**History = His Story Part 3**

**Daniel 11:21-35**

**Introduction**

 Today we are continuing our study of the eleventh chapter of Daniel. The title of today’s message is History = His Story Part 3. In today’s passage we a will begin looking at the rule of the next king of Syria (Antiochus IV) who will be the last king that the prophecy of Daniel will describe in this chapter. What we are going to find is that this king will become so evil and hostile toward the nation of Israel that he will also proclaim himself to be a god. In addition to claiming to have divinity he will also claim himself to be higher than any other god, even the God of Israel. As we make our way through verse 35 today, we are going to discuss three important applications that can help us in our lives. 1. We must guard our hearts against human leaders who attempt to obtain and hold on to power through deceit. Leaders may rise to power by lies, but we must remember that the truth will always prevail. 2. As we live in this world where there is turbulence and uncertainty, we need to remain patient because the plans of God are unfolding right before our eyes. 3. We are reminded in God’s Word that those who remain faithful to Christ despite the hardships will be purified and honored by the Lord. We have reasons to stay faithful to God! Please join me as we continue to unwrap this prophetic vision of Daniel together.

**The “Despicable Person” Arises to Power (vv. 21-24)**

**21 And in his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the majesty of kingship has not been conferred; but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. 22 And the overflowing forces will be flooded away from him and smashed, and also the prince of the covenant. 23 After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people. 24 In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers did not, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, spoils, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time.**

 For the past two Sundays I have been using a chart to show you the succession of kings for both the North and the south kingdoms. Today I will be showing this to you for the final time so that you can see the name of the king who will come to power in the North. As you can see, Antiochus IV will be the final king of the north that we will discuss in this chapter. Verse 21 tells us that this is a “despicable person” and that his “kingship has not been conferred” upon him. Part of the reason that Antiochus IV is referred to as being a despicable person is because he obtained the kingship of Syria through deceit, cunning, bribery and manipulation. To make a long story short, he was not heir to the throne because his nephew Demetrius was the oldest son of Seleucus IV. However, because Demetrius was a prisoner in Rome at the time of Seleucus IV’s death Antiochus was able to manipulate the situation to get the crown for himself. As verse 21 ends it tells us that he was able to “seize the kingdom by intrigue.” Continuing in verse 22 we see that he will be successful as he attacks the forces of Egypt. “The overflowing forces will be flooded away from him and smashed.” His success against Egypt will aid him in establishing his power over the Seleucids. Not only did he have early military success, but we are told in verse 22 that he will defeat the “prince of the covenant.” Most theologians support the conclusion that the “prince of the covenant” refers to the high priest of the temple during this time whose name was Onias III. Just a quick reminder, the position of High Priest was an inherited position that was handed down through the descendants of Aaron and the tribe of Levi were the only men allowed to serve as priests. Verse 23 tells us that Antiochus will make an alliance and that he will use deception to gain power. The Alliance being referred to here is when he removed Onias III from the position of high priest and then installed Onias’s brother Jason to the position. According to legend what happened was that Antiochus offered the title of High Priest to the man who was able to pay him the most tribute. Jason offered more money than Onias did, so he got the position. Not only was Jason able to buy the position but he used that opportunity to make an alliance with Antiochus to get the Jewish nation to support him. These were the Hellenized Jews we mentioned last week who were neglecting obedience to the Mosaic Law and embracing Greek culture including their polytheistic religion. He was able to gain power with a small force because of his use of deception. Finally in this section we have verse 24 which tells us the strategies he used to defeat his enemies. He went into rich areas of the realm such as Egypt and Judea using surprise attacks and political scheming to take control. He was so effective at using these means that the verse records that no other kings before or after him were as successful as him. Even though he enjoyed such success this only took place for a short amount of time.

