

All Bad Things Must Come To An End

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Daniel 11:1-45

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Well, at the end of a vacation or a fun night on the town, or at the end of a holiday, there's always possibly this one person who's a killjoy or a curmudgeon, who has to say, "All good things must come to an end." Why? Just, why do you think you have to... If that's you, stop it. Don't be that person. Daniel is not that person at all. If you take anything away from this series, take this, that, yes, bad days, bad years, bad decades will come to God's people, but all bad things will come to an end. That's the hope that we have. I'll say it another way. Jesus actually saves. That's who he is, and that's the message of this book from Genesis to Revelation, but specifically, and here in Daniel, in Daniel 11, in its detail, helps us understand that all bad things must come to an end.

That's good news. This is our hope, this is our joy, this is our rock. This is not a pie in the sky denialism that bad things happen. Of course they do. We're in a broken world, broken by sin. But this is a God promised, God bought, God given, God assured offer to sinners who believe in Jesus Christ, that they have hope and let me ask you today, do you place, and have you placed your hope in the Lord Jesus Christ? If you haven't, I hope by the end of today you will and if you have, I hope that you will have an incredible encouragement from Daniel chapter 11 today. Because Daniel chapter 11 is another nail in the coffin for hopelessness, fear, misery, sin, and death. Chapters 10, 11 and 12, pastor Kevin started us off last week with chapter 10, and reminded us that chapters 10, 11 and 12 are one chunk. These chapters and these verses were added much later, but these three chapters really can be taken as a whole, but we can't do them all in one Sunday.

This one chunk gives us a continual detail of what is to come and what to expect. So from where we are on the timeline, there's some of this that is in the past, there's help for us in the present, and there's hope for us in the future. History is not cyclical. It is not random. Yes, there is nothing new under the sun, but everything is moving in a linear direction toward the end. It is in fact the unfolding of the spiritual battle between good and evil.

Chapter 11, in this chapter we're going to see Daniel's next and most precise vision of the future, and it is an e-ticket ride, some of you know what that means, that continues to exalt the faithfulness of God, giving strength to God's people as they navigate the times. Here's our main point as we look at this chapter today, and that's this. History reveals God's sovereignty and faithfulness, giving God's people unbreakable hope in fueling their faithfulness to the end. All bad things must come to an end. Well, I know you're nice and settled now, but would you stand in honor of God's word? I'm going to read to you just a portion. Daniel 11 is the second-longest chapter in the book of Daniel. Daniel chapter 2 is the longest. So here we are with this. I just want to read you a little chunk that I really feel is the tent pole of this whole chapter.

Starting in verse 31. It says this, "Forces from him," and the him we're going to look at later is Antiochus IV, Antiochus Epiphanes, a really bad man that tormented the people of Israel. "He shall appear and profane the temple and fortress and shall take away the regular burnt 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 knew their God, 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." You may be seated.

That is God's word, may he bless it to our hearts today. Well, we start ourselves in verse one, but verse one is really a transition between, what we call, chapter 10 and chapter 11. It gives us the starting point of what follows. And then we go back in time just a little bit, and as he says, "And as for me," this is Daniel, "in the first year of Darius, the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him."

This is 538 BC. Daniel is in his mid 80s. He was 15 years old when they were held captive and brought to the land of what was Babylon, and now they're under the Medo-Persian, the Persian Empire, as times have changed in those 70 years, Daniel being in his mid 80s. So we have this marker of time, this new chapter begins, where we continue on from chapter 10, where last week pastor Kevin did a great job pulling that veil back for us to see history as it truly is. We have a great angel, the Archangel Michael, who's defending God's people behind the scenes. History is a spiritual warfare between good and evil. What comes in chapter 11, verses 1 through 35, is, get this, 135 prophecies that have already been fulfilled. In verses 36 through 45 there's some prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled, and that's where we are, between them.

Now there's so many prophecies and such detail that liberal scholars do not believe Daniel was written in the 600 BC, but rather in the 200s BC after these events have taken place. The problem with that is they have a small God theology. They don't believe in a God who predicts, much less orchestrates history. But that's exactly what Daniel is getting to here. We have a big God theology, and a biblical understanding that God not only knows but puts together the times. Thus, he knows what's happening, and he reveals this to Daniel, so that when it happens, they know exactly what's taking place, and exactly who they can trust and that's Yahweh, that's God Almighty. Here's some quick proofs to this. In verse 1, it tells us when he wrote it, 538 BC, not only that, but in several places, Daniel, after he received some of these visions says, "I did not understand them."

