

# LESSON 37

## **Daniel 11:36**

**36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.**

Who is the king mentioned in verse 36? Verses 28–35 have been discussing the “king of the north” so it would seem that verse 36 is also discussing the “king of the north.” But who is this king of the north? (We have seen four different kings of the north so far.)

Some say that the king of the north in verse 36 is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who we have been reading about since verse 21. This view has at least one thing in its favor — it does not require a sudden and perhaps unexpected break in the narrative. When we read verse 36 after verse 35, we could very easily conclude that verse 36 is still talking about Antiochus.

Why should we even consider another view? First, we should at least consider the possibility of a break between verses 35 and 36 because we have seen such sudden breaks before, not just in this chapter but elsewhere in the book.

We saw such a break between verses 2 and 3. That break involved a skip over six Persian kings and 134 years to a king of another nation, Alexander the Great of Greece. So, if verse 36 also skips without warning to another nation, it would not be the first time that had happened in this chapter.

Also, back in Chapter 5, the narrative jumped from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the very end of the Babylonian empire. Abrupt changes are not uncommon at all in Daniel. Indeed, they seem to be the rule rather than the exception.

How did we know about the break between verses 2 and 3? Because we knew about Alexander the Great. There was no doubt at all about who verse 3 was talking about, so we knew a break must have occurred.

Likewise, here in verse 36 we need to apply the same methodology. If verses 36-45 do not fit with Antiochus but instead fits with someone else, then we need to consider the possibility of a break, just as we saw in verse 3.

Do verses 36-45 fit with Antiochus? In a word, no. In fact, liberals argue that Daniel was written between verses 35 and 36, and that Daniel knew the history of verses 1-35 because it had already happened, and verses 36-43 are wrong (they argue) because Daniel was just guessing.

*McGuiggan:* It is true that the thought processes of the Liberals are decidedly uncomplicated.

Before we deal with the (wrong) Liberal view, let's look at why verses 36-45 do not fit with Antiochus.

For starters, history tells us that Antiochus IV never fought a war against Egypt after 168 BC. Thus, verses 40-43 (which we will read in a moment) cannot apply to him. Verse 40, for example, will tell us that the king of the north will come against the king of the south like a whirlwind. Rome expelled him from Egypt with just a word in 168 BC, and he never went back. Egypt supplied Rome with its entire grain

supply for four months of each year, so it was imperative to Rome that Antiochus not be in charge of Egypt. Verse 40 cannot be describing Antiochus.

Antiochus IV never conquered Libya and Ethiopia as verse 43 suggests the king in verse 36 did.

Antiochus IV never had all the riches mentioned in verse 43. In fact, he robbed temples in his spare time to pay the heavy Roman taxes that were levied against him.

So where are we? Verses 21-35 are definitely talking about Antiochus Epiphanes, and verses 36-45 are definitely not talking about Antiochus Epiphanes. So what is the logical implication? There is a break between verse 35 and verses 36.

Some commentators try to make verses 36-43 fit with Antiochus, but not (in my opinion) with any success.

So who is the subject of verses 36-43? Some say verses 36-43 are describing Herod the Great, and some (but definitely not all) of the descriptions seem to fit. The most glaring problem is that Herod could never be accurately called the king of the north. Herod was an ally of Cleopatra and Marc Antony in their fight against Rome.

The most popular view today is that the king in verse 36 is the Antichrist, who premillennialists say will show up just before Christ returns to reign on earth for a thousand years. But this view cannot possibly be correct since the vision is explicitly said in Daniel 10:14 to deal with the history of the Jews in the latter days. (We know from Acts 2:16-17 that the latter days were already occurring in the first century.) In addition, this view has all of the problems associated with premillennialism, which as we have seen are legion.

Who then is this king in verse 36? Well, let's look at the problem in reverse. We have said that this vision deals with Jewish history up to the first century. Further, we have seen the Persians and the Greeks so far. Who haven't we seen yet? Rome!

How could a vision describe the history of the Jews up to the first century and not mention Rome? Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. A discussion of Rome is required by the declared scope of this vision. Also, as we will see, the description in verses 36–45 fits very well with what we know about Rome and the Roman rulers. (This will be made clear as we continue through the text.)

We first saw Rome in Chapter 11 in verse 18, and the focus switches to Rome without any additional warning here in verse 36. Likewise we first saw Greece in verse 2, and the focus switched to Greece without any additional warning in verse 3.

