

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Far From Home

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Part of God's Plan

SCRIPTURE

Daniel 11



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God starts everyone's story at a particular time, with particular people, in a place we call home. And subtly, at various times in our life, the foundations under our feet shift and we find ourselves far from our place. Far from our people. Far from home. Where do we find courage when the foundations shake? How do we live in a new place that feels hostile to our faith? How do we live and thrive when we are far from home?

Good morning, Providence. It's good to see you. My name is Daniel Savage. I'm one of the pastors here, and it's a joy to be able to open the word. We're in our series through the Book of Daniel. And if you are following along, we're in Daniel chapter 11 this morning. If you've read ahead, you know that we have quite a bit of ground to cover. So I hope you're not too hungry for lunch. I hope you've had a little coffee, and I promise to have you out of here by 2:30 at least.

That's a classic pastor joke you just have to make every once in a while. But that's the last joke we have time for. So let's pray and ask for God's help as we look at Daniel chapter 11. Heavenly Father, as we approach Your word this morning, we ask that You would help us. God, that you would reveal Yourself through what is complex and somewhat confusing. God would You speak clearly to us, reveal Yourself, Your character, Your nature, Your power and goodness. And point us to Jesus Christ. And as He is exalted among us, I pray that He would draw us to Himself. God give us this grace this morning. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear. Help us to understand what You've revealed in Your word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. And we're moving through Daniel. We've got this week and next week left. And the series is called Far from Home and it's because Daniel was a prophet who was far from home.

He was taken and exiled to a foreign land. And the book of Daniel is really two parts. The first part is about his experience being far from home. Some of him, his friends, what they went through, what it was like to try to follow God in the midst of a pagan culture. And a culture that wasn't friendly towards their religion, but in fact opposed to it. And then the back half of the book, which we're in now, chapter 7 through 12, is comprised of four visions. And we're the fourth one now. Chapters 10, 11, and 12 are really all devoted to this one final vision that we are studying now. Chapter 10 was an introduction to this vision, and then chapter 11 is really the meat of it. And then chapter 12 is sort of the conclusion. And so we will look at these 45 verses of chapter 11 this morning.

Now what's going to happen in these 45 verses is God is going to supernaturally unfold His plans and purposes before Daniel, the prophet. And if you can imagine with me, it's going to be like a camera that is fixed on one scene. And just like the lens of a camera, you can turn that lens and change the focus from the foreground to the background. Daniel's going to be doing that as we move through the chapter. He's looking at this kind of one set of events. He kind of begins, he ramps up with some major world events, and then he begins to narrow it down. And he's focused on one ruler, Antiochus. And he's going to start close up, and he's going to slowly through the chapter move, and be talking farther and farther away. We'll talk about that as we go. As we start though, I think we should ask a question. And that is, as we read this, there's all these details, all this prophecy here.

And the question that it raises for me is, why is this here? What is the point of all this? I mean it is detailed, what he is going to describe about one king versus another king. And the things that are going to happen. What is the point of this? And even this, verses 21 on are really talking about Antiochus IV who was a ruler in Syria. And he's already talked about him. He talked about him in Daniel chapter 8. We already had the warnings about Antiochus. This great persecution that was coming. So why again? Why is he retreading some of this ground? Why all this detail? God doesn't do things for no reason. When you think about all that He didn't reveal, why go over this again? And I think it all speaks to how important these things are, and how much they are needed.

God knows the difficulty of the times that are to come for His people, and He wants to do everything He can to prepare them. And this is part of it. Jesus taught His disciples repeatedly about being prepared for the last days. He used all kinds of analogies. He's talked about a thief that would come in the night and if you knew that he was coming, you would stay awake and wait for him. He talked about the 10 virgins, some had oil, and some didn't. Some were ready, some weren't. All of these different pictures to tell His disciples, "Be ready for the end." And I think Daniel 11 gives us valuable instructions about how to do that. How can we prepare ourselves for what is to come the last days leading up to Christ's return? I think we'll see three important ways that God was preparing His people for the difficult days to come, and learn how to prepare ourselves for the days leading up to Christ's return.