Chapter 8, verse 27, chapter 12:8. If he had written and there, in a sense, saying that someone in the 200s is a forgery, using Daniel's name for credibility, and then just putting these things together after they happen and pretend that it's a prophecy. But Daniel says, "I didn't understand these." Just one of many proofs here that we can trust the reliability of scripture, the reliability that prophecies come true, and this is an amazing chapter that does just that. So what follows

then, verses 2-4 sets the stage. "And now I will show you the truth. Behold three more kings shall arise in Persia." After Cyrus, three more kings arose, Cambyses, Smerdis, Darius, Hystaspes and then it says a fourth one, "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." This, of course, is Xerxes.

Now there's other kings that follow these guys, but this is pertinent to the story here. Xerxes, as we know, Esther married him, and through that relationship, and through that happening, Xerxes was the one who decreed that God's people can return to the promised land from captivity. Then as it unfolds, and as we've seen in other places, Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Daniel 8, 10, and so on, these prophecies, "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 of which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others beside these." Who is this? This is what history calls or who history calls Alexander the Great. But here he's Alexander the two-verse king. That's all he gets.

This is God's perspective, remember. Oh, the great and mighty Alexander the Great gets two verses. That's how God views it. Now he did amazing things. He was an incredible general. He conquered the known world in a very fast way back then, and then his time was up. Just like that and through the course of time it's really just a small little blip on the map. In fact, Antiochus IV, Antiochus Epiphanes, gets 15 chapters here. And why is that? Because he's significant in God's people, to God's people and the rest of Daniel shows us and gives us the hope, as it did to them, that those who mess with God's people mess with God, and when they do, it will not go well for them. That's a reminder for us as we look at this, are you with God or are you against him? So here we find Daniel's vision, and we're going to look at this, navigating the twisted road of history here and what we'll see is that it goes from bad to worse, to the worst to the best.

That's the hope that we're given through this. Verses 1-35 deal with the time period that came after when Daniel wrote this, of 323 BC to 164 BC. In a sense, what God is warning through these prophecies is what every good doctor and every good dentist does, and he says beforehand, "This is going to hurt. This is going to hurt. Now that's helpful. It still hurts right when the dentist gets his drill out, but he says this is going to hurt. At least when it hurts that it's supposed to be that way. So in this sense that's what God is doing, it's going to hurt, but it's good to know beforehand so that when it happens, there's not panic, you're going, "Uh-oh. It's hurting. What's going on here?" Nope, it's according to plan and God has his reasons in that. So let's take a look at **#1) *The Bad: A Twisted Mess of Frustrated Leaders*** in verses 5-20. This amazing, detailed prophecy that came true before their eyes as the centuries prevailed.

This was assurance there's a mess. You're going to see a mess here as we look at these. Through that we see that there's an assurance to believers that God knows, God foreordains, God wrangles history, and we can trust him no matter what happens. So we lean in, we pay attention, and these next verses are a roller coaster of names, times, and places. It's going to be focused on two of the

four kingdoms that happened after Alexander, the two-verse king. His kingdom, after his great successes, he had no successor, so they divided it up into four kingdoms. We're going to look at two of those kingdoms. We're going to look at the Seleucid kingdom, which is in the north Assyria, all of Seleucus's progeny that come after him, his successors, and then Ptolemy in the south, which is the Egyptian kingdom.

These two kingdoms, north and south, in relation to Israel, and Israel are not spectators but rather the footpath of this feud that goes on between these two kingdoms and the significance and the impact that it has to God's people. So we're going to see an amazing flood of detailed predictions from 323 to 164 as they come true. What I'm going to do is go through these verses. You can put your pens down, you can put your pencils down, put your keyboard down. I just want you to listen, and please indulge me. I'm going to stretch you here for a few minutes, and to prove the point that all scripture, even some of the stuff we go, "What is going on here?" All scripture is useful for teaching, for preaching, for rebuking, and training the man and woman of God to be thoroughly equipped and so this is just one other passage that makes us scratch our head a little bit, and yet there's a significance to it. So bear with me and listen closely.

