DISCOVERING DANIEL

11
LESSON

WORKBOOK STUDY COMPANION · LESSON 11

The Long Journey *to the Antichrist*

DANIEL 11

Scripture written out in the NASB95, every question answered in one sentence, cross references, verse-by-verse commentary from three trusted teachers — and for each question, a point of critical thinking and a key question to carry into the week.

Amir Tsarfati
DISCOVERING DANIEL

John MacArthur
GRACE TO YOU

David Guzik
ENDURING WORD

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see?

Using my Bible, following the action without naming the kingdoms yet — watching the constant rise and fall of human empires.

1 **Who is the first king mentioned in Daniel 11 (see verse 1)? What are we told about the "mighty king" in verse 3? What will happen to this king's kingdom, according to verse 4?** P. 233

Daniel 11:1 NASB95

"In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.

Daniel 11:3 NASB95

"And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.

Daniel 11:4 NASB95

"But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.

IN MY WORDS

The first king named is Darius the Mede; the "mighty king" of verse 3 rules with great authority and does exactly as he pleases, and verse 4 says his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out to the four points of the compass — to others, not to his own children.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:8** The goat's large horn is broken at the height of its strength and four horns come up in its place — the same fourfold division, seen earlier under a different picture.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that the chapter opens with a heavenly messenger who has been working behind the scenes of Persian politics since Darius' first year — the history we are about to read was already being steered before a single king in it drew breath.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that verse 4 is the whole chapter in miniature: the strongest man in the world cannot hand his kingdom to his own son. Authority ends at the grave, and what he built is divided among strangers.

CRITICAL THINKING

Verse 3 and verse 4 sit side by side with no transition — "do as he pleases" is immediately followed by "as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up." The text gives his rise one verse and his ruin the next. God is not impressed enough by the greatest conqueror in the ancient world to give him a second sentence.

KEY QUESTION

What am I building that will not survive being handed to someone else?

2 In verse 5, what are we told about “the king of the South”? What will this king do, according to verses 7-8?

P. 237

Daniel 11:5 NASB95

“Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with one of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain will be a great dominion indeed.

Daniel 11:7 NASB95

“But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against their army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display great strength.

Daniel 11:8 NASB95

“Also their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from attacking the king of the North for some years.

IN MY WORDS

The king of the South grows strong, but one of his own princes gains ascendancy over him and ends up with an even greater dominion; then in verses 7-8 a descendant of that southern line invades the North, breaks into its fortress, prevails, and carries the North’s idols and its silver and gold back to Egypt.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Chronicles 36:7** Nebuchadnezzar brought some of the articles of the house of the LORD to Babylon — plundering a rival’s gods and treasures was the ancient way of announcing that your god had won.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the pattern that will repeat for thirty-five verses: strength, alliance, betrayal, invasion, plunder, and a pause — then the same cycle again with new names.

CRITICAL THINKING

The king of the South does not fall to the king of the North in verse 5. He is overtaken by one of his own princes. The first threat in the chapter is not the foreign army; it is the trusted man standing next to the throne — and that pattern will hold all the way to verse 26.

KEY QUESTION

Am I so braced against the obvious threat that I have stopped watching what is already inside the room?

3 What will then take place between the kings of the North and South (see verses 11-13)?

P. 238

Daniel 11:11 NASB95

“The king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be given into the hand of the former.

Daniel 11:12 NASB95

“When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail.

Daniel 11:13 NASB95

“For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment.

IN MY WORDS

War breaks out: the enraged king of the South defeats the huge army of the North, his heart is lifted up in pride and he strikes down tens of thousands — yet he does not prevail, because the North simply raises a larger army and comes back years later.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:18** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." Verse 12 puts the lifted-up heart and the failure to prevail in the same sentence.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur sees here the futility of all merely human victory — the win is real, the casualties are real, and none of it holds; the enemy comes back stronger and the ground changes hands again.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that all this back-and-forth is being fought across the land bridge between Egypt and Syria — which means Israel is the road these armies keep marching over.

CRITICAL THINKING

Verse 12 is precise about the order: he wins, then his heart is lifted up, then he does not prevail. Scripture does not say he lost because he was outmatched. He lost because the victory changed him before the next battle ever started. Success is the more dangerous of the two tests.

KEY QUESTION

What recent win has quietly made me harder to correct?

4 What then happens in verses 14-16?

P. 239

Daniel 11:14 NASB95

"Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down.

Daniel 11:15 NASB95

"Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand.

