

# Kingdom Wars

## *Daniel 11*

I have in my hand the proverbial glass of water and ask you the philosophical question: **Is this glass half-full or half-empty?** Of course, the answer to the question is, “Yes!” It is both half-full and half-empty at the same time.

But the question intends to help us probe whether we have an optimistic view of life or a pessimistic one. It seems that some people are naturally more positive, while others are more naturally negative in their point of view. This applies to unbelievers and believers alike. But this question came to my mind this week as I studied Daniel 11 and so I am applying it spiritually. I ask you the question, ***“Does following Jesus make a difference in how we see the glass?”*** I contend that it does. Of course, like unbelievers, Christ-followers may be born with a natural bent toward being half-full or half-empty kinds of people. But following Jesus powerfully impacts us in the way we view our world. I confess that my natural bent is half-empty and that I have to fight with the truth of the Gospel to turn my heart and mind toward a happy posture of my heart.

The Christian half-empty person looks at the world and allows his mind to drift toward the empty part of the glass. He/she acknowledges the good in God’s working in the present age. He/she is not reluctant to sing or give thanks or to praise God when we gather for corporate worship, **but in the main his/her conversations, attitudes, thoughts and feelings are more often weighed down by the troubles, corruptions, unfairness and hopelessness of the part of the glass that is half empty.** Such a person is prone towards grumbling, complaining, gloom, gossip, fear, frustration, anger, false accusations or bitterness.

The Christian half-full person looks at the same world and labors to set his mind and heart on the full part of the glass. He/she acknowledges the evil and sorrow that God allows in the present age. He is not a person who chooses to be ignorant of all the darkness, trouble, sin and injustice in the world, **but in the main his/her conversations are buoyed upward by the grace of God at work in the present and by the promises of God in the future.** Such a person influences others through the joyful, peaceful, thankful spirit that fills his/her conversations and relationships with hope and love.

Daniel suffered so much injustice and pain in his life. **As a teenager,** witnessed his nation and the city in which he lived overrun and demolished by the Babylonians. He was removed from his home, his parents, his siblings and exiled

hundreds of miles away to a foreign country where they only exploited his talent and intellect to further the Babylonian empire. **Early in his life in Babylon**, he was threatened with execution when Nebuchadnezzar had a prophetic bad dream. **His best friends** were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to bow down to a statue. **Late in life**, people high in government conspired to put an end to his life because they were jealous of him and they hated his God. He was thrown into a den of lions. We are not told all of Daniel's troubles, but we find that **he is not a grumbler, not filled with despair or self-pity, not angry at God or people, not vindictive toward those who oppressed him**. Daniel is a man of faith . . . a man filled with the peace of God and the hope of the Lord. **How was he able to be a "glass half-full" kind of guy?** Here is what we know: He talked with God every day. He obeyed God completely. He listened to God when the LORD revealed what the LORD will do in the future. **That was his formula.**

Remember that last week I shared that one of the benefits of studying Bible prophecy is the hope that it brings to our hearts. I shared this definition of hope:

**Definition: Hope is the confidence that in the mess of this world, the LORD is working out His good and perfect plan all the way to completion.**

Daniel 11, like Daniel 10, helps us to grab hold of hope. These chapters remind us that not only will not Satan win in the end, but that he never wins. **God is sovereignly pulling every string in our world in such a way that even the evil that Satan accomplishes is overseen by God and is used by God to bring about His glory and our good.** In short, God uses the dark and corrupt actions of Satan to fulfill His good plan for all eternity.

**Question: Do I look at our world and focus on the "God things" that are missing from it OR do I look at our world and set my minds on the "God things" that are part of it?**

In Daniel 10, Daniel experiences great distress as the LORD gives him the fourth and final vision found in the book of Daniel. An angel is sent to deliver this prophecy to Daniel. He is stalled by the Prince of Persia for a time. And at the end of Daniel 10 we read, *"But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth". (Daniel 10:21 [ESV](#))*. I love the title that the angel gives to this fourth vision, **"Book of Truth!"**

Very briefly, in the first 35 verses of this “Book of Truth” vision, Daniel is told what will happen in the next few centuries in the Persian and Greek empire. **It has been estimated that in these 35 verses alone that 135 prophecies came to pass EXACTLY as Daniel records them!** What is written is so accurate about the future that many skeptics say that this book of Daniel had to have been written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. They have no other evidence about this dating of Daniel other than the assumption that **the Bible is not a supernatural book and that predictive prophecy is not possible.**

One pastor tells the true story of a student in a liberal seminary who took a class on the book of Daniel. The professor was an unbeliever who taught that the book was written long after the time that Daniel lived and so was written by someone other than Daniel. The student raised his hand and noted that Jesus said in Matthew 25:14 that Daniel wrote this book. Whereupon the professor retorted, **“Well, I know more about the Book of Daniel than Jesus did!”** Friends, please know that many pastors and theological professors believe that Jesus did not understand the scriptures. One day every one of us will stand before Jesus to give an account of every worthless word we have spoken.