All right, we're going to go through this fast. This is a summary of all these prophecies that have already come true, and what it looks like. Verse 5, we see the Southern Kingdom, Ptolemy I, Egypt, he helped one of his commanders conquer the south. So they started off as friends and that was Seleucus I. Verse 6, after some years, Ptolemy II makes a treaty with Antiochus II, Seleucus's grandson. He sent his daughter Berenice to marry Antiochus II, to have a son to become an heir and to form this treaty through that. However, Antiochus II's ex-wife, Laodice, killed Antiochus II, Berenice, and their son. Poisoned them. So Ptolemy II's treaty plan was unsuccessful. Verses 7 and 9, Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III, he avenged the death, he attacked the north. Plundered Seleucus, capital of Antioch, made a treaty with Seleucus II in 240 BC. Seleucus II breaks that treaty.

Verse 10, Seleucus II's son, Seleucus III and Antiochus III, his other son continued warring with the Ptolemies in Egypt. Verses 11 and 12, Ptolemy IV, who's also known as Philopator, launched a counterattack, won at Raphia, but only victorious for a short period of time. Pride got the best of him, and it says he did not prevail. Verses 13 and 14, Antiochus rallied more troops, defeated Ptolemy IV, Seleucid's power began to increase such that it always eclipsed that of the Ptolemies... Of the Seleucids. There was a violent uprising among the Jews who put themselves with the wrong ally, with the Seleucids, and they were defeated, and it was squashed. Maybe they thought they were fulfilling the prophecies of Daniel, but it wasn't to be. Verses 15 and 16, Antiochus III pushed III pushed the Egyptian army back to the Sidon and Phoenician coast. Israel was now under Seleucid control, under Antiochus III, who controlled all of the promised land.

In verse 17, Antiochus III offered his daughter Cleopatra I, not the one you're thinking of, not Elizabeth Taylor, to Ptolemy V to gain control, but she loved her husband and flipped to becoming pro-Egyptian. So the advantage was denied to Antiochus III. Verses 18 and 19,

Antiochus III got greedy, went after the island countries, only to meet defeat at the hand of the Romans and after the defeat he was assassinated while robbing a temple. In verse 20, Antiochus III's son, Seleucid IV, sent tax collector, Heliodorus, to plunder the temple, later poisoned Seleucus IV with the help from Antiochus IV, Antiochus Epiphanes, who we're going to look, at 175 BC. You got it? What a jumbled mess. That's exactly what it is. It's supposed to be in a sense. History seems like, as Joseph Heller, author, says in his book, *Good as Gold*, "History looks like a trash bag of random coincidences torn open in a wind." It sure looks like that. But what we find here is that's not the case.

The good news is these leaders, in all their cunning deceit, paganistic motives, are but power-mad fleeting vapors who bounce around history like a Pachinko machine. They wreak havoc, and they have their day, but their number is always up, and it's as if heaven is shouting down "Next. Who's next? Move along." Because our God is different. Our God is the great God. He's not a God of confusion. He's not a mess. But they are. Listen to what one commentator says, Iain Duguid, in his commentary on Daniel, says, "On one level, it is the continual story of wars and rumors of wars, as one human ruler and empire after another seeks to gain power by cunning or force. Yet though the tide in the affairs of men come in and go out, in the end it accomplishes precisely nothing. The balance of power and earthly politics may shift but never comes to a permanent rest." Keep that in mind.

"On the one hand, therefore, Daniel 11 shows us the fallen world pursuing the wind and finding it elusive. What do power and politics gain for all their toil? All this, as the writer of Ecclesiastes noted, is vanity." So what's the point of this mess? Well, here's how we respond. *We believe that God reveals the future to remind his people that he is in control.* You notice that this echoes in every chapter of the book of Daniel. God is in complete control. These amazingly specific predictions speak loud and clear that you can trust this book. It is reliable, and not only that, you can most importantly trust its author, God Almighty. The bad news is that God's people are not just bystanders but will have to endure these tumultuous times. It's going to hurt. Following Christ is going to hurt. That's the story of the Old Testament and New Testament. We're swimming upstream to a world that is in rebellion. The good news though is that we're never abandoned.

