



THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Lesson Number 36



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

THE FUTURE IS UNFOLDED TO DANIEL, #5

“ 11:28 Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land. ²⁹ At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. ³⁰ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. ³¹ And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. ³² And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. ³³ And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. ³⁴ Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. ³⁵ And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” ^{KJV} (Daniel 11:28-35)

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the book of Daniel, the greatness of God is again and again affirmed. He is the One who is governing the world, and all rulers are actually under His authority, whether they know it or not. This circumstance is not a mere formality, but applies to the very fabric of the kings of the earth and their dominion. There is no such thing as a king who operates independently of God, or a kingdom that is out from under His total and unhindered control.

When it comes to the fulfillment of Divine purpose, and the free exercise of God's power, man's will has no decisive influence

at all. A corrupt human will does have an affect upon the destiny of the individual. However, in the matter of “eternal purpose,” it has no role at all. Thus the creation, the giving of the Law, and the salvation wrought out by Christ Jesus were in no way contingent upon human will. **They were all the solitary expression of the Divine will.**

Although I have mentioned this previously, I feel compelled to once again draw this to your attention. I do this because of the nature of the prophecy with which we are presently dealing. The precision of the prophecy is so remarkable that it tends to draw attention to itself

rather than to the Lord. By nature, men gravitate to the lower realms, seeking explanations “under the heavens” instead of high above them, where explanations are actually found. We must push mere human reasoning into a secondary position by affirming the Sovereignty of God, and the surety of His purposes. If we fail to do this, the flesh will take up occupancy in the living room of our hearts and minds. Faith thrives upon affirmations of God's nature and purpose.

REFERENCES TO GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY TO THIS POINT

- ☐ The Lord “gave” Jehoiakim to Nebuchadnezzar (1:2a).

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

OUTLINE

- ▶ GREAT RICHES, YET UNSATISFIED (11:28)
- ▶ AN APPOINTED RETURN (11:29)
- ▶ OPPONENTS THAT GRIEVE BUT DO NOT DESTROY (11:30)
- ▶ POLLUTION AND DESECRATION (11:31)
- ▶ STRONG IN THE MIDST OF OPPRESSION (11:32)
- ▶ UNDERSTANDING, INSTRUCTION, YET AN OVERTHROW (11:33)
- ▶ A LITTLE HELP (11:34)
- ▶ TRYING, PURGING, AND MADE WHITE (11:35)

- ▶ The Lord “gave” part of the vessels of His house to Nebuchadnezzar (1:2b).
- ▶ God brought Daniel “into favor with the prince of the eunuchs” (1:9).
- ▶ God gave Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel “skill in all learning and wisdom” (1:17a).
- ▶ God gave Daniel “understanding in all visions and dreams” (1:17b).
- ▶ Wisdom and might “belong” to God (2:20).
- ▶ God “changes” times and seasons (2:21a).
- ▶ God “removes kings” (2:21b).
- ▶ God “sets up” kings (2:21c).
- ▶ God gives “wisdom to the wise” (2:21d).
- ▶ God gives “knowledge to them who know understanding” (2:21e).
- ▶ God reveals “deep and secret things” (2:22a).
- ▶ God “knows what is in darkness, and light dwells with Him” (2:22b).
- ▶ God “made known” to Daniel the Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its meaning (2:23).
- ▶ God “reveals secrets” (2:28a).
- ▶ God made known to Nebuchadnezzar what would be in the “latter days” (2:28b, 29,45).
- ▶ God gave Nebuchadnezzar his “kingdom, power, strength, and glory” (2:37; 5:18).
- ▶ God gave Nebuchadnezzar “the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heavens,” making him “ruler over all” (2:38).
- ▶ In the midst of global governments, God set up His kingdom, “which shall never be destroyed,” never know a successor, and will consume all other kingdoms, standing forever (2:44).
- ▶ God is the “God of gods” (2:47a).
- ▶ God is the “Lord of kings” (2:47b).
- ▶ God countermanded Nebuchadnezzar’s judgment by delivering the three children of Judah from the fiery furnace (3:24-28).
- ▶ There is no other god who can deliver as God does (3:29).
- ▶ God’s signs are “great,” and His wonders “mighty” (4:3a).
- ▶ God’s kingdom is an everlasting kingdom (4:3b,34).
- ▶ God’s dominion is from generation to generation (4:3c,34).
- ▶ God “rules in the kingdoms of men” (4:25a; 5:21).
- ▶ God gives the kingdoms of men to “whomsoever He will” (4:25b).
- ▶ The heavens do rule (4:26).
- ▶ God imposed a beast’s heart upon Nebuchadnezzar, and made him spend seven years in the field, eating grass as an ox (4:31-33; 5:20-21).
- ▶ God returned Nebuchadnezzar’s understanding to him (4:34).
- ▶ God does “according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth” (4:35a).
- ▶ No one can “stay” God’s hand, or question what He does (4:35b).
- ▶ God is able to abase those who “walk in pride” (4:37).
- ▶ God intruded into Belshazzar’s feast, bringing the revelry to an abrupt conclusion (5:5-9).
- ▶ God appoints over kingdoms “whomsoever He will” (5:21).
- ▶ The “breath” and “ways” of even kings are in the Lord’s hand (5:23).
- ▶ God “weighed” Belshazzar in His scales, and found him wanting (5:27).
- ▶ God “divided” the kingdom of Babylon, giving it to “the Medes and the Persians” (5:28).
- ▶ God overturned the judgment of Darius, delivering Daniel from the lion’s den (6:19-23).
- ▶ God is the Living God, and is “steadfast for ever” (6:26a).
- ▶ God’s kingdom “shall not be destroyed,” and “His dominion shall be unto the end” (6:26b).
- ▶ God “delivers and rescues” (6:27a).
- ▶ God works “signs and wonders in heaven and earth” (6:27b).
- ▶ The Empire of Babylon was like a great beast to whom God gave “the heart of a man” (5:4).
- ▶ God gave dominion to the Empire of Grecia (5:6).
- ▶ God cast down thrones (7:9).
- ▶ God “took away” the dominion of the

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four beastly governments (7:12).

- ▶ God gave “*dominion, and glory, and a kingdom*” to “*the Son of man*” (7:13-14a).
- ▶ Christ’s dominion is “*an everlasting dominion*” that will not pass away (7:14b).
- ▶ Christ’s kingdom is “*that which shall not be destroyed*” (7:14c).
- ▶ God “*made*” Daniel to know the interpretation of the vision of the beasts (7:16).
- ▶ The “*Ancient of days*” gave judgment to “*the saints of the Most High*” (7:22).
- ▶ God gave the saints into the hands of the enemy for a time, times, and half a time (7:25).
- ▶ God took “*the dominion*” away from worldly kingdoms (7:26).
- ▶ God will give “*the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven*” to the “*saints of the Most High*” (7:27).
- ▶ God “*broke*” the horn of the Grecian Empire, causing Alexander the Great to die off of the battle field (8:8,22; 11:4).
- ▶ God gave a “*his*” to the “*little horn,*” enabling him to cast truth “*to the ground*” (8:12).
- ▶ God limited to desolation of His house to 2,300 days (8:14).
- ▶ God made Daniel understand the vision little horn (8:16).
- ▶ God broke the power of Antiochus Epiphanes without any human involvement (8:25).
- ▶ God “*poured out a curse*” upon Judah for their disobedience (9:11).
- ▶ God brought “*great evil*” upon Judah for their sin (9:12).
- ▶ God brought Israel out of Egypt (9:15).

- ▶ God caused the angel Gabriel to fly swiftly from heaven to earth (9:21).
- ▶ God determined “*seventy weeks*” upon His people (9:24).
- ▶ What occurs upon earth has already been written in “*the Scriptures of Truth,*” determined by God (11:21).
- ▶ God “*divided*” the Grecian Empire

to see this, for here is where the element of edification and profit is to be found. **There are at least four levels where the dominion and will of the Almighty God was revealed and confirmed.**

- ▶ At the highest level, the devil could not hinder, thwart, or effectively resist the will of God.
- ▶ The high places of Satan’s citadel of

IT SHOULD BE EVIDENT TO US THAT GOD HIMSELF IS THE POINT, NOT HISTORICAL EVENTS. THE EVENTS ARE THEMSELVES EVIDENCES OF, AND COMMENTARIES UPON, THE WORKING OF THE LORD.

into four parts (11:4a).

- ▶ God “*plucked up*” Alexander’s kingdom (11:4b).
- ▶ God caused a wicked alliance of Grecian powers to “*not stand*” (11:6).
- ▶ God gave “*a multitude*” into the hand of the “*king of the South*” (11:11).
- ▶ God caused Antiochus the Great to “*stumble and fall, and not be found*” (11:19).
- ▶ God caused a “*raiser of taxes*” to be destroyed in a short time, “*neither in anger, nor in battle*” (11:20).
- ▶ God caused a king with superior forces to “*not stand,*” with those at his own table conspiring against him (11:25).
- ▶ God made the cause of two kings “*speaking lies at one table*” to “*not prosper*” (11:27a).
- ▶ God caused an “*end*” to come at “*the appointed time*” (11:27b).

power, principalities and powers, such as the “*prince of Persia*” and “*the prince of Grecia*” could not withstand the working of the Lord.

- ▶ The loftiest earthly powers – kings and kingdoms – were utterly powerless before the God of heaven. Kingly edicts and purposes failed, and governmental objectives fell to the ground in absolute defeat.
- ▶ At the lowest level, the enemies of God’s people, like the magicians and wise men of Babylon, were utterly impotent before God. Evil purposes and intentions were thrown down.

GOD HIMSELF IS THE POINT

It should be evident to us that God Himself is the point, not historical events. The events are themselves evidences of, and commentaries upon, the working of the Lord. **That working has preeminently to do with His glory and purpose, and secondarily to do with His people and His commitments to them.**

Thus, the children of Judah were preserved, Jerusalem remained, and the Temple continued. All of this culminated in the appearance of the Son of God in “*the fulness of the time.*” This even included Him standing in the Temple as

SOMETHING TO BE SEEN

In all of these things, the unquestionable ability and power of the Lord was made known. We must not fail

“the Messenger of the Covenant.” Malachi prophesied, *“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts”* (Mal 3:1). This text introduces John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Christ (Isa 40:3-5; Matt 3:1-3), who himself would come from the Jewish stock. The Lord Jesus, introduced by John, would also come from that stock, and come into the Temple – a place where He taught during the day (Mk 12:36; Lk 21:37). Thus the Jews, the city of Jerusalem, and the Temple, must be present when *“the Word became flesh”* (John 1:14). Working through these kings, Satan was attempting to remove the people, their city, and the Temple.