**Application: Before you listen to someone tell you principles of healthy living, or teach the meaning of scripture, or share practical wisdom to help you relate to yourself or others, ask the question, “What does this person believe about God? And what do they believe about the Bible?”** It is not that unbelievers have nothing to say to us that is true. It is that so much of what they say is NOT TRUE!

I wish we had time to look at verses 1-35, but this morning, I am going to focus primarily on the last 10 verses of Daniel 11.

**One matter to affirm from those 35 verses is that God plans for Israel, a nation that had been decimated in Daniel’s day, to be at the center of world events all the way through the Persian and Greek empire.**

Then, verses 36-45 reveal that Israel will continue to be at the center of world events all the way until the end of time . . . all the way through the end of the fourth kingdoms rule.

**Let me ask you, do you think Israel is a major focus of world events in these last days?** That is predicted by God to be true! From 70 A.D. until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Israel was not even a nation. But here we are in the middle of 2024, we wake up and find Israel to be the major news story throughout the whole world.

Furthermore, God tells Daniel that at the end of time, because of their unbelief, **the LORD will once again chasten the people of Israel**. The angel tells Daniel *““At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. **And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.**” (Daniel 12:1 [ESV](#))*. This final chastening will be the most severe. The purpose of this tribulation will be to bring spiritual revival to Israel as a whole.

**Between verse 35 and 36, there is a jump in time.** The prophecies of 1-35 have already been realized. But the prophecy of 36-45 is still yet to come. As we focus on verses 36-45, we learn about a willful ruler who is yet to come who will rule over the whole world in the **“time of the end”** (11:35). We have seen this figure already prophesied about in the Book of Daniel. In Daniel 7 and 8, he is called “the little horn”. In Daniel 9, he is called “the prince who is to come”.

God references him in a number of other places in God’s Book. **In 2 Thessalonians** he is called, “the man of lawlessness” and the “son of destruction”. **In 1 John**, he is called the “Anti-Christ”. **In Revelation 13**, he is called “the Beast”. But we meet him first in the book of Daniel. This is no small character on the stage of God’s great program and plan for the world!!

**Why would we take a whole Sunday to consider this person called the Anti-Christ?**

First, he must be a person that God want us to know because God spent so much time in His Book revealing him to us.

Second, he becomes a measure by which we understand the kind of leadership that is dark and evil. While there is only one Anti-Christ. There are many “anti-christs” who precede him. This list informs who we vote for. This list helps those in leadership positions to move away from the character traits of this wicked leader. We must learn from the Anti-Christ’s negative example!

Finally, a study of the Anti-Christ makes us love the true Christ all the more. **The Anti-Christ becomes the dark background against which the diamond of the true Christ is more beautifully admired.**

## **Seven Traits of the Anti-Christ**

### **Trait #1: He does what is right in his own eyes.**

*““And the king shall do as he wills.” (Daniel 11:36 [ESV](#))*

This man believes that there is no rule, no law, no truth that is above him. He submits to nothing and to no one. He is the ultimate Captain of his own soul.

Whatever he thinks is right is right to him. He listens to no correction. He answers to no one. He is the ultimate authority with no check or balances.

When rules get in the way of what he wants to do or believes is best, he changes the rules. He makes all the decisions. His word is law. There is no law outside of him.

**Friends, it is the spirit of the Anti-Christ that urges us to listen to our own hearts to determine what is right and what is wrong.** God created us to live our lives UNDER His sovereign authority. When we decide that we are the best source for decisions related to morality, truth, relationships, and every-day living . . . we will find ourselves without God in our life. What a dark, destructive and devastating place to be! It may SEEM to work for us! But in the end, it leads to destruction of everything good.

How opposite the Anti-Christ is to the true Messiah! Jesus voluntarily and joyfully submits Himself to the Father. He willfully places Himself under the authority of the Word of God. And Jesus is God of very God!! Yet as One who took on flesh, He refuses to allow Himself to be the only measure of His life, His decisions and His actions.