The first thing that we need to do, the first way that we need to prepare ourselves, is that we need to learn to rest in the power of God. That's the first thing we need to do. Rest in the power of God. The chapter starts out with this detailed prediction of some major world events. And it starts with this wide shot, and then it's going to narrow the focus. It starts with Persia, moves to Greece. And then it's going to zero in on an ongoing conflict between two kingdoms that will come out of the Greek empire, Syria and Egypt. And the Book of Daniel was written sometime around 540 BC. And the vision of this chapter is going to look forward through these kingdoms all the way to the end. And the first four verses are going to cover about 200 years from 540 BC to the rise of Alexander the Great to his demise and the dividing of his kingdom into four parts.

Look with me at verse one. It says, chapter 11:1. "And as for me, in the year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him. And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. Then a mighty king shall arise who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills. And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these." So it says there's going to be three kings, and then a fourth in Persia who will raise up a great army.

He's talking here about Xerxes. Xerxes was the fourth king after Cyrus in Persia. And then verses three and four summarize the rise and fall of a great king. This great king is going to have great power and his kingdom is going to be divided into four parts. This is Alexander the Great. In 334 BC, Alexander the Great would

conquer Persia. And he ruled most of the known world. In a very short period of time, he takes over most of what was known to mankind at the time. But his reign is going to be short-lived. He dies suddenly in his early thirties. And just as Daniel predicted, his kingdom doesn't go to his sons, his posterity. But instead it goes to four parts. It's goes to the four winds or it's divided among four generals. Now the next section, the vision is going to narrow to two of the four kingdoms that come out of that.

So the empire of Greece is divided into four parts, and now he's going to focus in on two of those four parts. And the reason he's going to narrow this focus is because the conflict between these two countries is going to have... Or two kingdoms is going to have an outsized impact on Israel. In fact, he's going to refer to them as the king of the North and the king of the South, and they're called that because of their relative location to Israel. It's the kingdom north of Israel and the kingdom south of Israel. Or the "glorious land" as he calls it in verse 16. And the kingdom of the North, he's referring to Syria. And the kingdom of the South, he's referring to Egypt. And they're going to go back and forth in conflict over the next 170 years or so. And it's going to have Jerusalem right in the middle.

So verse five, we're going to pick up there, we're going to read through verse 20. It says, "Then the king of the South shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority. And after some years they shall make an alliance and the daughter of the king of the South shall come to the king of the North to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up and her attendance, he who fathered her and he who supported her in those times. And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.

He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the North. Then the latter shall come into the realm of the King of the South but shall return to his own land. His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. Then the king of the South, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the North. And he shall raise a great multitude but it shall be given into his hand. And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands but he shall not prevail. For the king of the North shall again raise a multitude greater than the first and after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.

In those times, many shall rise against the king of the South, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail. Then the king of the North shall come and throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the South shall not stand, or even his best troops for there shall be no strength to stand. But he who comes against him, shall do as he wills. And none shall stand before him and he shall stand in the glorious land with destruction in his hand. He shall set his face to come with strength, the strength of his whole kingdom. And he shall bring terms of an agreement

and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.

Afterward, he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him, then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall and shall not be found. Then shall arise in his place, one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom, but within a few days he shall be broken neither in anger nor in battle.” There’s a lot of details in those verses and if you were trying to keep up, good luck. It took me, I don’t even want to say how long it took me to figure out what all that meant. And I don’t want to rehearse to you all the details. You can get a good history book, read about Syria and Egypt and their conflict. And you can begin to piece together what he’s talking about.

One commentator I read said, “It’s thinly veiled commentary.” In other words, it’s not too hard to begin to figure out once you read the historical events what he was talking about and where. But what we need to focus on is that this prophecy outlines in great detail and accuracy what is going to happen around Israel as these two kingdoms go back and forth for a few hundred years. You hear the language of wars, and fortified cities, arranged marriages, treaties, betrayals, assassinations. And all in this sort of manner of chaos. It’s this kind of back and forth where it doesn’t seem to read like one has the advantage over the other. It’s this kind of ongoing back and forth. And so you can read through this and figure out exactly what he’s talking about, but I think there’s one general idea that we need to zero in on. And that idea is that God knew exactly what was going to happen, and He revealed it to Daniel.