However, over and above his working, the Lord was sustaining all three in the very midst of tumult and chaos.

Not a single delay was realized, even though Satan, His hosts, kings, kingdoms, and personal enemies sought to hinder what the Lord was doing – some knowingly, and some in total ignorance.

It is no wonder that we are told, *“If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom 8:31). The book of Daniel provides some insights into HOW God works all things together, causing them to serve His purpose and ultimately benefit His people. Nothing is out from under His control!

☐ He raises up and removes earthly rulers.

- ☐ He controls kings and kingdoms.
- ☐ He subdues spiritual forces.
- ☐ He employs holy angels.
- ☐ He provides revelation and insight.
- ☐ He overturns earthly determinations.
- ☐ He strengthens His people.
- ☐ He works within the framework of Divine appointments.
- ☐ He gives wisdom.

All of these, and much more, are used of God to fulfill His purpose, sustain His people, and bring Him glory. They rich sources of edification.

GREAT RICHES, YET UNSATISFIED

“11:28 Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.”

The angel has just told Daniel of a

This is not a mere commentary on human history or the rise and fall of Greece.

HE SHALL RETURN TO HIS LAND

“Then shall he return into his land with great riches . . .” The “great riches” of reference is what this king plundered

betrayed by his own people (11:26). However, Egypt still did not belong to Antiochus Epiphanes. He actually ruled as young Ptolemy’s guardian instead of the uncontested monarch of the kingdom. History says of this: “Antiochus forestalled an Egyptian expedition to Palestine by invading Egypt. He defeated the Egyptians between Pelusium and Mount Kasion, conquered Pelusium, and in 169 occupied Egypt with the exception of Alexandria, the capital. Ptolemy VI was Antiochus’ nephew—Antiochus’ sister, Cleopatra I, had married Ptolemy V—and Antiochus contented himself with ruling Egypt as Ptolemy’s guardian, giving Rome no excuse for intervention.” BRITANNICA 2003

Now, the angel says, he returns to his own land – Syria. He takes with him “great riches,” taken from his exploits in Egypt. The book of First Maccabees says of this return, “Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt and he took the spoils thereof. And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year” (1 Macc 1:19-20a).

At the time he was returning to his own country, he heard “that there had been a report of his death, at which the citizens of Jerusalem had made great rejoicings.” ADAM CLARKE Of this, the following has been written: “When he was in Egypt, a report was spread abroad that he was dead. In consequence of this rumour, Jason took the

WHILE DECEPTION WAS THE MOTHER OF THIS SEEMINGLY PEACEFUL ENVIRON, THE ANGEL WILL NOW REVEAL TO DANIEL HOW THIS WILL AFFECT HIS PEOPLE AND JERUSALEM.

time of relative peace – when two kings (Antiochus Epiphanes and Ptolemy Philometor) would sit at one table, speaking lies to one another. While deception was the mother of this seemingly peaceful environ, **the angel will now reveal to Daniel how this will affect his people and Jerusalem.** This is, of course, the intention of the prophecy – to reveal to Daniel what will befall his people in the latter time (10:13).

from Egypt. Thus the NASB reads, *“he will return to his land with much plunder.”*

The “he” to which the angel refers is Antiochus Epiphanes. He has attacked Egypt, coming *“against the king of the South with a great army”* (v 25). Even though outnumbered by the army of the *“king of the South,”* he wins a decisive battle because Ptolemy Philometor was

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opportunity of recovering the office of high priest from his brother Menelaus, and with a thousand men took Jerusalem, drove Menelaus into the castle, and killed many whom he took for his enemies. Antiochus, hearing of this, supposed that all the Jews had revolted, and determined to inflict summary chastisement on them on his way to his own land." Jahn, "Heb Commonwealth," p. 263.

History records that on his way back to his own land, he turned aside to attack Jerusalem. This is the action to which the angel refers in the next part of the verse.

HIS HEART SHALL BE AGAINST THE HOLY COVENANT

"... and his heart shall be against the holy covenant . . ."

The expression here is important. This is how heaven viewed the action of Antiochus Epiphanes. From the earthly point of view, he turned aside to punish those with whom he was displeased. This was a fit of rage through which he thought to subdue the Jews, sweeping them into his efforts of hellenize (or make Greek) the world. But this is not how heaven viewed his action.

The angel's words are pointed: *"his heart shall be against the holy covenant."* The more liberal NLT version reads, *"On the way he will set himself against the people of the holy covenant."* That is actually an interpretation of the text, and not a translation. According to appearance, his actions were, indeed, *"against the people of the holy covenant."* But he did not regard that covenant as holy, or associate the Jews with the holy God of heaven. With Antiochus, this was purely a political and personally vindictive matter.

However, the people he was attacking were in covenant with the God of heaven, and heaven regarded his actions as being *"against the holy covenant."*

Touching the Jews

In the very beginning, when God made covenant with Abraham, He was clear about how He regarded those who touched Abraham's offspring.

- ▣ *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen 12:3).

- ▣ Isaac conferred the same blessing upon Jacob: *"cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee"* (Gen 27:29).
- ▣ At Sinai, contingent upon their obedience, the same commitment was made to Israel: *"I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries"* (Ex 23:22).
- ▣ Balaam saw the Spirit of God with Israel, and said this: *"Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee"* (Num 24:9).
- ▣ Zechariah prophesied of this people: *"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple*

The *"holy covenant"* is the one made with Abraham, to which absolutely no conditions were attached. *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen 12:3). This was a promise that ultimately related to the coming Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. **It was a unilateral covenant made by God with Abraham.** It was not negotiated, but was announced. In Abraham's *"Seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed"* (Gen 26:4; 28:14). That is the *"holy covenant"* against which this wicked king aligned himself – even though he did not know it. This was the nation *"of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came"* (Rom 9:5). Therefore, those who were against

THE EXPRESSION HERE IS IMPORTANT. THIS IS HOW HEAVEN VIEWED THE ACTION OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES. FROM THE EARTHLY POINT OF VIEW, HE TURNED ASIDE TO PUNISH THOSE WITH WHOM HE WAS DISPLEASED. THIS WAS A FIT OF RAGE THROUGH WHICH HE THOUGHT TO SUBDUE THE JEWS, SWEEPING THEM INTO HIS EFFORTS OF HELLENIZE (OR MAKE GREEK) THE WORLD. BUT THIS IS NOT HOW HEAVEN VIEWED HIS ACTION.

of his eye" (Zech 2:8). God had clearly declared Israel to be *"the apple of His eye"* (Deut 32:10).

Now Antiochus Epiphanes fastens his eyes upon this people for evil – and thus aligns himself against *"the holy covenant."*

Which Covenant?

What is *"the holy covenant?"* Is it the one made at Sinai, where God affirmed *"And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation"* (Ex 19:6). Indeed not! For that covenant was contingent upon the faithfulness of Israel: *"Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine"* (Ex 19:5).

them were *against "the holy covenant."*

Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, referred to this covenant as God's *"holy covenant"* (Luke 1:72) – the one He *"promised"* to the *"fathers"* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Just as in our time, the Jews were then *"beloved for the fathers"* (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) *sakes"* (Rom 11:28). Thus heaven regards Antiochus as being against the *"holy covenant,"* which specifically pertained to the coming of the Messiah.

HE SHALL DO EXPLOITS

"... and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land." Other versions read, *"so he shall do damage,"* NKJV *"he will take action,"* NASB *"he will take action*

against it,"^{NIV} and "he shall work his will."

From the standpoint of appearance, it will seem as though Antiochus works without any restraint whatsoever. He will attack the people of the land with a vengeance, and it will seem as though they are totally in his hand. Of this awful siege, the following has been written.

"And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, 1:21 And entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, And the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials, and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crown, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off. 1:23 He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found. 1:24 And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly."^{1ST MACC 1:20-24}

"He returned immediately, slew many thousands of the inhabitants and robbed the temple of its treasures."^{INTL STD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA}

Historians record the following of this awful occasion. "Antiochus brought a great army against Jerusalem; took it by storm; slew forty thousand of the inhabitants; sold as many more for slaves; boiled swine's flesh, and sprinkled the temple and the altar with the broth; broke into the holy of holies; took away the golden vessels and other sacred treasures, to the value of one thousand eight hundred talents; restored Menelaus to his office; and made one Philip, a Phrygian, governor of Judea."

^{1 Macc. 1:24; 2 Macc. 5:21. Prideaux and Newton}

These atrocities are termed "exploits" by the holy angel. **It is because of initiatives such as this that Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to by the angel.** He had other "exploits," but these are particularly mentioned because they were "against the holy covenant."

NOT SATISFIED

Although Antiochus Epiphanes

has plundered Egypt, and carried away "great riches," yet he will easily be turned aside to harass the people of God, and to take riches from them as well.

From this we learn that the heart cannot be satisfied with the wealth of this world. The "lust of the eye" is "never satisfied," and will never say "It is enough" (Prov 30:15). This is precisely why "those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition"^{NKJV} (1 Tim 6:9). It is also why covetousness "is idolatry" (Col 3:5).

We are living in a time in which the heart can be easily drawn aside to covetousness. **We should take occasion through this text to consider the folly of pursuing riches, and planning for wealth, as though it was possible to reach a point where such things can satisfy us.** Such things cannot ultimately gratify.

AN APPOINTED RETURN

²⁹ **At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter."**

After he had finished massacring

It IS God's manner to open things He has determined to His people – things that can cause pain to the heart.

☐ Thus He told Abraham his people

about the Babylonian captivity, and the horrors that would accompany it (Isa 39:6; Jer 20:4; 25:11; Hab 1:6-10).

☐ Jesus told His disciples of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and of the grief that would be associated with it (Matt 24:15-20).

☐ The Lord revealed to Paul the time of a coming apostasy, and moved him to give the message to the churches (2 Thess 2:3; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1-5).

