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DANIEL 11:36-45 ULTIMATE SIN AND ULTIMATE VICTORY

³⁶ *"The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. ³⁷ He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. ³⁸ Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.*

⁴⁰ *"At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. ⁴¹ He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. ⁴² He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. ⁴⁴ But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.*

Toward the end, the godless will appear to prevail. The culmination of human sin and willfulness will be the exaltation of the totally deceived and depraved human being who will not only deny the existence of God or any god, but will believe that he actually is God. He will seem to be the perfect fulfillment of Satan's suggestion to Adam and Eve that they would "*be like God*" (Genesis 3:5) or that words that Isaiah placed on the lips of the king of Babylon, "*I will make myself like the Most High*" (Isaiah 14:14). Indeed, this Anti-Christ will be Satan's greatest achievement. This one will live into the offer that Satan made to Jesus in the wilderness.

⁵ *The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ So if you worship me, it will all be yours."* (Luke 4:5-7)

But he will not prevail. When he makes his final assault upon the eternal and sovereign God, "*he will come to his end, and no one will help him.*" Living on this side of Easter we know that this victory has already been accomplished. No amount of human pride or denial can undo what was done on Calvary and the Garden Tomb. This is our great encouragement. It is not the community of believers that is deceived, but those who deny the reality of Christ's victory. Who would not stand in defiance of the bombs of the terrorists, the bullets of the assassins, and the character-killing lies of the evil powers if he knew that he would prevail? That was the assurance of the three who went into the

furnace and Daniel who entered the lions' den. It is also that which is available to us, today.

Lord, your Word does not promise a spirit of fear, but of strength and courage. I thank you that you have overpowered the powers and have promised to be with me always. Make me ever faithful to you. Amen.