In fact, these prophecies are so accurate that people who don’t believe in the supernatural nature of the Bible refused to believe that this was written before it happened. Even though there’s ample evidence that it was written well before any of these things happened, but it’s so accurate that they cannot believe that it was written in advance. The point of this vision is that God wants to give His people all that is needed in order to stand in a time of adversity that’s coming. And one of the things that He thinks they need to know is that He is in control of all things. He knows all things. God is revealing in these verses His omniscience or just, He’s all-knowing. He knows all. He’s revealing that He knows and sees all things. He’s not unaware of anything. Not only does He see every detail of what’s happening now in every place, but He sees what will happen even in the future.

And this is the point. Now you take the reality here of God’s omniscience, that He knows everything. Not only everything that’s happening now, but everything that will happen. And He is omnipotent, He’s all powerful. He’s in control of it all. And you compare that to the relative weakness and fragility of man in this chapter. Just think about the example of Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great is one of the greatest rulers that’s ever been in the world. One of the most powerful men who ever lived. He was able to dominate the world and only a few years in his early thirties, and this is what it says about him in verse four. “And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven. But not to his posterity, not to his sons, nor according to the authority with which he ruled for his kingdom shall be

plucked up and go to others besides these.”

God is intentionally using language to communicate how small this kingdom is in His sight. Even though it was the greatest, most powerful empire the world had known up to this point. He says, “I plucked it up like I plucked it up with two fingers.” And this great ruler who had all this power, and this majesty, and this ability, and he conquered so many people, he’s going to die at an early age. And he won’t even have the power to pass his kingdom on to his own sons. Instead, it will blow in the four directions of the wind. It’s going to be broken up and divided, all highlighting how weak even Alexander the Great was before God Almighty. In fact, if you go back through and read this chapter and these verses, what you’ll see over and over again is this description of something that they were planning to do and then they’d use the word “but” 13 times. Verse four, verse five, verse six. Again in verse six. Verse nine, verse 11, verse 12, verse 14, verse 16, verse 17, 18, 19, 20.

All of them say they made these plans, but they failed. They tried to go this direction, but they were turned back. They tried to offer this solution, but it didn’t work. Over and over again talking about how the plans of these great men failed. Because they look powerful, but ultimately there was One who is all powerful. What we need to do as we prepare for the end is we need to rest in God’s power. And how we’re supposed to do that? The first point of application this morning is let’s keep His power and authority in view. We have to keep His power and authority in view. It’s easy for us to forget that God is ruling and reigning over all things. And we can quickly begin to give earthly rulers and authorities way too much credit.

Because when we look at the world’s events and the things that are going on through the lens of what’s presented to us in the culture, it’s easy to begin to think, “Oh, that’s who has all the power. That’s where all the might is. That’s who’s in control.” And we need to instead look through the lens of scripture. And be reminded that it is God who reigns over all things. Remember what Jesus said to Pontius Pilate. When Jesus was on trial in John chapter 19, He’s before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. And Pontius Pilate is grilling Him with questions, trying to get Him to speak to him and Jesus won’t respond.

And so Pilate gets frustrated and in verse 10 he says, so Pilate says to him, “You will not speak to me. Do you not know that I have authority to release you? And authority to crucify you?” And finally Jesus speaks and He answers him. He said, “You would have no authority over Me at all unless it had been given to you from above.” Because Jesus knows who is really in control. Jesus knows that all earthly authority is a delegated authority. It’s a delegated power that God has given and He can snatch away in a moment if he wants. These things are true, this is reality, but we’re quick to forget who’s reigning and ruling in the world. And so how do we remember? How can we rest in His power and authority? Well, we can do that by making sure we spend more time reading God’s word than listening to the news.

We need to spend more time meditating on the truth of scripture than we do on the opinions of the day that are spun up on social media. Even some of you who have great habits of waking up in the morning and reading God’s word. Sometimes we pile on top of that habit, the habit of then going off and watching 30 or 45

minutes of news before we leave for the day. Or we turn on the radio when we get in the car and we listen to the opinions of the day. And you have to consider, you have to guard your heart, cultivate your mind. When you sit at work the rest of the day or wherever it is you go, what do you dwell on? Are you dwelling on the realities that you read about in the word of God? That He is reigning and ruling over all things. That He is gracious and merciful, that He appoints steadfast love and faithfulness to us?