☐ As He did with Daniel, in John's old age, he was told of a coming corrupt church that would shed the blood of righteous men and appear invincible (Rev 17:1-6).

Such revelations were given in order to assist the people of God in preparing for such times through prayer and the perfection of holiness. **Religious men are too often lulled into**

RELIGIOUS MEN ARE TOO OFTEN LULLED INTO SPIRITUAL SLEEP WHEN THINGS ARE GOING WELL, AND RELIGIOUS PROSPERITY AND POPULARITY IS IN LARGE PROPORTIONS.

many Jews, and seizing many golden vessels from the Temple in Jerusalem, Antiochus returned to Antioch – his own land – enriched and filled with pride over his exploits. What had occurred to the Jews was tragic, yet the angel is careful to open up to Daniel what would "befall" his people – even though it was most painful to the heart.

would be "afflicted" in a strange land for "four hundred years" (Gen 15:13).

☐ He also told Abraham of the impending destruction of Sodom (Gen 18:17-23).

☐ Extensive revelation was given to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk

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spiritual sleep when things are going well, and religious prosperity and popularity is in large proportions.

The current purported religious musical revival that is taking place has not been birthed by hardship and trial, but by popularity, ease, and friendship with the world. While it is not popular to oppose such movements, their fruitage confirms that someone must do so. Even though the professed Western church is acknowledgeably in deplorable condition, this wave of emulated praise has not produced weeping saints like Jeremiah (Jer 9:1), shaken God-fearing men like Daniel (Dan 8:17; 10:9-10), or astonished men like John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev 17:6). All of these men received revelations of the coming oppression of God's people, and were moved by it.

Now the angel will confirm that all of these things are not only duly noted in heaven, but that they are controlled by *"the God of the Jews"* (Rom 3:19).

AT THE TIME APPOINTED

"At the time appointed he shall return . . ."

Since the heavenly messengers were sent to Daniel, things *"appointed"* will be mentioned no less than five times (8:19; 10:1; 11:27,29,35). There are also four references to things *"determined"* (9:24,26,27; 11:36). These are expressions of the Lord ruling *"in the midst"* of His enemies (Psa 110:2). It is His purpose that is ultimately being served, not the corrupt desires of men. **The Lord's agenda is driving the course of this world, not the manipulative agendas of men.**

Thus, after an unknown period of time, Antiochus Epiphanes is once again vaulted into activity by Divine purpose – at *"the time appointed."* This world is being precisely moved along to an appointed destiny.

By way of passing interest, the expression *"time appointed"* is used thirteen times in Scripture (Gen 18:14; Ex 23:15; Josh 8:14; 1 Sam 20:35; 2 Sam 24:15; Psa 81:3; Jer 46:17; Dan 8:19; 10:1; 11:27,29,35; Gal 4:2). The expression

"appointed time" is mentioned four times (Esth 9:27; Job 7:1; 14:14; Hab 2:3). Three times we read the words *"the Lord appointed"* (Ex 9:5; Matt 27:10; Lk 10:1). There are also other references to appointments made by the Lord (2 Chron 33:8; Isa 44:7; Mic 6:9; Lk 22:29; 1 Thess 3:3; 5:9; 2 Tim 1:11; Heb 1:2; 3:2; 9:27; 1 Pet 2:8).

This, then, is the language of Divine government and oversight. It is designed to assure us that things are not as chaotic as they may appear.

HE WILL COME TOWARD THE SOUTH

" . . . and come toward the south."

The king of reference now heads for the South, or Egypt, once again. This speaks of the third invasion of Egypt by Antiochus Epiphanes, and took place in

again. He sent his fleet to Cyprus to secure possession of that island, and led his army toward Egypt to subdue the two brothers, designing to annex the whole country to his dominions." BARNES/CLARKE

However, the angel does not give Daniel an historical perspective, but a heavenly one: *"At the appointed time he shall return."*

IT WILL BE DIFFERENT

" . . . but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter." Other versions read, *"but this time it will not turn out the way it did before,"* NASB and *"the outcome will be different from what it was before."* NIV

In confirmation of the Lord's government of both kings and kingdoms, the initiative of Antiochus will fall short of previous advances. The Word of the

THIS, THEN, IS THE LANGUAGE OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT AND OVERSIGHT. IT IS DESIGNED TO ASSURE US THAT THINGS ARE NOT AS CHAOTIC AS THEY MAY APPEAR.

168 B.C. The first invasion was mentioned in verse 22 (171 B.C.), and the second in verses 25-27 (170 B.C.). **The reason for bringing these matters to our attention is that they involve Israel.** Otherwise, they would have no real significance.

Historically, the events that occasioned this return involved an alliance made between Ptolemy and his brother Physcon. Ptolemy had perceived the treachery of his uncle, Antiochus, and therefore determined to resist him, keeping the kingdom of the South for himself. They determined "that they should share the government between them, and resist Antiochus with their united power. To do this, they hired mercenary troops from Greece. Antiochus, learning this, openly threw off the mask, and prepared to invade Egypt

Lord is again confirmed in this effort. *"The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect"* (Psa 33:10). And again, *"That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish"* (Isa 44:25).

History tells us the efforts of Antiochus failed because of the alliance Ptolemy and his brother made with Rome. However, that was a secondary reason, and not the primary one. **The counsels of the Lord are what brought these disappointing results to Antiochus.** That counsel did, in fact, show itself in history, but it was God who brought it to pass.

OPPONENTS THAT GRIEVE BUT DO NOT DESTROY

“³⁰ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.”

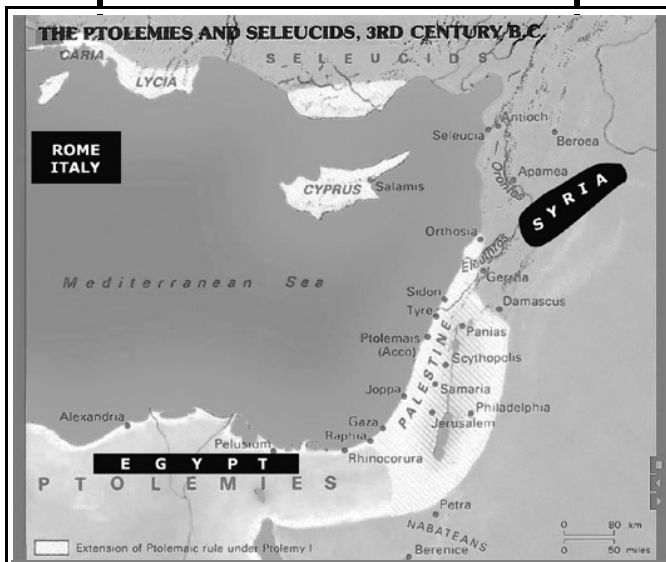
The angel now makes known to Daniel how the attack against Egypt will be foiled. Remember, these are things written in *“the Scriptures of Truth,”* reflecting Divine determinations and workings. Believers must continually strengthen their hearts with the recollection that *“The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein”* (Psa 24:10).

THE SHIPS OF CHITTIM COME AGAINST HIM

“For the ships of Chittim shall come against him . . .” Other versions read, *“ships of Cyrus shall come against him,”* ^{NKJV} *“ships of Kittim will come against him,”* ^{NASB} *“Ships from the Western coastlands will oppose him,”* ^{NIV} *“those who go out from the West will oppose him,”* ^{BBE} and *“the galleys and the Romans shall come upon him.”* ^{DOUAY}

The word *“Chittim”* means “bruisers,” and is “a general term for all islanders of the Mediterranean Sea.” ^{STRONGS} It is used in a variety of ways in Scripture. Balaam prophesied that ships would come *“from the coast of Chittim”* afflicting Asshur (the Assyrians) and Edber (the Hebrews) (Num 24:24). This was a prophecy of the invasions of Greece and Rome. Isaiah refers to *“the land of Chittim”* (Isa 24:1,12). Jeremiah wrote of *“the isles of Chittim,”* referring to the coasts of Cyprus which were West of Palestine. Ezekiel also referred to *“the isles of Chittim,”* also referring to Cyprus. All of these areas were West of Palestine, being either Islands (as Cyprus), or Coastal areas, like Italy.

The idea of the text is that ships, or a naval fleet, would come against Antiochus Epiphanes from the West, thus thwarting his mission. In all of this it is important to remember that Rome would eventually displace Greece, as foretold in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the great image, and Daniel’s vision of the four beasts. **What we are witnessing, therefore, are the death-throes of the Grecian Empire, and the**



strengthening of Rome. All of this was being governed by the God of heaven as things moved forward toward the coming of the Messiah, the Seed of woman, and the appointed ruler of the Kingdom of God, that would decimate all other kingdoms.

The historian Jahn records the following. “When he had arrived at Leusine, about four miles from Alexandria, he met Caius Popilins Laenas, Caius Decimius, and Caius Hostilius, ambassadors, whom the Roman Senate had sent to him at the earnest request of Ptolemy Physcon. They were instructed to assure Antiochus that he must leave the kingdom of Egypt and the island of Cyprus in peace, or expect a war with the Romans. When Antiochus said that he would lay the affair before his council, Popilius, the head of the legation, with his staff drew a circle about the king in the sand on which they stood, and exclaimed, ‘Before you leave that circle, you must give me an answer which I can report to the

Senate.’ Antiochus was confounded, but on a little reflection, he said he would do whatever the Senate required.” Jahn, “Hebrews Commonwealth,” pp. 265, 266; Polyb. “Legat.” Sections 90, 92; Livy, xlv. 14, 29, 41-46; xlv. 10, 12.

