



Daniel 11:29-45

“Satan’s Counterfeit ‘Christs’”

29 "At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter.

30 "For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.

31 "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

32 "Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.

33 "And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering.

34 "Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue.

35 "And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

36 " Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.

37 "He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all.

38 "But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.

39 "Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

40 " At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

41 "He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

42 "He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

43 "He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.

44 "But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.

45 "And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

I hope you've been paying attention to the recurring themes we have been discussing in Daniel, because many of those themes come together in this chapter in a way that can be very confusing. Obviously I can't go back and discuss all of those themes, but let me at least remind you of some of the more important ones in the hope that it will help you to understand what is going on in these verses.

The prophecies and visions in the book of Daniel are all in one way or another concerned with the way that God will establish his everlasting kingdom in the midst of history. The controlling or summary vision, that provides us with a meta-narrative for all of history, is in chapter 2. There we saw in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the statue, the succession of worldly kingdoms. Finally, those kingdoms are crushed by a stone cut out of a mountain without hands which grows to fill the world. Daniel tells us that this is the kingdom of God - "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." That Stone was Christ, and God is even now bringing that glorious prophecy to pass.

Now as God has been building that Spiritual Kingdom in the world, He often used signs and types to show his people a glimpse of the glory that was coming. So for instance, he gave his people the sacrifices of the temple in Jerusalem as types that would foreshadow and point to the glorious sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross. That way, they would learn for instance, the important principle that without the shedding of blood there could be no atonement for sin. But God didn't only give his people signs and types that foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus, he gave them people who were themselves types prefiguring or foreshadowing the Christ who was to come. Moses, for instance, in the way that he interceded for the people with God, and led them to the promised land was a type of Christ. He himself knew this, which is why he said in Deut. 18:15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear." Moses was a *type*, Jesus is what is called the *Antitype*, the reality or fullness that those types foreshadowed and gave a glimpse of. We have many *types* of Christ, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David, etc. but only one *Antitype*, that is Jesus Christ.

Sometimes in Scripture you have almost a seamless blending of references to type and antitype, particularly in the Psalms. For instance, just this past Wednesday we were going over Psalm 69, and in that Psalm there are verses that refer only to David, and then others that clearly refer to greater David's greater Son Jesus.

It probably won't surprise you to hear this, but the Devil is not happy with God's plan to establish His Kingdom. And so as we have seen he has been very busy trying not only to thwart or even end the growth of the Kingdom of God, but he is also hard at work trying to set up his own counterfeit kingdom. And just as in the real kingdom there is one Antitype, foreshadowed by Types, the devil will have his own counterfeit Antitype – the Man of Lawlessness, or "Capital A" Antichrist foreshadowed by counterfeit types or "little a" antichrists. We've already seen that in that chapter 7 of Daniel spoke of the Little Horn with "the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words", which is the final Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, and then in chapter 8 we have the little horn that arises after the division of Alexander's empire into 4 parts that was Antiochus Epiphanes.

Now the reason that is so important to remember is because in these verses we have a transition in verse 36. Verses 29-35 speak of Antiochus Epiphanes, a type, little "a" antichrist who greatly persecuted God's people but ultimately came to naught. And then in verse 36 we transition to talking about the Antitype. The Big "A" Antichrist who is yet to come. From our perspective then, these

verses have prophecy that has been fulfilled, and prophecy that will be fulfilled. Interestingly enough Jesus does the same thing in his prophetic discourse in Matthew 24 which contains references to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans and also to His Return and the final judgment of the world.

With that in mind, let's briefly look at those verses and see what we can learn from them. We take up the narrative from where we left off in verse 29. Antiochus once attacks attempts to finally conquer Egypt in 168 BC. But this time, Egypt does what the Greek city states had done, she appeals to the new superpower in the Mediterranean – Rome, who had already badly beaten Antiochus' predecessor. They send a fleet, the ships from Cyprus of verse 30. [Incidentally, "Cyprus" there is the word *Kittyi* meaning Kittim an old testament word for the area of the Western Med. It is used because at the time of Daniel there was no Hebrew word for Rome or even Italy.] This is when the head of the Roman fleet Laenas, tells Antiochus he must withdraw or there will be a war, Antiochus says "let me think about it" and Laenas draws a circle in the sand around Antiochus and says "think about it here" – in other words cross the line in the sand, and there will be a war.

Antiochus knows if he fights there he loses, so he is humiliated and forced to withdraw. He is grieved, and in a rage he marches back towards Jerusalem. He has had enough of the Jews and their resistance to Hellenization, that is becoming Greek. So he conspires with the Jews who have Apostatized to end it once and for all. He drafts a mercenary by the name of Apollinaris to make peace overtures to the Jews. A military parade of Apollinaris men is organized in Jerusalem, (imagine a memorial day parade if you will) the parade starts, then the soldiers suddenly attack the spectators. The men of the city are massacred, the fortress overlooking the temple is captured and the women and children are enslaved. Antiochus then begins his campaign to stamp out Jewish religion, including ending the temple sacrifices and erecting a statue of Zeus in the temple and starting sacrifices to his false god.