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (Matthew 5:17 [ESV](#))*

*So Jesus said to them, “. . . I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.” (John 8:28-29 [ESV](#))*

*For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.” (John 12:49-50 [ESV](#))*

*“Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8 [ESV](#))*

Question: Are you ever tempted to live by your own rules? When you find that God’s will is opposite of what you think to be best, what do you do?

**Application: Live in community with people who submit to the Word of God together. Do not “go it alone” in the many moral and spiritual decisions that you face.** If scripture is absolutely clear, submit to the Word of God. But be slow to discount other faithful people’s reading of the Word. In short, do not be “willful”!

I thank the LORD for the elders in our church who seek the LORD together for the many decisions that confront us. There are often decisions that we make that are difficult. On many occasions, the elders disagree about what is good. We search the scriptures and seek for spiritual understanding from the LORD. **But even then, sometimes our understanding of the correct application of scripture differs.** I tell you . . . **there is much protection for each one of us in listening to one another and refusing to be “willful”.** On those occasions where the group decides something different from what I believed to be best, I thank God for that.

### **Trait #2: He exalts himself.**

*“He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god,” (Daniel 11:36 [ESV](#))*

Like Satan empowers him, the willful ruler craves glory for himself. He resents praise going to anyone but himself. He demands the esteem of others and he becomes angry when he is not given the credit that he thinks is due him.

*Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.** (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 [ESV](#))*

This person will be the ultimate narcissist. According to the Cleveland Clinic, here are the nine marks of a narcissist.

The nine criteria are:

1. A grandiose sense of self-importance.
2. Fantasies about having or deserving.
3. A sense of self-superiority.
4. A need for excessive admiration.
5. A sense of entitlement.
6. Exploitative behavior.
7. A lack of [empathy](#).
8. Frequent envy.
9. Arrogance.

I believe our sin nature is self-centered and that every person struggles with some of these symptoms of narcissism. But the Anti-Christ is off the charts!!

And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.” (Revelation 13:7-8 [ESV](#))

## How opposite is the true Messiah!

*Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*  
([Philippians 2:5-8](#) [ESV](#))

The true Messiah took a personal DEMOTION so that we could receive the ultimate PROMOTION. I love what J I Packer writes about the humility of Jesus.

*“The really staggering Christian claim is that Jesus of Nazareth was God made man— . . . and that He took humanity without loss of deity, so that Jesus of Nazareth was as truly and fully divine as He was human...*

*It is here, in the thing that happened at the first Christmas, that the profoundest and most unfathomable depths of the Christian revelation lie. ‘The Word became flesh’ (John 1:14); . . . the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child.*

*. . . The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as is this truth of the Incarnation.”*

—J.I. Packer, [Knowing God](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 53.

**Practical Truth: Instead of using His divine position as an opportunity for grabbing glory from others, the Son used His divine position as a platform for giving glory to others!!** Jesus opened His hands and yielded His right to pursue His personal interests and instead pursued our interests. This is grace . . . all grace.

**Friends, let us have this attitude in us! Jesus taught us a different kind of leadership!**

*“But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.””* (Matthew 20:25-28 [ESV](#))

### **Trait #3: He speaks against the God of Scripture.**

*“and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods.” (Daniel 11:36 [ESV](#))*

We see this trait again in Revelation 13:

*And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.” (Revelation 13:5-6 [ESV](#))*

**He is a megaphone for Satan. He uses his skill in oratory to tear down the LORD . . . to slander and disparage the God of glory.**

**Definition: Blasphemy is the sin of using our words to denigrate the one true and living God.**

A person blasphemes the LORD when he/she . . .

- denies God's existence.
- uses the name of the LORD in vain.
- treat the LORD as equal with other false gods.
- denies anything that God says is true.
- affirms anything that God says is not true.
- condemns God for something He allows.
- defies God through willful disobedience.
- speaks falsely about God.

Our culture places much emphasis upon the evil of using our words to denigrate people . . . especially certain groups of people. **As Christians, we are right to immediately agree that the use of our mouths to malign any person is a sin against the LORD.** But we are also right to affirm that the ultimate sin of our mouth is the denigration of the LORD. **Blasphemy is a sin that merits eternal condemnation.**

God created our mouths for the purpose of giving Him thanks and praise. As such, the LORD places great importance upon the words we speak. He tells us that from our hearts, the mouth speaks. An evil heart produces evil words. A grace-filled heart produces gracious words.