Which Roman king is being referred to in verse 36? We earlier studied about eleven Roman kings, from Augustus to Domitian — but I think these verses are treating Rome itself as the king of the north. I don't think these verses have any specific single king in mind but instead show us a composite description of many Roman rulers, and in fact a description of Rome itself.

I think verse 36 summarizes the Roman mindset from its emergence as a world power until its fall. This king does whatever he wants, he magnifies himself above every god, and sets himself against the true God. As we know, this fits very well with what we might call the “typical” Roman emperor.

For example, recall the following passage from 2 Thessalonians in which I think Paul is discussing the Roman emperor Domitian:

**2 Thessalonians 2:3-4** — *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

And what is the indignation in verse 36? I think it is the final outpouring of God's wrath on Rome. Although the official fall of Rome occurred long after AD 70, Rome was judged by God and found wanting in the first century. Rome's judgment (and

ultimate fall) is mentioned in this vision as a side comment. In fact, each time Rome is referred to, we are given a side comment to the effect that “they are going to get it too one of these days!”

I think we see the same thing in Luke 21:24. There, Jesus is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of Rome, and he makes the following comment:

**Luke 21:24** — *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

In that verse, Jesus says “Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Here in Daniel 11:36, the angel says “he shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished.” I think that both of these verses are saying that “yes, Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Romans, but the Romans are going to be destroyed as well.” But this is just a side comment. The fall of Rome is not part of the vision. Indeed, the vision ends at a time when Rome is still very much in power.

Finally, some might object that if verse 36 refers to another king of the north, then Daniel 11 seems to have just dropped the subject of Antiochus Epiphanes rather than to have concluded it. But we already know all about him from Daniel 8, so what more is there left to say here in Daniel 11? Rather than asking why Daniel 11 doesn't say more about Antiochus, the real question might be why Daniel 11 says as much as it does about him. But, of course, it does so because he was a major part of Jewish history, and a major threat to God's plan.

Why was verse 36 written this way? Why the lack of a clear transition in moving from Antiochus to Rome? I think it was to emphasize the link between the two, a link we have already seen. Both would try to destroy the Jewish nation, both would exalt themselves as god, and both would be filled with pride and earthly power. We look at them today and see two completely separate events, separated by many

years and involving different nations. God looks at them differently. He sees the same prideful arrogance of man that he has always seen, and perhaps he wants us to see it that way as well. There is nothing new under the sun.

### **Daniel 11:37**

**37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.**

Here we see even further the arrogance of Rome and of the Roman rulers. As the Roman emperors began to deify themselves, all other “gods” were pushed aside. The Roman rulers magnified themselves above all else.

The phrase “nor the desire of women” is difficult to interpret. It may simply be the counterpart to the gods of their fathers; that is, they would pay no heed to the gods of their fathers or of their mothers.

A literal translation of the passage points to another possibility. Literally, the phrase is “the love of women” — that is, these rulers would pay no heed to the love of women. As we know, homosexuality was rampant in Rome, and it is possible that this verse is referring to the moral collapse of Rome, which we know from secular historians contributed to Rome’s fall.

### **Daniel 11:38**

**38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall**

**he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.**

Rome only had one real god throughout its history. Rome worshiped power. Rome worshiped war. Rome's god was the "God of forces."

Rome did not care what type of religion you practiced as long as you recognized Rome's ultimate authority and you paid your taxes. Rome was not religiously zealous in the sense that they sought to convert those they conquered for religious reasons. Everything Rome did was for pragmatic reasons. They worshiped at the altar of perpetual power, and all of their resources were devoted to that god.

### **Daniel 11:39**

**39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.**

Rome used other nations and their "strange gods" to accomplish its goals. In fact, Rome used anything and everything necessary to accomplish its goals.

This verse suggests that Rome would magnify with honor those who helped it and would divide the land for a price. Did Rome do this? Yes. Rome set up a system of client kingdoms around its border and those same client kingdoms later contributed to its fall.

**Daniel 11:40**

**40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.**

The time of the end, as it did earlier, points to the time appointed by God for the events in the vision to come to pass. All it means here is that we are nearing the end of the vision.

The “king of the south” here refers to the Ptolemies of Egypt under Cleopatra VII aided by Marc Antony. (This is the “Elizabeth Taylor” Cleopatra.) Their push against Rome (the king of the north) led to Octavian’s declaration of war against Egypt.

Rome is pictured as rushing in like a whirlwind with ships and chariots. This began at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, which ended the Ptolemaic kingdom, which itself was the last vestige of the Greek kingdom. Egypt itself fell to Octavian in 30 BC. Cleopatra and Marc Antony committed suicide in Alexandria when the country fell to the Romans.