Daniel 11:16 NASB95

"But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to withstand him; he will also stay for a time in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand.

IN MY WORDS

Many rise against the South, and violent men from among Daniel's own people lift themselves up and fall; the king of the North then casts up a siege ramp and takes a well-fortified city, the South's choicest troops cannot make a stand, and the victor does as he pleases and stays for a time in the Beautiful Land — Israel — with destruction in his hand.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:9** The small horn grew exceedingly great "toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land" — the same title for Israel, the same direction of attack.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati highlights "the Beautiful Land": for all the talk of North and South, the prophecy keeps returning to Israel, because Israel is the point of the map God is watching.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out the sobering detail in verse 14 — some of Daniel's own countrymen try to force the prophecy along by violence, and they fall. God's word does not need our help, and it will not excuse our methods.

CRITICAL THINKING

Verse 14 says the violent ones lifted themselves up "in order to fulfill the vision" — and then fell. They were not fighting against the prophecy; they thought they were fulfilling it. Sincerity about God's plan is no protection when the means are wrong.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I trying to force something God said He would do — on my schedule and by my hand?

5 As you read verses 17-20, what words and phrases stand out to you as describing the arrogance of rulers and the chaos of human history?

P. 240

Daniel 11:17 NASB95

"He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand for him or be on his side.

Daniel 11:18 NASB95

"Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn.

Daniel 11:19 NASB95

"So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.

Daniel 11:20 NASB95

"Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle.

IN MY WORDS

The phrases that stand out to me are "set his face," "the power of his whole kingdom," "to ruin it," "his scorn," "stumble and fall and be found no more," "an oppressor," and "shattered" — a peace proposal offered only as a weapon, a daughter handed over as a tool, contempt for everyone, and then men who simply vanish out of history.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 4:14** "You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." Verse 19's "found no more" is that verse written as a royal obituary.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that even the marriage in verse 17 is a weapon — a daughter given away not in love but to ruin a kingdom from within; power reduces people to instruments.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik draws attention to verse 20: an oppressor sent out through the Jewel of the kingdom, and then the king is shattered — not in anger, not in battle. No dramatic end, no last stand. He is simply gone.

CRITICAL THINKING

Look at how these kings actually die. One stumbles and falls in his own land. One is shattered "not in anger nor in battle." After all the siege ramps and great multitudes, the chapter kills them off in half a verse with no battlefield at all. God does not even grant the arrogant a memorable ending.

KEY QUESTION

If my life ended today with no drama and no announcement, what would actually have been accomplished?

6 In verse 21, we come to Antiochus Epiphanes IV. What are we told about his character?

P. 243

Daniel 11:21 NASB95

"In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue.

IN MY WORDS

He is called a despicable person who was never given the honor of kingship, and who takes the throne during a time of tranquility by intrigue rather than by right or by battle.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:23** "a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue" — Daniel had already been shown this man's method three chapters earlier.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that Antiochus took for himself the title Epiphanes — "God manifest" — while his own people nicknamed him Epimanes, "the madman." The self-given title and the honest one sat side by side.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that Scripture's verdict, "a despicable person," is heaven's assessment, given in advance and regardless of the throne he managed to seize.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice the timing: he seizes the kingdom "in a time of tranquility." Not in a crisis, not in a war — in the calm, when nobody was guarding anything. Intrigue does not need chaos to work; it needs a season when everyone has relaxed.

KEY QUESTION

What have I stopped guarding simply because things have been peaceful?

7 In the grand sweep of all that we're told about Antiochus IV in verses 22-35, what words or phrases help to explain why this evil man is considered a foreshadow of the Antichrist?

P. 245

Daniel 11:23 NASB95

"After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people.

Daniel 11:28 NASB95

"Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he will take action and then return to his own land.

Daniel 11:31 NASB95

"Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

Daniel 11:32 NASB95

"By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

IN MY WORDS

The phrases that mark him as a foreshadow are "practice deception," "his heart will be set against the holy covenant," "desecrate the sanctuary fortress," "do away with the regular sacrifice," "set up the abomination of desolation," and "by smooth words he will turn to godlessness" — an alliance made and betrayed, the temple defiled, the sacrifice stopped, and a people seduced by charm rather than conquered by force.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 9:27** "he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate" — the same moves, in the same order, still future.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati sees Antiochus as God's preview: a man who made an alliance, practiced deception, stopped the sacrifice, and defiled the temple — so that when the real one does it, Israel will recognize the script.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur emphasizes the contrast built into verse 32: smooth words turn the compromised into the godless, while "the people who know their God" display strength and act. Knowledge of God, not cleverness, is what makes a man immovable.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the weapon of choice here is not the sword but flattery — smooth words accomplish what armies could not.

