

## **PRACTICE PERSEVERANCE**

**11** <sup>36</sup>The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the indignation has been accomplished, for what has been determined will take place. <sup>37</sup>He will show no reverence for the gods of his fathers, nor will he have [a natural] desire for women, nor will he reverence any god; for he will magnify himself above all [things]. <sup>38</sup>Instead of them, he will honor the god of fortresses; a god whom his fathers did not know he will honor with gold and silver and priceless jewels and all sorts of treasures. <sup>39</sup>He will attack the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god, and he will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rule over many people and will distribute lands as a reward.

<sup>40</sup>At the end of time the king of the South will contend against him; and the king of the North will come against him like a whirlwind—with chariots and horsemen and many ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. <sup>41</sup>He will even invade the Glorious Land, and many shall perish. But Edom, Moab and the head of the children of Ammon will be spared from his hand. <sup>42</sup>He will extend his power over all the nations; the land of Egypt will not escape. <sup>43</sup>He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the riches of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians will be in submission to him. <sup>44</sup>But reports out of the east and out of the north will alarm him. So he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. <sup>45</sup>He will pitch his royal tents between the Sea and [beside] the Glorious Holy Mountain; but he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

**12** At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will stand up. There will be a time of trouble such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone [whose name] is found written in the book—shall be delivered. <sup>2</sup>Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. <sup>3</sup>Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the heavens; and those who turn many to righteousness [shall shine] like the stars forever and ever. <sup>4</sup>But you, Daniel, preserve the words and seal the book, [safeguarding it] until the time of the end. Many will diligently study it, and the understanding [of these things] will increase.

<sup>5</sup>Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two other men, one on [the near] bank of the river and one on the [far] bank of the river. <sup>6</sup>One [of them] asked the man dressed in linen who was [standing] above the waters of the river, How long will it be before these wonders are fulfilled? <sup>7</sup>The man clothed in linen, who was [standing] above the waters of the river, lifted up his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, It shall be for a time, times, and half [a time]. When they have finished breaking into pieces the power of the holy people, all these things will be accomplished. <sup>8</sup>I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, My lord, what will be the outcome of [all] these things? <sup>9</sup>But he said, Go your way, Daniel; for the words are preserved and sealed until the time of the end. <sup>10</sup>Many will be purified and be made white and be refined. But the wicked will [continue] to act wickedly. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. <sup>11</sup>From the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. <sup>12</sup>Blessed

*is the one who waits and comes to [the end of] the one thousand three hundred and thirty five days. <sup>13</sup>But go your way until the end comes; for you shall rest and shall rise [again to receive] your allotted inheritance at the end of the [age]. (Dan. 11:36-12:13)*

## **Introduction**

There is a fast food drive-through in California that guarantees to fill your order in 90 seconds, or else it's free. Instant service! T.V. commercials promise FAST relief from pain and discomfort: there is a nasal spray that goes to work in 2.2 seconds; a certain lotion provides "healing you can feel instantly." Instant relief!

Modern day advertising not only seeks to sell a product, it also promotes and cultivates a lifestyle—a lifestyle that has no time for patience and no place for endurance. We have a great desire for fast service and instant relief from every pain and discomfort. Modern advertising promotes the myth that we deserve such service and that we have a "right" to such relief, and we are to expect such things.

But the myth promoted by the advertisers does not correspond to everyday life. We still encounter many occasions that call for the exercise of patience; from something as minor as a major city traffic jam to something as major as the maturing of our children. We still encounter many situations that require steadfast endurance; anything from putting up with difficult neighbors to handling prolonged pain and disability.

In giving instruction to new converts to Christ, the Apostle Paul gave the following exhortation:

*... they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, <sup>22</sup>strengthening the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and [teaching] that we must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations. (Acts 14:22-23)*

We have a great desire for fast relief from all pain and discomfort, but such is not always God's plan for our lives. Because of the obstacles we presently encounter, and because of the glory we shall eventually experience, as Christians, we must practice perseverance.