Is that what you're dwelling on? Or are you stirred up about the issues of the day? And this foreign power. And that foreign power. And what this leader is doing. And what this election might turn out to be? Where's your heart? What are you dwelling on? We must rest in the power of God. Psalm one, one through three says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the council of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. And on His law he meditates day and night." You know what it says about him? What happens when a man meditates on the book of the law day and night? Verse three, he says, "He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit and its season. And its leaf does not wither, in all that he does, he prospers." It's talking about being steadfast.

How do we prepare for the end when there's going to be so much trial and difficulty? We must sink roots deep next to streams of water. So that whether it's extreme heat, or extreme cold, or drought or storm, we will have deep roots and we will be ready to bear fruit in every season. We must rest in the power of God.

The second thing that we must do to prepare for the end is that we need to prepare ourselves for suffering. The point of view narrows at this point even further as we move to verse 21. The rest of the chapter is going to focus on one king of the North. It's a king that was first introduced, like I said in Daniel chapter eight, it's Antiochus. Who in chapter eight was the little horn. And the reason Daniel keeps coming back to Antiochus IV is that he is going to unleash one of the most devastating persecutions that the people of God have ever known.

He's the one that they need to know about. He's the one that they need to prepare for. And not only that, we're going to begin to see clues in these next few verses that he's not only talking about Antiochus, but he's pointing to someone beyond him as well. He's pointing to another period of suffering that is to come. Verse 21, this is what it says. We'll read 21-35.

"In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant." So there our minds run to religious covenants. There I think he's talking about like the rightful ruler. He's going to steal the throne.

Verse 23. "And from the time that an alliance is made with him, he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with the small people. Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his father's fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil

and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds but only for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand for plots shall be devised against him. Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away and many shall fall down slain. And as for the two kings, their heart shall be bent on doing evil.

They shall speak lies at the same table but to no avail for the end is yet to be at the time appointed. And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land. At the appointed time he shall return and come into the South but it shall not be this time as it was before. For ships of Kittim shall come against him and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant.

He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress and shall take away the regular burn offering and they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant. But the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery. And some of the wise shall stumble so that they may be refined, purified and made white until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.” Antiochus IV, which this is referring to, was a deceiver.

He obtained his throne and his might through lying and flattery. He had great power and great influence because he knew how to appeal to the flesh. The desires of the flesh in each man’s heart. He paid for loyalty, he gave out power and position and in many ways all of these things are pointing ahead to the anti-Christ. He was also set against the holy covenant it says in verse 28. In other words, he opposed the worship of God. His aim was to convince the people of Israel to abandon God. And so he began to punish those who practiced their faith and he began to reward those who would walk away from it. He appointed leaders in Jerusalem to oversee this sort of de-religion of the Israelites. He was trying to strip away their devotion to God. And all of these efforts pick up speed when he attempts to go to Egypt a second time to attack them, in verse 29. He goes to attack Egypt, but this time he’s met by the ships of Kittim, which is referring to the Romans.

So on his second campaign down to Egypt, he meets the Romans and the Romans humiliate him. In fact, one historian I read said that one of the Roman generals drew a circle around Antiochus, and said he needed to decide what he was going to do before he stepped out of that circle. And that if he attacked Egypt he would be attacking Rome itself. And so Antiochus takes his troops, turns around and heads back home, but he goes to Jerusalem on his way. And that’s where he unleashes this great persecution. He massacred thousands of people. He desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar. And setting up an idol of Zeus in the holy of holies. This is what he’s calling the abomination that makes desolate in verse 31. He shuts down the daily sacrifices in the temple and makes regular worship a capital offense. And many of the Israelites will walk



away from their faith but not all.

If you look back at verse 32, and these I think are some of the most encouraging verses in the chapter. It says, “He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant.” So in other words, he’s going to reward those who walk away. “But the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.” And what is it that they’re going to do? What is this action they’re going to take? “The wise among the people shall make many understand.” In other words, they’re going to be proclaiming the goodness and power of God. They’re going to be calling the people back to worship and it says some are going to listen. “They will make many understand. Though for some days they shall stumble or fall or be killed by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.” They’re going to pay a heavy price for this faithfulness.

Verse 34 says, “When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. Some are going to join them, many will join themselves to them with flattery and some of the wise shall stumble so that they may be refined, purified and made white until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.”

