



Icebreaker

1. What is something you are looking forward to this summer?

Day 1

These closing verses in Daniel 11 and the beginning of Daniel 12 are difficult to understand and interpret. There are lots of different views that people take toward this passage: Do they relate to history? Do they refer to events that are still in the future? Are they meant to be taken literally or symbolically?

In general, there are three popular approaches to this section of Daniel:

- These verses continue to talk about Antiochus Epiphanes.
- These verses predict some of the early history of the Roman Empire.
- These verses refer to the future Antichrist who will appear at the end of all things—just before Jesus returns.¹

As a church, we take the third approach, believing that these verses shift attention toward a future leader and events surrounding his life. We recognize that there is a lot of difficulty in making sense of this passage, so we take this position humbly, knowing that there are a lot of great Christian men and women out there who don't agree with us on this interpretation.

¹ Boice, J. M. (2006). Daniel: An expositional commentary. Baker Books. p. 114-115.

We take this approach for a few reasons:

- The things talked about in this section don't match what we know about the end of Antiochus Epiphanes' life.
- We don't think that Daniel shifts here to talking about a "kingdom" in general instead of a specific "king" or person because the surrounding context of Daniel 11 is highly specific about different kings, not kingdoms.
- Daniel 11:40 says these things refer to "the time of the end" which seems to be the future end of all things that take place before Jesus returns. This seems to be consistent with the deliverance of those whose name is "written in the book" (12:1) and the rising of the dead to judgment and reward in 12:3.

This means that we believe these verses contain some bad news and some really good news. The bad news is that there will be "a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time" ahead. But the good news we look forward to is the deliverance of God's people in the end!

Read It

Read Daniel 11:36–12:4.

2. What are some characteristics of this king in verses 36–39?
3. How do these verses talk about this king's conquests with foreign nations?
4. What is the ultimate "end" for this king?
5. At that time, what awaits God's people according to Daniel 12:1?
6. What will happen to those who "sleep in the dust of the earth"?
7. What was Daniel instructed to do with this book in Daniel 12:4?

Day 2 — Today's Theme: Don't Miss the Trailers!

Read Daniel 10:1–3.

I was never a huge fan of taking tests in school. But early on, I learned a little test-taking tip that might help you out along the way—if you aren't sure what the answer is to a question on a test, read through the rest of the questions because sometimes another question will give you the answer to the one you're stumped on! It doesn't always work out this way, but every now and then you get lucky!

When it comes to studying hard passages in the Bible like this one, it's helpful to keep reading because sometimes there are other places in the Bible that help us understand the hard passages a little better.

So far in Daniel 11, we have been told a lot about what would happen between the kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucids, but as I mentioned earlier, we believe that now we've shifted gears to what will be fulfilled in the future Antichrist. "We know that everything about this prophecy was not fulfilled during the career of Antiochus Epiphanes. Jesus specifically said the real abomination of desolation was still in the future (Matthew 24:15)."

No doubt Antiochus Epiphanes played an important role in history. But it seems like the importance of his role was to be a historical preview of the Antichrist. This is why so much space is given to describing the career of one evil man—because he represents the ultimate evil! Antiochus Epiphanes is the "trailer" that is released well before the Antichrist, who is like the "feature film."²

8. God frequently works through "types" throughout the Bible. These "types" are people or events that personify, characterize, and foreshadow greater fulfillments in the future. What are some other examples of "types" you can think of in God's Word?

9. The paragraphs above identify Antiochus Epiphanes as a "type" or "trailer" of the Antichrist who is prophesied to come later. How does studying and understanding these "types" benefit us today?

² Guzik, David. Found at: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/daniel-11/>

Day 3 — Today's Theme: The Antichrist

The Bible talks about these people that are called “antichrists.” According to 1 John 2:22, an antichrist is anyone “who denies the Father and the Son.” This is why John can say that many antichrists have come (1 Jn 2:18). The Bible speaks of a coming Antichrist who is believed will be a powerful, evil ruler who will come to power before Jesus returns.

It seems as though this passage introduces us to the Antichrist that is yet to step into power on the world stage. At the end of Daniel 11, we are given a snapshot into the Antichrist's:

- **Character** (Daniel 11:36–39)
- **Career** (Daniel 11:40–44)
- **Collapse** (Daniel 11:45)

Verse 45 tells us nothing about how the Antichrist will be defeated. Evidently his end will be sudden, swift, and unexpected. This fits with the picture given in other passages in Daniel regarding the suddenness of Christ's coming. It is like ...

- The Rock that hit the Statue in Daniel 2.
- The Court that passes judgment in Daniel 7.
- The end that comes without human power in Daniel 8.
- The end that is decreed in Daniel 9.

The battle is over before it starts. Men run for cover but there is nowhere to hide. The great day of judgment has come and no one can escape. The message is clear. You can't take on God and win. You can fight him if you like, but as the wise man said, your arms are too short to box with God.³

10. How do verses 36–39 describe the “character” of the Antichrist?

How do you see these characteristics represented in today's ideas and influencers?

11. What do you think God's purpose is in telling us about the future Antichrist?

12. What do you think the sudden “collapse” of the career of the Antichrist tells us about God's power?

³ Pritchard, Ray. “Who is the Antichrist?” <https://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/who-is-the-antichrist/>

Day 4 — Today's Theme: The Savior's Saints

Key Verse: Daniel 12:1–2

“But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

This final vision in the book of Daniel (chapters 10–12) has a lot to unpack. It's one of the most detailed prophecies in the whole Bible and contains both good news and bad news. At the core, the bad news is that things aren't gonna always be easy and they won't always be pleasant. The reality of life is that it's marked by difficulty. While there are blessings along the way, these hard days ultimately come as a result of the fact that many people who have lived before us, many people today, and many people who will come after us deny God and live opposed to Him. Daniel 12:2 says that in the very end, everyone is going to be judged and given the “reward” for their life. It says that some will rise to everlasting life while others will rise to shame and everlasting contempt (judgment). Now the hope is for those whose names are written in the book—they'll be delivered. How is your name written in the book?

Well, it's not because of how well you performed in your life. Did the good things you did outweigh the bad? That isn't how it works. It isn't because of how well you suffer for Christ either, because that's basically asking the same question: *Did I do enough?* How does your name end up in the book?

It's subtle. But did you catch the beginning of the last sentence in Daniel 12:1? “But at that time your people shall *be delivered*.” It doesn't say that they will deliver themselves—that would be based on “did I do enough” kind of thinking. Being delivered is something that someone does for us. How are God's people delivered? By the Deliverer!

There are many great people, Daniel included, who have gone before us and are great examples of faith to follow. But none of those people can deliver us. There's only one Person who can deliver you and His name is Jesus. And it's because of His blood shed on the cross and His resurrection from the dead that we can look forward to spending eternity in His light when we place our faith and trust in Him and in Him alone.

13. There are lots of great men and women of faith who have gone before us and many who are still alive today. How can we learn from their examples without actually idolizing them over Jesus?

14. We all hope that we'll be faithful to the end. How do we remain faithful to the end and where do we find the strength to do that?

15. When you are called to give an account of your life before God, what will be your claim to righteousness?