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3-A: *"Vile Person"* Arrives on the Scene (11:21-23)
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3-G: Nature of the anti-Christ *"King of the North"* (11:36-37)

11:36 "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done.
11:37 "He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all."

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***Then the king shall do according to his own will* (11:36)**

The "king" (of the North), the Antichrist, having invaded the Jewish "sanctuary", has by this bold action thumbed his nose at the restraining powers of his enemies, powers given to them, presumably, in the *"holy covenant"*. He feels emboldened then to operate *"according to his own will"*. This phrase was used in verses 3 and 16 to describe the rise of Alexander the Great and of Antiochus III the Great. Their willfulness became the weakness that undermined their regimes.

Like so many rulers, who thought they could just barrel along without listening to God or anyone else, they and their kingdoms eventually

unraveled; they wound up defeated and frustrated and lost their authority and kingdoms. And, as we will soon learn, this is also how the story will play out for the Antichrist *"king of the North"*.

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***He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods* (11:36)**

But for the time being, he feels tremendously confident: *"he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god"*. And if that isn't enough, he *"shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods."* At this point of rebellion against the *"holy covenant"*, it appears that the Antichrist undergoes a transformation as he begins voicing bitter diatribes – his blasphemies against God. From the passage in Revelation 12, we learn that Michael and his angels around this time will have driven Satan and his hordes out of the Celestial Dimension. Which means that those evil forces will be confined to the Earthly Realm. Which in turn means that the Antichrist will be influenced more directly by the forces of Darkness.

And so, it is no surprise that at this time he will begin to speak with enhanced power and defiance *"against the God of gods"*. The Hebrew word used here for *"blasphemies"* can be translated as *"marvelous things"*. Other passages speak of the Antichrist as a *"beast"* speaking *"great* [proud] *words against the Most High"* and *"blasphemies"* and as a *"horn"* who will *"cast truth to the ground"*. (Daniel 7:8,11,20, 8:12, Revelation 13:5-6)

Generally, we may conclude from these different Scriptures that the Antichrist, through his eloquent manner of speaking, will greatly impress and win much of the world; however, the hidden (or not so hidden) intent of his words will be to defy the Most High. And of course, modern means of media broadcasting and communication will greatly multiply the effectiveness of this persuasive propaganda. As Hitler managed, through his great oratorical skill, to get the German nation to rise up in rebellion against the rest of the world, so the Antichrist will succeed in persuading much of the world to rise up in rebellion against the Most High.

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***And shall prosper* (11:36)**

Here is repeated something that was said in a previous vision (about 15 years earlier) of the Antichrist, that he *"shall prosper and thrive".* And the reason for this is because *"his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power."* (8:12, 24) And in the *Book of Revelation* we learn where this *"power"* comes from: *"the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority."* (13:2)

The *Dragon* is allowed free rein to use his *Beasts* from *"sea"* and *"earth"* to act as God's instrument of chastisement on His wayward people of the *Harlot* empire. And that free rein continues for a short while afterwards, long enough to show that, without God, a ruler or empire will only descend into a downward spiral of totalitarian tyranny and can never provide the kind of wise and benevolent government that human society needs.

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***Till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done* (11:36)**

For those living at this time in history, there will be no need to feel defeated or intimidated by the Antichrist's apparent victory over the world and God's people. He and his anti-God kingdom will soon come to its end. For it *"has been determined"* (in the councils of Heaven) and it *"shall be done."*

Just as happened to so many of history's tyrants, who thought they could carry on "according to their own will", the Antichrist *"king of the North"* also *"shall prosper"*, but only for a limited time… *"till the wrath has been accomplished."* But in this case, instead of raising up enemies or assassination or other earthly means of pulling down the tyrannical regime, this time God Himself will step in by supernatural intervention.

This kind of supernatural intervention to bring about battle victories happened a few times during the history of ancient Israel. The most dramatic accounts of these may be found in Exodus 14, Isaiah 37, 2Chronicles 20; and there are others. But the most dramatic and

astounding "supernatural intervention" will occur at the Battle of Armageddon, as outlined in Revelation 19, when the Lord Himself, along with *"the armies in heaven"*, shall swoop down to defeat *"the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies"*. (19:14,19)

That the final Antichrist will be defeated in this supernatural manner is a recurring theme brought out in the Book of Daniel: in verse 2:45 – *"the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands"*; 8:25 – *"he shall be broken without human means"*; 11:45 – *"he shall come to his end, and no one will help him."*

Incidentally, regarding *"the wrath"*, the Hebrew word used here is commonly translated as *"indignation"*, which probably expresses the meaning better – Daniel 8:19, Revelation 14:10, for example. *"Indignation"* implies righteous anger. God is not arbitrary in His judgments; He is upset for good reasons. He is angry with the transgressions of evil men and the evil spirits who influence them and is ready now at this point in history to put an end finally to their stranglehold on human society.

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***He shall regard neither the God of his fathers* (11:37)**

The previous verse said that he would *"speak blasphemies against the God of gods."* So of course, it is no surprise that he does not regard the *"God of his fathers"*. The term *"fathers"* was often used in the ancient Hebrew in a fairly general sense as "ancestors". Probably it can be taken then as referring to previous generations in the predominantly Christian culture of Europe and Russia.

One historical example we can note: Josef Stalin attended seminary school during his youth, yet he rejected this heritage to become a ruthless communist leader and atheist dictator of Soviet Russia.