CRITICAL THINKING

The people who resisted are not described as the strongest, the smartest, or the best organized — they are the ones who "know their God." Verse 32 makes that the entire difference between the two groups. The defense against flattery is not being harder to fool; it is being better acquainted with God.

KEY QUESTION

Do I know God well enough to recognize a lie about Him when it is spoken kindly?

8 In verse 36, we are introduced to the Antichrist. What is revealed about his character in verses 36-39?

P. 248

Daniel 11:36 NASB95

"Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

Daniel 11:37 NASB95

"He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all.

Daniel 11:38 NASB95

“But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures.

Daniel 11:39 NASB95

“He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.

IN MY WORDS

He does entirely as he pleases, exalts and magnifies himself above every god, speaks monstrous things against the God of gods, shows no regard for his fathers’ gods or for the desire of women or for any other god, honors instead a god of fortresses — military power — with gold and silver and costly stones, and buys loyalty by handing out great honor and parceling out land for a price.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Thessalonians 2:4** “who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points to the phrase “until the indignation is finished” — the same verse that describes his unstoppable success also sets the limit on it. He prospers, but only on a lease.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that his religion is not atheism but self-worship with a military sacrament: the “god of fortresses” is force itself, funded with gold and paid in parceled-out land.

CRITICAL THINKING

Verse 36 says two things at once: he will do as he pleases, and “that which is decreed will be done.” Both are true in the same sentence. His will is genuinely his own and genuinely running inside God’s decree — which means his worst blasphemy is still, unknowingly, on God’s schedule.

KEY QUESTION

Do I believe God is sovereign over the thing in my life that currently looks unstoppable?

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9 In verses 40-45, we read of conquests, victories, and defeats. According to verse 45, how will it all end for the Antichrist?

P. 250

Daniel 11:44 NASB95

“But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.

Daniel 11:45 NASB95

“He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

IN MY WORDS

After sweeping through country after country he pitches the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain — and there he comes to his end, with no one to help him.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Thessalonians 2:8** “Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;”

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes where he falls: not in some far country, but camped in sight of the Holy Mountain, at the very place he came to claim. He gets close enough to see it and no closer.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati stresses the words “no one will help him” — the man who ruled the world dies with every ally gone, including the one who empowered him.

CRITICAL THINKING

The whole chapter is armies — great multitudes, chariots, horsemen, many ships. Verse 45 ends it with no battle described at all. He simply “comes to his end.” The most heavily defended man in history is disposed of in a clause, and Scripture does not bother to say how.

KEY QUESTION

What am I depending on for security that will not be there at the end?

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 **In Daniel 11:1, we read that Daniel's messenger "stood up to confirm and strengthen him." When it comes to identifying who "him" is, what are the two options (see page 235 in Discovering Daniel)?** P. 235

Daniel 11:1 NASB95

"In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.

Daniel 10:21 NASB95

"However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.

IN MY WORDS

The two options are Darius the Mede, the king named in the verse itself, or Michael the archangel, who is mentioned in the sentence immediately before as the one standing firmly with the messenger.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 10:13** The messenger was withstood twenty-one days by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" until Michael came to help — which is why Michael is a live candidate for "him."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes the chapter break here is a later editorial convenience, not part of the original text — 11:1 is really the continuation of the conversation begun in chapter 10, which is exactly why the pronoun is ambiguous.

CRITICAL THINKING

The ambiguity exists largely because our chapter divisions cut the sentence off from what came before it. The men who added chapter numbers centuries later were trying to help us find verses, and here the help cost us a pronoun.

KEY QUESTION

How often do I misread Scripture simply because I started reading at the heading instead of at the thought?

2 **Even though we cannot be absolutely certain about the identity of "him," what can we be certain about (see page 235 in Discovering Daniel)?** P. 235

IN MY WORDS

I can be certain that God has His messengers actively at work behind the scenes of world politics, strengthening and protecting so that His purposes move forward — whether the one being helped is a Persian king or an archangel.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 10:13** The messenger was withstood twenty-one days by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" until Michael came to help — real conflict, over real empires, invisible to everyone on earth.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur's point is that the identity of the pronoun is not where the weight of the verse sits; the weight sits on the fact that heaven was involved in Persian politics at all.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that a doctrine should never be built on a debatable pronoun — but the thing the verse plainly asserts is more than enough.