**Time of Conflict and Deception Continues (vv. 25-28)**

**25 And he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, because schemes will be devised against him. 26 Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. 27 As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table; but it will not succeed, because the end is still to come at the appointed time. 28 Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he will take action and then return to his own land.**

 Antiochus IV will launch an invasion of Egypt in 170 BC. He made it look like his invasion was done to help Ptolemy, the current king of Egypt, defend himself against Ptolemy VIII who also wanted the crown. However, Antiochus did not have this intention at all. His real reason for the invasion was to gain control of the country. In verse 25 we read that Antiochus will be the victor because he will use scheming against the king of Egypt. This was the second time that he had invaded Egypt. The first time he invaded he was defeated, but this time the table had turned. All this deceit and manipulation that Antiochus was using even infiltrated the royal court of Ptolemy. In verse 26 the angel says that “those who eat his choice food will destroy him.” This is telling us that those who served the king of Egypt rose to betray him. With the instability that was taking place in the king’s palace, it was a lot easier for Antiochus to overtake him. The leadership was so poor due to the betrayal that his army was weakened leading to the overflow of his army being killed. The results of the deceit and manipulation Antiochus used to defeat his enemy illustrate once again how despicable of a person he really was.

 Verse 27 tells us that both the kings of Egypt and Syria were really deceiving leaders. In this situation Antiochus and Ptolemy had several meetings to discuss how they would be handling the relationship between their kingdoms. We see in their negotiations a lot of political maneuvering. They made promises to each other, but neither of them had any intention of keeping their word. We see this still happening in the world today. Political leaders try to make speeches and say things that they feel will keep their supporters happy, but as we all know, political promises are seldomly kept. These men were very deceptive and used manipulation to try to control each other’s actions. Even though they tried to be successful with their deceit, verse 27 tells us that their scheming would not succeed. They were unsuccessful because God had set the appointed time for their kingdoms to end.

 In verse 28 Antiochus is returning home after his second invasion of Egypt around 168 BC. Since he had been successful in this invasion, he did have spoils and wealth from the victory. However, he had to withdraw his invasion of Egypt because the Romans forced him out. He was told that if he did not retreat that the Roman army would lay waste to him. Therefore, after paying the Romans the tribute he owed, he needed funds, so once again we see Jerusalem being in the path of his return home. He entered the city and installed another high priest who would support his agenda. We also see that he will begin to outlaw the Jewish customs making the people stop circumcising their children and interrupting the sacrificial system. As a part of his attack on the Jewish faith he will desecrate the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and erecting a statue of Zeus. We read that he will take action and then return to his own land. Part of those actions will be that he will punish all Jews who remained faithful to the Law of Moses and refused to follow him. His goal in all these actions was to make the Jews forget about God and convert to Greek customs. When he left, he felt that he had firm control of Jerusalem.

**Antiochus and the Desecration of the Temple (vv. 29-35)**

**29 “At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. 30 For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will withdraw in fear and will return and curse the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and pay attention to those who abandon the holy covenant. 31 Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. 32 And by smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will be strong and take action. 33 And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. 34 Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. 35 And some of those who have insight will fall, to refine, purge, and cleanse them until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.**

In this final part of the passage we are looking at today we will see the specific actions Antiochus IV will take that will earn him the title of being a despicable person. In verse 29 he will attack Egypt again, but this time he will not be successful and therefore it will not be like it was the time before. When he is retreating and heading home, he will once again stop in Jerusalem. Because of his defeat he will be in a rather upset mood, so he is going to take his anger out on the people in Jerusalem. In verse 30 we read that he will pay attention to those who abandon the holy covenant. This is referring to the Hellenized Jews who had supported his efforts the last time he was there. What we need to remember is that the Hellenized Jews represented a portion of the nation, not all of them.

 When he enters the city, he will desecrate the temple as we have already mentioned and then do away with the sacrifice. He will order that the Jews totally stop carrying out their religious practices and begin worshiping the gods of the Greeks. If he would be able to make the people change their religious practices, then he would be able to control the nation. What we see is that there will be a group of devout Jews who will revolt to fight against the desecration of the temple. This is the Maccabean Revolt , which is recorded in the 1st and 2nd book of Maccabees. Those books are in the apocrypha, not in our Bible. Even though these leaders will suffer many setbacks they will eventually be victorious.