## **I. Practice Perseverance, Because the Times are Hard (Dan. 12:1b)**

In chapter 12:1b the LORD declares that there shall be a time of trouble such as was never before experienced by the people of God. He is referring to the events outlined in chapter 11, verses 36-45.

Daniel 11:2-35 has provided a detailed account of ancient history from approximately 320 B.C. to the times just prior to the coming of Christ; the passage especially concentrates on the interaction between Egypt and Syria, with Israel finding itself in the middle of these two powerful kingdoms. But beginning with

verse 36, the passage leaves ancient history behind and projects us into the future, to those last days of world history that culminate in the return of Christ and the final judgment (note 12:1-3.) Verses 36-45 are speaking about a person and describing events that shall occupy a place at the end of history, but they are described in Old Testament terminology. That is to say, people and places familiar to the Old Testament people of God are employed as living models to describe future people and places and events.

Verses 36-39 reveal the character of the anti-Christ (and his empire), especially his defiance of God. Verse 36a describes his blasphemous pride: *“The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak astonishing things against the God of gods.”* Having exalted himself among men, and having successfully magnified himself above the idols of men, he shall foolishly speak against God Himself; note, also, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, *“He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God’s temple, presenting himself in the place of God.”* Verse 37 describes his unnatural affections: *“He will show no reverence for the gods of his fathers, nor will he have [a natural] desire for women, nor will he reverence any god, for he will magnify himself above all [things].”* He shall have no loyalty to his ancestral religion; he shall be devoid of all natural human desires and affections (having no desire for women); he shall be devoid of any conventional religious allegiance (he shall not regard any god); and he shall make an idol out of himself (magnifying himself above all; note, again, 2 Thessalonians 2:4.) Verses 38-39a describe his religion: *“Instead of them, he will honor the god of fortresses; a god whom his fathers did not know he will honor with gold and silver and priceless jewels and all sorts of treasures. <sup>39</sup>He will attack the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god.”* He shall reverence might and worship power, as seen by his honoring *“the god of fortresses.”* But there is a personality, a spirit, a god, which he worships, *“a god whom his fathers did not know”*—he will be in league with the devil. He shall conquer apparently unconquerable fortifications *“with the help of a foreign god”* (the devil himself.)

The twentieth century has witnessed the appearance of men who have possessed the anti-Christ personality (as described in Daniel 11:36-39) to an unprecedented degree; the coming to power of such men was actually predicted by the 19<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche maintained that the belief in the Christian God was outdated for modern man and the modern “scientific” age. Consequently, the removal of Christianity from the center of Western civilization would create a spiritual vacuum. According to the British historian, Paul Johnson,

The history of modern times is in great part the history of how that vacuum has been filled. Nietzsche rightly perceived that the most likely candidate would be what he called the “Will to Power” ... In place of religious belief; there would be secular ideology ... And, above all, the Will to Power would produce a new kind of messiah, uninhibited by any religious sanctions

whatever, and with an unappeasable appetite for controlling mankind. (*Modern Times*, Paul Johnson, p.48)

The twentieth century has witnessed precursors to the final anti-Christ, men who have displayed the character of the anti-Christ as described in Daniel 11:36-39; two such men were Vladimir Lenin and Adolph Hitler. As Johnson writes, "The central tragedy of modern world history is that both the Russian and the German republics, in turn, found in Lenin and Hitler adversaries ... who embodied the will to power to a degree unique in our times" (*Modern Times*, pp.128-129.) Again, with regard to Lenin and Hitler respectively Johnson writes:

Both his [Lenin's] parents were Christians. Religion was important to him, in the sense that he hated it. Unlike Marx, who despised it and treated it as marginal, Lenin saw it as a powerful and ubiquitous enemy. He made clear in many writings ... that he had an intense personal dislike for anything religious ... From the start, the state he created set up and maintains to this day an enormous academic propaganda machine against religion. He was not just anti-clerical, like Stalin, who disliked priests because they were corrupt. On the contrary, Lenin had no real feelings about corrupt priests, because they were easily beaten. The men he really feared and hated, and later persecuted, were the saints. The purer the religion, the more dangerous ... No man personifies better the replacement of the religious impulse by the will to power. (*Modern Times*, pp.50-51)

Hitler was totally irreligious and had no interest in honor or ethics ... he was only really at home, like Lenin, in a world where the pursuit of power by conspiracy, agitation and force was the chief object and satisfaction of existence ... He had the same intellectual egoism, lack of self-doubt, ruthlessness in personal relations, preference for force as opposed to discussion and, most important, the ability to combine absolute fidelity to a long-term aim with skillful opportunism. (*Modern Times*, p.129)

As Daniel 12:1b indicates, such intensely demonic opposition to God and His truth will be the occasion for extremely hard times for the people of God—by way of example, consider the political States erected by Lenin and Hitler and what the church of Jesus Christ experienced under those regimes:

[In Soviet Russia] the attack on religion was hardly restricted to propaganda. Church and State were declared to be separate. Church property was confiscated on a huge scale. Church activity in the schools was banned. There was widespread persecution of priests or any who attempted to teach religion, and most churches and seminaries were taken over for secular uses. Perhaps the greatest symbolic event in the assault upon Christianity was the movement of the capital from Petrograd to Moscow, and locating it in the ancient walled city, the Kremlin. Up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Kremlin had been the governmental and religious center of Russia. Peter the Great had

moved the capital to St. Petersburg, which much later became Petrograd. The government buildings in the Kremlin deteriorated after that, but the great cathedrals and other religious shrines were maintained. When the Communists moved their headquarters into the Kremlin, it signified the replacement of Eastern Orthodox Christianity with a new religion ... communism. (*A Basic History of the United States*, Vol.4, Clarence B. Carson, pp.219-220).

[In Nazi Germany] our education was also nationalized. I attended a very good public school. Ninety-eight percent of the population was Catholic at that time, so we had religion in our schools. The day we elected Hitler, March 13, 1938, I walked into my schoolroom and where we had a crucifix; it was replaced with Hitler's picture and the flag. Our teacher, a very devout woman, stood up and told the class that we wouldn't pray or have religion any more. We sang "*Deutschland, Deutschland, Uber Alles*" and had physical education instead. Our parents were not happy about the sudden change. On Sunday, we had National Youth Day. It was compulsory to attend. We were told if our parents would not send us on Sunday, they would get a stiff letter of warning the first time. The second time they would be fined the equivalent of \$300, and the third time they would be subject to jail. As time went along, we loved it. The first two hours we had political indoctrination. The rest of the day we had sports. Oh, we had so much fun and got our sports equipment free. We would go home and tell our parents gleefully what a wonderful time we were having. My parents didn't like it at all: no church, no religion in school, and no prayer ... Our churches were nationalized. The church was the only real opposition to Hitler's belief of humanism. Before 1938, we supported our churches privately. After they were nationalized, they were being financed by the government. The priests were being used to get their propaganda through. They had to support the whole system, or they went to Dachau, the labor camp. (Kitty Werthman, a woman who grew up in Nazi Germany)

There is the need to practice perseverance, because living for Christ in this world is never easy, not at any time nor in any place; but especially is this the case when the society is dominated by the anti-Christ spirit and personality. Consider the circumstances that require perseverance: "*everyone who would live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution*" (2 Tim. 3:12.) Consider the command to practice perseverance:

*Live your life only in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that if I come and see you—or if I remain absent what I will hear about you is that you are standing firm in one spirit, and with one soul are contending for the faith of the gospel,<sup>28</sup> and that you are in no way being intimidated by those who oppose you.* (Phil. 1:27-28a)

Consider the incentive for perseverance: "*Our light and momentary afflictions are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all*" (2 Cor. 4:17.)