The point here for the Jewish people was that God wanted them to be prepared for the suffering that was to come. And I would say that you and I need to make some of the same preparations. And we need to be prepared for One who is coming, who will make war against everything that we believe. And so how do we prepare for that? How do we prepare for suffering? The Bible repeatedly tells us to be ready for it, to be prepared for it. So how do we do that? I’ll give you three quick ways. One is let’s take comfort in God’s predictions and promises to help. Now, one of the reasons this chapter is here is to remind us that everything that’s happening in the world is passing through the fingers of a gracious and loving God. God doesn’t cause suffering but He allows it and can accomplish His purposes through it. And we see that over and over again. Think about the language we’ve seen in this chapter, “at the appointed time.” It said that at least three times. Well, who do you think is appointing the times?

It is God who reigns over all things. And these predictions are here, this prophecy, this kind of unfolding of events is there to comfort us that we could look back and say, “God knew what was coming. And God knows now what is coming.” So God predicted this suffering. I think the second thing we must do if we’re going to prepare is we have to forsake the idols of comfort, control, and power. God was predicting for these people that there would be great suffering coming. And as we read the rest of this chapter, it’s going to become more and more clear that we’re supposed to be looking ahead for a similar day that we should face. And if that’s true, if there is a coming time of suffering, which we’ve been talking about now for weeks as we’ve looked at these prophecies. If there is a day coming, when someone is going to make war against what we believe, then we should be prepared to give up power and control.

I’m watching as the American church is making this transition out of an unusual season, where we’ve had influence and control and power, and we are struggling as we let go of it. We’re grasping with fear. We’re wondering what’s going to happen to us? Can we survive in a day that’s not like the day’s gone by? And the

answer is yes, we can. Why? Because God is with us. And we have to ask the question. We must decide now whether or not God is enough for us. If we lose everything, our possessions, our power, our influence, our safety, our security, our comfort. If we lose it all, will God be enough? I submit to you that He is. He is all we need. He is our inheritance that is kept unfading in heaven for us. He is the one that will satisfy our souls. He is the one we can trust in and rest in, but we must forsake the idols of comfort, control, and power and we must decide now that he is all we need.

Finally, we can rejoice in God's ability to use our suffering to produce good things in us. Verse 35 says, "Some of the wise will stumble so that they may be refined, purified, and made white." Looking at this idea that's repeated over and over again in the New Testament that God uses our suffering for our good. James, sorry, James 1: 2-4 says, "Count it all joy my brothers. When you meet trials of various kinds for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

Are you counting it all joy when you meet trials of various kinds? Daniel here is talking about captivity and plunder and sword and flame. Those are massive trials. But trials come in all shapes and sizes. You will face trials this week. Some of you will face small trials, some of you will face massive trials. Will you count it all joy? And how do you do that? How can you count these trials as joy? Only if you rest in the truth that God can use all of it for your eternal good. Do you believe that? Do you believe that there is a gracious God who cares about you so much that He is carefully using every circumstance in your life to produce good fruit in you? Do you believe that? Are you resting in it? We can prepare for the end by resting in God's power, preparing ourselves for suffering. And finally by standing firm and taking action by looking to the One who rules over all. Standing firm and taking action by looking to the One who rules over all.

Now I'm going to read the last 10 verses and the further we get into this chapter, the more he's talking about the events of the last days. And remember the camera, that he's turning that lens and he's moving further and further into the background. Now in these verses, I think he's still talking about Antiochus. But more and more he's using Antiochus as a symbol, as an analogy almost, to show us what the anti-Christ is going to be like.

Look at verse 36, it says, "And the king shall do as he wills, he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every God and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished for what is decreed shall be done. He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god 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. At the time of the end, the king of the South shall attack him, but the king of the North shall rush upon him like a whirlwind with chariots and horsemen and with many ships.

And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. He shall come into the glorious land and tens of thousands shall fall. But these shall be delivered out of his hand. Edom and Moab in the main part of the Ammonites. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and silver and all the precious things of Egypt and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. But news from the east and the north shall alarm him and he shall go out with a great fury to destroy and devote them to destruction. And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious mountain. Yet he shall come to his end with none to help him.”