CRITICAL THINKING

It is worth noticing what Scripture leaves unclear and what it makes unmistakable. The identity of "him" is uncertain; the activity of God behind human government is stated without any hedging at all. Where the Bible is vague, it is usually vague about what I wanted to know and clear about what I needed to know.

KEY QUESTION

Am I more troubled by what God has not told me than I am comforted by what He has?

3 Verses 3-4 talk about Alexander the Great. What ended up happening to his kingdom after his death (see page 237 in Discovering Daniel)? P. 237

Daniel 11:4 NASB95

"But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.

IN MY WORDS

Alexander died young and his kingdom did not pass to his own descendants; it was divided among four of his generals — exactly the four-way split toward the four points of the compass that Daniel was shown centuries in advance.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:22** "The broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati emphasizes the detail that convicts the skeptic: not merely that the kingdom would split, but that it would go four ways, and not to his descendants. That is more precision than a lucky guess allows.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out that two of those four divisions become the king of the North and the king of the South, and the rest of Daniel 11 is the long, bloody quarrel between them.

CRITICAL THINKING

Alexander conquered the known world and could not secure the one thing any ordinary father can hope for — that his own child would inherit what he built. The size of what he won is precisely what made it impossible to pass on.

KEY QUESTION

What am I pouring myself into that my own family will not actually receive?

4 In verses 5-20, we see a lot of back and forth take place through battles, attempts at alliances, and intrigue and deceit. Remember, all of this was written well before it ever happened. P. 238

Daniel 11:27 NASB95

"As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time.

Isaiah 46:9-10 NASB95

“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

a. What is God telling us about Himself by giving all these details?

IN MY WORDS

He is telling me that He knows the future exhaustively and in detail — not the broad outline only, but the marriages, the betrayals, and the lies told at the table — and that He governs all of it toward an appointed time He has already fixed.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 46:10** “declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done” — prophecy of this precision is God’s own stated proof that He is God and there is no other.

b. What do we learn about humanity in these same details?

IN MY WORDS

I learn that left to ourselves we repeat the same cycle endlessly — ambition, alliance, betrayal, war, plunder, collapse — and that even kings sitting at the same table lying to each other cannot change the outcome God has appointed.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 17:9** “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” Verse 27 shows two hearts “intent on evil” sharing a meal.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that this is the most detailed predictive prophecy in Scripture, which is precisely why critics have insisted it must have been written after the fact — the accuracy is the offense.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati’s point is that fulfilled prophecy about the past is God’s receipt for the prophecy about the future: the chapter that got Alexander and Antiochus right is the same chapter describing the Antichrist.

CRITICAL THINKING

Verse 27 is the strangest detail of them all — God tells Daniel that two pagan kings would sit at one table speaking lies to each other. He was not only tracking the armies; He was in the room. Nothing in human history happens off the record.

KEY QUESTION

Do I live as if God is in the room for the conversations no one else hears?

5 How did Antiochus IV become ruler, and what was the relationship between him and the Jews like, and why (see pages 243-244 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 243

Daniel 11:21 NASB95

“In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue.

IN MY WORDS

He was not the rightful heir and the honor of kingship was never conferred on him, so he seized the throne by intrigue during a time of tranquility; his relationship with the Jews was violently hostile, because he was determined to force Greek culture and Greek religion on them and the faithful Jews would not surrender their covenant with the LORD.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:24-25** "he will destroy to an extraordinary degree... and he will destroy many while they are at ease" — Daniel's earlier vision of the same man, with the same method.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati describes the collision plainly: Antiochus wanted one empire with one culture and one religion, and the Jews were the people who would not dissolve into it.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that persecution came not because the Jews attacked Antiochus but because they refused to be absorbed — faithfulness itself was read as sedition.

CRITICAL THINKING

Antiochus did not hate the Jews for anything they did to him. He hated them for what they would not do — stop being distinct. A tyrant can forgive opposition more easily than he can forgive a people who simply will not be assimilated.

KEY QUESTION

Is there anything distinct enough about my life that it would inconvenience a world demanding conformity?

6 What happened to Antiochus IV when he went to Egypt (see pages 244-245 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 244

Daniel 11:29-30 NASB95

"At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.

IN MY WORDS

His second campaign into Egypt failed — the "ships of Kittim" of verse 30 brought Rome against him and he was forced to withdraw without a fight — and he went home disheartened and enraged, taking his fury out on Jerusalem and the holy covenant.