Another record reads, “These ambassadors came by the way of Greece, and in Grecian vessels, and their coming might properly be described as “ships from Chittim.” They went from Rome to Brundisium, and then passed over to the Grecian shore, and from thence by the way of Chalcis, Delos, and Rhodes, to Alexandria.” ^{Prideaux, iii. 237}

One commentator writes, “Chittim is well known to mean the Roman empire. Antiochus, being now in full march to besiege Alexandria, and within seven miles of that city, heard that ships were arrived there from Rome, with legates from the senate. He went to salute them. They delivered to him the letters of the senate, in which he was commanded, on pain of the displeasure of the Roman people, to put an end to the war against his nephews. Antiochus said he would go and consult his friends; on which Popilius, one of the legates, took his staff, and instantly drew a circle round Antiochus on the sand where he stood, and commanded him not to pass that circle till he had given a definitive answer. Antiochus, intimidated, said, he would do whatever the senate enjoined; and in a few days after began his march, and returned to Syria. This is confirmed

by Polybius, Livy, Velleius, Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, and Justin.” ^{ADAM CLARKE}

OBSERVATION

Generally speaking, these ships came from Rome in response to appeals by the rulers of Egypt. They came to stand in the gap, so to speak, for Egypt. However, that is all according to appearance. **Technically speaking, and in accord with reality, the Lord called for these forces to come “against” Antiochus Epiphanes, to bring his initiative to a grinding halt – and that is precisely what they did.**

HE SHALL BE GRIEVED AND RETURN

“ . . . therefore he shall be grieved.” Other versions read, *“he will be disheartened,”* ^{NASB} *“he shall lose heart and withdraw,”* ^{NRSV} and *“he shall be afraid and withdraw.”* ^{RSV}

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

Thus, using appointed means, the Lord turns the king's heart *"as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will"* (Prov 21:1).

This wicked king is mortified, humbled, and disappointed. Yet, his diabolical mind is still against the people of God. Once again, he will turn his attention to the Jews, and *"against the holy covenant"* God made with Abraham. **This is now the second time he has responded in this manner to the frustration of his own purposes** (verses 28 and 30).

Already he has attacked Jerusalem, slaughtering the people and plundering the Temple through wicked *"exploits"* (verse 28). Now he will return with even greater vengeance.

INDIGNATION AGAINST THE HOLY COVENANT

" . . . and return, and have

people, and, if an occasion should be given, would seek to vent his wrath in some other direction. This habitual state of feeling toward Jerusalem and the Jews would make him ready to seize upon the slightest pretext to wreak his vengeance on the holy land. What was the immediate occasion of his taking this opportunity to attack Jerusalem is not certainly known, but in his marching back through Palestine, he detached from his army twenty-two thousand men, under the command of Apollonius, and sent them to Jerusalem to destroy it." Prideaux, iii. 239; Jahn, "Hebrews Commonwealth," p. 266.

Adam Clarke says of this event, "For he vented his rage against the Jews; and he sent his general, Apollonius, with twenty-two thousand men against Jerusalem, plundered and set fire to the city, pulled down the houses round about it, slew much of the people, and built a castle on an eminence that commanded the temple, and slew multitudes of the poor people who had come up to worship, polluted every place, so that the temple service was totally abandoned, and all the people fled from the city. And when he returned to Antioch he published a decree that all should conform to the Grecian worship; and the Jewish worship was totally abrogated, and the temple itself consecrated

about it. The events of this text took place around 170-167 B.C. – about 370 years after the word is being delivered to Daniel. Between the time of Daniel and the ravaging attacks of Antiochus Epiphanes, the children of Israel had gone backward instead of forward.

The last Prophet to write Scripture was Malachi. He wrote somewhere between 445-432 B.C., or nearly 100 years after Daniel had received this word. In vivid words, Malachi described the state of the people, and it was a deplorable one indeed!

- ▣ They questioned God's love for them (1:2).
- ▣ They did not honor or fear God (1:6).
- ▣ They offered polluted bread upon His altar (1:7a).
- ▣ They treated the table of the Lord with contempt (1:7b).
- ▣ They offered the blind, lame, and sick as sacrifices (1:8).
- ▣ God had no pleasure in them, and would not receive their offerings (1:10).
- ▣ They profaned the name of the Lord (1:12).
- ▣ The priests departed out of the way, causing many to stumble (2:8).
- ▣ The priests did not keep the ways of God, and were partial in the Law (2:9).
- ▣ Judah dealt treacherously with God (2:11a).
- ▣ Judah profaned the holiness of the Lord, and married the daughter of a strange God (2:11b).
- ▣ They wearied the Lord with their words (2:17).
- ▣ They went away from the Lord's ordinances, and did not keep them (3:7).
- ▣ They robbed God by withholding their tithes and offerings (3:8).

POLITICALLY, THERE WAS NO CAUSE FOR HIS AGGRESSION AGAINST THE JEWS. HOWEVER, THERE HAD BEEN A SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM THE LORD AMONG THEM, AND THUS THE CHASTENING HAND OF GOD WAS UPON THEM.

indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do." Other versions read, *"return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage,"* ^{NKJV} *"return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action,"* ^{NASB} *"turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant,"* ^{NIV} and *"take furious action against the holy covenant."* ^{NJB}

According to appearance, it seems as though the children of Abraham have been counted *"as sheep for the slaughter."* As David said, *"Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter"* (Psa 44:22).

One historian records the following. "Polybius says that he left Egypt in great anger, because he was compelled by the Romans to abandon his designs. In this condition he was, of course, in a state of mind to become irritated against any other

to Jupiter Olympius. How great must the wickedness of the people have been when God could tolerate this!"

This return to destroy Jerusalem takes place just two years after he did *"exploits"* against the Jews before – also in a return from Egypt.

The Jews had not particularly provoked Antiochus this time, as they had before by spreading the rumour that he was dead. Politically, there was no cause for his aggression against the Jews. **However, there had been a significant departure from the Lord among them, and thus the chastening hand of God was upon them.**

CORRUPTION IN ISRAEL

While I have mentioned this before, it is necessary again say something

- ▣ Their words were stout against God (3:13).
- ▣ They said it was vain to serve the Lord (3:14).
- ▣ They called the proud happy, those who worked wickedness were elevated (3:15).

It was these conditions that brought such awful judgments against the people. If Israel had been walking in a manner that was pleasing to God, He could have caused their enemies to be at peace with them (Prov 16:7). But they were in a condition that displeased the Lord, and therefore He gave them over into the hands of their enemies, as He had frequently done (Judges 2:14; 2 Kgs 21:14; 2 Chron 25:20; Neh 9:27; Jer 12:7; 20:4; Ezek 39:23).

IT IS A FEARFUL THING

It is not without cause that we read, *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Heb 10:31). Who can forget Samuel’s solemn words concerning the a king: *“If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men”* (2 Sam 7:14). And what of the 600,000 that died in the wilderness en route to Canaan (Heb 3:17). In one plague, the Lord slew 14,700 Israelites (Num 16:49). In another plague, 24,000 died. Once *“much people died”* from the bites of venomous snakes that were sent among them (Num 21:6). Once the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from morning to evening, killing 70,000 men (2 Sam 24:15).

WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION

All of these things have been *“written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”* (1 Cor 10:11). **They are an index to the Divine nature, confirming to our hearts His contempt for iniquity.** We are living in a time when the professed church has fallen asleep, and has therefore lost its sense of these things – if, indeed, it ever possessed such sensitivity.

INTELLIGENCE WITH HIM THAT FORSAKE THE HOLY COVENANT

“ . . . he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.” Other versions read,

“show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant,” ^{NKJV,NASB} *“show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant,”* ^{NIV} *“pay heed to those who forsake the holy covenant,”* ^{NRSV} and *“reward those who forsake the covenant.”* ^{NLT}

The word translated *“intelligence”* has a very wide meaning. It can mean to discern, understand, or perceive. It can also mean consider diligently, or regard. Using the first definition, our text would mean the king was **able to detect** who had no real regard for the *“holy covenant”* – those who preferred the accolades of men to the praise of God. Using the second definition, the text means he would give **special favors** to those who

go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. ^{1:12} So this device pleased them well. ^{1:13} Then certain of the people were so forward herein, that they went to the king, who gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the heathen. ^{1:14} Whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the customs of the heathen: ^{1:15} And made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen, and were sold to do mischief.” ^{First Macc 1:11-15}

Concerning this remarkably detailed record, Bishop Newton writes the following. *“It may be proper to stand a little here, and reflect how particular and ircumstantial this prophecy is, concerning Egypt and Syria, from the death of Alexander to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. There is not so*

THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE WHO WEAR THE NAME OF THE LORD WHO PREFER THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD TO THE APPROBATION OF ALMIGHTY GOD.

had no respect for the *“holy covenant.”*

In a sense, both of these meanings apply. Antiochus Epiphanes would give special favors to those having no regard for the *“holy covenant”* because he was, in fact, able to tell who they were. Such people would more readily seek his praise, and be more easily convinced to side with him.

From the viewpoint of Antiochus Epiphanes, he was attempting to hellenize the world, making it adopt the Greek values and customs. From the Jew’s viewpoint, this meant forsaking *“the holy covenant,”* and leaving the national heritage of being associated primarily with the God of heaven. There were some who were quite willing to do this, having no respect for God or the covenant He had made with Abraham. As Jahn writes, there were some who were *“inclined to do this, and to introduce the customs of the Greeks.”* ^{Hebrews Commonwealth, pp 258-260} The historical books of the Maccabees says the following of these compromisers. ^{1:11} In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us

conceive, concise, comprehensive, and regular an account of their kings and affairs to be found in any authors of those times. The prophecy is really more perfect than any history, and is so wonderfully exact, not only to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, but likewise equally so beyond that time, that we may conclude in the words of the inspired writer, *“No one could thus declare the times and seasons, but he who hath them in his own power.”* ^{NEWTON, A.D. 1754}

APPLICATION

There are still people who wear the name of the Lord who prefer the friendship of the world to the approbation of Almighty God. The Spirit refers to the very best of this group in these words: *“Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God”* (John 12:42-43). To the worst of them he says this. *“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God”* (James 4:4). It is tragic that such people exist in the church – but they do.

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

Let it be clear, **those who despise identity with the Lord, choosing to court the friendship of His enemies, eventually move God to**

loose the enemy. This is such a common practice in the professed church that it is an embarrassment to sensitive souls. Such worldly alliances are being revealed in all

areas of “church” activity: its business, leadership, education, organization, recruitment, and music. It is a most serious circumstance.

POLLUTION AND DESECRATION

“³¹ And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”

Now the wickedness of this king is

Syrian forces and Jewish apostates were involved in this initiative. The point of the text is that Antiochus himself launched this attack. It is he who was most pointedly “against the holy covenant” (vs 28 and 30a). As for those Jews who “forsook the covenant,” they joined in the conspiracy by both participation and in

POLLUTE THE SANCTUARY OF STRENGTH

“ . . . and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. . . ” Other versions read, “and shall defile the sanctuary fortress,” ^{NKJV} “desecrate the sanctuary fortress,” ^{NASB} “desecrate the Temple fortress,” ^{NIV} and “profane the Temple fortress.” ^{NRSV}

In addition to desecrating the Temple, the daily sacrifices were brought to an end, and an altar to an idol was placed upon the very altar of God, thereby bringing “abomination” into the Temple of God.

