

Message #14  
Daniel

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4/23/2023

## THE WITNESS OF FULFILLED PROPHECY DANIEL 11:2-35

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

God has chosen to reveal Himself to us humans in various ways. One way that He has done that is through the created universe. Some people come to an awareness of God by simply observing the world around us and concluding that someone must have created it. Whittaker Chambers was an American Communist and an atheist. He later wrote for *Time* magazine. One day he was watching his young daughter eat in her high chair and noticing her ear. The unwanted thought suddenly entered his mind that this ear had to have been created by God.

We human beings have a conscience. Some people have come to an awareness of God by the realization that they have a sense of right and wrong and a feeling of accountability to a higher being. Most early civilizations practice some kind of animal sacrifice for this reason.

Some people discover evidence of God in history. Cervantes is regarded by many as the greatest writer in the Spanish language. He lived around 1600. He once wrote, **“History is in a manner a sacred thing so far as it contains truth; for where truth is, the Supreme Father of it may also said to be, at least, inasmuch as concerns truth.”**

Unfortunately there is less interest in history in our day than in times past. In 2019 the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation surveyed 41,000 US adults. They took the test required of all immigrants who wish to become American citizens. Only 40% of adults passed the test. Only 27% of those under age 45 passed the test.

The lens by which we view history, the presuppositions that we bring to our look at history color our understanding of what is going on in the world and whether there is a God. Scientific materialists, those who believe that there is nothing beyond the physical and visible world, might agree with American writer Joseph Heller, who said that history is **“a trash bag of random coincidences torn open in a wind.”** History is meaningless. There is no direction or purpose to be found in it.

Karl Marx and the Communists concluded that history is a story of class conflicts between the rich and the poor, the capitalists and the proletariat. But history, they said, would inevitably produce a classless society. Events in the twentieth century proved that idea to faulty, and dangerous to a lot human beings who lived in such Communist countries.

Currently critical race theory has become a popular lens by which to view history. It says that history is the story of systemic racism--- of a power narrative by which the powerful

control the weak, especially those of minority groups. This perspective provides little hope, focuses on victimhood, and leaves little room for a sovereign God.

The Bible provides another perspective on history. Many of us would argue that its analysis has passed the test of time. It says that God created all of life. He made human beings in His image with great value and worth. But humans disobeyed God and became infected with sin. History has become the story of a gracious God who seeks to rescue human beings from the consequences of sin. This perspective holds out hope for the future, for a reconciliation between God and man.

Progressive revelation is a term that has been used to describe God's dealing with humanity, as described in the Bible. As time has gone by, God has progressively revealed more about Himself to us humans. Because God has revealed Himself to us in a historical record, and because He has provided predictions about the future in the Bible, the trustworthiness of this progressive revelation can be tested. The scholars estimate that about a fourth of the Bible contains prophecies about the future. Some of those prophecies have already come to pass. Some are yet to be fulfilled. The trustworthiness of those prophecies already fulfilled give us considerable hope about promises that relate to events yet future to us.

By examining the accuracy of prophecy that has already been fulfilled, we can test the reliability of the Bible. Any book that makes specific, detailed predictions about world events hundreds of years in the future and proves to be correct is certainly supernatural and worthy of our trust.

For this reason the passage before us today is an excellent test of the trustworthiness of the Bible. Because of the Bible's close connection with its divine author, this passage provides us with a positive answer to one of the two questions that we have seen that the Book of Daniel answers: Is God worthy of our trust?

The last 10 verses of Chapter 11 contain prophecies that concern events that are yet future. The first 35 verses concern events that occur up to 400 years after they were predicted, but from our reference point they constitute history. In fact in these first 35 verses there are at least 135 specific prophecies. We can't take the time to examine all of them in detail, but let's at least survey them to see if God and His Word are worthy of our trust.

Chapters 10-12 in the Book of Daniel contain the last revelation from God given to Daniel in his long and faithful life. On the Sunday before Easter we looked at the introduction to the vision that begins here. We got a glimpse into the spiritual warfare that went on behind the scenes in the delivery of this revelation. We learned something in the process about the cosmic struggle in which all of us believers are involved, about conflict that happens in the heavenly realm pitting good angels against evil angels.

We found out also that Daniel at the time of the vision was around 85 years old. (PROJECTOR ON--- PERSIAN EMPIRE 2) Thousands of his Jewish countrymen had

recently returned from their 70 year captivity in Babylon and Persia to Judah to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. But they ran into opposition, and the building project came to a halt.

