

Daniel

Daniel 1:1-12:13

By Phil Kayser at Dominion Covenant Church on 2019-11-10

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I. Introduction: why this book has come under such demonic attack

Back in 1998 I gave a verse by verse exposition through the book of Daniel,¹ and I will try not to repeat much of what I said in that series. But there is one observation about the book as a whole that I think is worth repeating or at least summarizing, and that is why this book has come under such demonic attack from scholars. R. J. Rushdoony says that there are four things about the book of Daniel that make it extremely offensive to theological liberals. But these four things that they hate are four things that we love about the book, and I think form a great introduction to the book of Daniel.

First, theological liberals are offended because this book presents a God that cannot be manipulated. In contrast to even man-centered versions of Christianity of today, this book presents a God who is sovereign, self-sufficient, and utterly without the need of anything that man could contribute. Daniel 4:35 words it this way,

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?"

Daniel presents a message that humbles man's pride and exalts God's glory. In fact, that is the purpose of the first half of the book - as can be seen by the first chiasm in your outline. The heart of the first chiasm in the book is the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. And the heart of the heart of that section is Nebuchadnezzar's testimony in chapter 4:37. which says, Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

Hallelujah! Daniel is a book that destroys pride and exalts God. It is the antithesis of man-centered religion and even man-centered Christianity.

The second thing that makes the book of Daniel so offensive to theological liberals is that it speaks boldly about the presence of miracles. That makes them uncomfortable. Liberals don't mind talking about non-miraculous things as being miracles. For example, they don't mind speaking of the miracle of birth (no, that's not technically a miracle), or the miracle of love (no, that's not technically a miracle). They like using Biblical language and

¹ Available here <http://www.dominioncovenantchurch.com/sermons/?series=67>

redefining it because it makes them look more sheep-like than wolf-like. But if you say Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were literally cast into a literal furnace that was literally so hot that it killed those who cast them in, and yet those three walked around in the flames with the Son of God without even being singed by the flames, they will deny that it is literal history. Such things cannot be explained scientifically, so they discount those kinds of stories. They turn them into myth and then (in order to sound spiritual) they try to learn lessons from that myth. But our God is not simply a concept. He is the Maker and Sustainer of the universe and He continues to be a God who stuns people with miracles. I love it.

The third thing that makes the book of Daniel so offensive to theological liberals is its portrayal of Providence as covering the minutest details of life - such as the growth of Nebuchadnezzar's hair and fingernails, sickness, health, the outcome of every ungodly war, and the raising up of both good kings and bad kings. It details His control of false rumors and legitimate news, who will go insane and who will stay sane, divorce and remarriage of kings. It covers which people lions will eat and which people they will not eat. God's providence is sovereign over even the sinful wars of man. To a true believer, that is comforting. To a man-centered Christian, that is troubling.

The fourth thing that Rushdoony says makes this book offensive to liberals is that it is full of predictive prophecy, showing that every moment of history is known by God long before it comes to pass because it was all planned by God and controlled by God. I hope to give you at least some of the detailed prophecies that span more than 600 years of history. Do you know what liberals say about many of these detailed prophecies? They agree that they are true to history. They can't disagree with that. But liberals like Goldingay, Driver, Montgomery and Wendt say that the prophecies about events in history are so precise and so accurate in all of their details that they must have been written after the events were finished. They presuppose that nobody could know the future like that. And yet many of these commentators give a pretense of honoring the Scripture.

So, if you want to find out who is a closet liberal, one way to find out is to ask that pastor or teacher when he believes Daniel was written. If he says that it is written in the second century B.C., he is at least a closet liberal and you should ignore anything else that he has to say. I don't care how much he protests to the contrary, he is an unreliable teacher. To deny that Daniel wrote the book in the sixth century BC (as he said that he did) is to call the book a fraud, to say that Ezekiel lied through his teeth when he said that

Daniel was a contemporary, and it really amounts to calling Jesus a liar when Jesus said that Daniel predicted these things in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14. E.B. Pusey was absolutely right when he said, “The writer, were he not Daniel, must have lied, on a most frightful scale, ascribing to God prophecies which were never uttered, and miracles which are assumed never to have been wrought.”² Stephen Miller rightly says that if the liberals are right, then they are hypocrites for speaking so highly of Daniel since “the prophecy therefore would be fraudulent.”³

But we love the fact that this book is pride humbling and God exalting. We love the fact that God is a God who works miracles. And we have experienced some of His wonderful miracles in our lives. We love the fact that nothing is outside the control of His providence. That gives us comfort. We love the fact that He controls and knows the future and has written about it. OK, enough on that.

