

Daniel 11:35–40 — The Three Kings and the Time of the End

The Willful King Between North and South; The Indignation; The Assyrian as Rod of God's Anger; Psalm 83; and Daniel 9:27

Scripture Reading: Daniel 11:35–40; 12:1; 9:26–27; Isaiah 8:8; Psalm 83:1–12; 2 Thessalonians 2

“And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” (Daniel 11:35)

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god... and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.” (Daniel 11:36)

Three Kings, Not Two: The Importance of Thinking in Thirds

Verse 35 functions as a hinge, linking what has gone before historically to what is coming at the time of the end. The passage from verse 36 onward concerns a third king who stands in the middle between the king of the north and the king of the south. Those who approach the chapter by habitually dividing subjects in half will manufacture a problem here, because there are plainly three kings involved: the king of the north, the king of the south, and the willful king in the middle. This king in the middle is in Jerusalem — his location is determined by the geography: if he is being attacked by both the king of the north (the Assyrian/Syrian area) and the king of the south (Egypt), he is in Israel. He is the Antichrist, given the title king in this chapter and also in Isaiah. His headquarters

is Jerusalem; not Rome, not Babylon, not any western city that hometown thinking attempts to insert into the prophecy.

God's Purposes in Verse 35: Try, Purge, Make White

Before the great darkness of the time of the end is described, verse 35 states three of God's purposes for his people passing through it: to try them, to purge them, and to make them white. These are not the purposes of men. Men's purposes run to profit, power, and position. Satan's purposes are destruction and corruption. But God's purposes, even in what appears to be catastrophe, are purifying, cleansing, and refining. The wise in Israel who shine in that dark time — mentioned in 11:33 and 12:3 — are the products of this divine work. Their suffering is not evidence of foolishness, as men might suppose; it is the mark of those in whom God is doing his deepest work.

The Willful King: Self-Will as the Character of the Antichrist

Verse 36 introduces the willful king with the words, and the king shall do according to his will. This is the same person as the man of sin and the lawless one in 2 Thessalonians 2. The great distinguishing characteristic is self-will. First Samuel 15:23 says that stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry: to make oneself the object is to make oneself a god, which is exactly what this king does — he exalts and magnifies himself above every god. The mystery of iniquity that was already at work in Paul's day is precisely this: self-will introduced into the things of God, adjusting Christianity to man's own mind and preference. The Antichrist is the full development and consummation of that principle. What began as a mystery working in the bosom of Christendom will reach its final, open, terrible manifestation in this person sitting in Jerusalem.

The contrast with the Lord Jesus could not be sharper. Looking through the Gospels for the Lord Jesus doing his own will, it is almost impossible to find

even a single verse that describes that. His pathway from beginning to end was: not my will but thine. He humbled himself even to the death of the cross, and God exalted him. This one exalts himself, and the Lord will cast him down. The contrast is total and deliberate.

The Indignation: A Technical Term in the Prophets

Verse 36 says the willful king shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done. The indignation in the prophets functions almost as a technical term, like the appearing used in the New Testament. In Isaiah, the Assyrian is called the rod of my indignation and the staff of my anger. God will use the king of the north as that rod to smite Israel in the time of the end — an awful punishment for allowing and embracing the wickedness of the Antichrist's system. When the rod has done its appointed work, God will break it: he shall be broken without hand (Daniel 8). The principle is plain: do not appoint yourself the instrument of vengeance on others, because God may have to break you for taking that role. Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.

That the willful king prospers until the indignation is complete is not an indication of God's approval. God allowed the Amorites to prosper in their iniquity until it was full, and then he judged them (Genesis 15:16). The prosperity of the wicked means only that their appointed time has not yet expired. When that which is determined shall be done — this is the sovereignty of God asserting itself over all the plans of men and Satan. No cultural force, no strong tide of history determines things in advance with purpose and will. God does. He is sovereign, and the king who exalts himself will come to his end and none shall help him.

Psalm 83 and the Great Arab Confederacy

Psalm 83 names the peoples of the confederacy that will come against Israel: the tabernacles of Edom, the Ishmaelites, Moab, the Hagarites, Gebal, Amalek, Philistia, the inhabitants of Tyre, and Assyria as their head. This is not Mongolia or Tibet; this is the prophetic earth in relation to Israel — the ancient adversaries of God's people, gathered in a final confederacy headed by Syria and the north. Notable by its absence from the list is Egypt, which appears in Daniel 11 not as part of the confederacy but as an adversary of the king of the north. Whatever political alignments exist in the present world, they will be stripped away at the time of the end and the ancient enmities will reassert themselves in exactly the form the prophets described.

Daniel 9:27: Confirming, Not Making, the Covenant

Daniel 9:27 is the foundation text for understanding the seven-year period of the end: and he, that is the coming Roman prince — the first beast of Revelation 13, not the Antichrist — shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week. Three points demand attention. First, he is the Roman prince, not the Antichrist; the identity of the Antichrist as one world ruler of the whole earth is a mistake that generates rippling errors throughout prophetic interpretation. Second, the verb is confirm, not make; it is possible that some covenant of protection already exists before the seven years begin, which this Roman power then formally ratifies for the seven-year period. Third, the verse does not say he will break the covenant; it says he will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease in the middle of the week. The Jewish worship stops so that the new false order of worship can be imposed. The Assyrian's subsequent coming as a desolator is the rod of God's indignation used against Israel for permitting and embracing this wickedness, as confirmed by Daniel 11:36 and its phrase for that which is determined shall be done.

For that that is determined shall be done.