Consider the secret of how to practice perseverance: *“So we focus our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, for what is seen is temporal, but what is unseen is eternal”* (2 Cor. 4:18.)

## **II. Practice Perseverance, Even Though the Time of Trial May Seem to be Endless (Dan. 12:11-12)**

In verse 6 Daniel hears an angel ask the question that, no doubt, was foremost in his own mind, *“How long will it be before these wonders are fulfilled?”* That is to say, “When shall these events come to pass, and when shall they come to an end?”

The LORD responds by declaring, *“It shall be for a time, times, and half [a time.]”* Compare this present statement with Daniel 7:25, which defines the reign of the anti-Christ as being *“a time and times and half a time.”* The point is that this final epitome of rebellion against God must appear (represented by *“a time”*); it must advance (represented by *“times,”* that is, the doubling of “time”); and then it shall finally be destroyed (represented by *“half a time,”* that is, the breaking of “time.”) With regard to this pattern of allowing evil to fully manifest itself, note Psalm 92:7, *“When the wicked spring up like the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish; it is so that they may be destroyed forever.”* The LORD does not provide any actual date as to the duration or termination of this period of time when the final anti-Christ shall be permitted to reign; He merely answers by asserting that these things must happen, but when they have run their course, they will be terminated.

In verses 11-12 it is again impressed upon Daniel that the events described in chapter 11:36-39 must be fulfilled, and the people of God must persevere to the end: *“From the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.”* The banning of the Old Testament sacrifices and the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 B.C. is presented here as a model depicting the final assault on biblical religion in the days of the final anti-Christ. This desecration of all that is identified with biblical religion is viewed as the starting point of a period designated as 1290 days, which equal 3 years and 7 months, another way of stating *“a time”* (one), *“times”* (plus two), *“and half a time”*—both of these time periods, approximating three and a half years, are symbolic references to the duration of the anti-Christ’s reign. With regard to the two prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century examples of the final anti-Christ personality and empire, note that when Lenin and Hitler had established themselves in power, they each commenced their rule with an assault on the church of Jesus Christ. Then in verse 12 Daniel is told, *“Blessed is the one who waits and comes to [the end of] the one thousand three hundred and thirty five days.”* Once again, the numbers are symbolic and the point being made is the need for perseverance—there is the need to persevere **through** the tribulation and persevere **until** the

deliverance, even though the time may seem to be endless (the 1290 days expire but the wait must continue another 45 “days”!)

There is the need to practice perseverance, even though the time of trial may seem to be endless. Consider the LORD’s word to Habakkuk, *“The revelation is for the appointed time, and it speeds toward the end and shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not delay”* (Hab. 2:3.) We may think that God is negligent about His promises, but such is not the case; His purposes are being carried out in His sovereignly appointed time, and we must wait for the day of their fulfillment.

### **III. Practice Perseverance, Because the Time of Deliverance will Surely Come (Dan. 12:1c)**

In verse 1c the LORD assures Daniel that at the appointed time his people shall be delivered. In verse 7 the LORD solemnly swears that the time of tribulation shall not extend beyond the designated period, and the deliverance shall come, at which time the redeemed shall be raised to everlasting life (vs. 2) and shall shine like the brightness of the heavens (vs. 3.)

Christian, there is the need to practice perseverance, because the time of deliverance will surely come; whether that be deliverance from a personal trial or whether it be the final deliverance of the church. May we be encouraged by the assurance given by the Apostle Peter:

*But after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will personally restore you, support you, strengthen you, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him belongs the dominion forever. Amen.* (1 Pet. 5:10-11)

**For a More Detailed Study of Daniel 11:36-12:4, See the Second Appendix that Accompanies the Previous Lesson on Daniel 11:2-35**