II. The structure of the book

The structure of the book is rather simple. Daniel B. Wallace shows how it is almost impossible to miss if you read it in the original language. Chapter 1:1-2:4a is written in Hebrew. Then there is a switch to Aramaic for the rest of chapter 2 through the end of chapter 7. Then there is a switch back to Hebrew in chapters 8-12. Why the switch in language? It is one of several clues that the book is divided up into three literary units.

2 E. B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures, Delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Oxford, with Copious Notes* (Oxford; London: John Henry and James Parker; Rivingtons, 1864), 1.

3 Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, vol. 18, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 36.

Daniel Outline

Hebrew Section – Historical Prologue (Dan. 1:1-2:4a) – a message of hope for remnant

Aramaic Section (Daniel 2:4b-7:28) – a message of judgment on Gentile nations

- A Prophecy of the four kingdoms (Dan 2:4b for parts of statue represent four empires)
- B Trial of remnant (Dan 3: fiery furnace)
 - C Prophecy to pagan king leads to Nebuchadnezzar's repentance (Dan. 4)
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 - C' Prophecy to the pagan king leads to humbling (Dan. 5)
- B' Trial of remnant (Dan. 6: Daniel in lion's den)
- A' Prophecy of the four kingdoms (Dan. 7: four beasts represent four empires)

Hebrew Section (Dan. 8-12) – a message of hope for Israel's future

- A Prophetic details of the second and third Kingdoms (Dan 8)
- B Daniel's prayers for deliverance of his people (Dan. 9:1-23)
 - C The arrival and purpose of the Messiah's kingdom (Dan. 9:24-27)
- B' Daniel's prayers for deliverance of his people (Dan. 10)
- A' Prophetic details of the second and third kingdoms (Dan. 11)

Based on a similar outline by Daniel B. Wallace

Chapter 1 is sort of like a Joseph-story.⁴ And it introduces the main characters and the main themes of the book. So it acts as an introduction. But its focus is upon the remnant of Hebrews.

Chapters 2-7 are written in Aramaic, which was the universal language of the pagan empire back then. Certainly the stories show that God rules over pagan nations. But even the Gentile language shows that God cares about the whole world. And by the way, that is one of the reasons why the New Testament was written in Greek rather than in Hebrew. Greek was the universal language of New Testament times. It shows that God's kingdom breaks out of the Hebrew nation and possess the entire world. Hallelujah! Praise God that He has embraced us. So the language switches is really a cool structural feature.

Chapters 8-12 return to Hebrew again because it shows how God will preserve Israel for the next 600 years and how Israel will end as a nation in AD 70. So the terminus of that section is the war against Israel in AD 70. And the Hebrew hints that the focus will be on God's preservation of Israel for the next 600 years. And I think you will find the double chiasmic structure in your outline to be a helpful road map to the book.

