

“WALKING IN THE SHADOW OF THE ANTICHRIST”**“Antichrist Revealed” (Daniel 11:36-45)**

After the revelation of Antiochus Epiphanes as a type of the Antichrist, the vision leads on to consider the times of the Antichrist. Up to v35 we have been studying past history. This means there is a gap of at least 2,200 years between Daniel 11:35 and Daniel 11:36. Such a large gap is consistent with many aspects of prophetic literature. Daniel drew such a gap between the 69th week and 70 week of his Daniel 9 prophecy. In Daniel 11:36-45 we see the character, military campaigns, collapse, and the final condemnation of the Antichrist. These future events detailed here have no exact parallel in world history.

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. (v36)

Most commentators agree that this king of v36 is very different from Antiochus Epiphanes of v21-35. This Greek king's career doesn't fit with the details. However, there are similarities in character as Antiochus Epiphanes was a typical forerunner of the Antichrist. But there are also profound differences that cannot be applied to Antiochus Epiphanes and the timeframe for v36-45 is one of the end times, “*at the time of the end.*” (v40) There are many other clues. For instance, in v40 the King of the North and the King of the South are fighting this king of v36, whereas in v21-35 the King of the North is Antiochus Epiphanes! Indeed, the Lord Jesus Christ explicitly stated that the Abominations of Desolations is a future event to His day and tied to His Second Coming in Matthew 24:15. This final section corresponds remarkably with other explicit prophecies of the final Antichrist such as Daniel 7, 2 Thessalonians 2, and Revelation 13, 17, 19.

We are told that the Antichrist “*shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.*” God has sovereignly decreed the rise of the Antichrist and this evil man will arise to rule during the period, “*till the indignation be accomplished,*” which is another way of describing the Great Tribulation period when God will pour down His wrath or indignation upon the earth in multiple judgments. The Bible makes clear repeatedly in the OT and NT that there will be a time of unprecedented chaos and tribulation directly preceding the return of Christ. This is a period of judgment and cleansing of the Jewish people in preparation for their salvation. The Jews have been through countless pogroms and holocausts in their long history. This final Great Tribulation will be worse than all of these. John MacArthur raises an interesting question,

“I suppose we could ask the question at this point: why does God let him do it? Why does God tolerate it? And the answer is, because it is part of the purging process of purifying God's people Israel. And by the way, God only lets it go for a short time. It says in Revelation 13, only for 42 months can he really carry this off. Only for three and a half years, just half of the Tribulation. And it says it in verse 36, too. He'll do it but he'll prosper only until the indignation be accomplished, just until the final unfolding of the wrath of God is finished. God puts a time limit. And the reason again, I say, that God allows this and permits such oppression of the Jews is that it is this, people, listen to me, it is this ultimate incredible blasphemy and oppression of the Antichrist that finally

brings Israel to the proper attitude where they will recognize Jesus Christ as their Messiah and turn to Him. And the Bible shows us that nothing short of this will do that.”

There are other clues that the rise of the king is in the end times. We are told he shall arise, “*at the time of the end.*” (v40) This period of indignation is also called “*a time of trouble,*” which results in a persecution of the Jews followed by their national deliverance and a General Resurrection of the Dead,

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Daniel 12:1-2)

We must note the similarity in language here between Daniel 12:1, “*and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time*” and Matthew 24:21, “*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*” Christ is clearly speaking in Matthew 24 of the Great Tribulation Period preceding His return. We are told 3 things about the character of the Antichrist ruler in v36:

(1) **SELF-WILL** – we are told, “*And the king shall do according to his will...*” This ruler will be a law unto himself. He will refuse any moral or earthly constraints on his actions. He is the ultimate rebel. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3b he is called, “*that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*” Paul went on to describe him as “*that Wicked*” (the Greek word translated “*wicked*” is *anomos* from the word *a* meaning “no” and *nomos* meaning “law”). So the expression “*that Wicked*” means literally “no law” or “lawless one.” The Antichrist will be empowered by the devil and supported by his evil twin, “*the false prophet*” of Revelation 13, 19 and 20.

(2) **EXALTATION OF SELF** – the Antichrist will exalt himself in pride, “*and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god.*” Paul also reveals of him, “*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*” (2 Thess. 2:4) The false prophet is pictured as a whore riding the beast of the Antichrist in Revelation 17. So these two individuals will make use of each other in an unholy religious and secular union empowered by hell. Eventually the Antichrist will utilise the false prophet to unite all religions under him.