These last few verses in particular point ahead to a final conflict between good and evil. The anti-Christ will defeat his enemies and set up his kingdom in Jerusalem. Verse 41, “the glorious land”. His enemies will be his prisoners and the only ones who will be spared are Israel’s historic enemies. People like the Edomites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites. There will be this incredible buildup of power and victory, but Daniel’s vision gives us a preview of how this all comes to a conclusion. And how the anti-Christ is going to have a stunning fall. And the whole narrative of the anti-Christ coming on the scene and gaining in power, it ends with this underwhelming sentence. “Yet he shall come to his end with none to help him.”

And all this serves as a reminder that this great conflict at the end is not like two champions that come out. The champion of evil and the champion of good, and we’re all holding our breath to see what’s going to happen. It won’t be like that at all. When God says the conflict is over, it will be over. In fact, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2:8 says this. It says, “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nothing by the appearance of His coming.” How will Jesus defeat this great enemy? Will it be all of his angels and all of his armies? No. It will be by the appearance of His coming. He will show up and bring the anti-Christ to nothing. So as you think about preparing for the end and the appearing of Jesus Christ, let me point out one final application. And that is simply that let’s prepare for the day of Christ’s return.

It would be a mistake for us to zero in on all these powers of evil and try to predict what they’re going to be like. Instead, what we need to do is cast our eyes towards the One who is coming. Look to the One who will destroy these enemies just by the appearance of His coming. Look to Him. Jesus was repeatedly telling His disciples to look forward to this day and to be ready for it. Matthew 24:37-39 says this, “For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of man. For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark. And they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away. So will be the coming of the Son of man.”

Jesus is using this analogies, comparing the end of time to the days leading up to the flood in Genesis chapter six. And He’s saying, “Just like in those days people were going about their regular business.” They were buying and selling. They were coming and going. They were giving in marriage, and they were getting married up until the last day. Why? Because they were just assuming every day was just going to be like the days before. Jesus is warning them that there will come a day when it is not like the days that have come before. “But

I will return when it is not expected.” And the danger for us as a church is that we would fold up the Book of Daniel after next week and we have a nice conclusion. And then we just think, “Well, that was an interesting study.” And we move on.

The Book of Daniel is giving us very real warnings and instruction. And it is telling us to prepare for the end. Prepare for the days that are coming. Well, how do we do that? Who are the ones that were prepared in the days of Antiochus? Who are the ones that were able to stand firm and take action? Who were the ones that were able to make many understand? It was the ones who knew their God. So what do we do to prepare for these last days? If you didn't even heard anything else I've said this whole time, know your God.

What do you need to know about Him? Everything that you need to know about God is encapsulated in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That there is a God who loves you. And Jesus Christ took on flesh to come live among us. Took on the form of a servant and was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. He lived a perfect sinless life, and then died the death of a sinner. On the third day He was raised again from the dead. And He did all of that so that there could be an exchange so that if I put my faith in Him, my trust in Him, His righteousness, His sinlessness could be given to me. And my sin could be removed from me and placed upon Him. And He pays the penalty for it so that when I see Him face to face, when He comes in the sky and the clouds break open and I see Christ, I don't have to turn and run in shame. But I can rejoice, because I have safety in the day of judgment. Because of His work on my behalf.

Know God. If you're not a Christian, you need to know the same things as the Christian. That if you meet Him face to face without putting your trust upon Him, there is judgment to come. But you don't have to face Him that way. You can put your hope and trust in Jesus and submit yourself to Him and His righteousness becomes yours. And your sin is removed from you. And if you're a Christian, you need to know those same things. That there's a God who loves you. That He will not forsake you. That He has promised to be with us until the end of the age. And that He was raised on the third day. And He sits now in all authority at the right hand of God, the Father. And so no matter how dark the days get here, we can look to Him and we can wait for His return. Be steadfast, stand firm, and take action as we look to the One who rules over all.

I'm going to say a prayer now and then after I pray we're going to have a commissioning. So if you're involved in the commissioning, if you want to make your way up, we'll pray and then we'll do that. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, thank you for Your word. For the opportunity to think about the gospel and all that You have done for us. God, thank you for revealing Your promises to us and giving us grace to see, warning us in advance and helping us to fix our eyes on the One who is to come. That we thank you for your goodness and grace, that You remind us of these things in Your word. God, would you help us to remember them? Would you help us to live in light of them? I pray that You give us eyes to see, and ears to hear. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.





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