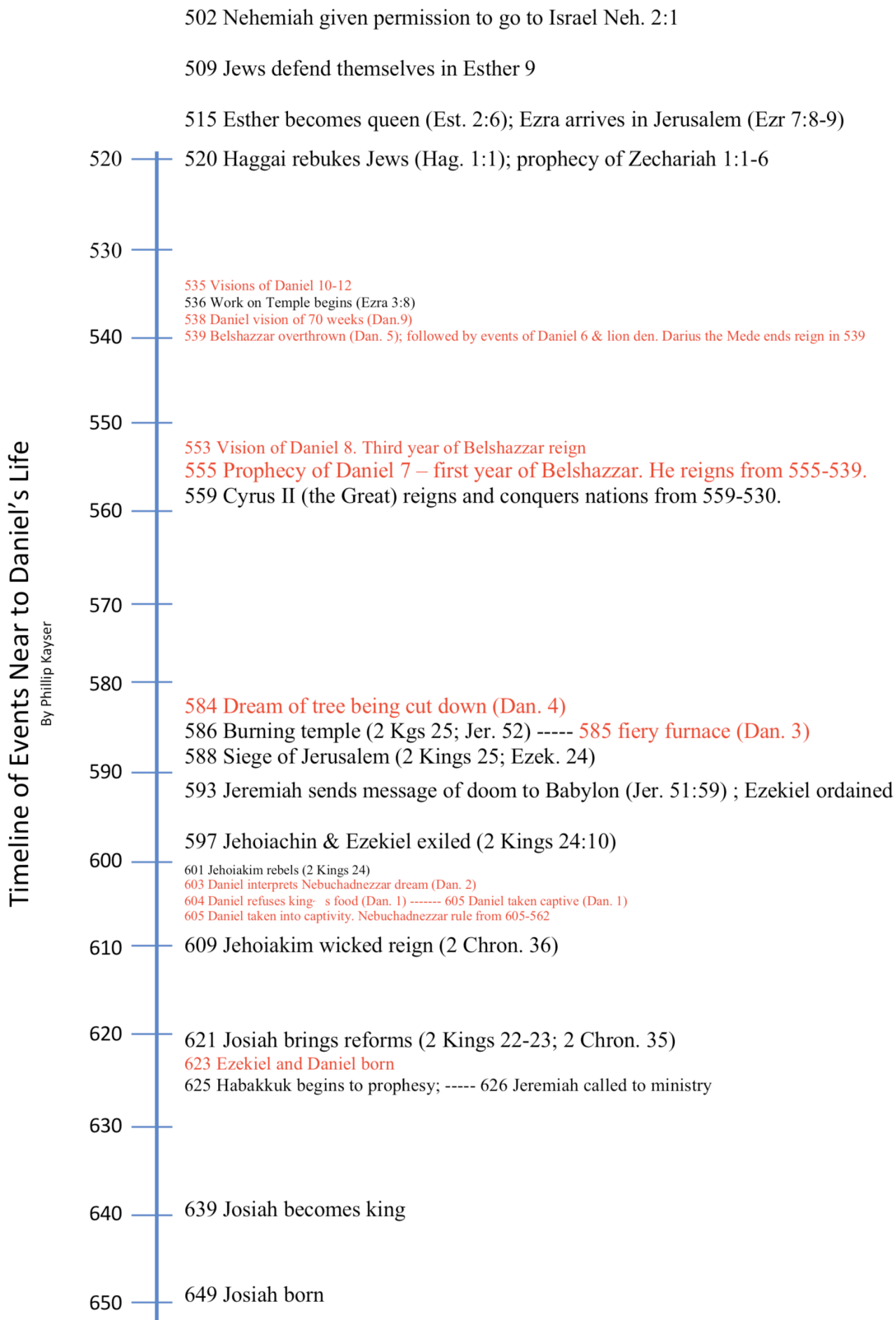
4 A young Hebrew is a captive in a foreign land, and while there he goes through a crisis that tests his faith. But like Joseph, Daniel passes the test faithfully, is elevated by God to a position of enormous influence in the empire, and uses that position not only for the good of the empire, but also to protect his people.

III. Mini-biography of Daniel

But let me give a bit of background on the person, Daniel. He was born into nobility in Judah. He was taken captive to Babylon in 605 BC - and that despite the fact that God three times calls Daniel greatly beloved. Don't interpret tough times that you go through as an indication that you aren't loved by God or noticed by God. The angel tells Daniel in chapter 9:23 that he was greatly beloved by God. Likewise in chapter 10:11 he says, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved..." and again in verse 19 "O man greatly beloved..." Yet here he is, taken into captivity when he was 16 or 17 years old.

He was then instructed in University classes for three years - much of which he obviously rejected. In chapter 1, he and his three friends covenanted together to not eat food offered to idols, no matter how good it looked. And God honored this test of their faith with a huge promotion for all four of them.

Daniel's whole life was characterized by faith, prayer, courage, consistency, boldness, knowledge of God's Word, and refusal to compromise. Ezekiel mentions Daniel three times in his book as an example of righteousness (Ezek. 14:14,20; 28:3). He compares him to Job and Noah.



To give you an idea of how old Daniel was at various points in this book, you can take a look at the timeline that I have included in your outline. I will

start with the age of his captivity, which was either 16 or 17. Scholars debate that.

- If he was 17, then chapter 1 covers his years from 17-19, and probably early into his 20th year.
- Chapter 2 has him interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream at the age of 19 or 20, in 603 BC.
- He was 37 when the fiery furnace testing happened to his three friends in chapter 3.
- One year later, at the age of 38 he interpreted another dream of Nebuchadnezzar - the dream of the tree cut down and which predicted Nebuchadnezzar's insanity because of his pride. It would have taken some courage to give the interpretation of that dream.
- But then there is a gap of 29 years in which Daniel either didn't receive revelation, or didn't record it. There is nothing in Scripture that says that prophets had to have prophecy every year. God was sovereign in when He gave His prophecies. They didn't originate in man's will anyway.
- 29 years later, at the age of 67, Daniel had his next vision - the amazing dream of chapter 7 in the first year of Belshazzar - the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.
- Two years later, he had the vision of Daniel 8 - the vision of the Ram and the Goat. He would have been 69 years old.
- The chapters are partly out of order because they are arranged thematically. But chapter 5 actually occurs later than chapter 8. It occurs in 539 BC, when Daniel was 83 years old. We know that because it occurred in the last year of Belshazzar.
- Though the lion's den incident is debated because the identity of Darius the Mede is debated, I believe it was later that same year (after the overthrow of Belshazzar), when Daniel was still 83 years old. That puts the whole story into a new light, doesn't it? He was not a young man.
- The next year he had the vision of the 70 weeks in Daniel 9 at age 84.
- And at the ripe old age of 87, he had the visions of chapters 10-12. And most people believe that by the end of Cyrus' reign he had written the book.