(3) **BLASPHEMY** – the Antichrist will not just exalt self and demand worship of himself, but he also will speak blasphemies against the One True God, “*and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods...*” John expanded on this by revealing of the Antichrist, “*And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*” (Rev. 13:5-6; cf. Dan. 7:8, 25)

Things may appear to be out of control in this time of Tribulation and chaos from the human perspective but Daniel is assured that God is fully in control, “*for that that is determined shall be done.*”

Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. (v37-38)

The vision shifted to reveal some of the policies of the future Antichrist. One of his policies is the deification of self by declaring himself as God, “*Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god.*” This description of a completely new system of worship was not true of Antiochus Epiphanes’s rule. Dave Guzik observes,

“Antiochus Epiphanes certainly did this in the general sense that all sinners oppose God. Yet he remained loyal to the Greek religious tradition, which revered the entire Olympian pantheon. Antiochus Epiphanes put a statue of Zeus in the temple, not of himself. This will be far more precisely fulfilled in the Antichrist, who sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (2 Thess. 2:4, cf Rev. 13:15, 16)”

Many have speculated that the expression, “*Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers,*” implies that the Antichrist must emerge from apostate Christianity or from apostate Judaism and after initially using those religions, he turns his back on them to start a new religion of worship to himself or directly to the devil, “*And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?*” (Rev. 13:4) It could well be true that the Antichrist is from Christendom or Judaism but it doesn’t necessarily follow. It could simply mean that the Antichrist rejects the religion of his upbringing to launch a new form of religious worship.

The expression, “*nor the desire of women*” is one that has given rise to intense speculation. Some think it means the Antichrist is a homosexual that leads the prophesied rise of Sodom and Gomorrah in the last days (cf. Luke 17:26-30). Others argue that it means that the Antichrist will turn away from apostate faiths that exalt the worship of women. Others believe that it is linked to the Messianic prophecy of Christ as “*the desire of all nations*” (Haggai 2:7) with the Antichrist demonstrating his hatred of Christ and his campaigns to exalt himself over Jesus Christ as a “counterfeit christ.” The Antichrist will fiercely oppose any Jewish hope of the real Messiah coming to deliver the Jews and establish His kingdom from Jerusalem in righteousness. No competition will be permitted to him.

The Antichrist will be a man of guile and intimidation. He will wear out the saints of God mentally and physically. Every man who wants to function in the society will be forced to take the mark of the Antichrist beast according to Revelation 13. The Antichrist will “*honour the God of forces*” which seems to suggest that he will be a man that glories in physical power. There is a marked contrast here between the true believer who glories in the Lord as his strength and refuge and the Antichrist who trusts in the arm of the flesh. The Antichrist will worship his military power. No doubt he will have access to terrorism, nuclear and biological weaponry. Lehman Strauss has an interesting observation,

“Even though the Antichrist shall not have regard for any god at all, verses 38 and 39 seem to teach that he will create his own god, which is love of warfare and victory. With some people their god is sex, or money, or prestige, but with the Antichrist the pride of his heart will be to have men at his feet. If they will not yield to him willingly, then he will bring them there by force. Gold and silver and mere things hold no attraction for Satan. He is “the prince (ruler) of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and the whole world is his sphere of operation (1 John 5:19), but he must be the mighty master of men and angels. To bind the Antichrist to himself he will offer him particular honors and influence. The seventieth week will be Satan's greatest hour, and he will make the most of it. The Antichrist will be his willing tool, doing his bidding completely.”

The expression, “*and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things*” may well be linked to that or to the fact that he worships himself as the god of power. It is interesting that many of the types of Antichrist (the little antichrists) like Nimrod, Alexander the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, Adolf Hitler have been men that were consumed with the power of the sword to effect their self-will and empire building projects. This is a time of unprecedented chaos, apostasy, persecution, and evil on the earth. It will be a period of great confusion and spiritual delusion.

Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; (v39-40a)

The next part of the vision details the military successes of the Antichrist. He will be a powerful and successful demagogue, “*Thus shall he do in the most strong holds.*” No national power will be able to stand against his spiritual and military rule. He will rule the world. We are reminded again that he will institute a new religion of worship to himself, “*with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory.*” Like his antitype Antiochus Epiphanes (v24), the Antichrist will use his ill-gotten gains to reward those who co-labour with him in his evil exploits, “*and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.*” The Antichrist will be a master manipulator of men by appealing to their basest of motives for corrupt gain.

