

His empire will span every continent and his rule will be the most demonic the world has ever experienced. He will rise to world domination by declaring himself a Man of Peace, he will later plunge the world into global war. Eventually his true character will be revealed. He will control the global economy and most of the world will follow him willingly. At the apex of his power he will launch an all-out attack on Jesus Christ and offer himself to the world as the true savior of humanity. For a short period of time he will become the most powerful man on earth, but his reign of terror will come to a sudden end – he will be destroyed by Jesus, when Christ returns to the earth to set up his kingdom.

These verses in Daniel do not say exactly who the Antichrist will be, but they do describe a series of military maneuvers that will take place during the last few years of the Tribulation. The “King of the South” will fight with the “King of the North.” Keeping in mind Daniel’s knowledge of geography and using Jerusalem as the center point, the “King of the South” refers to an alliance of armies that may include present-day Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other North African nations. The “King of the North” could come from Syria, Turkey, Russia, or one of the regions of the former USSR. As the Antichrist tries to consolidate his power, he will invade and conquer Israel, the “Beautiful Land.” Toward the end of the Tribulation, there will be “reports from the east and the north” which will alarm the Antichrist; and he will set out to “destroy and annihilate many” in the lands of Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, Southeast Asia, and the Far East.

The biblical “Battle of Armageddon” will be a military campaign involving multiple armies, countless battles, and millions of soldiers. These battles will range over a vast area of land, but will be centered in the Middle East. Armies from the north and east will move against the Antichrist, causing a bloodbath previously unknown in human history. As the mightiest armies on earth converge on Israel, the stage will be set for the final act in human history.

He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him (11:45). As the Antichrist prepares to go to war, he sets up his military headquarters near Jerusalem (the “beautiful holy mountain”) between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. The final battle will take place on the plains of Jezreel in central Israel, near a crossroads called Megiddo. The Hebrew term for “Mountain of Megiddo” is Har Megiddo, which comes into English as Armageddon. Today, visitors to that area can see a man-made mountain formed across the centuries by the successive settlements built one on top of another.

Verse 45 tells us nothing about how the Antichrist will be defeated, but it says his end will be sudden, swift, and unexpected. 2 Thessalonians 2:8, however, describes the final end of the Antichrist this way: *And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.*

Ponder the scene for a moment: millions of soldiers moving toward the Middle East, armed with the very latest high-tech weaponry and enough firepower to destroy the earth several times over. They fully intend to use their arsenals on each other, but at the last second the armies cease fighting each other and join together in a final assault on the Lord Jesus Christ. As the Lord begins descending from heaven, missiles fly straight toward the figure on the white horse, but before they can reach their mark, the Lord Jesus Christ opens his mouth and literally blows them all away.

The battle is over before it starts. Men run for cover but there is nowhere to hide. The great Day of Judgment has come and no one can escape. The apostle John gives us this vivid description of that moment:

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean (Rev. 19:11-14).

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur (Rev. 19:19-20).

The message is clear: you can’t take on God and win. You can fight God if you like, but as the wise man said: your arms are too short to box with God. The only way to be on the winning side is to be on God’s side.

So, what are we to do with this prophecy? How should we respond to the truth about the coming Antichrist? **Be Prepared.** The worst is yet to come. No matter how good the world

seems to be in terms of technology, the moral compass is pointing in the wrong direction. Our modern attitude of “live and let live” and our propensity to let each person do as he or she sees fit is paving the way for an outbreak of evil beyond anything we have yet seen.

Be Alert. The Last Days will be a time of confusion and spiritual delusion. We must be alert to the spirit of Antichrist that is already in the world; a spirit that tries to make us think that sin isn’t really sinful and that there is no such thing as right and wrong. It also seduces us into silence when we ought to speak out.

Be Bold. This is no time for compromise. In the days to come we will see persecution grow worse as those who know Christ are ridiculed for their faith. It’s already happening in many places around the world: Christians are imprisoned in China, they are criminals in Malaysia, and they are beheaded by ISIS terrorists in the Middle East. Such persecution is a sign that the forces opposing Jesus are fighting back with all their might. May God bless those Christians who follow Christ openly and who will pay a heavy price. May God give us the same kind of bold faith to stand up for Jesus no matter the cost.

Be encouraged. The Antichrist will rise and fall when Christ returns to set up his kingdom on earth. Even the Antichrist is an instrument in God’s hand; he can do nothing without God’s permission. His time on earth is part of God’s plan. When his time on earth is up, he will be utterly destroyed.

Be found in Christ. There never has been a better time to stand with Jesus. Eventually the whole world will have to make a choice: Christ or Antichrist. We must choose Christ! Today is the day of our salvation. When we lay our sins at the cross of Jesus, believing that he died for us and that he rose again on the third day, when we open our hearts to him and trust him as our Lord and Savior, then no matter what the future holds, we will have nothing to fear.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the Word of Truth given to us many centuries ago through Daniel. We have seen it fulfilled before our eyes and we believe that what is not yet fulfilled will come to pass in your own time and according to your good plan. Strengthen our faith and make us bold for Jesus Christ. May we never be ashamed to live for him for he was not ashamed to die for us. Give us a spirit of encouragement and deep joy that comes from knowing that you are in control of all things. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

When History and Prophecy Meet

Sunday, April 12, 2015

The Federated Church, Fergus Falls, MN

Daniel 11:36-45

In 1968, “Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In” made its debut on television. One of the regular features of the show was “News from the Future”: two news anchormen acted as though they were reporting breaking news from decades in the future. They tried to be as funny and as outlandish as possible with this fake news; and yet, there were two things they “predicted” with humor that actually came true! They forecast that actor Ronald Reagan would be elected president of the United States, and they reported the fall of the Berlin Wall. Even though it was meant as humor, these two predictions actually came true. I guess even false prophets are right some of the time; much like a broken clock is still right two times each day. But God’s prophets are correct all of the time, as we’ll see in Daniel 11.

Daniel 11 is an amazing chapter of Scripture. It contains a detailed preview of world history broken into two parts. Verses 1-35 contain over 100 specific predictions that have already been fulfilled; they were prophecy to Daniel, but are historical fact to us. They describe wars and political intrigues in the Greek empire following the death of Alexander the Great, and they describe the actions of a “contemptible person” whom we know from history as Antiochus IV Epiphanes. (His atrocities against the Jews are also described in Daniel 8.)

But beginning in verse 36 we come to a section of the prophecy of Daniel that is still prophecy for us today. The verses describe events that have no parallel in world history. Since the early days of the Christian church, most scholars see in these verses a description of the final end-time ruler known as the Antichrist.

As we’ve already discussed, the Antichrist is a man who will appear on the world scene in the Last Days, just before the return of Jesus Christ to earth. Described in both the Old and New Testaments, the Antichrist will be the very incarnation of evil cleverly disguised as a dynamic, charismatic, and visionary leader. He will astound the world with his exceptional solutions to very human problems.