CROSS REFERENCE **Numbers 24:24** "But ships shall come from the coast of Kittim, and they shall afflict Asshur and will afflict Eber…" — Balaam's oracle names ships from the same western coastlands centuries earlier.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes the sequence in verse 30: disheartened, then enraged, then action against the holy covenant. He could not beat Rome, so he turned on Jerusalem.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati observes how often Israel has paid for someone else's humiliation — a pattern that runs from Antiochus straight through to the last days.

CRITICAL THINKING

He was stopped by Rome and he punished the Jews. The people who suffered most had nothing to do with the defeat that caused it. Humiliated pride never takes its revenge on the one who humbled it; it takes revenge where it is still strong.

KEY QUESTION

Who ends up absorbing my frustration with a situation they had nothing to do with?

7 In what specific ways did Antiochus IV unleash his anger upon the Jews, according to Daniel 11:31 (see page 245 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 245

Daniel 11:31 NASB95

"Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

IN MY WORDS

Verse 31 names three things: his forces desecrated the sanctuary fortress, they did away with the regular sacrifice, and they set up the abomination of desolation.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 8:11** "it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down" — the identical assault, shown to Daniel three chapters earlier.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the strategy behind the three acts: defile the place, stop the offering, install a substitute. It is not merely vandalism; it is the systematic replacement of the worship of God.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points out that stopping the regular sacrifice struck at the one visible sign that Israel's covenant worship was still in force — which is exactly why it will be done again.

CRITICAL THINKING

The three acts move in a specific direction: he does not simply tear worship down and leave the space empty. He puts something in its place. False worship has never been satisfied with an absence; it always moves in to occupy what it emptied.

KEY QUESTION

What has quietly moved into a place in my life that used to belong to God?

8 What two different ways did the Jews respond to Antiochus IV (see pages 245-246 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 246

Daniel 11:32 NASB95

"By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

Daniel 11:33 NASB95

"Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days.

IN MY WORDS

Some compromised — turned to godlessness by his smooth words, they abandoned the covenant and embraced Greek ways; the others knew their God, displayed strength and took action, gave understanding to the many, and fell by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder.

CROSS REFERENCE **Hebrews 11:35-36** "others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that both groups were Jews, both were in the same city under the same pressure, and the dividing line was not circumstance but whether they knew God.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur observes that verse 33 gives the faithful no exemption — those with insight instruct the many and still fall by sword and flame. Faithfulness is promised meaning, not safety.

CRITICAL THINKING

Verse 33 puts the teaching and the falling in the same sentence: they gave understanding to the many, "yet they will fall." The ones who instructed the nation were the ones who died for it, and the instruction outlasted them. What they handed on survived because they did not.

KEY QUESTION

Am I willing to pass on something true if it costs me more than it will ever pay me?

9 What was involved when Antiochus IV committed the "abomination of desolation" (see page 247 in Discovering Daniel)?

P. 247

Daniel 11:31 NASB95

"Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

Matthew 24:15 NASB95

"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),

IN MY WORDS

He halted the regular sacrifice, set up a pagan altar to Zeus in the temple, and had a pig — the most unclean animal under the Law — offered on it, deliberately defiling the holy place in the way most offensive to God and to the Jews.

CROSS REFERENCE **Leviticus 11:7-8** The swine is unclean: "you shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you." The animal was chosen to insult.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that Jesus, speaking long after Antiochus was dead and gone, still pointed forward to an abomination of desolation yet to come — which means Antiochus was the rehearsal, not the performance.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik observes that the defilement was calculated, not careless. Every element was chosen for maximum offense to the God of Israel.

CRITICAL THINKING

Jesus quoted this prophecy in Matthew 24 as still future — roughly two centuries after Antiochus had already done it. That is the clearest proof in Scripture that a prophecy can be genuinely fulfilled and still be waiting for its fullest fulfillment.

KEY QUESTION

Do I read prophecy as a closed file, or as something God is still unfolding?

10 Read both Daniel 11:36-39 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. Based on these descriptions, in what ways will the Antichrist be the complete opposite of the one true Christ?

P. 249

Daniel 11:36-37 NASB95

"Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 NASB95

that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 NASB95

For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

IN MY WORDS

At every point he is the mirror image: Christ did the Father's will while he does as he pleases; Christ humbled Himself while he magnifies himself above every god; Christ is the truth while he comes with false wonders and the deception of wickedness; Christ came in His Father's name while this one comes in accord with the activity of Satan; Christ laid down His life to save while he prospers by destroying; and Christ was exalted by God while this man exalts himself and is brought to an end.