*"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matthew 12:36-37 [ESV](#))*

**How opposite is the true Messiah to the Anti-Christ!! Every word that Jesus uttered brought glory to His Father. Far from uttering words of corruption, Jesus went about proclaiming the Good News!**

#### **Trait #4: He prospers for a time.**

*"He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done." (Daniel 11:36 [ESV](#))*

**"Till the indignation is accomplished" refers to the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel . . . also known as the Tribulation.** When the Tribulation is complete, the Anti-Christ will be judged at the return of the true King. When Jesus returns to the earth with His saints, He comes to make war against the Anti-Christ and all on earth who oppose the LORD. The Anti-Christ will then be thrown into the lake of fire to suffer under God's righteous judgment forever and ever.

*"And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur." (Revelation 19:19-20 [ESV](#))*

**Question: Why does God allow this person to prosper? Why not cut him down the first time he blasphemes?**

**Part of the answer is that God allows the Anti-Christ to persecute the Jews as part of His plan to purge them of their unbelief and to bring them into salvation.**

*"so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time." (Daniel 11:35 [ESV](#))*

*In the whole land, declares the LORD, two thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.' (Zechariah 13:8-9 [ESV](#))*

### **Trait #5: He craves worldly power.**

*for he shall magnify himself above all. **He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these.** A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. **He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god.** Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. **He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.**" (Daniel 11:37b-39 [ESV](#))*

He exerts power through military might. He uses intimidation and force to get other nations to place themselves under his rule. He is the stereotypical BULLY on the playground. Everyone is afraid of his abuse.

He will for a time, gain the throne of this whole world with all the nations submitting to him.

**Application: Let us take care not to use bare power to bring others under our will.** This applies to all who possess any human authority. It applies to government leaders, to company owners, to supervisors, to coaches. Parents, this applies to you too. While your authority is not to be surrendered, neither is your authority to be misused. Use your authority like the true Messiah uses His . . . to love and help your children to willingly comply to what is good and right and true.

How different is the true Messiah! Jesus, the true Messiah will be given authority and power. But He only seeks subjects who willingly place themselves under His care, protection and authority.

*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30 [ESV](#))*

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20 [ESV](#))*

That is my King!!

### **Trait #6: He hates the future Messiah.**

*"He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, **or to the one beloved by women.**" (Daniel 11:37 [ESV](#))*

**NASB:** *""He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women,"*

(Daniel 11:37 [NAS95](#))

Lots of potential ways to understand this phrase, “Desire of women”, but I take to refer to the Anti-Christ’s hatred of the true Messiah. He is after all called the “Anti-Christ”.

*... And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand.” (Daniel 8:25 [ESV](#))*

**He has intense hatred for Jesus . . . an irrational loathing of the true Messiah.**

**Friends, we should be aware that those who have the spirit of the antichrist (and they are many) really, really hate Jesus and hate those who follow Him. Let us not be uninformed about the kind of attitudes that are present in our world.**

**We KNOW HOW THE STORY ENDS!**

*As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom.” (Daniel 7:21-22 [ESV](#))*

**Trait #7: He uses his eloquence to deceive many.**

*The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 [ESV](#))*

**What joy to know that every word Jesus speaks is a word of truth. He only speaks truth to us.**

*““And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: ‘The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s creation.” (Revelation 3:14 [ESV](#))*

*“Daniel 11:40 “Then at the time of the end, the king of the south will attack the king of the north. The king of the north will storm out with chariots, charioteers, and a vast navy. He will invade various lands and sweep through them like a flood. Daniel 11:41 He will enter the glorious land of Israel, and many nations will fall, but Moab, Edom, and the best part of Ammon will escape. Daniel 11:42 He will conquer many countries, and even Egypt will not escape. Daniel 11:43 He will gain control over the gold, silver, and treasures of Egypt, and the Libyans and Ethiopians will be his servants.*

*Daniel 11:44 "But then news from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in great anger to destroy and obliterate many. Daniel 11:45 He will stop between the glorious holy mountain and the sea and will pitch his royal tents. But while he is there, his time will suddenly run out, and no one will help him."*

*(Daniel 11:40-45 [NLT-SE](#))*

## **Conclusion: Who is Your King?**

On the corner of the UN building is the inscription from Is 2:4: "and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation and never again will they learn war." Sounds great! But look around. No peace. Why does the UN fail?

First part of Is 2:4 left off the inscription: "And He (the Messiah) will judge between the nations and will render decisions for many peoples." There will never be any peace until the LORD is seated at the conference table. Even so Lord Jesus, come quickly!

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**Trait #5: He craves worldly power.**

**Trait #6: He hates the future Messiah.**

**Trait #7: He uses his eloquence to deceive many.**