The Antichrist will eventually launch a full frontal attack on the saints of God. This will be very evident in the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation Period (42 months). The Antichrist will not only “*wear out the saints*” but also, “*and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.*” (Rev. 13:7b) Many will be physically persecuted to the point of despair by protracted persecution, and some will even die in his reign of terror, “*He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*” (Rev. 13:10) Those who will not worship him will die, “*and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.*” (Rev. 13:15b) Religion will never go out of fashion. The Antichrist will know that and make use of it. But he will eventually not tolerate any other form of religion that doesn't worship him. He will become like many Emperors of the past that eventually deify self and demand that the people they subjugate make him the object of worship. That is what the Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans did!

Initially everything will seem to have gone the way of the Antichrist who, *“shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.”* Inspired and empowered by the devil, the Antichrist will build an Empire of unprecedented power and size in world history. This Empire is built on corruption, deception, lies, violence, and intimidation. However, we learned in other prophecies that his kingdom is a very short-lived and unstable. Revelation reveals that its powerful grip will only last for three and a half years, *“and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.”* (Rev. 13:5b) This also corresponds to the symbol of the mixture of iron and clay in the Great Image on Daniel 2, which indicates strength and fragility combined. This relatively short period is necessary to limit the destructive power of the Antichrist or none would survive, *“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.”* (Matt. 24:21-22)

The instability of the Antichrist's reign will come from other rivals for his crown. The devil's crowd cannot be controlled by the devil. We know from the Book of Revelation that God will strike in judgment on the power structure of the Antichrist during the Tribulation judgments. This will weaken his ability to maintain his grip on his newly constructed empire. The timing of this chaos for the Antichrist is clearly at the end of this world, *“And at the time of the end..”* We are told here that two rival powers emerge to challenge the rise of the Antichrist, *“the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships..”* One power seems to be from the South in nations like Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia. The other is from the, *“king of the north,”* which may be the land of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon that was mentioned previously in Daniel 11 that was controlled by the Seleucid kings. However, we cannot be dogmatic. Time will reveal exactly who these rival kings are.

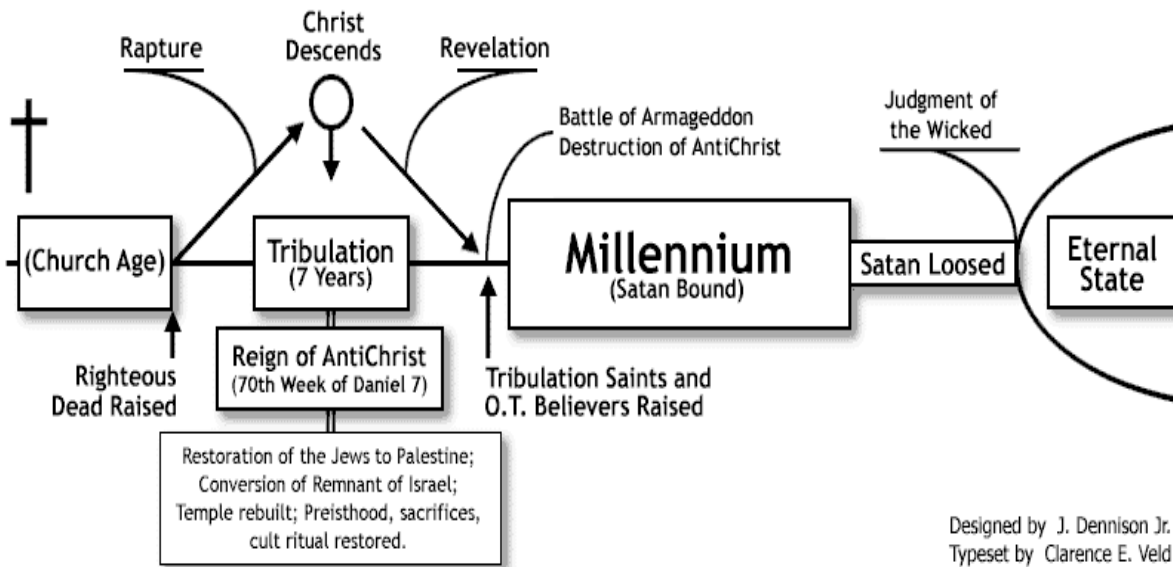
....and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. (v40b-v43)

The Antichrist will have to facedown these rebellions. He does successfully and crushes the revolt, *“and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.”* The Antichrist, like Antiochus Epiphanes, will plunder the spoil of these subjugated nations, *“He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.”* To achieve his subjugation of these rebellions the Antichrist enters the land of Israel, *“He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown.”* There are three areas that are stated to escape his retribution, *“but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.”* This land is where the kingdom of Jordan is situated today. We are not told why these areas of these old historic kingdoms are spared the wrath of the Antichrist. They may have remained neutral in the rebellion between the Antichrist and the two rival kings from the North and the South.