Having a keen interest in things pertaining to the Lord, Daniel had prayed concerning the holy city and Temple. Hear Him plead with His God: *“O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain”* (9:16). And again, *“shine upon Thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake”* (9:17). And again, *“O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Thine own sake, O my God: for Thy city and thy people are called by Thy name”* (Dan 9:19).

Because of His great love the Lord’s land, the holy city, and the Sanctuary of the Temple, the Lord will also share with Daniel things that will befall all of them. The purpose for making them known is not to cast Daniel down, but to confirm that He will not forsake them. Though they will be chastened for their waywardness, He will “not make a full end” of Israel, even though He certainly will “make a full end of all the nations” whether they were scattered (Jer 4:27; 46:28).

Now, under the leadership of

BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE THE LORD’S LAND, THE HOLY CITY, AND THE SANCTUARY OF THE TEMPLE, THE LORD WILL ALSO SHARE WITH DANIEL THINGS THAT WILL BEFALL ALL OF THEM. THE PURPOSE FOR MAKING THEM KNOWN IS NOT TO CAST DANIEL DOWN, BUT TO CONFIRM THAT HE WILL NOT FORSAKE THEM.

made more fully known. Having before desecrated the Temple, he now does it once again. This time, however, he does it with the aid of apostate Jews who have cast their lot with him, and thus turned their backs upon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

ARMS SHALL STAND ON HIS PART

“And arms shall stand on his part . . . ” Other versions read, “forces shall be mustered by him,” ^{NKJV} “forces by him will arise,” ^{NASB} “His armed forces will rise up,” ^{NIV} and “Forces sent by him shall occupy.” ^{NRSV}

Some have concluded these “arms” were the apostate Jews that chose to stand with Antiochus. In this view the “arms,” or forces, would be those who “forsake the holy covenant” (v 30). Others see them as a militia sent by Antiochus into Jerusalem, for the purpose of destroying it. It is most likely that both

principle. Those who are not “for” the Lord are, in fact, “against” Him. As Jesus said, *“He that is not with Me is against Me”* (Luke 11:23). In the text before us, some of the Jews formally carried out that opposition.

Application

From righteous Abel to this very day, the people of God have always had enemies. **However, no enemies are as treacherous as those who have turned their backs on the Lord Jesus.** Whether they do so deliberately or not, such souls have sided with the enemies of the people of God, and will be appropriately punished with them. By becoming wicked themselves, they have “joined” hand in hand with the wicked and “shall not go unpunished” (Prov 11:21). This is one of the factors that compounds apostasy, making it all the more difficult for recovery to be experienced.

Antiochus Epiphanes, the “*sanctuary of strength*” is polluted. The dreadful account of this profanation is recorded in the Maccabees.

“1:41 Moreover king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, 1:42 And every one should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. 1:43 Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the Sabbath. 1:44 For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Juda that they should follow the strange laws of the land, 1:45 And forbid burnt offerings, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the Sabbaths and festival days: 1:46 And pollute the sanctuary and holy people: Set up altars, and groves, and chapels of idols, and sacrifice swine's flesh, and unclean beasts: 1:48 That they should also leave their children uncircumcised, and make their souls abominable with all manner of uncleanness and profanation: 1:49 To the end they might forget the law, and change all the ordinances. 1:50 And whosoever would not do according to the commandment of the king, he said, he should die. 1:51 In the selfsame manner wrote he to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Juda to sacrifice, city by city. 1:52 Then many of the people were gathered unto them, to wit every one that forsook the law; and so they committed evils in the land; 1:53 And drove the Israelites into secret places, even wheresoever they could flee for succour. 1:54 Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; 1:55 And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. 1:56 And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. 1:57 And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death. 1:58 Thus did they by their authority unto the Israelites every month, to as many as were found in the cities. 1:59 Now the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God. At which time according to the commandment they put to death certain women, that had caused their children to be circumcised. 1:61 And they hanged the infants about their necks, and rifled their houses, and slew them that had circumcised them. 1:62 Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved and confirmed in themselves not to eat any unclean thing. 1:63 Wherefore the rather to die, that they might not be defiled with meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant: so then they died. 1:64 And there was very great wrath upon Israel.”¹ Macc 1:41-64

It has become highly fashionable in our day to speak of the religion and gods of other people – giving them respect and a sort of dignity. However, note how the angel refers to the placing of another god in the Temple of the Lord: “*they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.*” Other versions read, “*they will set up the abomination of desolation,*”^{NASB} and “*set up the abomination that causes desolation.*”^{NIV}

The phraseology employed by the angel is most arresting. The “*abomination*” to which he refers is an idol. Through the Prophets, the Spirit consistently referred to idols as “*abominations*” (Deut 32:16; Jer 7:30; 1 Pet 4:3). Carrying the matter even further, Antiochus called the Temple “the temple of Jupiter Olympius.”² Macc 6:2 The following is a brief account of this.

“They did sacrifice upon the idol- altar, which was upon the altar of God. At this time an old man, by

Temple of God. That idol was an abomination that **caused** desolation. God would not allow the Temple to flourish under such a condition.

A PRINCIPLE TO BE SEEN

There is a vital kingdom principle to be seen in this text. **When abomination comes in, it brings a curse to the whole of the matter, and a need for a fresh beginning is introduced.** A few examples of this will suffice to establish the point.

- ▣ When sin entered into the world, the entire universe, and mankind as well, came under a curse (Rom 5:12; 8:20-21).
- ▣ When Achan coveted and took the unlawful, “*trouble*” came upon the entire nation (Josh 7:16).
- ▣ When the sins of the world were laid upon Christ, and He was “*made to be*

IN THE TEXT BEFORE US, EVEN THOUGH ALL OF THE ISRAELITES DID NOT CONSENT TO THE DEFILEMENT OF THE TEMPLE, YET SOME OF THEM DID. THE TEMPLE BEING THUS DEFILED, DESOLATION FOLLOWED, FOR GOD CANNOT BLESS OR DEFEND WHAT IS DEFILED.

the name of Athenaeus, was sent to Jerusalem to instruct the Jews in the Greek religion, and compel them to an observance of its rites. He dedicated the temple to Jupiter Olympius; and on the altar of Jehovah he placed a smaller altar, to be used in sacrificing to the pagan god.” Jahn, “*Hebrews Commonwealth,*” pp. 267,268.

This wretched defilement was the mother of the desolation that followed. It is as though the defilement was so deplorable the city had to be laid waste. Thus history records of that time, “*Now Jerusalem lay void as a wilderness, there was none of her children that went in or out: the sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the strong hold; the heathen had their habitation in that place; and joy was taken from Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased.*”¹ Maccabees 3:45

Let it be clear, the desolation that followed was because of the abomination that was set up in the

sin for us,” He was “*cursed*” (2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13).

In the text before us, even though all of the Israelites did not consent to the defilement of the Temple, yet some of them did. The Temple being thus defiled, desolation followed, for **God cannot bless or defend what is defiled.**

I will wax bold at this point and affirm that **desolation is nearly always preceded by a condition that is spiritually abominable before God** – a condition that arouses the wrath of the thrice-holy God. Whether it is expulsion from the Garden (Gen 3:24), a scattering at Babel (Gen 11:8), or the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 19:43-44), abominable conditions always preceded the associated judgment.

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

The Relevance of This to Our Day

This principle accounts for the spiritual desolation that exists in our day – a day of a famine “of hearing the Words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). It accounts for the dispersion of believers, and the remarkable degree of division that exists among professed believers. The prominence of false prophets may also be traced back to this condition. There are abominations within the church – conditions that are intolerable to God. Among other things this consists of a “form of godliness that denies the power thereof” (2 Tim 3:6), friendship with the world (James 4:4), an ignorance of God (Eph 4:18), a high degree of tolerance with false teaching (Rev 2:20), and many departures from the faith (1 Tim 4:1).

God will not bless an impure and faltering church, any more than

He would a disobedient and compromising Israel.

Astute organizational structures, church growth programs, and the likes, will not bring a faltering church into a spiritually upright position. There must first be a desolation of unacceptable conditions before genuine renewal can be experienced. That is why Israel was told, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). It is why a transgressing church is told, “Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (James 4:10).

God sent Nebuchadnezzar against Israel for her sins (1 Chron 6:15). Twice God stirred up an adversary against Solomon because of his sins (1 Kgs 11:14,25). The whole nation of Judah was judged because Manasseh had “provoked” the Lord (2 Kgs 23:26). Our text declared the momentary success of Antiochus Epiphanes because of the deplorable state of Israel. Let us rid ourselves of any notion that God will overlook sin in His church. The fact of the matter is this: “For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God:** and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Pet 4:17-18). It is in order to seriously ponder these realities, and to seek to be among the concerned.

STRONG IN THE MIDST OF OPPRESSION

“³² And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”

We will now see that there are

whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom 6:16). No person is his own master, for “the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer 10:23). **A person who cannot direct his own steps cannot possibly be his**

“ . . . And such as do wickedly against the covenant . . . ” Other versions read, “those who act wickedly toward the covenant,”^{NASB} “those who have violated the covenant,”^{NIV} and “those who were disloyal to the covenant.”^{NAB}

These are Jews who submitted themselves to the idolatrous practices of the Greeks – breaking their covenant with the Living God. That agreement was stated at Sinai: “All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do” (Ex 19:8). When they entered into Canaan, Israel made the agreement again: “The LORD our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey” (Josh 24:24). Following the Babylonian captivity, they affirmed the covenant again: “and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God’s law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His judgments and His statutes” (Neh 10:29).

It is no wonder that the angel refers to these covenant-breakers as doing “wickedly against the covenant.” We should not expect such people to prosper, or to gain benefits from the heathen to whom they willingly subjected themselves.