Verse 40 very clearly indicates that the kingdom of the north under consideration here is Rome. Who else was attacked by Egypt during this time period? Who else so thoroughly conquered Egypt during this time period?



**Daniel 11:41**

**41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.**

The glorious land is Palestine, and Rome took control of the holy land in 63 BC when Pompey marched into Jerusalem.

Herod's patron was Marc Antony. When Antony was defeated, Herod as you might suspect switched sides. Octavian realized the importance of Herod as a client king and thus confirmed his royal status.

A better translation for "many countries shall be overthrown" is "tens of thousands shall fall." The "tens of thousands" who fell are those who were on the losing end of Rome's continued expansion. But as this verse points out, Rome had its share of failures. Aelius Gallus' expedition into Arabia for Augustus in 26-25 BC, for example, was not successful. This failed Arabian campaign may be what is in view here in verse 41 with those who escaped out of their hands.

**Daniel 11:42-43**

**42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.**  
**43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things**

**of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.**

After the defeat of Cleopatra, Octavian confiscated the royal treasures of Egypt, just as verse 43 suggests. Michael Grant says that Octavian's "seizure of the Cleopatra's treasure made him wealthier than the Roman state itself."

As for the Libyans and the Ethiopians, they were also part of the triumphal procession into the city of Rome. (Antony and Cleopatra killed themselves to avoid appearing in just such a procession.)

Libya and Ethiopia, as with Egypt, were conquered by Rome. Ethiopia fell in 22 BC. Libya had long been under Roman domination, but was claimed by Cleopatra when she marched against Rome. Rome, of course, retained control.

**Daniel 11:44**

**44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.**

Again, we are reminded that all was not well with Rome. Rome's biggest threats came from the east and the north, just as this verse suggests. The Germanic hordes and the Gauls were north of Rome, and the Parthians were east of Rome.

Parthia was an Iranian feudal empire beyond the Euphrates that had broken away from the Seleucids in the third century BC. In the first century BC, they were the only substantial foreign power confronting Rome anywhere in the world.

Later in Rome's history, the threat shifted to the north. In fact, the city of Rome itself was sacked in AD 410 by Alaric, a (Germanic) Visigoth from the north. That event marked the first time in 800 years that the city had been taken by a foreign invader.

### **Daniel 11:45**

**45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.**

This verse shows that Rome would be firmly in control of Palestine, as in fact it was. The "seas" refer most likely to the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. The glorious holy mountain is Jerusalem.

Again, we are given a side comment to the effect that Rome is not going to be around forever. He (Rome) shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

Notice the time frame of this verse. Rome is in control of Palestine, and Egypt has been defeated. The very next verse begins with the phrase "at that time." Which time? During the early period of Roman rule. This time frame will be crucial to understanding Daniel 12.

## CHAPTER 12

### **Daniel 12:1-4**

**1 And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.**

The most important words in understanding this section of the vision are the first four words in verse 1: “And at that time.” These four words provide the time frame for this part of the vision, which of course is crucial to understanding the vision.

What is the time frame? The items mentioned here in Daniel 12 will occur at the time when the events of Daniel 11 come to an end. What was happening when Daniel 11 came to an end? Rome had just established its authority in Palestine. The angel is telling Daniel (very plainly) that this part of the vision applies to the time when Rome would be in charge of the Holy Land.

But we do not have to rely on this clue alone to determine the time when this prophecy would occur. We can also look at what the angel said would happen, and then look elsewhere in the Bible to see when that happened. Let's consider these other clues.

**First Clue:** At this time, we are told that the angel Michael would arise. Here he is called "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people." In Daniel 10:21, he is called "your prince." Just as Persia had a prince in Daniel 10, the Jews also had a prince — Michael. The fact that Michael is involved here indicates that this part of the vision is focused on the Jews.

This focus fits in well with what we were told at the beginning of this vision. Daniel 10:14 told us that this vision would tell us about the Jews in the latter days. ("Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.") This entire vision has been focused on the Jews, and the opening verses of Daniel 12 are no exception.

**Second Clue:** At this time there would be "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" This language was a common way of describing a very terrible calamity. Did such a calamity befall the Jews at this time? Yes. Read the description of Jerusalem's destruction found in Matthew 24:21.

**Matthew 24:21** — *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

We can also compare Josephus' description of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

It is impossible to give every instance of the iniquity of these men (the Romans). I shall therefore speak my mind here at once briefly: that never did any other city suffer such miseries.