CROSS REFERENCE **Philippians 2:9** "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name" — Christ was exalted by the Father; the Antichrist exalts himself.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes the precision of the counterfeit — "power and signs" is the very vocabulary Scripture uses of Christ's own works, with "false" attached; the imitation is deliberate, not incidental.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati points to John 5:43 as the hinge: "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him."

CRITICAL THINKING

2 Thessalonians 2:10 gives the reason people fall for him — not that the deception was too clever, but that "they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved." The vulnerability is created long before the deceiver arrives. People do not believe the lie because it is convincing; they believe it because they never loved the truth.

KEY QUESTION

Do I love the truth, or only the truths that suit me?

11 According to Revelation 19:19-21, how will it all end for the Antichrist and his forces?

P. 251

Revelation 19:19-20 NASB95

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.

Revelation 19:21 NASB95

And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

IN MY WORDS

The beast and the false prophet are seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone, and the rest are killed with the sword that comes from the mouth of the One seated on the horse — the battle ends the moment Christ speaks.

CROSS REFERENCE **Revelation 20:10** "the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also" — a thousand years later they are still there.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Christ's weapon is the sword from His mouth — the armies of earth are undone by a word, exactly as the world was made by one.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati highlights "thrown alive": the beast and the false prophet do not die first. They are the first two occupants of the lake of fire, and they arrive a thousand years ahead of the devil himself.

CRITICAL THINKING

Revelation 20:10 mentions the beast and the false prophet as still being in the lake of fire when Satan is thrown in — a thousand years after Revelation 19. That single detail settles the question of whether the lake of fire consumes or punishes. After a millennium, they are still there.

KEY QUESTION

Does the reality of a judgment that does not end change how urgently I speak to the people around me?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

All through Daniel 11 we are reminded of one sobering truth — everything human is temporary, and nothing earthly will last. What wisdom do I glean from these passages?

1 Matthew 10:28

P. 252

Matthew 10:28 NASB95

"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

IN MY WORDS

Every king in Daniel 11 could only reach as far as the body, so the right response to all of them is not fear but perspective — the only One worth fearing is the God who holds both soul and body.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 11:33** The faithful fell "by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder" — Antiochus reached their bodies and got no further.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that Jesus does not tell us to stop fearing; He tells us to move our fear to its proper object. Fear rightly placed is what makes a man fearless everywhere else.

CRITICAL THINKING

Antiochus had the power to kill and used it freely — and Jesus calls that the lesser power. The most a tyrant can do is the thing God can also do, and God can do more. That is why the faithful in verse 33 were not losing.

KEY QUESTION

What am I afraid of that can only reach my body?

2 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

P. 252

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NASB95

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

IN MY WORDS

Paul weighs the two sides and tells me the affliction is momentary and light while the glory is eternal and beyond all comparison, so I should fix my attention on what I cannot see rather than on what I can.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 11:35** The faithful fall "in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time" — their affliction was producing something, exactly as Paul says.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Paul calls persecution "light" not because it did not hurt, but because he had weighed it against the glory on the other side of the scale.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati connects this directly to Daniel 11:35 — the suffering of the faithful is described as refining, not as waste.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul says the affliction is "producing" the glory — not merely preceding it or being compensated by it. The suffering is not the price paid for the reward; it is the process that makes it. That is why Daniel 11:35 calls it refining.

KEY QUESTION

Am I treating my present hardship as an interruption, or as the thing God is using to make something?

3 James 4:13-15

P. 252

James 4:13-15 NASB95

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

IN MY WORDS

James tells me my life is a vapor, so confident planning that leaves God out is arrogance — the honest way to speak about tomorrow is "if the Lord wills."

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 11:19** "he will stumble and fall and be found no more" — a king's entire future erased in one clause.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur points out that James is not condemning planning; he is condemning planning that leaves God out of the sentence.

CRITICAL THINKING

The kings of Daniel 11 planned in years and campaigns — alliances, marriages, invasions "after an interval of some years." James would call every one of them a vapor. The longer the plan, the more it assumes about a tomorrow that was never promised.

KEY QUESTION

Which of my plans have I made without once asking whether the Lord wills it?