WE WILL NOW SEE THAT THERE ARE CERTAIN PENALTIES REALIZED BY A DEFECTION FROM THE LORD. THEY SUDDENLY ARE AT THE MERCY OF WICKED MEN, FOR WHOM THEY HAVE ABANDONED THE LORD AND HIS WAYS.

certain penalties realized by a defection from the Lord. **They suddenly are at the mercy of wicked men, for whom they have abandoned the Lord and His ways.** It is not only true that “no man can serve two masters” (Matt 6:24), it is also true that **every one serves one master.** Paul stated it succinctly when he wrote, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are to whom ye obey;**

own master – and there is not a person who can direct their own path, or be the master of their own destiny.

The principle we will see here is that those who chose to abandon the Lord will be at the mercy of the wicked.

SUCH AS DO WICKEDLY AGAINST THE COVENANT

HE SHALL CORRUPT BY FLATTERIES

“ . . . shall he corrupt by flatteries . . . ” Other versions read, “by smooth words he will turn to godlessness,”^{NASB} “seduce with intrigue,”^{NRSV} “will be turned to sin by his fair words,”^{BBE} “shall be corrupt by blandishments,”^{JPS} and “make some . . . to apostatize.”^{NAB}

The people who did not cleave to the “holy covenant” would be deceived into further impiety and apostasy. The implication is that these people thought they could use Antiochus to their advantage. Instead, however, he used them to his advantage, **for the wicked cannot be manipulated by men for personal advantage.**

Like corruptors do, this king overcame disobedient people by “good words and fair speeches” (Rom 16:18), and “great swelling words” (Jude 1:16). Perhaps he offered them gifts, knowing that “every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts” (Prov 19:6). In this case, the people were overthrown by what was deceitfully given to them. As it is written, “he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it (the land)” (Prov 29:4). It is ever true, “A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet” (Prov 29:5). How vividly this is seen in Antiochus Epiphanes.

A Principle to Be Seen

An extremely important kingdom principle is seen in this text – a principle that transcends covenants, spanning all time. **When a person or people refuse to receive from God, God will dictate their delusion, choosing those delusions for them, and ensuring that they are effective.**

There is no question about this being true, for the Spirit has spoken expressly. Under the Old Covenant God spoke to those who insisted on walking in ways that did not delight Him. **“I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not”** (Isa 66:4).

Under the New Covenant the Spirit speaks of one “whose coming is

after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause **God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness”** (2 Thess 2:9-12).

Those who treat their relationship to God through Christ with contempt cannot avoid the judgment of God. Unless they repent, they will be sent delusions they will not be able to decipher – delusions that will drag

resist him.” While it is true that those who know their God would not be taken in by the flatteries of this king, more is intended by this word than that. The word translated “do exploits” is one that signifies accomplishment, advance, and bringing forth. It includes the idea of producing, fashioning, making, and preparing.^{STRONGS}

The people that “do know their God” are declared to do more than simply resist the encroachments of Antiochus Epiphanes – although that alone would require considerable effort. Two things are said of these people.

They Will Be Strong

It is one thing to “be strong” when

THOSE WHO TREAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD THROUGH CHRIST WITH CONTEMPT CANNOT AVOID THE JUDGMENT OF GOD. UNLESS THEY REPENT, THEY WILL BE SENT DELUSIONS THEY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO DECIPHER – DELUSIONS THAT WILL DRAG THEM DOWN TO PERDITION.

them down to perdition. **I want to emphasize that it is not possible to avoid Divinely imposed delusion if the love of the truth is not received.** We are living in a time when the truth is not held in high regard. The views of men are being held too high, creating an environment in which delusion thrives. This is a time to be sober and vigilant, and “valiant for the truth” (Jer 9:3).

THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THEIR GOD

“ . . . but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.” Other versions read, “but the people who know their God will display strength and take action,”^{NASB} “but the people who know their God will firmly resist him,”^{NIV} and “but the people who have knowledge of their God will be strong and do well.”^{BBE}

Some of the versions are particularly weak on this verse – such as the NIV that renders “do exploits” “firmly

the people are flourishing, the enemy is subdued, and the favor of God is resting upon your nation. It is quite another thing to “be strong” when your city is being invaded, the Temple of your God is being desecrated, and bloodshed and oppression is all around you.

Being “strong” includes being courageous, obstinate against iniquity, and having a forwardness to live godly when it is not fashionable. Strength also includes the idea of constancy, establishment, and being valiant.

Commenting on the occasion being foretold to Daniel, Josephus wrote, “that many of the Jews indeed, some willingly, and others through fear of punishment, obeyed the king’s commands; but the more approved, and those of generous minds, had a greater regard to the customs of their country than to the punishment threatened to the disobedient; and for this being continually harassed, and enduring grievous punishments, died; some were scourged, and their bodies mutilated, and being yet alive and breathing, were crucified; women and their children,

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

whom they crucified, were by the king's orders strangled, and hanged about the necks of their parents that were crucified." Antiquities. 1. 12. c. 5. sect. 4. That was an exhibition of great strength!

In the book of Hebrews, the Spirit refers to people who endured through

and his sons, especially by the heroic Judas Maccabaeus, certainly knew their God, and as certainly did exploits." PULPIT COMMENTARY

The Source of Their Strength and Exploits

The angel accounts for the

The "knowledge of God" accounts for spiritual strength and exploits. The lack of "the knowledge of God" accounts for spiritual weakness and the lack of fruit.

Following the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, what the Spirit says about "the knowledge of God" confirms its centrality in the Divine economy. It is always attached to something pivotal.

THESE PEOPLE ACTUALLY MADE SOME PROGRESS, AND FORGED SOME NEW SPIRITUAL TRAILS DURING A TIME OF OPPRESSION. THEY NOT ONLY HELD THEIR GROUND, THEY MADE SOME ADVANCEMENT. THEY GATHERED ALL OF THE COURAGE FAITH COULD MUSTER AND GLADLY DISCHARGED THEIR DUTY BEFORE THE LORD.

great strength. Some are of the opinion the group includes some who lived during this intertestamental period. "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb 11:35-38).

They Will Do Exploits

These people actually made some progress, and forged some new spiritual trails during a time of oppression. They not only held their ground, they made some advancement. They gathered all of the courage faith could muster and gladly discharged their duty before the Lord. "Even when Epiphanes seemed most nearly successful, there was a deep-seated opposition to this Hellenizing process. Especially prominent were those who were zealous for the Law, the Hasidim, or, to give them the name they have in the Book of Maccabees, the Assidseans. These religionists, headed by Mattathias

strength and exploits of these faithful Jews. **They knew their God!** Their association with God through their faith caused them to be strong and accomplish what was otherwise impossible. Of all of the knowledge available to men, this is the primary and most foundational knowledge – "the knowledge of God."

When David instructed Solomon he said, "know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart" (1 Chron 28:9). Those who truly know the Lord will put their trust in Him (Psa 9:10). That is why they are strong and "do exploits."

In The New Covenant

Within the New Covenant, all of the constituents of that covenant know their God, and none of them are ignorant of Him. Of that covenant it is written, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer 31:34; Heb 8:11).

☐ **ETERNAL LIFE IS KNOWING GOD.** "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

☐ **GRACE AND PEACE ARE ADMINISTERED THROUGH THIS KNOWLEDGE.** "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet 1:2).

☐ **THINGS PERTAINING TO LIFE AND GODLINESS ARE REALIZED THROUGH THIS KNOWLEDGE.** "According as His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet 1:3).

☐ **WE ESCAPE THE POLLUTIONS OF THE WORLD THROUGH THIS KNOWLEDGE.** "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Pet 2:20).

A lack of familiarity with God guarantees weakness and falling before the enemy. These are arresting realities to consider. However, it assists us to perceive the real people of God, and distinguish them from imposters.

UNDERSTANDING, INSTRUCTION, YET AN OVERTHROW

³³ *And they that understand | among the people shall instruct | many: yet they shall fall by the*

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days."

Here the angel continues to elaborate upon those who are not taken in by the flatteries and aggression of Antiochus Epiphanes. Not only are they described as "they that do know their God," but they also are "they that understand." It is possible that these are two separate groups of people, each excelling in these virtues. It seems more likely to me, however, that this is an explanation of some of the "exploits" accomplished by those who "do know their God."

THEY THAT UNDERSTAND

"And they that understand among the people shall instruct many . . ." Other versions read, "those who have insight among the people will give understanding to many,"^{NASB} "those who are wise will instruct many,"^{NIV} "they that are wise among the people shall instruct the many,"^{DARBY} "The knowledgeable among the people will make the many understand."^{TNK}

These are people regarded by heaven as wise and with understanding. They are not men whose intellects have been trained by rote, or those who are only well read in the works of men. Those who are truly wise have a grasp of the Word of God and a cognizance of His purpose. They are individuals who can "handle aright the Word of God," and traffic in eternal verity. All of this flows out from their knowledge of and acquaintance with the God of heaven.

Such individuals are like the men of Issachar "which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chr 12:32). They can "discern the signs of the times," (Matt 16:3), and thus not be taken in by the flatteries of Antiochus Epiphanes. These are people whom God has "taught knowledge," and whom He had made to "understand doctrine" (Isa 28:9).

Such people, the angel tells Daniel, will "make many understand." They will bring such wonderful knowledge to the people as will enable them to stand in the evil day Eph 6:13). Even in the day of assault, when apostasy was prominent in Israel, and some of the chosen people were

siding with an idolatrous heathen king, there remained some who "feared the Lord," and had understanding. Rather than caving in to the pressure of the times, they dispensed real knowledge, assisting humble souls to be strong, and to stand.

For Those in Christ Jesus

For those in Christ Jesus, this kind of understanding is called "the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col 1:9). It is comprehending with all saints "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ,

Cor 14:16). No amount of academic credentials, worldly expertise, or administrative skills can compensate for a lack of such understanding.

YET THEY SHALL FALL BY THE SWORD, FLAME, CAPTIVITY, AND SPOIL

". . . yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days." Other versions read, "yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering,"^{NKJV} "yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by

SURELY YOU KNOW THAT WE ARE LIVING IN A TIME WHEN SUCH KNOWLEDGE IS EXCEEDINGLY RARE. IN THE RELIGIOUS WORLD, THIS IS A DAY OF INTELLECTUAL MIMICRY AND BORROWED KNOWLEDGE. THE PREPONDERANCE OF CHRISTIAN SPEAKING IS MUCH LIKE A COMPENDIUM OF QUOTATIONS AND VIEWS FROM OTHER MEN.

which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Eph 3:19). These are the individuals who are "of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb 5:14).