**Third Clue:** Verse 1 tells us that:

*at that time thy people (the Jews) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

Did that happen in the first century? Absolutely.

**Jeremiah 33:14-16** — *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.*

**Luke 1:68-70** — *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began.*

But, you say, how can we be in the first century when verse 2 talks about the final resurrection at the end of the world? Let's take a closer look at that verse.

For starters, if this is the final resurrection, then we must conclude that the vision includes the end of the world, and hence we must conclude that the Jews have a special role to play in the end of the world. Such a conclusion would be in clear

conflict with other scriptures that tell us there is no distinction between Jew and Greek in the church.

But, you say, verse 2 sure sounds like the final resurrection. **Does it really?** Let's take a closer look. How many people will be raised from the dead at the end of the world?

**2 Corinthians 5:10** — *For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that **every one** may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

Notice the word “all” and the phrase “every one” in that verse. If we will **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, doesn't that tell us that we will **all** be raised from the dead? If **every** knee shall bow to God and **every** tongue confess to God (Romans 14:11), then doesn't that tell us that **every** person will be raised?

**Acts 24:15** — *There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*

What does Daniel 12:2 say? “And **all** who sleep in the dust of the earth shall be raised”? No. Daniel 12:2 says that “**many of them** that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

**Many of them?** Doesn't that language suggest that some will continue sleeping in the dust? Maybe this verse doesn't sound as much like the final resurrection as we first thought.

Even the text itself suggests that the final resurrection is not in view here. But we have more than just the *text* of this verse — we also have the *context* of this verse. And the context confirms that this resurrection in verse 2 is *not* the final resurrection at the end of the world.

To which resurrection does it apply then? It is the figurative resurrection of many from the Jewish nation that occurred when their promised Messiah came to bring blessings to the entire world.

What happened to the Jews at this time? Those Jews who followed Christ were saved. Here they are pictured as awakening to everlasting life. Verse 3 shows them being turned to righteousness by those who were wise and shining as the brightness of the firmament. This awakening is the spiritual resurrection of the faithful Jewish remnant who entered into the kingdom of God under the rule of their Messiah.

They had long been under foreign domination — they were under the Persians when this vision was received. They would be under the Greeks and under the Romans before the vision ended. But the day was coming when they would once again be ruled by a son of David, and that rule would last forever.

Listen as an angel of God tells us all about it — not the angel here, but the angel that appeared to Mary 500 years later.

**Luke 1:32-33** — *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

Those Jews who rejected Christ were lost. Here they are pictured as awakening to shame and everlasting contempt.

All of the Jews were asleep in the dust of the earth as they awaited the Messiah. Jesus came to bring them life. Those who awakened are those who heard the gospel. Those who awoke to everlasting life are those who heard and obeyed. Those who awoke to shame and contempt are those who rejected the gospel. Many of the Jews fell into those two categories. But some never awoke at all, because they did not hear the gospel call.



And so, just as verse 2 describes, many of them that slept in the dust of the earth awoke, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Is this resurrection spoken of elsewhere in the Bible? Definitely.

**Ezekiel 37:12-14** — *Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.*

**John 5:24-25** — *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*

**Ephesians 5:14** — *Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*

**Luke 2:34** — *And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.*

Isaiah wrote about nations that would not experience such a figurative resurrection.

**Isaiah 26:14** — *They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.*

This figurative resurrection in verse 2 may also refer to baptism (either that of John or that under Christ), which we know depicts a resurrection.

**Luke 3:3** — *And he [John] came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

**Romans 6:4** — *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

This language may also help explain a very puzzling event that occurred at the death of Christ. Recall:

**Matthew 27:52-53** — *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*

I think that this actual *physical* resurrection of faithful Jews in Jerusalem was a sign of the *spiritual* resurrection that was occurring for the faithful Jews at that time.

Many use Daniel 12:2 to apply to the end of the world. I think they are taking it out of context. If we want to apply Daniel 12:2 to the end of the world, then we should be aware of the logical consequence that the Jews must then have some special future role to play in God's plan.

So is this figurative resurrection in the first century the *only* resurrection? Of course not, but some have also made that mistake, such as Max King, who has followed the way of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

**2 Timothy 2:17-18** — *And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*

And if you don't know about Max King ... be thankful!

As there was a *spiritual* resurrection at Christ's first appearance, so will there be a *physical* resurrection at Christ's second appearance.

**1 Corinthians 15:52-53** — *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

Finally, Daniel is again told to seal up the vision, which means that it pertains to a future time and a future people. (Recall that John was told just the opposite in the book of Revelation 22:10!)