

September 24

Daniel 10-12

Towards the beginning of today's reading, an angel tells Daniel that he's come at the end of the 3 weeks of Daniel's fasting to bring him a message, but a heated spiritual battle delayed him for the entire 3 week period. He was detained by "the prince of Persia" and only got free when Michael, a chief prince also described as Daniel's prince, came to help.

Now I could spend this whole accelerator talking about "spiritual warfare" and the other-worldly nature of some of these passages, but what I want to spend the most time talking about today is the portion of our reading that deals with the period of tribulation under Antiochus, but which also points to future occurrences under the antichrist. Chapter 11 has some of the most remarkable and detailed prophecies in the Bible. It is a blow by blow description of the military rulers of the Near East from Daniel's time until the Maccabean period. Its detail is incredible.

Rather than go through the entire list of people in history that this prophecy speaks about, let's skip to the most important part about Antiochus Epiphanes.

The commander spoken of in Daniel 11:18 that would rise up was a Roman Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, who, after defeating Antiochus the Great, took his son as a hostage in Rome. That son was the dreaded persecutor of the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes, who is the "star villain of Daniel 11 and of the entire portion of Jewish history that we call the Maccabean period.

Antiochus Epiphanes was the "little horn" of chapter 8. He tried to destroy the Jewish religion completely. He was not next in line for the throne (it was supposed to be his nephew, whose father was the "tax collector" in Daniel's vision. Epiphanes means "The illustrious one" and we know from the coins he minted that he called himself Epiphanes Theos—"The Illustrious God" or "God Manifest." This is significant because he turns out to be a type of the Antichrist or beast who will come at the end of all time. He embodies everything Paul envisions in the "man of lawlessness" in 2 Thessalonians 2.

Chapter 12 begins with the declaration that Michael the Great prince who protects the Jewish people, will arise and "there will be a time of distress such that there has not been from the beginning of nations until then." Jesus apparently believed that Daniel 12 was talking about the last days, pointing to a great tribulation about which he said: "If those days had not been cut short, no one who would survive but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened." (Matt. 24:22)

The archangel Michael apparently has the task of protecting Israel, and there are people whose names are written down "in the book"—that sounds very much like the book of Revelation. This book is mentioned throughout the bible, including Revelation 20:12—when the Book of books will be opened to determine who will live in heaven and who will be cast into the lake of fire.

By 12:2, Daniel announces a great resurrection leading to judgment. Obviously this didn't happen in 160 BC. The idea of a general resurrection and judgment with the righteous

being rewarded with eternal life is not well developed in the OT but it IS there and it is clear.

In Daniel's vision, he saw on the other bank of the Tigris River two "others." They ask the speaking angel when all of these things will occur. The answer is, "A time, time and half a time," which appears to mean three and a half years—the remaining unused period of the 70th week, which apparently will begin at the end of time.

Of course, Daniel is confused, yet is told that this prophecy is really for those who will come much later. Those who are wise will understand it. The scroll will be sealed up, but the last piece of information for the wise ones in the end: The period of time from the abomination that causes desecration to the deliverance will be 1290 days and 45 days after that everything will be over.

The prophecies of this chapter "track" from Daniel's day to the overthrow of Antiochus Epiphanes, and they do so in more incredible detail than any other prophecy in scripture. I think we should expect that when Daniel's vision suddenly skips out to the end of time it will be just as accurate in predicting what will happen there. We don't know exactly what it will look like, but if we keep the words of Daniel before us, we will be the "wise ones" who will understand when these things begin to happen.

