

Antichrist: A Wicked Warrior
Daniel 11:38-39

Have you ever heard someone say that you are “living in the dash?” What they mean is that you are presently living in that little hyphen between the date of your birth and the date of your death. With this in mind, every tombstone you see becomes a metaphor for the brevity of life. So here is a piece of advice for all the younger people listening to this: go ask an older person about the brevity of life. If they are like most, they will tell you that the difference between your young age and their much older age is incredibly short. Life is racing by and each of us is living in the dash.

The Great Parenthesis

It's important that you know you are in the dash. But for you to really understand your dash – the race you are running – it's important to know where the dash is. Those who study Scripture have placed your dash and my dash in what they call “The Great Parenthesis.” Harry Ironside made a detailed study of this parenthesis in Scripture. What he meant was that there are verses in the Bible that describe one time period, and the very next verse will describe an event that is thousands of years later. So he described the gap between the verses as “The Great Parenthesis.”

In 1944, John Walvoord wrote, “Dr. Ironside shows a number of instances of parentheses in God's program: (1) The interval between the “acceptable year of the Lord” and the “day of vengeance of our God” (Isa 61:2—a parenthesis already extending more than nineteen hundred years). (2) The interval between the Roman Empire as symbolized by the legs of iron of the great image of Daniel 2 and the feet of ten toes. Confer also Daniel 7:23–27; 8:24, 25. (3) The same interval is found between Daniel 11:35 and Daniel 11:36. (4) A great parenthesis occurs between Hosea 3:4 and verse 5, and again between Hosea 5:15 and 6:1. (5) A great parenthesis occurs also between Psalm 22:22 and 22:23 and between Psalm 110:1 and 110:2. (6) Peter in quoting Psalm 34:12–16 stops in the middle of a verse to distinguish God's present work and His future dealing with sin (1 Pet 3:10–12). (7) The great prophecy of Matthew 24 becomes intelligible only if the present age be considered a parenthesis between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27. (8) Acts 15:13–21 indicates that the apostles fully understood that during the present age the Old Testament prophecies would not be fulfilled, but would have fulfillment “after this” when God “will build again the tabernacle of David” (Acts 15:13).”ⁱ

Why is it important to know about “The Great Parenthesis?” By its very nature, this parenthesis means that there is a delay – a gap in time. And that is when you really find out whether or not you believe God's promises. If you are presently placing your faith in “the land of peace” (Jeremiah 12:5), then you will be sorely disappointed. (Just look at the riots around our nation in the last week.ⁱⁱ) So it forces every one of us to ask, “Am I trusting in the land of peace or the Lord of peace?” Am I hoping that my country can just settle down on its own, or am I placing all my faith in the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)? The Great Parenthesis helps you understand where you place your emphasis. Because there is a delay, critics and scoffers, walking after their own evil desires, will demand, “**Where is the promise of His coming?**” (2 Peter 3:4). But 2 Peter 3:9 helps you to correctly interpret the parenthesis. Why is there a delay? It is because God is showing us all His patience, “...not willing that

any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” In today’s message, we are presented with a choice: Wait for the true Prince of Peace or worship the mythical god of war.

The Arrogant Antichrist

In the last message, we studied the arrogant Antichrist, introduced in Daniel 11:36-37. In today’s text, we want to examine his warlike approach to the nations of the world. Verses 36-37 prophesied that this man will be willful, arrogant, blasphemous, blind, and self-sufficient – constantly exalting himself: **“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous [shocking] things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.”** (Daniel 11:38-39). It is at least possible that the phrase “the God of his fathers” identifies this as a Jewish man. But the passage is clear that this man will present himself in his own name (or his own authority). Perhaps this is why Jesus said, **“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive”** (John 5:43). The Jewish leaders were persecuting Jesus and threatening to kill Him (John 5:16). They were rejecting the true Prince of Peace. And Jesus predicted, **“... if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.”** In principle, John 5:43 explains Israel’s acceptance of the Antichrist in Daniel 9:27, **“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week...”** (a 7 year period). This frames the choice for every one of us. Will you trust in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, or the Antichrist and his mythical god of war?

I. The Arrogant Antichrist will be a mighty military man who conquers the strongest fortresses in the world. v. 39

“Thus shall he do in [deal with] the most [the strongest] strongholds ...”