So Daniel outlived Nebuchadnezzar, Evil Merodach, Neriglissar, Nabonidus, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede, and may even have outlived Cyrus the Great. That's an astonishing record of serving under seven kings, and possibly having outlived all seven.

From the timeline in your handout, you can see that his ministry overlapped that of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and later that of Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Nehemiah, and Ezra. I like you to have visuals of where each of the books line up. That way it fills out the background to all of the books.

IV. The Christ of Daniel

The Christ of Daniel is pretty cool. Christ's priestly ministry is emphasized in Daniel 9:24, His kingly ministry in the next verse, and His work as Judge

in the next verses as well as in many of these chapters. His kingdom is predicted to start out tiny in chapter 2, represented as a stone cut without hands - in other words, as a kingdom that does not originate in this world, but which permeates and eventually replaces all the kingdoms of this world and fills the earth. What a glorious vision of what our future holds - eventually there will be no theological liberals, Muslims, Buddhists, or humanists. This whole world will eventually worship and serve Christ and (like the dust of that image that is blown away by the wind) even the memory of humanism will be a distant memory. What an awesome and glorious trajectory!

In several of the visions Christ's kingdom was predicted to start during the time of the fourth empire, Rome. And I think that chapter 2:44 is the key verse of the whole book. It says, "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Hallelujah! Such encouraging words!

In chapter 7, the divine being that is like the Son of Man ascends on the clouds to the right hand of the Father, and begins His kingdom during a time of tribulation and opposition from the beast (that would be AD 30-70). It is also predicted to be the last days of Israel and of the Old Covenant. But though those days are troubled days, the beast is eventually killed, and Christ's kingdom expands non-stop after AD 70. It forms a marvelous description of New Covenant times.

I won't go into the vision of the 70 weeks in chapter 9 this morning because it is rather complex. But it gives a countdown from Cyrus year one till Messiah the Prince and prophecies that Messiah will be baptized, will minister, and will be covenantally cut off on behalf of His people. The prophecies of chapter 9 are absolutely astonishing.

V. Overview of the book

But let me give an overview of this amazing book. And you will probably want to look at the double chiasm outline as I go through this.

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Based on a similar outline by Daniel B. Wallace

A. The book as a whole

Chapter 1 is chalk full of lessons on leadership, character, faith, testing, how to serve in politics, and God's providences. It also gives amazing background information on the four characters who will play a big role in bringing God's message to an evil empire. So you can sort of think of chapter 1 as the introduction. Then the rest of the book is divided into two chiasms. So the book is constructed as an introduction and two chiasms.

The first chiasm is in chapters 2-7. There are also mini chiasms and other fun structures that I won't get into. But if you look at the first chiasm, you will see a symmetry that is very deliberate. And the parallel portions of the chiasm help to interpret each other.

The two A sections of chapters 2 and 7 parallel each other with visions that describe the same four empires that will happen from Daniel's time until the Messiah. Those four empires are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. And in both visions, Messiah's kingdom is established during the time of the Roman empire. There is no future resurrected kingdom of Rome. One kingdom comes right after the other in both of those visions, and there is no escaping the conclusion that Jesus begins His kingdom in the first century AD. My sermon series deals with the incredibly detailed prophecies of those two A visions. But that's all I'm going to say about them this morning.

The B sections deal with the trial of the remnant and the testing of their faith. God allows such testing. In chapter 3 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are tested on whether they will bow down to an image in order to save their lives. Even though other Jews do bow down, they stand up like sore thumbs and as punishment are cast into the furnace of fire. And in verse 25 we have a theophany of God the Son. The king says,

“Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

It appears that Jesus went with them into the fiery furnace. He doesn't make us be tested alone. But even if God had not rescued them, they were prepared to die in the arms of Jesus rather than to compromise.

In the second B section we have another testing that is parallel to the first. This time the testing of Daniel. The decree goes forth that no one may pray to anyone other than the king for thirty days. Again, it appears that there may have been others who compromised. But Daniel openly prayed to the God of heaven and refused to obey this law. There are so many lessons related to civics in that chapter, including the lesson of civil disobedience - a very important lesson to understand. When is it appropriate to disobey the law of the land?