God's people are in captivity because they rejected him and didn't obey him, but he hasn't abandoned them and he has promised, he has promised again to deliver them. Even then he comforts them through their messes. God's faithful to his people, and oftentimes too, and in many instances, God's people don't always have to wait to the end of history to see God's justice. Just like Daniel, he's on his fourth or fifth king now after 70 years. He's still there. He's still plugging away. He's still doing what God has called him to do, and yet his trust is not in these guys who come and go, "Next," but rather in Yahweh, God Almighty. That's the hope that he's bringing to his people and that's the hope that's being brought to us today in the midst of our crazy world. This is good news.

You see, unstable gods produce unstable nations and there's Yahweh who stands in great contrast to this. That leads to #2) *Things Get Worse: There's a twisted man bent on destroying God's people* and so he's highlighted here in verses 21 through 35. He gets more verses than Alexander, the two-verse king. We've met this worst guy before in Daniel 8. He is the second little horn that shows up. He precedes the first little horn that's mentioned in Daniel seven. The first little horn that's mentioned is the Antichrist who comes at the end of the age. Then we're talked about, in Daniel chapter 8, a second little horn that comes, and that's Antiochus IV, Antiochus Epiphanes.

He is really a shadow of the little horn that's to come. He is, in many ways, the Antichrist of the Old Testament. One of many Antichrists, many scholars have called him that. He's called here in verse 21. Look, says, "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," the North Kingdom, "by flatteries." He's contemptible, he's despised. That's what that means. This is not a good guy. In fact, he's named himself Epiphanes, which means illustrious one. God manifested. I'm God incarnate. He has a God complex, and so he's a shadow of the Antichrist to come. Verses 22 through 26, we see some of his tactics. Ptolemy IV broke a treaty, launched an attack on Antiochus Epiphanes. He successfully thwarted Ptolemy IV. He became more aggressive. He started with small numbers.

In verses 25 and 26, he has victory over Ptolemy IV. Antiochus Epiphanes, in verse 27, he conspires with Ptolemy VI to restore Ptolemy VI for his benefit. He's trying to double-cross him. Ptolemy VI figures this out, tries to double-cross him. They're double-crossing each other, and then Antiochus Epiphanes failed, and so he returns to the promised land and to his empire. Then we pick up in verse 28, it says this, "And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the Holy Covenant." He hates God's people. This is a godless ruler who hates God and his people. "And he shall work his will and return to his own land." Then verse 29 it says, "At the time appointed," which is also said in verse 27, "At the time appointed." What does that mean? Who's appointing the time? Yahweh.

God is in charge of all of this. He has a governor on Antiochus Epiphanes. Now what's that? I'm not talking about governor like the governor of the state or whatever, but the idea is that who is restraining him, and it's God. I lived in Texas for a couple of years, and I worked for a ministry there, and my former youth pastor become a senior pastor and called me to be the youth pastor at that church and believed it was what God wanted. So my father flew out and we rented a U-Haul van, and we drove from Dallas all the way to my hometown of San Jose, California. Took us three days. It could have taken us a lot less, but there was a governor on the U-Haul that wouldn't let us go past 65 miles an hour. Going through West Texas at only 65 miles an hour, it took about a thousand years to get through there.

If you've ever driven through Texas. Good thing we didn't get any speeding. Tickets and it seemed like time was going backwards, it was going so slow because there was this governor on this holding things back, and that's exactly who's holding back Antiochus Epiphanes. God is his governor holding him back from what he could do. God using him all along the way though,

even the evil that he did, for his purposes. Verse 30, we see this. "For ships of Kittim," so he goes, he wants to go back to the south and try to take it over again. "For ships of Kittim shall come against him and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and he 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."

What happens here is God sends a bigger bully than Antiochus Epiphanes. He goes and wants to conquer the south. Instead, God sends a Roman against him, Gaius Popilius Leanas and it makes Antiochus afraid and retreat. What does the bully do when he's met with a bigger bully? He goes back to picking on someone who's weaker than him, a weaker victim, and who's that? The people he hates, God's people. He goes back, and then it says there, "He shall turn back, pay attention to those who forsake the Holy Covenant, forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress."