When news of that reached Daniel, he was greatly disturbed. The rebuilding of the temple and the reestablishment of his people in their homeland was of great concern to him. So he prayed. One of the things that he prayed for was understanding. In response to his prayer God sent an angel to Daniel to describe God's future program for Israel and the nations with whom it would be dealing.

I.

Verses 2-4 then describe PROPHECY CONCERNING PERSIA AND GREECE. (I. PROPHECY CONCERNING PERSIA AND GREECE) This angel begins in v. 2 by saying that three more kings are to arise in Persia. The fourth king, as v. 2 indicates, will gain special prominence. This came to be true of Persian King Xerxes. (PERSIAN EMPIRE VS. GREECE) Xerxes spent four years gathering a 2 ½ million man army to attack Greece. By looking at the size of the two nations it would seem that the much larger Persian Empire should have been able to do in the Greeks. Xerxes did succeed in penetrating Greece, but in the process he lost hundreds of thousands of troops.

A hundred years later, still remembering that vicious attack, the Greeks under Alexander the Great defeated Persia (ALEXANDER ATTACKS PERSIA) and went on to occupy the entire civilized world, thus fulfilling the prophecy of v. 3. But as v. 4 predicted, this great leader died suddenly at the height of his power, and the Greek Empire was divided up among four of his generals. (DIVIDED GREEK EMPIRE) Ptolemy gained control of Egypt. Seleucus gained control of what we would call Syria. Antigonous gained control of Turkey. Cassander ended up in control of the Greek homeland. The time when this took place was close to 300 BC, over 200 years after the time of Daniel.

The Lord was using the Greeks to accomplish His sovereign purposes. For prior to this time there was a motley array of languages that was spoken throughout this entire region. There was no commonly understood language. But after the Greeks came, Greek came to be the language of trade and commerce and literature. It came to be understood throughout this region for hundreds of years to come.

When the story about Christ and the early church was put down on paper, it was in a language that people throughout this entire area could understand. When Paul and his cohorts began to spread the gospel to other parts of Asia and into Europe, they spoke a language that most all could understand. God is indeed sovereign over the events of history. He is worthy of our trust.

II.

(II. PROPHECY CONCERNING EGYPT AND SYRIA) In vv. 5-20 we are given a description of PROPHECY CONCERNING EGYPT AND SYRIA. The Seleucid Kingdom was formed in the aftermath of the collapse of the united Greek empire under

Alexander. It was sometimes referred to as Syria. (PTOLEMY VS. SELUCUS) Initially General Antigonus controlled the territory that we know today as Syria, but Seleucus soon took over this area. Syria's leaders are referred to in our text as the Kings of the North. In the South the Ptolemy dynasty occupied what we better know as Egypt. Its rulers are called the Kings of the South in our passage.

As you can see from the map, Israel and Jerusalem were located in between these two powers. The two nations didn't get along with each other. So Judah became the battleground for them during much of the next 200 years. Control of the region changed hands several times.

Verses 5-20 predict and accurately describe the conflict that occurred between Egypt and Syria. I am not going to bore you with all of the details. Suffice it to say that events happened just as they were prophesied.

In the time period described in vv. 10-19 the Seleucid ruler leading Syria and his forces were more powerful than the Egyptians. They succeeded in taking control of Judah away from Egypt. (SELEUCID EMPIRE) As v. 18 points out, this Seleucid leader then began to expand his territory to the islands and land to the west.

But he ran into opposition from a Roman general who was leading the growth of the power of Rome. This Roman general decisively defeated the Syrians. As a result of that defeat, the Romans took hostages from the royal family of the Seleucids. Among the hostages was a young man by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes, which is a name that should ring a bell. For we have seen in earlier chapters other prophecies that spoke of him.

As v. 19 predicted, the Seleucid leader died. Verse 20 describes his son, who was the oldest brother of Antiochus Epiphanes. This oldest brother died after a short reign.

III.

So in vv. 21-35 we come to PROPHECY CONCERNING ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES. (III. PROPHECY CONCERNING ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES) Verse 21 says, **"In his place [i.e. the oldest brother's place] shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."**

The rule legally should have passed to the nephew of Antiochus and the son of the king who died, but Antiochus managed to return to Syria. By doing some wheeling and dealing, he took over the throne of the kingdom. Verses 22-28 describe the first two campaigns that he conducted against Egypt. They were largely successful.

In 168 BC Antiochus Epiphanes returned to Egypt to try to further his conquests. Look at what is predicted in vv. 29-30: **"At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. 30 For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back**

**and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant..."**

Kittim was a term that was used at times for Cyprus. (CYPRUS) But in the Greek translation of the Old Testament made 200 years after the time of Daniel and over 100 years before the events described here, Kittim was translated simply as Rome. By 168 BC Cyprus was part of the expanding Roman Empire.