4 2 Peter 3:11

P. 252

2 Peter 3:10-11 NASB95

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

IN MY WORDS

Because everything I can see is going to be destroyed, Peter turns the coming judgment into a question about my character right now — what sort of person ought I to be, in holy conduct and godliness.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 11:45** The last and greatest of the empires in this chapter ends with "he will come to his end, and no one will help him."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that Peter draws a moral conclusion, not a speculative one — the end of the world is given to us as a reason to live holy, not as material for a timeline.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati makes the same turn: prophecy that does not change how you live has not really been understood.

CRITICAL THINKING

Peter's response to the end of everything is not fear, escape, or calculation — it is conduct. He looks at a universe dissolving and asks what kind of man you ought to be. Prophecy taken as information alone has been misread.

KEY QUESTION

Has what I believe about the last days made any visible difference in how I lived this week?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Taking Daniel 11 off the page and into the week.

1 Based on what you read in Daniel 11, what did human rulers and their followers pursue and value most?

P. 253

Daniel 11:38 NASB95

"But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures.

IN MY WORDS

They pursued territory, wealth, military strength, revenge, and above all their own glory — verse 38 says it plainly, that what he actually honored was a god of fortresses, paid for in gold and silver and costly stones.

CROSS REFERENCE **Habakkuk 1:16** "Therefore they offer a sacrifice to their net and burn incense to their fishing net" — worshiping the instrument of their own success.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur notes that the "god of fortresses" is the oldest idol there is dressed in armor — trust in one's own strength, given an altar.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel 11 names no ruler who pursued anything worth having. Forty-five verses of the most powerful men on earth, and not one of them wanted something that would outlast him. The chapter is a complete inventory of ambition with nothing of value in it.

KEY QUESTION

If someone wrote forty-five verses about what I chase, what would be on the list?

2 In the light of eternity, what perspective should we have about human achievements?

P. 253

2 Corinthians 4:18 NASB95

while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

IN MY WORDS

I should hold human achievement loosely and honestly — good work done well is worth doing, but nothing I can see will last, so I measure it by whether it serves what is eternal rather than by how impressive it looks now.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 11:4** The greatest empire in the chapter is "broken up and parceled out" the moment its builder is gone.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik warns against the overcorrection: the answer to temporary achievement is not idleness but redirected labor — work aimed at what will still be standing.

CRITICAL THINKING

Scripture never says achievement is worthless — it says it is temporary, which is a different claim. The problem with Alexander's empire was not that he built it; it was that he built nothing else. Temporary things are worth doing and were never worth living for.

KEY QUESTION

What am I working on right now that will still matter in a hundred years?

3 **Read 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, which speaks of when believers will come before the judgment seat of Christ. Here, we read about our Lord's evaluation of our works done on Earth. As you answer the following two questions, don't come away with the impression that only "ministry service" counts toward good done for our Lord. It is possible for secular jobs, schooling, and everyday responsibilities to be done in ways that exalt God and accomplish His work—as 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."** P. 254

1 Corinthians 3:12-13 NASB95

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15 NASB95

If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 10:31 NASB95

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

a. **Give two to four examples of motives and pursuits you would say can be described as gold, silver, and precious stones.**

IN MY WORDS

Doing my ordinary work honestly when cutting a corner would never be discovered; teaching my family the Word when no one outside the house will ever know; giving or serving where there is no possibility of being thanked for it; and telling someone the truth about Christ when it costs me the relationship.

CROSS REFERENCE **Colossians 3:23** "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" — the audience determines the material.

b. **Give two to four examples of attitudes and achievements you think will be considered wood, hay, and straw.**

IN MY WORDS

Service done to be seen and complimented; being right in an argument at the cost of the person; building a reputation, a title, or a balance sheet as an end in itself; and religious activity kept up out of habit or appearance with no love for Christ behind it.

CROSS REFERENCE **Matthew 6:1** "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

MacArthur stresses that this judgment is about reward, not salvation — the man whose work burns is still saved; he simply stands there with nothing to show for a lifetime.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik notes that gold, silver, and precious stones are not the largest materials but the ones that survive fire. Size is not what is being tested; quality is.

CRITICAL THINKING

Both lists are built on the same foundation — Paul is describing believers in both cases. The difference is not between the saved and the lost but between two Christians doing similar things for different reasons. The fire tests quality, and motive is the one thing no one else can see.

KEY QUESTION

If the fire tested my last month of work for motive rather than volume, how much would still be standing?

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4 Colossians 3:2 exhorts us, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." Yet we will always find ourselves lured by the glitter of the temporary. What can we do to grow in our heavenly mindedness?