Like Alexander the Great, the coming Antichrist will be a mighty conqueror. Stop for a moment to consider some of the strongest, most strategic fortresses in the world today. What comes to your mind? Fort Knox? The Cheyenne Mountain Complex (home to the Space Command, NORAD, and the U.S. Strategic Command with its 25 ton blast doors)? Or the new Chinese installation in Djibouti on the horn of Africa? The Scriptures predict that the coming Antichrist will conquer the strongest military installations and fortresses. In fact, Revelation 13:4 prophesies that the time will come when **“... they worshipped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’”**

It’s important to remember that God is in control and to learn what prophecies He has given us. Revelation 6:1-2 is a passage that many scholars believe describes the beginning of The Tribulation (Daniel’s 70th week). Listen to the way that the Prince of Peace (the Lamb) ordains what is to happen in the coming of the Antichrist: **“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”** (Revelation 6:1-2) From the beginning, the Antichrist will demonstrate amazing military prowess. Earlier in Daniel we learned that the horn was a symbol of power. Daniel 7:24-25 predicts about this coming Antichrist, **“And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings**

that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” (Daniel 7:24-25). Passages such as these remind us that the Most High God still rules in the kingdom of men (Daniel 4:17); He opens the seals of judgment. So will you wait for the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ? Or will you worship the Antichrist and the mythical god of war?

From other passages of Scripture, we know that initially, the Antichrist will offer peace and protection to Israel. Stephen Miller commented about Daniel 9:27, “Antichrist, on behalf of his empire, will make a treaty with the nation of Israel. This agreement probably entails a promise of protection in return for certain favors (likely including those of an economic nature). It is easy to understand why Israel would enter into such an arrangement with the powerful forces of Antichrist. With such protection Israel will feel safe and secure. The term of the treaty will be “for one seven,” that is, seven years. ‘In the middle of the seven’ [Daniel 9:27], the Antichrist “will put an end to [*šābat*] sacrifice and offering.” This event takes place after three and one-half years. The seventieth seven is commonly referred to as the tribulation period, and the second half of this seven is known as the great tribulation (Rev 7:14; cf. Matt 24:21).”ⁱⁱⁱ The first half of the Tribulation will be no easy time (as evidenced by the first six seals in Revelation chapter 6). But the last half of the Tribulation will be far worse.

II. The arrogant Antichrist will honor a new, mythical god of war. v. 38

“But in his estate shall he honor the god of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.” The phrase “god of forces” refers to a new, strange god of war unknown to the ancestors of the Antichrist. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can recognize this as a manifestation of Satan. Revelation 6:4 begins with the words, **“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast ...”** Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 identify the dragon: “that old serpent called the Devil and Satan.” Note the parallel with many of the fictional stories of super heroes; many are portrayed as having godlike qualities. Are we even now being taught to fantasize and long for the coming of Antichrist? This coming military leader will exalt himself even as he exalts this mythical god of war. And he will honor that strange god with the wealth he acquires in military conquest. Undoubtedly, this will appear very inviting to millions of people.

III. The arrogant Antichrist will richly reward those who honor his mythical god of war. v. 39

“Thus shall he do in [deal with] the most [the strongest] strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain” (Daniel 11:39). The Antichrist will richly reward those who pledge allegiance to him. At that time, it will appear that there are many benefits and rewards for worshiping the beast, and accepting the mark of the beast. But the Scriptures strongly warn everyone against doing this. Revelation 14:9-11 warns, **“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same**

shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name.” Heed this warning! Wait for the Prince of Peace, and refuse to worship the mythical god of war.

Applications:

You are already making a choice. Pay attention to your choice. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 foretells that Jesus Christ will destroy the Antichrist with “the brightness of His coming.” But that passage also tells you that the deceitfulness of the Antichrist will deceive many. Why? **“...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”** Stop for a moment to consider what this means. You have heard many people share the good news of Jesus Christ: the Gospel. “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and He was buried and He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Have you personally trusted in Christ, who died for your sins? If not then, to date, you have “not received the love of the truth” that you might be saved. So here is the warning according to 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, **“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.”** Do you understand this warning? If you do not receive the truth and love the Gospel, you are already believing the lie. And when the Antichrist suddenly appears on the scene, you are in very great danger of falling for his deception and being lost forever. But if you will trust Christ and wait for Him – the Prince of Peace – you can turn away from the satanic, mythical god of war.

In Mark 8:36, Jesus posed the question: **“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”** When the Antichrist comes, lavishing wealth and lands on his followers, people will be drawn into his web of deceit. But answer the question posed by Jesus: even if you could acquire the whole world, would it be worth it if it meant losing your own soul in the Lake of Fire forever? Of course not, so wait for the Prince of Peace who made peace through the blood of His cross, and turn way from the mythical god of war.

Pastor Gordon Dickson, Calvary Baptist Church, Findlay, Ohio www.cbcbfindlay.org

ⁱ John Walvoord, “Is the Seventieth Week of Daniel Future?” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, BSAC 101:401 (Jan 1944)pp. 48-49, citing and summarizing Harry Ironside’s monograph available at “The Great Parenthesis” accessed at <https://www.webtruth.org/eschatology/the-great-parenthesis/>

ⁱⁱ Dom Calicchio, "Riots, protests in Minnesota, Chicago, elsewhere in reaction to police shootings," Fox News, April 17, 2021, accessed at <https://www.foxnews.com/us/riots-protests-in-minnesota-chicago-elsewhere-in-reaction-to-police-shootings>

ⁱⁱⁱ Stephen R. Miller, Daniel, vol. 18, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 271.