History shows that this Antiochus did return to Egypt (SIEGE OF ALEXANDRIA) where he besieged the city of Alexandria. The Egyptians appealed for help to Rome. In response the Roman Senate sent an official by the name of Laenas to Alexandria with a fleet of ships to have a little chat with Antiochus.

As the historians record it, Laenas met Antiochus on the beach and gave him an edict demanding that he withdraw from Alexandria. Antiochus supposedly asked for time to consider this order from Rome. Reportedly Laenas took his staff and drew a circle in the sand around him saying, **"You may have time to consider, but you must decide before you step outside of this circle."**

The name "Epiphanes" means "the Manifest, or Glorious, One." (ANTIOCHUS COIN) On all of the coins in Antiochus' realm there was printed the title "Epiphanes Theos," which meant "God Manifest." Just to the left of the knee on the reverse side of the coin is the Greek word for God, *theos*. To the left of that is *Epiphanes*. Antiochus was claiming to be god, or a god. Antiochus had been raised as a hostage in Rome, and he knew about the growing power of the Romans. So Antiochus Epiphanes, the Glorious One, or Divine One, realized that he was no match for the Roman military, and he was forced to withdraw. But it was a tremendous humiliation to him. (PROJECTOR OFF)

Last time we talked about the reality of spiritual warfare, and I said that one of the key battlegrounds in cosmic spiritual warfare is the fate of the Jewish people. Because God has made many specific promises about the destiny of the Jewish people, Satan and his forces have sought to do in the Jews. In what this Antiochus did next we see one of these demonic attempts to thwart the purposes of God.

Antiochus did return to Syria, but in fulfillment of vv. 30 & 31 he became enraged at the holy covenant. Part of his rage was probably due to his humiliation at the hands of the Romans. Antiochus determined that he was going to force Israel to adopt Greek culture. On a Sabbath day he sent 20,000 troops into Jerusalem. According to 1 Maccabees 1:29-30, which is part of the Apocrypha and included in the Catholic Bible, the chief officer **"spoke words of peace unto them, in deceit; and they gave him credence. And he fell suddenly upon the city and smote it very sore and destroyed [many] people of Israel."** We Protestants recognize this book of 1 Maccabees as history, but not necessarily inspired by God.

Forty thousand Jews were killed in three days. The daily sacrifices in the temple were stopped. Antiochus outlawed the practice of the Jewish religion. Antiochus ordered an

idol to the Greek god Zeus to be set up in the temple, and on Dec. 16, 167 BC, pigs were offered on the holy altar. Jews regard pigs as unclean animals. In the eyes of the Jews this was an abomination--- an abomination of desolation--- the term used in v. 31 in our passage.

As v. 32 predicted, Antiochus promised great rewards to those who would adopt the Greek ways of worship. But there were some who refused to compromise their faith. Many of them were killed. But in 166 BC a priest by the name of Mattathias rose up, and with his five sons began guerrilla warfare against Antiochus and the Syrians. These Maccabeans, as they were known, became more and more successful. Soon some of the apostate Jews began to join with them, because they saw that the rebels were beginning to win. These Jews became afraid that they might be killed for their apostasy if they did not join with them. Thus the last clause of v. 34 was fulfilled, **“and many will join with them in hypocrisy.”**

The Syrians were finally defeated, and the temple was rededicated in 164 or 165 BC. According to Jewish tradition only enough oil was found in the temple to keep the huge lamp stand lit for one night. But miraculously the oil somehow was multiplied for eight days to allow for new oil to be properly prepared. This became the basis for the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, the feast of lights, whose predominant feature is the lighting of eight candles. Antiochus Epiphanes died in 164 BC. However, the new Syrian king again attacked the Jews. At first he was successful. But eventually he, too, was defeated. Verse 35 may be making reference to this.

IV.

Consider then THE LESSON FROM FULFILLED PROPHECY. (PROJECTOR ON--- THE LESSON FROM FULFILLED PROPHECY) We have in this passage 135 specific prophecies, by one count, made up to 400 years before the events described took place. We have 135 specific fulfillments.

For people who deny the inerrancy of the Bible there is but one explanation. These prophecies are too accurate. They are too specific. For 135 specific things to be predicted, in some cases hundreds of years before they happened, would require something supernatural. The only possible explanation for these people is that this is history. The descriptions in this chapter must have been written in the second century BC after the events described actually happened.