Until modern times, rulers were obliged to at least acknowledge, or *"regard"* the God of the Bible, regardless of whether or not they were real believers or adherents to Christian virtues. But modern culture has, to a large extent, shed this veneer of acknowledgement of Christianity, and in

some nations of Europe, and in former communist nations, it is or was illegal to make any official declarations of Christian faith (or even any other faith).

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Nor the desire of women (11:37)

Nevertheless, in those historical situations where rulers did not believe in God, either because of their own unbelief or because of the constraints imposed by their cultural surroundings, God's voice could still get through to them. And this perhaps is what the phrase about the *"desire of women"* is about.

Some events from ancient times may help us with understanding this. When the Roman generals Julius Caesar and Mark Antony arrived in Egypt, they were captivated by the Egyptian queen Cleopatra. Because of this, Egypt received favorable treatment from these powerful men. In another example, the Persian king Ahaseurus yielded to the influence of Queen Esther and saved the Jewish people in his empire from annihilation.

In the case of the Antichrist however, he will not be swayed by the *"desire of women"*. Perhaps that means he is a homosexual and as a result women can't influence him. Or it could mean that he is such a ruthless character, under the Devil's influence, that no amount of tender pleading for mercy can cause him to spare in his relentless efforts to persecute and annihilate the people of God, and nations who oppose him in those days. (Further thoughts on this passage about the *"desire of women"* may be found in the Appendix.)

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Nor regard any god (11:37)

Modern, secular society has lost the religious, and often superstitious, orientation of past cultures. Because of the influence of scientific knowledge, the majority of humankind no longer worships the idols and images of old. Arising as he does out of this kind of modern culture, the Antichrist will not regard these gods of the past.

For us in modern times that is not so unusual, but for Daniel and the people from past eras, this would have seemed astonishing – a very peculiar feature about the world of the future – its non-religious setting and its final ruler who won't acknowledge God, or even *"any god"*. That was a difficult scenario for people in those days to imagine; for even the Caesars, who were supposed to be objects of worship, were themselves still obliged to recognize the authority of the other Roman gods.

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***He shall exalt himself above them all* (11:37)**

This statement seems to reflect modern mankind's rejection of the fact that he is a creation of God. Instead, the standard, accepted idea now is that human beings are the ultimate end-product of evolutionary development.

Communist doctrine (in China), secular humanism (in the West) and evolution teaching (everywhere) have propagandized the modern world to disbelieve in the Supernatural or the Afterlife, which were standard pillars in the cultural mindsets of those in days gone by.

So if God is not in the picture, nor any of the former gods, nor even a belief in the supernatural, then all that is left is the world of humanity; there is nothing better, nothing more than that. Against this sort of cultural background and philosophical orientation, it would be perfectly natural and easy for the Antichrist to *"exalt himself above them all"* – above the *"God of his fathers"* and above any other *"god"*.

This passage then reinforces what was mentioned in the previous verse: *"he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god."* Since it is mentioned twice, this exaltation of self must be an important or unusual feature that Gabriel was trying to get across. It was his way of describing in an ancient language the kind of non-religious setting of our modern culture, with its glorification of self, of humanity, and our manmade world – all shabby counterfeits for the real thing, God and the Heavenly Kingdom, but appealing, nonetheless, to our modern secular and science-oriented outlook.

In addition to these verses (11:36-37), a similar idea is expressed in the New Testament: *"the man of sin… son of perdition… opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped."* (2Thessalonians 2:3-4)

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Continue to Part 3H: The *"God of Forces"*

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Appendix

Regarding the *"desire of women"* phrase, below is a helpful quote from Keil and Delizsch, two German Bible scholars of the 19th century whose devotion to God enabled them to buck the tide of skepticism that had become popular in the academic world of that era. Their commentary starts off with the question of whether or not "desire of women" is a reference to one of the ancient gods:

> **A verbal proof that [*"desire of women"*] denotes the Anaïtis or Adonis as the favourite deity of women has not been adduced. For these words, *desiderium mulierum* [Latin for *"desire of women"*], denote not that which women desire, but that which women possess which is desirable; cf. under 1 Sam 9:20. But it is impossible that this can be Anaïtis or Adonis, but it is a possession or precious treasure of women.**
>
> **This desirable possession of women is without doubt love; so that, as C. B. Michaelis has remarked, the expression is not materially different from *naashiym 'ahabat*, the love of women, 2 Sam 1:26. The thought: "he shall not regard the desire of women, or the love of women," agrees perfectly with the connection. After it has been said in the first clause: he shall set himself free from all religious reverence transmitted from his fathers, from all piety toward the gods in which he had been trained, it is then added in the second clause: not merely so, but generally from all piety toward men and God, from all the tender affections of the love of men and of God. The "love of women" is named as an example**

selected from the sphere of human piety, as that affection of human love and attachment for which even the most selfish and most savage of men feel some sensibility. Along with this he shall set himself free from [*"any god"*], from all piety or reverence toward God or toward that which is divine (Klief.). This thought is then established by the last clause: *"for he shall magnify himself above all."* To [the Hebrew words for *"above all"*] we may not supply [the Hebrew word for "deity"]; for this clause not only presents the reason for the foregoing clause, [*"nor regard any god"*], but for both of the foregoing clauses [about not regarding *"the God of his fathers nor the desire of women"*]. Hitzig and Kliefoth are right in their interpretation: "above everything, or all, gods and men," he shall magnify himself, raise himself up in arrogance.

[from Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1866]

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Continue to Part 3H: The *"God of Forces"*