Verse 31, "and shall take away the regular burnt offering and they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate." What does he do? He sends Popilius a leader of mercenaries who pretended to come to the Jewish people in peace but attacked them on their Sabbath day, massacred many, plundered the city, and he set up a pig sacrifice for Zeus in the temple. That was the abomination of desolation. What an absolute horrific affront to God and his people and that's a shadow of a worse abomination of desolation to come, that Jesus predicted in Matthew 24, of the Antichrist who will come to the temple in the future during the tribulation and set himself up as God.

He seduced many Jews in the process but not all of them, because it says, "But the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action." Know your God. Know him inside and out so that you may stand. Then it says there in verse 35, "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 point of time." What's awaited? God is going to judge the nations, and judge all at the great white throne judgment at the end of the age. That is coming. God is just. He does not overlook sins like Antiochus's sins, or any other sins, but he waits. His patience is for all who might come to faith in him will have the opportunity to do so. Aren't you glad that God didn't come the day before your heart and your life got saved?

I know I am and so he waits. But knowing this, god's justice is to come. He's not blind. His great white throne judgment we see at the end of the book of Revelation. So how do we respond to this? This is what we believe. *We're reminded of God's justice which helps stoke the flame of his people's faithfulness.* We can hang in there, we can endure, we can keep going in our faith knowing that God is just, and the bad things that we see, and the bad things that people do, they're going to have to face God one day. You will have to face him one day if you reject him. We know we don't always understand God's timing, but we can trust it. Why? Because judgment is coming.

Forewarned is to be forearmed, producing steadfast faith in the faithful. Just look here in these verses, in verse 32, we see that God's people stand firm because they know their God. They resist

flattery. They resist deception. Boy, do we need that today. But the people who know their God will stand firm. Verse 33 "And the wise among the people shall make many understand." God sends wise people. Daniel, in this day. Others, those who have been gifted to teach and to preach and encourage, so that we can understand and how to interpret the times, so we know what's going on, so we don't lose faith. Verse 34, we see that God's people will find a little help. We don't have to wait till the end. That's the ultimate justice that we'll find, and the ultimate hope that we have, but along the way, God provides little victories and reminders.

He says here in verse 34, "When they stumble, they shall receive a little help." What happened? Well, in the midst of this and Antiochus Epiphanes and what he was doing to the people, there was the Maccabean revolt. You can read about it in the Apocryphal. It's not God's word, but it is good history. One through four Maccabees talks about Judas Maccabeus gaining a following, and they revolted and gave a reprieve from the oppression that was taking place. That's why and how Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah because of what God did in that. Verse 35, "God's people are refined, purified and made white." This is what difficulties, when it's going to hurt for us, when Jesus says things like "You'll be persecuted because of me," when we see this here in Daniel saying it's going to be difficult times, what does it do?

It reduces hypocrites. It eliminates phonies. It purifies God's people. God uses these difficult times for his purposes to make us mature and trustworthy. We hold on because he's holding onto us. Christian, rest in this. This is our hope. But guess what? **#3) *The Worst is yet to come. The twisted man that history progresses towards***, something happens in verse 36 and it's quite a jump. We jump from second century BC of Antiochus IV, Antiochus Epiphanes to the Antichrist that comes. Now some interpret this and say verse 36 just continues to describe Antiochus Epiphanes. However, what's described here does not fit Antiochus Epiphanes, but rather it fits what the Bible says about the Antichrist who is to come in Matthew 24 and out throughout Revelation. Listen to this, 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." The indignation." God uses the Antichrist. He gives the world what they want, the worst of rulers, the absolute most godless of all rulers, the one who sets himself up as God. It stirs his people to faith throughout the tribulation, as we see. "For what is decreed shall be done. He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers." He creates a new religion. It's the religion of him. "Or to the one beloved by women." That's an interesting statement there. Who's he referring to there? Some scholars would say, and this is where I would land on this, is that this is talking about the Messiah who's to come. Jewish women knew that the Messiah was going to be born among the Jews and so every time one of them got pregnant, they were hopeful that maybe God had blessed them to carry the Messiah who was to come.

