

Daniel 11:21-12:4
March 23, 2025



CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

MAIN POINT

In our passage today, the angel continues his revelation of truth to Daniel, sharing of suffering that would come for the Israelite people. This included suffering that came to pass before Jesus's earthly ministry and suffering that is still to come during the prophesied tribulation. From this, we can take away one critical resounding truth: We have hope because Jesus has already won, and He's coming back.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Let's kick off our time together today by setting up what we've already studied.

Daniel received some information in our passage today. Where and how was he getting this information?

What did the angel come in response to? (Hint: think back on last week's study or review the previous verses.)



What did the angel reveal to Daniel in our study last week?

Today, we'll continue our study of the revelation the angel gave Daniel in response to his prayers and petitions on behalf of the Israelite people. Daniel was met by an angel on the banks of the Tigris River, and last week we began studying what the angel revealed to Daniel. In last week's passage, the angel revealed details about future happenings (that have all now come to pass), and this week, we'll look at what the angel revealed next: more historical events and end times prophecy.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 11:21-35.

Think back to last week or review the verses prior to these. What two groups of people was he talking about?

Do you recognize the “despised person” the angel mentioned starting in verse 21 from earlier in Daniel? Do any of these events seem familiar? Explain.

Read Daniel 8:9-14. What similarities do you see in that passage and in our passage today?

In verse 21, the angel begins describing a figure we met back in chapter 8, the little horn, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, ruler of the North (175–163 BC).

Antiochus was one of the worst tyrants in history. He produced coins printed with a god-like image of himself and assumed the name “Epiphanes” (which means “glorious one”) claiming to be an epiphany from the gods. He had a nickname, “Epimanes,” which means mad-man. His nickname aligns more closely with what the angel calls him: “despised” (v.21).

In 169 BC, Antiochus attacked Jerusalem, murdering eighty thousand Jews and plundering and defiling the temple. He went on to attack the South once again, but this time, he met Roman opposition and was forced to withdraw. He took the anger at his failure out on the Jews with the help of Jewish traitors. In 168 BC, he returned to Jerusalem, prohibiting the Jews from practicing their faith and desecrating the temple.

Verses 33-35 describe the Maccabean revolt, when a group of faithful Jews including Judas—who had the nickname Maccabeus, which means “the hammerer”—opposed Antiochus.⁴ Many Jews died defending their faith in this conflict. Antiochus was eventually overtaken, and the temple restored. The Jews now celebrate this victory with the Feast of Lights, or Hanukkah.



 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 11:36-45.

These verses mark a shift in the angel's message. What similarities do you see between the figure described in Daniel 11:36-39 and what we know about Antiochus?

What can we learn from these verses about the end times?

The events described in our previous passage have all happened. This passage describes events that haven't happened yet: the end times.

Antiochus is an archetype of the antichrist, the last world dictator, whom the angel described in verses 36-39. The antichrist was also represented by the little horn we read about in Daniel 8.

In our passage, the angel described this figure as an extremely arrogant man with no faith who exalts himself above everyone. Just like Antiochus, he will richly reward his followers (v.38). Military campaigns to defeat him will fail, and he will set up camp in Israel (vv.44-45). He will retain his temporary power until Jesus's return (v.36), when "he will meet his end with no one to help him" (v.45). Jesus is triumphant.

 ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ DANIEL 12:1-4.

What did the angel describe in these verses?

What do you recognize from our previous study of prophecy in the book of Daniel?

What do you think "those who have insight" means in verse 3? What are these individuals doing?

The "time" the angel referred to in verse 1 is the end times mentioned at the end of chapter 11. The angel revealed that the angel Michael will rise up and come to the people's aid. Believers living during this time will need Michael's help during this time of unprecedented distress (v.1), but God's chosen elect will be saved. (Jesus refers to this in Matthew 24:22.)

Verse 2 describes resurrection in the end times. Believers will receive their resurrection bodies, an eternity with the Lord waiting for them, while those who do not believe in Jesus enter eternal judgment. We will all one day give an account for how we spent our lives. The faithful and those who lead others to Jesus will be rewarded, shining bright like stars for eternity (v.3). Remaining faithful during the tribulation will require incredible sacrifice and hardship but will be richly rewarded in heaven.

Daniel received instruction in verse 4. The command to "seal" the book didn't mean to keep it secret but rather to keep it safe until the end times, when its full meaning would



be better understood. God's people need the truth in this book, and it will be available to them then in their time of great need.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Today, we studied about the antichrist figure again. How can we better prepare to protect ourselves and our faith from people trying to deceive us?

What does Daniel 12:3 teach us about how we should live our lives?

What does Daniel 12:4 tell us about the importance of Scripture? How should that affect our dedication to studying it?

PRAYER

Close your time together by sharing prayer requests, praying for each other, and the group.

Thank God for the truth held in the pages of Scripture. Thank Him for telling Daniel (and us) what would happen. Thank Him for the hope this picture presents: Jesus has already won, and He's coming back. Ask for help living boldly in our faith, pointing many to Jesus, and being serious in our study of Scripture.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead to next week's scripture passage as we continue our study of Daniel.

March 30, 2025 --- Daniel 12:5-13



COMMENTARY

Daniel 11:21-12:4

Daniel 11:2–35 outlines the course of Palestinian history from Daniel's time to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Verse 2 refers to the four Persian rulers who would succeed Cyrus: Cambyses (530–522 BC), Pseudo-Smerdis (522), Darius I (522–486), and Xerxes (486–465). It alludes to Xerxes' campaign against Greece. Verses 3–4 then refer to Alexander the Great (336–323) and the division of his kingdom. Verses 5–20 outline the relationship between the Seleucids ("the king of the North"), who ruled Syria, and the Ptolemies ("the king of the South"), who ruled Egypt during the period 321–175. Verses 21–35 focus on the career of Antiochus Epiphanes (175–164), mentioning among other things his Egyptian campaigns and mistreatment of the Jews. Verses 32–35 anticipate the Maccabean revolt against Antiochus.

Most of the details of verses 36–45 do not correspond to Antiochus's career. For example, Antiochus died in Persia, not Palestine (see v. 45). Consequently, some scholars label these verses as unfulfilled "prophecy" and understand the preceding verses (vv. 1–35) as "prophecy" after the fact. Others understand a switch in perspective beginning in verse 36. The description merges into a portrayal of the Antichrist, whose hostility to God and His people was foreshadowed in the career of Antiochus.

The final verses of this section (12:1–4) anticipate a time of crisis for Israel in which Michael, the nation's guardian angel, would intervene on their behalf. Reference is made to a general resurrection of the righteous and evil.