Surely you know that we are living in a time when such knowledge is exceedingly rare. In the religious world, this is a day of intellectual mimicry and borrowed knowledge. The preponderance of *Christian* speaking is much like a compendium of quotations and views from other men. While such an approach may have measured value under certain circumstances, it is certainly not the mode of the kingdom.

Those who teach the people of God must themselves have some "spiritual understanding," being able to discern good and evil, decipher the times, and handle the Word of truth correctly. If they cannot do this, they should promptly be seated in "the room of the unlearned" (1

plunder, for many days,"^{NASB} and "though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered."^{NIV}

Here we come to grips with the nature of spiritual knowledge and godly instruction. Some imagine that a good understanding and faithful teaching guarantees longevity – even though there is nothing in the Word of God to support such a notion. Here is a group of godly people, endowed with good understanding, and faithful in communicating that understanding to others. Yet, things did not consistently go well for them.

For a period of time these faithful teachers were subjected to such opposition that they fell by the sword, were burned alive, taken captive, or had their goods plundered. These were the kind of people to which the Spirit referred in Hebrews. "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned,

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth” (Heb 11:38).

The author of the book of Maccabees records some of the terrible things to which these faithful people were subjected.

“2:31 Now when it was told the king’s servants, and the host that was at Jerusalem, in the city of David, that certain men, who had broken the king’s commandment, were gone down into the secret places in the wilderness, 2:32 They pursued after them a great number, and having overtaken them, they camped against them, and made war against them on the sabbath day. 2:33 And they said unto them, Let that which ye have done hitherto suffice; come forth, and do according to the commandment of the king, and ye shall live. 2:34 But they said, We will not come forth, neither will we do the king’s commandment, to profane the sabbath day. 2:35 So then they gave them the battle with all speed. 2:36 Howbeit they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped the places where they lay hid; 2:37 But said, Let us die all in our innocence: heaven and

earth will testify for us, that ye put us to death wrongfully.

2:38 So they rose up against them in battle on the sabbath, and they slew them, with their wives and children and their cattle, to th number of a thousand people.” ^{2 Macc 2:31-38}

Another entry in the book of Maccabees reads: “And others, that had run together into caves near by, to keep the sabbath day secretly, being discovered by Philip, were all burnt together, because they made a conscience to help themselves for the honour of the most sacred day.” ^{2 Macc 6:11}

SOME OBSERVATIONS

The book of Revelation speaks of those who overcame the “*accuser*” of the brethren. The way that overcoming was realized is quite different from much of the talk being circulated in the Christian community in this day. Here is the testimony of the Spirit, spoken to the churches. “*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death*” (Rev 12:11). In this case, the evidence of Satan being overcome was not seen in him fleeing, as often occurs when he is resisted steadfastly (James 4:7). **Here the devil**

was overcome by means of a godly death – martyrdom, if you please.

There are some testimonies that are sealed with the blood of the teacher. Stephen was such a man, as well as Peter, Paul, Antipas, and a host of others. Spiritual understanding and being an excellent teacher do not guarantee long life. It will, however, bring about a death that will glorify God (John 21:19), guaranteeing that an “*entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet 1:11).

Our Day

This is the day of religious careers, financially profitable ministries, and happy religious entertainment. It is a day of religious froth that will not sustain the soul in the time of trial. We do well to take heed to the message being delivered to Daniel. The Lord does not hide from this man of God what is up ahead. **It is not all pleasant.** It is also very possible that your earthly experience will not always be pleasant. However, in living by faith and walking in the Spirit, there is no reason why you cannot be one of those strong souls who do great exploits.

A LITTLE HELP

“³⁴ Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.”

popularity. I cannot over-emphasize the vanity of the type of religion that is being promoted in our day. This is a time of spiritual shallowness, surface

“Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help . . . ” Other versions read, “*Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help,*”^{NKJV} “*Now when they fall they will be granted a little help*”^{NASB} “*While all these persecutions are going on, a little help will arrive,*”^{NLT} and “*In defeat, they will receive a little help.*”^{TNK}

I WANT TO KEEP BEFORE YOU THAT WE ARE BEING EXPOSED TO THE DIVINE NATURE, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH GOD GOVERNS HIS KINGDOM. THERE ARE LARGER THINGS IN VIEW THAN PERSONAL COMFORT, FINANCIAL SECURITY, AND WORLDLY POPULARITY.

First, the summation of the thought here expounded is this: although Antiochus had determined to stamp out the Jewish religion, making Greeks out of all the Jews, the true worship of Jehovah and the propagation of the Law continued. **His efforts were not successful, even though he outnumbered the Jews in staggering proportions.**

I want to keep before you that we are being exposed to the Divine nature, and the manner in which God governs His kingdom. **There are larger things in view than personal comfort, financial security, and worldly**

explanations, and fleshly values. If we will receive it, this text will assist in delivering us from the snares associated with such times.

HELPED A LITTLE

This passage most probably refers

to the rise of the Maccabees, who refused to give in to the demands of Antiochus Epiphanes. They championed a return to the Law and the testimony, fighting against the imposition of Grecian manners. They were sorely outnumbered, yet achieved some remarkable success.

The record of the rise of the Maccabees is found in the second chapter of First Maccabees. The work of Judas Maccabeus was involved, who was the one who cleansed the temple of the defilements imposed upon it by Antiochus. That cleansing was referred to in Daniel 8:14, which word was expounded by Gabriel the angel. The **McClintok and Strong's Cyclopedia of Biblical Knowledge** records the following of Judas Maccabeus and his followers.

"(MACCABAE'US), a title (usually in the plural – "the Maccabees"), which was originally the surname of Judas, one of the sons of Mattathias, but was afterwards extended to the heroic family of which he was one of the noblest representatives, and in a still wider sense to the Palestinian martyrs in the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, SEE MACCABEES 4, and even to the Alexandrine Jews who suffered for their faith at an earlier time. SEE 3 MACCABEES. In the following account of the Maccabean family and revolution we shall endeavor to fill up this interesting interval of inspiration."

John Gill says this of the stand of the Maccabees. "When the Jews shall be thus harassed and distressed by Antiochus and his armies, to the ruin of many, by the several sorts of punishments inflicted on them; they should be helped and eased a little by Mattathias, a priest of Modin, and his five sons, commonly called the Maccabees; Porphyry himself interprets this of Mattathias: the help and assistance which he and his sons gave to the Jews was but 'little'; if we consider they were persons of a small figure, began with a handful of men, and could do but little, especially at first; and though great exploits were done by them, considering their number and strength, yet they were not able to restore the land to its former glory and liberty; nor did this help of theirs last long, but the enemy returned with great fierceness and cruelty, and sadly afflicted the people of the Jews."

The point of the angel, however, is not merely that a "little help" came from some fellow Jews. **Rather, it is that God sent them a little help through this band of faithful men. It was like "a little reviving" in bondage** (Ezra 9:8).

In this case, the "little help" kept the faith alive, and the nation in place for the coming of the Messiah in "the fulness of the time." Antiochus Epiphanes' purpose was to hellenize the Jews, wiping out their religion, and making idol-worshiping Greeks out of them. Behind his effort, however, the devil was making an aggressive attempt to stop the Seed of the woman from coming into the world through these chosen people. He was thwarted, praise God, by "a little help."

Something to Learn

There is a great lesson to be

spiritual, and are motivated more by pride than by faith.

History tells us that some, seeing the success of the Maccabees, joined with them, seeking earthly honor instead of God's glory. The book of Maccabees records the following. "Joseph the son of Zacharias, and Azarias, captains of the garrisons, heard of the valiant acts and warlike deeds which they had done. 57 Wherefore they said, Let us also get us a name, and go fight against the heathen that are round about us." ^{1 Maccabees 5:56}

Religious Success Breeds

THE LORD IS FULLY CAPABLE OF REVERSING SATANIC INITIATIVES WITH THINGS THAT ARE FOOLISH AND DESPISED, DOING SO AMIDST WHAT APPEARS TO BE NEAR-TOTAL VICTORY BY THE ENEMY.

learned here. Believers must come to the point where they do not despise "small things" (Zech 4:10) and "little help." **The Lord is fully capable of reversing Satanic initiatives with things that are foolish and despised, doing so amidst what appears to be near-total victory by the enemy.**

With all of the contemporary emphasis on largeness, it is good to remember that God does not need large numbers of people to keep the truth alive.

MANY SHALL CLEAVE TO THEM WITH FLATTERIES

"... but many shall cleave to them with flatteries." Other versions read, "but many shall join with them by intrigue," ^{NKJV} "and many will join with them in hypocrisy," ^{NASB} "though many who join them will not be sincere," ^{NLT} and "and many will join them insincerely." ^{TNK}

Here the angel informs Daniel that some will join the efforts to resist Antiochus, even though they are not doing so out of noble motives. They will not be sincere, even though they expend a seemingly hearty effort in the behalf of good. However, their hearts are not in the matter. They are more nationalistic than

Hypocrisy

Here again we see a principle with which we must struggle in our day. Often the seeming success of the church is like an open door into which hypocrites and false teachers can enter. Something like this was involved in the surfacing of Ananias and Sapphira in the early church (Acts 5). It was also found in the desire of Simon the Sorcerer to purchase the ability to confer the Holy Spirit with the laying on of hands (Acts 8:19-20). John also spoke of some who spent some time with the Apostles, yet finally went out from them, because they were not of them (1 John 2:19). Paul also wrote of those who "preached Christ of contention, and not sincerely" Phil 1:16).

While we are not to be suspicious, or go about "thinking evil" of every one who seeks to be identified with the church, we are to be sober and alert for those who would come in unawares. Some enter to "spy out our liberty" (Gal 2:4). Others seek to judge us in respect various expressions of the Law that do not apply to us (Col 2:16).

One of the fundamental weaknesses of developing what is termed "seeker friendly churches" is found in this

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very area. **The motivation for edifying the body and seeking the lost must be higher than trying to please of attract men.** Our fundamental desire must be to please the

Lord, and to labor together with Him. Even when we do this faithfully, we will encounter our share of people who tend to join with us in hypocrisy. **It is foolish in the extreme to pursue a course that**

actually tends to encourage such reactions. If we keep our affection placed on things above, we will be more safe, more able to resist the devil, and more suitable for glory.