That, of course, was bestowed on Mary. Others might say it's simply that he, because of his incredible and most unique narcissism of all men who've ever lived, that there's no one that he loves. He's the Antichrist, the God of love, he's the opposite, the God of no love. Either way, it

shows that this is a despicable, despicable human that's ever lived. "He shall not pay attention to any other God. He shall magnify himself above all, he shall honor the God of fortresses, his worship is war. A God whom his fathers did not know, he shall honor," Satan. "Most likely with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts, he shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign God." Satan, most likely. "Those who acknowledge him, he shall load with honor, he shall make them rulers over many, and he shall divide the land for a price."

Then verses 40 through 44 speaks of his conquests. The Bible tells us of this. Says that, in Revelation 13:4, "And they worshiped the dragon, that's Satan, for he'd given his authority to the beast." That's the Antichrist. "And they worshiped the beast saying, who is like the beast and who can fight against it?" Yet in verse 41, we're reminded that in the glorious land he delivers those who are his. God will not let the Antichrist conquer his people and so what do we do? How do we respond to this? We believe that *prayer sustains God's people's faithfulness even in the worst of times*. Now you might look at that and go, "Where does it mention prayer in this? Are you making that up?" No. Remember if we go back to this, go back to chapter 10, we're reminded, 10, 11 and 12, are one chunk and what Daniel saw and what he sees in chapter 11 as well and the visions that he sees, and what takes place, comes because Daniel was praying.

Look at verse 12 of chapter 10. "When this one appears to Daniel, he says, fear not Daniel for on the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before God, your words have been heard, your prayers have been heard, and I have come because of your words, because of your prayers." See Daniel's an example of what happens when in the midst of difficult times, especially the spiritual warfare that we face, as history unfolds, what does he do? What can we do? He's in captivity. Is there hope? Yes, through prayer. Spiritual war requires spiritual battle, and we're told throughout scripture that the battle is fought on our knees and it was for Daniel. So here we have the extension of this as he hears the worst of news that there's one coming who's going to be all that's described here and worse. How do we respond?

We pray. We pray. Prayer is essential in such battles. It tethers us to God. It strengthens us. It keeps us faithful in the midst of the storm. Again, Ian Duguid, in his commentary on Daniel, "Prayer is the revolutionary activity by which weak, mortal creatures take our stand in the great cosmic battle and do our part to move heaven and earth towards God's final victory." Sinclair Ferguson in his commentary says something very similar. He says "The whole function of this chapter was to encourage Daniel to faithfulness in prayer by showing him that the real conflict lying behind world events is spiritual. The Lord was teaching Daniel that the real weapon of the church is prayer. Fail in the work of prayer and we fail to understand this great vision here." We're called to pray for our leaders, 1 Timothy chapter 2:1-4 we're to pray for them. Pray that we might have peace so that we can deliver the gospel until Christ returns. Our mission doesn't change. We're still on task.

Christ is coming. If anything, it's supposed to kindle our understanding that could happen at any time, and to give us a sense of urgency that we need to be about the mission that he's given to us, to glorify himself to the ends of the earth, to make disciples. So our spiritual resolution to

spiritual battles is to pray. Boy, if anything this last week has sure given us a reason to, right? We're reminded of that. That's all leading us and pointing us to The Best that's yet to come. #4) *The Triumphant Messiah*. In these verses in chapter 11, we can't look at all of them, even though this is the third service, and we can take all the time we want. I will say this, verse four, six, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18 through 20, 24, 25, 27, 35, as we go through these prophecies of all these different leaders, they're coming and going, we see that in each one of those verses, they're stopped short, they're squashed, they're defeated, they're taken out. Their time is up. Who's doing that? It's God. It's Yahweh. It's the Messiah to come.

We see this in verse 45 of chapter 11, the very end. He wreaks havoc. He conquers the world. Here we find him in verse 45, "And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain." They're just tents. Tents don't last and that last sentence, "Yet he shall come to his end with none to help him." He's exalted himself as the greatest. Here's the linchpin. He's not the greatest. The greatest is coming, and he eliminates him once and for all. At the end of the age, he's done and there's no one to help him. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 says this of Christ's coming, "And then the lawless one," that's the Antichrist, that's the little horn, that's this guy here in chapter 11. "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." He's no match for Jesus. That's the best the world can offer? That's the greatest the world can offer? That's all it takes is Jesus' breath to wipe him out. He's done.

