



Time to Reflect

- When we experience 'tough times' in our lives, how do we respond? How good are we at turning to God and totally trusting Him?
- The Nineteenth Century American Statesman Daniel Webster once said of his life "My greatest thought is my accountability to God." How does this relate to our own relationship with God?

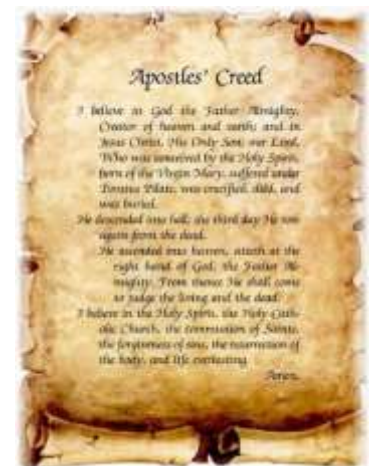
Last week we were encouraged to see how accurately the prophecies were fulfilled. This led us to conclude that God is sovereign, He is in control, and that His Word is true. This week we look at a final prophecy, one that has not yet been historically fulfilled. We are reflecting on the 'End Times' and the details of what is recorded do not fit with what is known of rulers like Antiochus Epiphanes – who we have reflected on before.



"At Daniel 11:36, the prophecy shifts from Antiochus Epiphanes to the man he foreshadowed, the Antichrist, the last world dictator. We have moved to 'the time of the end.'"

(Warren Wiersbe, *Be Resolute: Determining To Go God's Direction*, p169)

Passage Specifics

- The Bible has much to say about the End Times, especially the Book of Revelation. In the Old and New Testaments, it is made clear that a time of great challenge and tribulation will, one day, come to the world. This period will ultimately end with the return of Jesus.
- An evil ruler, the Antichrist, is referred to in the Bible and one such reference is (v36-39) of this passage. He masquerades as a man of peace and demonstrates immense political skill. However, his ultimate aim is world domination and he sets himself up as a god.
- (v36) gives us an insight to this. Look at how this 'king' will exalt and magnify himself. He goes even further as he directly opposes God – the One Daniel was so faithful to.
- This individual is self-centred and is not concerned with the religious beliefs of anyone else. Ultimately, this man will be at the very heart of war and conflict (v39-45), and he will appear to be successful in his endeavours.
- This is a rather troubling image and it conveys a message of uncertainty. None of us like such 'greyness.' We like security, stability, and safety. **Q1**
- (v44-45) see a dramatic change take place. This last world dictator will not always get things his own way! Note how certain reports will trouble him and cause him to set out in a great rage.
- It is never wise to establish a course of action when we are enraged and our emotions are running high. This leader fails to recognise this as he seeks to **"...destroy and annihilate many."**
- (v45) tells us that he will come to his end and no one will help him. Scripture teaches us that this eventuality occurs when Jesus returns.
- We declare this to be a central truth of the Christian faith. It is referred to in our credal statements within Anglicanism.



- As we enter Ch12 we encounter a period of persecution which is more commonly referred to as 'The Tribulation.' This prophecy refers to it as a time of distress (12:1) but it does also offer the assurance that God's people will be delivered.
 - (v2) is a clear reference to resurrection and judgement – which is also highlighted in the Apostles Creed. Note the division which occurs “...some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”
 - This gets us thinking about the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46).
 - C.S. Lewis wrote, “When the author walks on to the stage the play is over. God is going to invade, all right: but what is the good of saying you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else—something it never entered your head to conceive—comes crashing in; something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others that none of us will have any choice left? For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature.¹”
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- Choosing to live in accordance with God's will is deemed to be wise in (v3). We are called to shine brightly for Him and prepare for the day when we meet Him face-to-face. As Lewis indicates, this is not an occasion to fear. It is something to look forward to and be joyous about. However, the secret is to be prepared! Q2
 - The remainder of this passage (v4-13) contains some final instructions to Daniel. Our study of this remarkable book has highlighted just how much Daniel trusted God and now, in these closing verses, we see words of encouragement and instruction offered to him.
 - A beautiful image is described (v5) and a conversation takes place. Once again, we are being reminded in (v5-7) that God is in control and His timing is perfect. We may be eager to see immediate answers to prayer, or for difficult seasons to pass quickly, but as we draw close to God and see His leading, may we trust in His leading and timing.
 - It is reassuring for us to see Daniel ask the type of questions that often flood our own minds (v8) – how long; how will it end; what is the purpose of all of this?
 - Daniel humbly enquired of the Lord and sought the wisdom that he needed to counteract his lack of understanding. As we do this, we must be prepared that answers come in God's timing.
 - (v10) is a call for us to grow deeper in our relationships with God and to trust Him entirely. As we spend time with God, praying and reading His Word, our eyes are opened to His ways and we grow ever dependant on Him.
 - This is a wonderful place to be in our journeys of faith and it means that we are not burdened with fears or anxieties. Rather, we are walking in tandem with the Author of Creation and continue to do so until the day when we stand before Him.
 - (v13) concludes with a wonderful assurance for Daniel, this man of remarkable faith. He is to continue travelling the path that he is on until he 'rests.' Then he will receive his inheritance. This reminds us of that wonderful verse from 2nd Timothy 4:8.
 - May these verses be our inspiration, hope and assurance as we continue our journeys with the Lord.
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¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Simon and Schuster Touchstone, 1996), pp. 65–66