 Verse 34 says that they will experience much suffering and hardships as they fight against Antiochus. When the Maccabean revolt started it was a small movement which is why the angel says that it granted little help. However, after it had grown to full strength it was gaining an advantage. Some of those who joined the revolt were not sincere in their loyalty which is why the angel says that some of them joined in hypocrisy. Eventually, the revolt will remove Antiochus, and it will result in the purging and cleansing of the temple. What we find is that God used the fighting and the suffering experienced by the people to refine them and strengthen them for the challenges that would lay ahead in the future. Our passage ends telling us that everything that had taken place was happening at the time that God has appointed. All of this was taking place to carry out His plan in history.

**Applications**

1. **We must guard our hearts against human leaders who attempt to obtain and hold on to power through deceit. Leaders may rise to power by lies, but we must remember that the truth will always prevail.**

It is very easy to fall into the worship of leaders in this world. The allure of power and wealth are attractive to the selfish human heart. What we learn in Scripture is that there is a major difference between selfish leaders seeking power and leadership that comes from a heart of desire to serve others as well as the Lord. **In Proverbs 16:12 we read these words “It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts, because a throne is established on righteousness.”** The teacher is wisdom is reminding his son that true leadership is established on the righteousness of God. Solomon, who is this teacher of wisdom, received the greatest gift from God. He was given a discerning heart to judge the people wisely. He had this gift until his heart became selfish, and he chose to worship false gods of his wives. Once he had given up that Godly wisdom, it changed the way he ruled the kingdom. A leader who seeks after God will pray and ask God for wisdom and will act in ways that seek to glorify the Lord while at the same time seek to do what is best to establish justice for those they lead. The kings we learned about today were not good leaders and their kingdoms fell because they chose to rule using deceit and manipulation rather than leading with righteousness. Only the Lord can give the wisdom to allow man to do this. May our leaders always seek His wisdom to guide them!

1. **As we live in this world where there is turbulence and uncertainty, we need to remain patient because the plans of God are unfolding right before our eyes.**

When we see the world falling apart around us and when we think that there is no way that God can be involved in the crooked things that man is doing, we must not lose heart. What we have learned in the book of Daniel is that everything happening in this world is under the control of almighty God. It is amazing that the Lord has used those whom we would never expect to fulfill His will. Just to name a few people from scripture, we have Gideon, Joseph and Moses just to name a few. God can also use those who do not know Him to accomplish His purpose. He used the Babylonian Empire to carry out the punishment of Judah. We need to remember that God works in ways that we cannot always see. **Isaiah provides these words from God to remind us of how mighty He is. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts” (55:8-9).** You and I cannot see how He is working things out, but we do know that He is always at work.

1. **We are reminded in God’s Word that those who remain faithful to Christ despite the hardships will be purified and honored by the Lord. We have reasons to stay faithful to God!**

Being patient as God’s will is being carried out today is not easy, but that is something that all of us need to work on. We also need to remember that remaining faithful despite the challenges will merit for us a greater reward than we can imagine. To close our time together let us read the words of the Apostle Paul that he shared with Timothy not too long before he died. These words show us what the reward is for faithful obedience and a life of service to the Lord**.**

**“I solemnly exhort you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and exhort, with great patience and instruction. 3 For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But as for you, use self-restraint in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.**

**6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:1-8).**

Those words should encourage each of us to continue the good work the Lord has commissioned us to do. When we are called home to be with the Lord or if He comes before we pass from this world may we be found to be faithful.

One last word, what does it mean to remain faithful? We must continue to teach and model the true gospel for the culture. We cannot desire for our ears to be tickled, but to share the truth of the gospel. As we have said before, truth does not change and neither does God. If we remain faithful to the truth and lovingly share it with others, we have a future to look forward to! When Christ returns may He find us faithful! Amen.