You can read about this in Revelation 19, and I recommend that you do so. We see in Christ's coming, he's not in a manger the next time, he's on a great white horse, and he comes, and he takes the Beast, the Antichrist, the little horn, and he throws him into the lake of fire forever. All bad things must come to an end, and it's Jesus who does it. So what's our response, then, to him? *We believe that Christ is our only hope in life and death.* That is our hope. That is our life. The Heidelberg Catechism, which was written many years ago to help people and train them to understand theology and what the Bible says, the first question that it offers, "What is your only comfort in life and death?" Here's the answer, "That I am not my own, but I belong, body and soul, life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ."

What an awesome reminder. I'm going to steal a little bit. Kevin's preaching next week. I'm going to take a little bit from verses 1-3 of chapter 12. It gives us this taste, and it continues on. 12:1, "At the time shall arise, Michael, the great prince who is charge of your people, and there shall be a time of trouble, but has never has been seen since there was a nation till that time. But at that time, your people shall be delivered. Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book," the Book of Life. "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Amen. Amen and Amen.

What does this mean? It means that all bad things come to an end. God's people made it through the swamp of verses 2-20. They made it through Antiochus Epiphanes. Those who come to faith

during the tribulation will make it through the Antichrist, because God is faithful, and those who place their faith in him are not cast aside. So when the insanity of the headlines gets the best of you, and our personal tragedy, remember the words of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:11, "That he has made everything beautiful in its time." You may not see the beauty right now, but you will see it and that's the hope that we have. And that's what time reveals, the supremacy and greatness of our God. Daniel is fueling God's people in the midst of captivity, in the midst of their suffering, in history's rollercoaster of leaders that come and go.

This is an ingraining of truth that is meant to be tattooed on the hearts of God's people. What surfaces then, as we're getting to the end of this book, is some themes that keep showing up time and time again. Actually, they keep showing up throughout scripture, but here in this book we come to a vision statement, that when we face tough times, here's what we must remind ourselves, that God is faithful, that God is trustworthy, that God is sovereign, that God is just, that God is gracious, that God is supreme, that God is good, that God is loving, that God is victorious and that's to be repeated every election year, and every year in between. It's to be repeated when there's an assassination attempt or when an assassination hits its target. It must be repeated at every inauguration, every headline, every newscast, every social media blast, every conspiracy theory that comes true, every YouTube end times video that freaks you out.

Repeat these words. God is faithful, trustworthy, sovereign, just, gracious, supreme, good, loving, victorious, in every illness, every broken dream, broken heart, broken bone, every catastrophe, every natural disaster, every manmade disaster. Christian, this is your hope in life and death. This drives the prayers that tightens the belt, that sharpens the sword, that straightens the helmet, that adjusts the breastplate, that ties the shoes, that steadies the shield, so that we can stand in grace and in the sufficiency of the triune God, on this hope and in these truths we rest. Especially in troubled times, God is faithful. The implication then is, are you faithful? His faithfulness is not a passive truth in the background of your life as you go about being busy, but rather it's daily fuel as you face whatever it is you face. Our main point, the summary of this is, history reveals God's sovereignty and faithfulness, giving God's people unbreakable hope in fueling their faithfulness to the end.

The worst is coming, but the best will triumph. All bad things must come to an end. And that is good news and be reminded of this in verse 32 one more time. "But the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action." Do you know your God? His name is Jesus Christ, and he's coming back for those who are his. Are you his today? If not, place your faith in him. Ask the person who brought you to explain it, and what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ that saves you. If you have that faith today, then don't worry. When the sky is falling, you know who's holding it? Your God. So if the sky is falling, you're in good hands. Let it fall. Because a new heaven and a new earth is coming, and your Savior will be sitting on the throne. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for these great truths. We need hope today. We look around and it looks grim, but when we look past it, we see the hope that you have given us and reminded us of today. It is the hope of Jesus Christ. He came, you promised him the first time, and all your

promises came true. All of your promises come true, and we know that. So that you've promised him that he would come again. We know that it's going to happen and Lord, we want to be found in him and with him when it does. I pray for those today who have yet to place their faith in you. Let it be today, that today would be the time that they surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray for those who have that faith, that in these trying times they would find the hope of who you are and what you have done for us, and we pray this in your Son's precious name. Amen.