An unbelieving scholar by the name of Porphyry suggested that as long ago as the third century AD. Educated skeptics have promoted that idea ever since. In order to do so they must deny the evidences that we have discussed in previous lessons for the validity of the Book of Daniel. They are forced to try to convince us that the author of this book, who promoted qualities of honesty, integrity, faithfulness, and morality lied. When he indicates several times that he wrote the book and was an eyewitness of the events described, he flat out lied.

As I pointed out in earlier lessons, there are difficult challenges which the critics have to overcome. The Aramaic language in which the book is written is much closer to the sixth century BC than the second century BC. Also the author knew facts about people like Belshazzar in #5 about which people in the second century were totally unaware. Up until recent times the evidence that Belshazzar even existed was unknown.

People ultimately have to choose what they will believe. It comes down to presuppositions. If one's presupposition, or assumption, is that there is no God and that the supernatural is impossible, then the Book of Daniel must be a fraud, or at least not what it initially appears to be. It had to be written long after it claims to have been written.

One of the two basic questions that the Book of Daniel answers is this: Is God worthy of our trust? The testimony of the fulfilled prophecy of #11 is that God and His Word are indeed worthy of our trust. An increasing number of Jewish people have come to recognize the significance of these Old Testament prophecies in regard to Jesus.

Mitch Glaser grew up in New York City. His grandparents had immigrated from Europe years earlier. Mitch attended synagogue and observed the traditional Jewish holidays with his family. When he was just seventeen, he dropped out of college and moved to the West Coast.

He and some friends built a houseboat and lived there until a California building inspector condemned it. About that time a Jewish gal named Joan showed up on the scene. She had recently discovered Jesus. She told Mitch what she had found about Him. She talked about prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures and about what they said about the end times. She explained her convictions that Jesus fulfilled what the Old Testament said about the coming Messiah. At first Mitch thought that she was nuts.

Joan introduced Mitch to some Christian friends. He was amazed by the close connection which they seemed to have with God. He then approached a couple of young, ultra-Orthodox rabbis with questions he was curious about. He was dissatisfied with their answers.

Mitch acquired a job in the Redwood Forest. One night he approached the phone booth by the camp. He was startled to discover on the ledge where a phone directory was supposed to be that there was a New Testament. He had never read it. But he took it and read it. He was startled to discover how Jewish Jesus was. He had been taught in his earlier years that Christians were usually anti-Jewish.

Mitch struggled with the realization that becoming a follower of Jesus would be interpreted by his family and Jewish friends as an act of betrayal and rejection of his heritage. But he became convinced that the Hebrew Bible and its prophecies concerning the future and descriptions of the Messiah found their fulfillment of Jesus. He became a follower of Jesus. (MITCH GLASER) Today he serves as president of Chosen People Ministries and teaches at Talbot School of Theology.

This book and the God it describes are worthy of our trust. The passage about fulfilled prophecy that we examined today is further evidence of the truth of that proposition. (PROJECTOR OFF) But as we learned last time, we are involved in a spiritual war. Day in and day out we who claim Christ as our Savior are faced with countless little decisions and occasional decisions that seem big about whether we shall trust in God. Will we believe His Word?

In our efforts to share the gospel will we have confidence that God's Word will not return to Him void? In the difficult trial that we face will we believe the promise of God that He will provide a way of escape? Will we fight against despair and believe God when He says that all things work together for good to those who love God? Will we demonstrate in our prayer life a belief that if we pray anything according to His will that He hears us? Will we believe the principle in God's Word that what the Lord wants from us is not primarily success but rather faithfulness?

When the kids seem to be tearing down the house, will we have the supernatural confidence to believe the Bible that they are a gift from the Lord? When we are alone and no one else seems to understand our situation, will we believe that God does? In the midst of our hectic schedules will we believe the words of Christ, "**apart from Me, you can do nothing.**"

There was an article that appeared in *The New Yorker* magazine years ago (11/12/1938). It told about a man in Islip, Long Island, who satisfied a long time desire to buy an expensive barometer. When it arrived in the mail from Abercrombie and Fitch in the fall of 1938, the man was greatly disappointed. For the needle was stuck on the section marked "hurricane." He shook the thing and jiggled it, but the needle would not budge.

The man immediately wrote off a scathing letter to Abercrombie and Fitch and dropped the letter in the mail the next day on his way to work in New York City. When he returned home that night, the barometer was gone--- and so was the room in which he had left it--- and so was the house itself. A hurricane had struck that day and blown away his material possessions. The man had in his possession the revelation of truth, but he refused to trust it.

How about us, fellow Christians? In the skirmishes of spiritual war that come our way this week, will we choose to believe that God is worthy of our trust?