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mitted to human lips to carry, and it was her love that made her the suited messenger for the Lord to use. The other women were not there; the disciples were not there; but Mary was there, a vessel meet for the Master's use. Her affection put her in the place where the Lord could reveal Himself to her; her affection placed her in the position where He could use her as His messenger to others. How eagerly she would carry out her commission! How great her excitement and joy, as she burst in upon the disciples and exclaimed, 'I have seen the Lord', and disclosed to them the things He had spoken to her! Later in the day the disciples saw the Lord, but He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

DANIEL'S FINAL PROPHECY

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Daniel, Chapters 11 and 12

The final prophetic revelation given to Daniel is recorded in Dan. 11:2 to 12:4. In the three verses that follow (12:5-7) Daniel is permitted to hear a conversation between two celestial beings and the man clothed in linen Whom we have seen to be the Lord Himself (Dan. 10:8), but does not understand the answer given. Then Daniel, intent on learning more of the wonders of God's purposes at the time of the end, asks a question and receives a gracious answer from the Lord (12:8-13).

The prophecy itself predicts consecutive events, sometimes with long intervals between, from that very moment in Daniel's life till the time of the end. For us who live twenty-four centuries later, the events foretold are divided into two main sections, namely:

(i) those that have had their historical fulfilment before our time (11:2-35), and (ii) those predictions which are yet to be fulfilled at the time of the end (11:36 to 12:4).

The four Persian kings of Dan. 11:2 were known historically as Cambyses, Pseudo Smerdis, Darius Hystaspis and Xerxes the most opulent of the Persian kings. The names given to the first

three in Scripture are Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes and Darius. The mighty king mentioned in 11:4 is Alexander the Great, at whose death the Grecian kingdom was divided into four parts, one to each of Alexander's four generals (11:4).

Between the kings of Syria (the North) and Egypt (the South) an alliance was effected by the marriage of the Egyptian princess, Berenice, daughter of the King of the South, to Antiochus Theos, King of the North; but this alliance ended in the murder of Berenice and her son by the King of Syria (v. 6). Berenice's brother avenged her death by invading and conquering Syria, and carrying into Egypt large quantities of gold and silver and many idols and vessels used in the temples of Syria (vs. 7-8). Later the King of the North invaded Egypt but was compelled to return defeated (v. 9). Note the prominence of the King of the North and the King of the South in this part of the prediction that has been historically fulfilled. They were Israel's enemies then, they are at the present time, and they will be among the powers hostile to Israel at the time of the end.

One of the sons of the King of the North mentioned in verse 10 was Antiochus the Great, the father of Antiochus Epiphanes who in verse 21 is called a 'vile person'. The events recorded in verses 10 to 19 concern the wars between Antiochus the Great, King of the North, and the King of Egypt. In the many battles fought between the years 217 and 190 B.C., at first Egypt, but later Syria, was victorious. Verse 16 predicts the invasion of the 'glorious land', Palestine, about the year 200 B.C., and its subjugation by Antiochus the Great. After his defeat by the Romans at Magnesia in 190 B.C. (v. 18), he returned to his own land where he died (v. 19) and was succeeded by Seleucus Philopater, who was poisoned by one of his officers. Then the infamous king, Antiochus Epiphanes, who had no claim to the throne of 'the North' because he was a younger son of Antiochus the Great, 'obtained the kingdom by flatteries'. In a previous study we have identified 'the little horn' of Dan. 8:9 with this wicked prince, Antiochus Epiphanes. His campaigns against Egypt are foretold in verses 22 to 25, and his subsequent successes in verses 26 to 28. The ships of Chittim mentioned in verse 30 have been variously

interpreted as the Roman fleet and as vessels of Cyprus. Faced with the stern commands and the naval forces of the Roman power, Antiochus was compelled to abandon his attack on Egypt, and on his return fell upon the land of Judaea (v. 30). The wickedness and horrors he perpetrated on the Jews in Jerusalem are concisely, yet graphically, described in v. 31. Many were put to the sword, and women and children were made captives. Grecian idolatry was enforced, and the sacrificial and ceremonial rites of Judaism were proscribed. The temple was polluted by sacrifices of swine's flesh and then dedicated to Jupiter Olympus. Among the Jews there were two classes,—those who submitted and sided with the enemy and those who knew their God and did exploits (v. 32). To the latter class belonged the valiant Maccabees. The three verses that follow foretell the persecution of the Jews during the present period, when by affliction God's earthly people are being purified and prepared for the appointed time and the acceptance of their Messiah when He returns to earth.

The 'time appointed' mentioned in verse 35 is 'the time of the end' dealt with in the ten concluding verses of Chapter 11. The events predicted in verses 2 to 35 have all been fulfilled. Between verse 35 and verse 36 an unreckoned period has intervened and the remaining predictions of the chapter still await fulfilment. This corresponds in some respects to the similar gap between the end of the 69th and the beginning of the 70th week predicted in the ninth chapter.