P. 255

Colossians 3:1-2 NASB95

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

IN MY WORDS

I grow in it the same way I grow in anything — by deliberate, repeated habit: reading the Word before the news feed, praying about my plans instead of only making them, keeping company with people whose eyes are on Christ, giving away enough that my grip on money stays loose, and regularly reminding myself how the story ends.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 12:2** "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" — the mind is set by renewal, which is ongoing and intentional, not automatic.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Tsarfati notes that verse 1 comes before verse 2: the command to set the mind above rests on the fact that you have already been raised up with Christ. It is claiming a position you already hold, not climbing toward one.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Guzik points out the verb — "keep seeking" is continuous. Heavenly mindedness is not a decision made once but an attention that must be renewed daily.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul says "set your mind," which is something you do, not something that happens to you. The mind does not drift upward on its own; left alone it settles on things below by default. Every believer who is heavenly minded got that way on purpose.

KEY QUESTION

What is the first thing my mind reaches for in the morning — and what does that tell me?

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5 **Based on what you read in Daniel 11, on the left side of the space below, write a list of the characteristics of earthly kings and kingdoms. Then on the right side of the space below, list the characteristics that you know will be true about Christ and His kingdom. What contrasts do you see?** P. 255

> **Daniel 11:45 NASB95**
> "He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

> **Daniel 7:14 NASB95**
> "And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

> **IN MY WORDS**
> Earthly kings: seized by intrigue, built on deception, defended by fortresses, driven by pride and revenge, divided at death, temporary, and ending with no one to help. Christ: given dominion by the Father, founded on truth, humble and merciful, undivided, everlasting, and served by every nation — the contrast is that theirs all end and His will not pass away.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:44** "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed... it will itself endure forever."

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
> MacArthur observes that the contrast is not only moral but temporal — every kingdom in Daniel 11 ends, and that alone disqualifies it from being worth our hope.

> **Amir Tsarfati** DISCOVERING DANIEL
> Tsarfati points out the location of verse 45: the Antichrist falls in sight of the beautiful Holy Mountain, the very place Christ will reign. The last earthly king dies at the doorstep of the eternal kingdom.

> **CRITICAL THINKING**
> Both lists end in the same geography. The Antichrist pitches his tent between the seas and the Holy Mountain, and that is exactly where Christ will establish His throne. The final contrast is not that they occupy different worlds but that they want the same ground — and only one of them will still be standing on it.

KEY QUESTION
Which kingdom am I actually investing in — measured not by what I say but by where my time and money went this month?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

When the Antichrist comes on the world scene, he will captivate people with charm and deceit. He will rise to power quickly, and his arrogance, paired with Satan's power, will make him the most blasphemous world leader of all time. Daniel 11 portrays him as one who will do whatever he wishes (verse 36). He will exalt himself above not only earthly gods but the one true God.

He will prosper at all he does, and nothing will stand in his way (verse 36). He will be hostile to religion and to normal human affections (verse 37). He will place his confidence in his personal power and military might (verses 38-39), and he will know great success in battle (verses 40-43). So great will his power be that he appears unstoppable.

Yet Daniel 11:45 is clear about his fate, and it will come swiftly: "he will come to his end, and no one will help him." The most sinister and corrupt ruler of all time will meet instant defeat when Christ returns. Nothing will be able to spare him. He will have every earthly and satanic force at his disposal — and he and all who assist him will be wiped out completely.

The finality of that defeat is made clear in Revelation 20:10. After Christ conquers the Antichrist at the second coming, He will set up His thousand-year reign on Earth. At the end of that kingdom, Satan will attempt one last insurrection against our Lord, and be defeated. When the devil is thrown into the lake of fire, we are told that the beast and the false prophet are still there — a thousand years after the second coming. And that is where they will stay, tormented "day and night forever and ever."

That is why this long, difficult chapter of kings and campaigns is finally a comfort rather than a burden. Every ruler in it was told in advance what he would do and how he would end, and every one of them did exactly that. The God who wrote Alexander's four-way division and the ships of Kittim and the abomination of desolation into a scroll centuries early is the same God who wrote verse 45. If everything through verse 35 came true exactly as written, the rest of it will too.

But the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

DANIEL 11:32 · NASB95

Daniel 11 takes us on a tour through kingdoms in defiance of God, and reveals they are all destined for defeat. It is a triumphant testimony to the absolute sovereignty of God over all human affairs. No one can defy God and get away with it — and for that reason, we can be confident about the future.

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