TRYING, PURGING, AND MADE WHITE

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

As the angel continues to unfold

all! Remember, God is governing all of these affairs.

These are not those who are wise after the flesh, for God accounts such wisdom to really be foolishness (1 Cor 1:20-21; 3:19). These are those who are wise in things

Sam 22:1).

In Our Times

Believers should not be surprised by temporary setbacks – even when they appear to be rather serious. I am not speaking of lapses into immorality or unbelief, for that is altogether intolerable. I am rather referring to times when the enemy seems to have the upper hand. Paul expressed such times in very arresting language. *“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life”* (2 Cor 1:8). Hear him testify again. *“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed”* (2 Cor 4:8-9).

BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED BY TEMPORARY SETBACKS – EVEN WHEN THEY APPEAR TO BE RATHER SERIOUS. I AM NOT SPEAKING OF LAPSES INTO IMMORALITY OR UNBELIEF, FOR THAT IS ALTOGETHER INTOLERABLE.

what will befall Daniel’s people, it becomes apparent that the future is not all glowing with pleasantries. There are some rough paths, steep mountains, and deep valleys in the future. Some deserts will have to be crossed, and some enemies will have to be faced. There will be chastening as well as tender mercies, and correction as well as commendation. It is imperative that we rid ourselves of naive views of being the people of God.

SOME WITH UNDERSTANDING WILL FALL

“And some of them of understanding shall fall . . . ” Other versions read, *“some of those who have insight will fall,”*^{NASB} *“some of the wise will stumble,”*^{NIV} and *“some who are wise will fall victim to persecution.”*^{NLT}

The angel is quick to say that only *“some of them with understanding”* will fall into the hands of their oppressors. This will not be the experience of them

pertaining to God. In particular, these were men who knew the covenant, and were acquainted with both its manners and its requirements. They did not have academic wisdom like the Scribes and Pharisees, but possessed understanding that came from God.

It may appear on the surface, because there is so few such individuals, that they can never be subjected to worldly restraint, persecution, or martyrdom. However, that is not the case. Throughout the history of this world, wise and godly men have been subjected to all manner of persecution. Daniel is told it will be no different in the future.

The word *“fall”* does not mean fall away from the Lord, fall from the faith, or fall into sin. There would be some setbacks for these noble souls – some defeats and frustrations. It would be like David fleeing from Saul (1 Sam 20:1; 21:10), or hiding in the cave of Adullam (1

Sometimes the servant of God, while engaged in a good work, must be lowered over a wall in a basket to escape his enemies (Acts 9:26). Sometimes they are stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19). God’s people must become acquainted with this kingdom reality: *“and some of them of understanding shall fall”* – fall into the hands of the enemy, and into hard times!

TRIED, PURGED, AND MADE WHITE

“. . . to try them, and to purge, and to make them white . . . ” Other versions read, *“to refine them, purify them, and make them white,”*^{NKJV} *“in order to refine, purge, and make them pure,”*^{NASB} and *“refined, purified, and made spotless.”*^{NIV}

There are lofty purposes that are served by trials and tribulations. Here the angel mentions three of them. **Refining** is like being put into the fire to

burn out impurities. **Purging** is like being polished to a bright shine, where blemishes and imperfections are buffed out of one's character. Being **made white** is like being washed and scrubbed, so as to remove defiling spots.

Keep in mind, here the angel is not referring to pretenders, as those who joined themselves to the defenders of the faith with flatteries. These were genuine men of God. They had valid understanding, and were faithfully teaching others in the Jewish manner while Antiochus was attempting to make idol-worshipping Greeks out of them all.

Here is a marvelous thing to behold! **In the oppositions these men were enduring, things were being worked together for their good.** Over and above the activities of their enemies, their God was at work, orchestrating everything for their ultimate good. Through their afflictions they were being refined, purged, and made white. They were being oriented for the world to come by being purged from the defilements of this world – and it was all being accomplished through their enemies. Who but God can work such things!

Life in Christ Jesus

Try as we may, as long as we are in this world, there are impurities, blemishes, and defilements that attach themselves to us. These are not things that are preferred, but are the consequence of being in a cursed and dying world. The dregs of mortality cling too easily to us. Tribulations, working together with the grace of God, help to rid us of such defilements.

The Word of God speaks of the very effects chronicled in this text. It provides sound reasons for suffering affliction.

- ▣ *“But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, **that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead**” (2 Cor 1:9)*
- ▣ *“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, **that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us**” (2 Cor 4:7).*

▣ *“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, **that we should not be condemned with the world**” (1 Cor 11:32).*

▣ *“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there*

end,”^{NKJV} “until the end time,”^{NASB} “till the time be out,”^{GENEVA} “until the time of the End,”^{NJB} “till the end of the time.”^{YLT}

The point of this expression is not to point to the end of time – but to the end of the oppression. **That is, the time of suffering has a Divinely imposed**

THE POINT OF THIS EXPRESSION IS NOT TO POINT TO THE END OF TIME – BUT TO THE END OF THE OPPRESSION. THAT IS, THE TIME OF SUFFERING HAS A DIVINELY IMPOSED LIMIT. THE VERY FACT THAT THESE SUFFERINGS WERE INTENDED TO REFINE, PURIFY, AND PURGE GOD’S PEOPLE IS PROOF ENOUGH THAT THEY WILL NOT CONTINUE FOREVER.

was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” (2 Cor 12:7).

▣ *“So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, **that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer**” (2 Thess 1:4-5).*

This is part of what is involved in the marvelous working of God on our behalf. As it is written, *“And we know that all things **work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose**” (Rom 8:28).* The words *“work together”* refer to God causing things to serve an appointed purpose.

TO THE TIME OF THE END

“ . . . even to the time of the end.” Other versions read, *“until the time of the*

limit. The very fact that these sufferings were intended to refine, purify, and purge God’s people is proof enough that they will not continue forever. **As soon as their objective is realized, God will bring a conclusion to them.** That is a most comforting prospect.

This is further confirmed in the next phrase, which categorically affirms an appointed duration of the declared afflictions.

A TIME APPOINTED

“ . . . because it is yet for a time appointed.” Other versions read, *“it is still to come at the appointed time,”^{NASB} and “it is still for a fixed time.”^{BBE}*

The *“time appointed”* pertains to the entire trial, not just to its beginning. The time of its initiation was appointed. Its purpose was appointed. Its duration was appointed. The refining will satisfactorily be completed. The purging will be accomplished on schedule. Being made white will conclude acceptably.

The people of God are tried, purged, and made white by most a most grievous assault, by Given O. Blakely

CONCLUSION

This was a hard revelation to be received because Daniel loved the people of God, His land, and His Sanctuary. To hear of the people being slaughtered, the land being invaded, and the Sanctuary being defiled was anything but good news. Yet, these were Divine determinations, and the Lord desired to share them with Daniel, the one who was *“greatly beloved.”* He knew that Daniel could handle this knowledge, mingling it with supplications and persistent godliness.

What is God able to share with

people of God offend you?

These are not pleasant things to consider, just as what Daniel was shown did not produce feelings of great joy within him. They are part and parcel of the *“fellowship of His sufferings,”* in which an experience of Divine fellowship is realized that cannot otherwise be known. Yet, there are truths that God is seeking to share with those who can be faithful custodians of them – men and women who will not be overcome by such considerations, but will rather enter into

Ezekiel's Experience

On one occasion, the Lord revealed to Ezekiel the coming judgment of His people. Ezekiel was a young man, yet he was sensitive to the Lord. He was shown *“six men,”* coming by way of *“the higher gate.”* Every one of them had *“a slaughter weapon in his hand.”* It was an awesome sight, indeed. One man among them was *“clothed with linen,”* with a *“writer's inkhorn by his side.”*

All six men went in and stood beside the brazen altar. The glory of the Lord was present in that place. Suddenly the Lord called out to *“the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side.”* A solemn commission was given to him. *“Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof”* (Ezek 9:4).

Simultaneously, the Lord called out to the other men. *“Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house”* (Ezek 9:6).

What about you? **Would that man with the inkhorn have placed a mark upon you?** Do you sigh and cry for the abominations that are found among the people of God? Does the failure of men to declare the truth agitate your spirit? Are you grieved when corruption surfaces among those identified with Jesus? If so, you are probably considered strange by some. But you are duly noted and honored in heaven! You are also a part of the unique fellowship of the concerned ones.

WHAT IS GOD ABLE TO SHARE WITH YOU? WHAT PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE IS HE ABLE TO PROFITABLY OPEN TO YOU? CAN HE SHOW YOU THE TRAGEDY OF A GREAT FALLING AWAY? OR THE RISE OF A SPIRITUAL BABYLON? CAN HE OPEN TO YOUR UNDERSTANDING THE REALITIES OF A DAY WHEN MEN HAVE A FORM OF GODLINESS, YET DENY THE POWER THEREOF. DOES THE THOUGHT OF THE PERSECUTION AND OPPRESSION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD OFFEND YOU?

you? **What portions of Scripture is He able to profitably open to you? Can He show you the tragedy of a great falling away? Or the rise of a spiritual Babylon?** Can He open to your understanding the realities of a day when men have a form of godliness, yet deny the power thereof. Does the thought of the persecution and oppression of the

a fellowship with the Lord concerning them.

Perhaps you are such a person. If not, your faith can qualify you to be such an one. If you are affected by the abuses or truth, the people of God, and the city of God, you will be especially noted by the Lord.

Plan to attend the next Refreshing Waters Renewal
The Theme is, “The Grace of God”
July 29-31, 2003, in Indianapolis, Indiana

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/30/2003. We will continue in our overview of Daniel, reviewing verses 36-45 of the eleventh chapter. The title of our lesson is, "THE FUTURE IS UNFOLDED TO DANIEL, #6." The angel continues to unfold coming events, revealing the apparent invincibility of a political and spiritual tyrant. Yet, that despot will come to an end, with none being able to help him. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, Jonathan, and Eva
406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Jonathan (Jonstalk@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)
Adah Hutchcraft (ALHutchcraft@milligan.edu), Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@esr.edu)

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

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