To this future period belongs the king mentioned in verse 36, whose character and activities are delineated in the next few verses. Who is this king? It is clear that he is neither the King of the North nor the King of the South, for in this prophecy, in verse 40, those kings stoutly oppose him. Neither can he be Antiochus Epiphanes, for the description does not fit the person whose atrocities are outlined in the preceding verses. This king is to be marked by self-will,—for he 'shall do according to his will'—self-exaltation,—for 'he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god'—blasphemy,—for 'he shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods'—and temporary success and prosperity 'till the indignation be accomplished'. He will be a

Jew, because he will not regard the God of his fathers (Jehovah) nor regard 'the desire of women', which was—among the women of Israel—to become the mother of the Messiah. Instead of idol-worship he will set himself up as an object of worship and 'exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God' (2 Thess. 2:4). He will honour 'the god of forces' (or munitions). This doubtless has reference to the martial might and militant power of the revived Roman Empire centred in, and controlled by, its supreme ruler, the first beast of Rev. 13:1-8, whose image this wilful king will set up for universal worship. Compare Daniel 11:38-39 with Rev. 13:11-14.

From Daniel's description of this king we conclude that he is none other than the personal Antichrist who will arise in Palestine during the seven years antecedent to the return and reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, Daniel's seventieth week. He is the false Messiah coming in his own name, to whom the Lord Jesus makes reference in John 5:43, the Antichrist who is to come (1 John 2:18). The prophet, Zechariah, describes him as the worthless shepherd who will not only leave the flock of Israel but will direct the sword against them (Zech. 11:16-17). Paul foretells his coming as the 'Man of sin', 'the son of perdition', in 2 Thess. 2:3-4, 8-10, and John, in his visions in Patmos, saw him as the beast rising out of the earth (Rev. 13:11-14), and the 'false prophet' (Rev. 19:20) who is to be cast alive into the Lake of Fire.

The narration of events at the 'time of the end' is resumed in verse 40 of Dan. 11. The Antichrist will meet with opposition in the land of Palestine from the king of the South (Egypt) and the king of the North. The latter, who is identical with the 'king of fierce countenance' in Dan. 8:23-25, will be his chief antagonist. Stirred to action by the success of the Antichrist in Palestine, he comes with a mighty army and a navy (or perhaps an air-force which penetrates and passes through many lands on its way—v. 40) into the glorious land, Palestine, which is his main objective, though other countries will also be devastated. Some of the Arab lands will be spared, but Egypt will be one of

the victims of his deprivations. While a large part of his forces are in Africa, troublesome news from the North-East i.e., from Palestine or Syria or both, will reach him, and he will speedily return to Palestine and commence to build his palace in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords will terminate the successful career of this great opponent of the Jews, for the Lord shall fight against those nations, and 'His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives' (Zech, 14:3-4). Christ's return in power is more fully described in Rev. 19:11-21.

In Dan. 11 nothing further is said of the fate of the wilful king, Antichrist, who will be in Jerusalem at the time of the invasion of the holy city by the armies of the king of the North and his allies. In 2 Thess. 2:8 Paul tells us that 'the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of His mouth', and his final doom in the Lake of fire is recorded in Rev. 19:20.

The prophecy continues into Chapter 12, as its opening words 'at that time' clearly indicate. What about Daniel's people, the faithful remnant of Jews who refuse to acknowledge the Antichrist or to worship the image of the beast? For them it will be a time of unprecedented persecution and great tribulation (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21). The Archangel Michael, the representative of God's earthly people, Israel, in the councils of Heaven, will at that 'time of Jacob's trouble' be active on their behalf, probably by mediation in the Divine council-chamber which will result in the deliverance of the faithful in Israel, in accordance with the eternal purpose of God. There will be a great revival, a national resurrection of Israel after the apostate Jews have been swept into judgment to bear shame and everlasting contempt. The faithful witnesses will occupy a place of honour in the coming Kingdom and 'shine as the stars for ever' (12:2-3).

So far as Israel is concerned, the book of Daniel is largely a sealed book, but to those who have the illumination of the Holy Spirit the prophecies it contains, like those in the unsealed book of the Revelation, convey much instruction as to God's purposes and the events that will take place prior to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings. At the time of the end

there will be a tremendous increase in travel and in scientific knowledge (Dan. 12:4). The duration of the period of Jacob's trouble is again announced in reply to a question asked by one of two angels in Daniel's hearing. It is to be $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, as already noted in Dan. 7:25. That would be, in Hebrew reckoning, 1260 days. Later, in reply to a similar question by Daniel, 1290 days and 1335 days are also mentioned. The explanation of these added periods of one full month in one, and 75 days, or two and a half months, in the other, has not been given, and there is no other prophetic Scripture to throw light on it, so any explanation man may attempt to make is merely conjectural.

A. C. Gaebelin has made a suggestion with regard to those additional days which merits the serious consideration of Bible students. He writes:

'The extra month will in all probability be needed to make possible certain judgment events especially connected with the overthrow of the nations which came against Jerusalem and the judgment of nations given in Matt. 25:31. We cannot speak dogmatically on all this. But certain it is that 1335 days after the Antichristian abomination had been set up in Jerusalem, that is 75 days or $2\frac{1}{2}$ months beyond the close of the great tribulation, the full blessing of Israel and the establishment of the glorious rule of Israel's King, the once-rejected Lord Jesus Christ, will have come, for it is written, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days". This is as far as any teacher can safely go and here we would rest'.

(Concluded)