But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. (v44-45)

Things go from bad to worse for the Antichrist as his empire crumbles. The clock is ticking on the 7 years he has been allotted. New rivals seize this opportunistic moment to emerge to trouble him from the North and from the East, “*But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him.*” Some believe this is an alliance between Russia (or some of the nations of the former USSR) of the North and China/Japan of the East against the Antichrist, who are smarting from the initial humiliation of having to submit to the Antichrist. Some Bible scholars equate this revolt with the battle described in Ezekiel 38 and 39. Others tend to place that Gog and Magog war at the end of the Millennium only. Frankly, none of us can be sure other than the Ezekiel 38-39 battle will definitely occur.

The news of this rebellion infuriates the Antichrist who mobilises his armies to confront this new threat, “*therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.*” The proud and angry dictator will be devil-inspired to launch a final great Holocaust on the Jewish people and his enemies from the North and from the East. A great bloodbath of millions of dead is pictured in passages like Revelation 14.



The Antichrist places his armies in the heart of the land of Israel near Jerusalem and Mount Moriah, which is called “*the glorious holy mountain*” to take on these rivals between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea, “*And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.*” This is likely a description of what is commonly referred to as the Battle of Armageddon. The rulers of the East cross the Euphrates River and make their way to the final confrontation on the plains of Megiddo in Northern Israel (Rev. 16:12-16). Eventually the Antichrist and his armies surround the city of Jerusalem where the Lord intervenes. The Battle of Armageddon will be over in a twinkling of an eye. The Messiah of Israel will save His people (cf. Zech. 12-14). Jesus Christ will stand on the Mount of Olives. At this point in their history Israel is going through its greatest chastisement and its greatest revival. MacArthur points out,

You know what happens to Israel in all of this? Israel is at the deepest point of sorrow, the deepest point of suffering, the deepest point of humiliation in all of its history and it is at this very point that they look upon Him whom they've pierced and are redeemed. I believe they've already had 144 thousand special Jews giving them the message all through this three and a half years. And finally they hear it.

We receive a summary here of the final destruction of the Antichrist, "*yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*" The other parts of Scripture fill in the details of his sudden destruction, "*I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*" (Daniel 7:11) We get a further insight into this in the Book of Revelation. It reveals that the Antichrist and the False Prophet are destroyed together at the time of the Battle of Armageddon, "*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*" (Rev. 19:20) Paul speaks of it to the Thessalonians, "*And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.*" (2 Thess. 2:8) This is the greatest moment in world history. The battle is over before it even starts. No one can take on God and win. The Perfect Man is now reigning in truth and righteousness on the earth, "*Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.*" (Isaiah 9:7a)

Many Christians get caught up in intense speculation and divisive debate over the details of these future prophecies about the Antichrist. We need to remember that the people of Daniel's day did not know that Daniel 11:21-35 referred to Antiochus Epiphanes. It is only with the benefit of historical hindsight that we in the 21st century can be sure to identify much of the detail. In the same manner we should be content to simply study these future prophecies of Daniel 11:36-45 and be watchful and ready for their fulfillment. We need to humbly accept that the best we can do is speculate until a sovereign God begins His programme for the end times. Is the Antichrist on the earth today? We don't know so speculation doesn't add to certainty. The truth will only be known to the people of God when he is actually revealed.

We are living in the End Times of human history. All the promised signs of prophecy are now lined up with the rise of Sodom, the Jews in the Promised Land, and the economic and political turbulence. The world is in chaos today. The eyes of the world are focused on the Middle East. Many are looking for a leader that can solve the Middle East crisis between the Jews and the Arabs and for a man who can bring prosperity and stability to the turbulent world economy. The Antichrist will promise to deliver all of these. He will seemingly be able to square the circle! The world will be attracted to his charisma and intelligence, convinced by his amazing signs, seduced by his promises to bring peace and prosperity, to the point that they will worship him. But even when the devil's power on earth is at its greatest, God's power is greater still. When the Saviour intervenes the Antichrist's power melts away. As one writer said, "All the threads of history lead to the throne room of God." This reality of a sovereign God in control of all history and circumstances is something we need to continually remind ourselves even in the midst of our own dark days and the crisis of life. We must sing every moment of every day, "*Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*" (Rev. 19:6)