This is the first of the Abomination of Desolations, but this refers to anytime worship of false gods is brought by an antichrist into the worship of God people. For instance, in Matthew 24 Jesus refers prophetically to Titus systematically bringing false idols into the temple mount area during the sack of Jerusalem as the "abomination of Desolation" and in chapter 12 we shall read of the future abomination of desolation by the Antichrist. Paul refers to this in 2 Thessalonians when he says: "***Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.***" And brothers and sisters, when you read "Temple" there, don't think of Temple in the physical building in Jerusalem sense. Think in the New Testament, holy Temple in the Lord sense, that is the church. What he means is that the Antichrist will corrupt and co-opt the visible church.

During the period spoken of in verses 32-35 many Jews were indeed corrupted by the "flattery" of Antiochus, but the saints remained strong and under the able leadership of the Maccabees fought a successful guerilla war – the great exploits of 32. During that time, he faithful continued to worship God and instruct others, despite the fact that the temple and the high priesthood were controlled by Antiochus (a situation kids like that before the Reformation when faithful men like Hus and Wycliffe and Tyndale instructed the people even though the Visible Church had become compromised and corrupted.) But through this persecution the saints were purified, the church always grows stronger under persecution as the chaff is purged away.

Now in verse 36, the emphasis changes from Antiochus to the Man of Lawlessness spoken of in 2 Thess. 2 – We go from Type to Antitype. Now if you want to drive yourself crazy, and I think miss the point of these verses, you can try to figure out when these things will happen, what nations will be involved, is it Russia and Israel and Jordan and so on. I don't believe that's the point of these verses, the point is to show us the nature of this final Antichrist will be in keeping with his predecessors, but just as Christ is so much more glorious than all the types before him, so the Antichrist will be so much more terrible than all his predecessors.

What are some of his characteristics?

Well he will be the consummate rebel against God: He will do whatever seems right to him, he will act as though he is the center of the universe and will speak nothing but blasphemy against God. He shall break with the traditions of his earthly fathers in order to do the will of his father the devil. He shall not even regard the "desire of women" and here I agree with the commentators who say that this means he will have no spirit of pity, compassion, or real love in him. The only love he will have will be an overwhelming love of self. He shall honor, as 38 puts "a god of fortresses" – that is he will exalt force, particularly but not exclusively military might, above all things and no sacrifice that furthers force shall be withheld.

He shall attack anyone who does not serve him, and no earthly power will be able to withstand him. Even, as we have seen, the visible church will be entered corrupted, thrown down, and almost extinguished by him. The only powers that escape his wrath are personified by Edom, Moab, and Ammon, that is the ancient enemies of the church. So not surprisingly the only people who will be welcome in his kingdom are those that despise Christ and His Kingdom.

And yet, verse 45 tells us of his end. God allows him to prosper for a time, but only so that God's own ends can be fulfilled. Just as Antiochus and every other type of antichrist was swept away when God determined, at the seeming height of his power, he too will be destroyed and that without even a battle. Read Revelation 19 sometime and the vision of Christ destroying the beast and his armies. Christ speaks and it is over, one moment it's a mighty army, the next they are so much bird-food. We will speak more of the end of Satan, the Antichrist, and Satan's Counterfeits next week. But for now a couple of applications:

1) *It seems to me that in the spirit of the Antichrist we see the spirit of the modern age incarnate:* Every man does what is right in his own eyes, everyone is taught to love themselves, the traditions of the fathers are swept away and blasphemy becomes common speech. In the counterfeit kingdoms of Satan, the strong are exalted and the weak destroyed. All one has to do is think of how we treat the most defenseless members of our society the unborn, the terminally ill, how we are legislating the use of the bodies of the weak as spare parts for the bodies of the strong – and make no mistake, that is what embryonic stem cell research is all about.

And what of love? I mean real love? Satan doesn't love, anti-christ doesn't love. But he counterfeit it. And in our time, for the most part only counterfeits of love are allowed to prosper. We live in an age when narcissism, sentimentalism, lust, and perversion are all called love and actively promoted, while that self-less, pure, and strong love of God is despised sometimes even called hate, when the objective of that love is to reclaim the lost and dying rebel.

The visible church today is like the church in Antiochus' time in grave danger of being corrupted and co-opted. It has drunk deep at the poisoned wells of money and politics, and we are trading away the gold of the gospel for the dust of earthly power and wealth. We even mistake popularity for success, forgetting that Jesus warned the church ***"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."***

2) ***So should we look at all this and despair? Far from it!*** The difficult lesson of this chapter is that times of persecution are actually good for the church, to use the words of 29 they are times of purification, of refining. Satan's counterfeit seeks for victory through strength, the kingdom advances in times of weakness. 2 Cor. 12:9 ***"And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*** We learn then to put our trust in Christ not princes, to walk by faith and not by sight, think of when the saints were in greatest danger. When was David most in peril, in the cave of Adullam, pursued by Paul and surrounded by his greatest enemies? No it was on the roof of his palace in times of plenty and prosperity! It is times of weakness we learn to depend on Jesus. Think of the Apostolic church, they were persecuted and scattered and grew as a result!

EXAMPLE OF THE CHINESE CHURCH (Mao, 1949)