But our God of miracles shut the mouths of the lions, rescued Daniel, and had his enemies destroyed by those same lions. In the meantime, king Darius proclaims his faith in God to the whole empire. Daniel may have wondered why God had him thrown into the lion's den, but once he saw the purpose - the salvation of the emperor, he no doubt praised God himself. This is a book that in many ways foreshadows the universal scope that Christ's kingdom will have. During Daniel's day the kingdom encompassed the pagan world.

The two C sections of the first chiasm are stories that show how God is in the business of humbling the pride of arrogant kings. In chapter 4 you have the arrogance of Nebuchadnezzar completely humbled as he is given a form of insanity that has even been documented to occasionally happen in modern times. I think it is a demonic condition. We have seen demon possessed people in Ethiopia who ate nothing but grass for years. But in any case, he thinks of himself as an animal and he eats grass in the fields like a bull. When his sanity finally returned to him, he gave a beautiful testimony of faith and tells the empire how God had humbled his pride.

The second C section shows the arrogance and pride of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, with the miracle of the hand that wrote his doom on

the wall. So the heart of the first half of the book is that all kings must submit themselves to God's laws and serve Him unconditionally or they will perish. It's a beautiful testimony.

Well, having powerfully given that message in the first half, the second half of the book once again prophesies the history leading up to the Messiah who will guarantee the success of God's purpose that has already been stated. The Messiah will guarantee that eventually all kings will be humbled, and all kings will serve King Jesus. But until that happens, God shows how He will protect and use His faithful remnant.

The second half is also constructed like a giant chiasm, with mini-chiasms inside of it that I won't get into. But let me at least give you the broad contours of the second half.

The A sections of the chiasm, chapters 8 and 11, both outline very specific details of the history of the second and third kingdoms, with the last part trailing into the fourth kingdom. But the focus is on the second and third kingdoms.

The two B sections, chapters 9 and 10 cover Daniel's prayers for deliverance of His people. This is a recurring theme in history, and there are remarkable lessons in those chapters that we again will not have time to deal with.

The central C section shows the arrival and the purpose for Messiah's kingdom and how it would end the importance of Jerusalem and Israel in God's preparatory plans. Temple and people were only intended to prepare the way for the Messiah, and once Messiah came, there would be no need for the temple and the city and both would be destroyed. And because of how complex chapter 9 is, I will not give an exposition of it this morning - tempted as I am. But it is a fantastic prophecy that completely undermines Roman Catholic dogma, false views of the canon, Dispensationalism, and other errors of today. At least the audio of my Daniel series is still available on the church website (see footnote 1)

But I decided I would finish the sermon this morning by giving a cursory overview of the first 35 verses of chapter 11. And I am picking chapter 11 for three reasons. First, it illustrates the kind of predictive details that you find all through this book. Second, there is no way that liberals can explain away the predictive prophecies of chapter 11 since it predicts events even after their supposed latest date of authorship. Third, almost nobody preaches on chapter 11, and one commentary even recommended that nobody preach

on it,⁵ so I thought I would fill the gap.

B. Chapter 11

Beginning at chapter 11:1. The angel says in verse 1

Dan. 11:1 “Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)

I love the theology of angels in this book. Angels are constantly at work in humbling nations and protecting or displacing kings. It’s a very comforting thought. It was no doubt this angel’s work that eventually led to Darius the Mede coming to faith. Verse 2:

2 And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia...

Every detail of Scripture is truth, and we should not gloss over any details.

The next three kings after Darius would be Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius Hystaspes. Verse 2 goes on to say,

...and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.

Fifty years before Xerxes came to the throne, Daniel was told of his incredible power and wealth. He also predicted that he would be a master at manipulating other nations to do his will. Here it speaks of his despicable skill at manipulating nations into fighting against Greece. And I won’t give you a lot of details this morning. I spent seven Sundays going through chapter 11. But I do want to give a few highlights.

In verses 3 and following the focus is on the Greek empire that overthrew the Persians. In the earlier visions God had devoted a great deal of time to the mighty king of Greece, but here he is going to focus on how Alexander the Great’s kingdom would get broken up into four parts.

3 Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. 4 And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.

When Alexander died at the age of 32, his kingdom was divided into four parts, and as the text predicted, not one of his children inherited anything. Previous visions had given much more detail about this part of the history, but here is brief. Alexander’s three sons were murdered and his four generals divided the kingdom among themselves. The four generals were Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy.

And there are so many lessons that we must skip over, but one lesson is that God is in the habit of breaking nations that insist on doing their own will

5 Leopold said of chapter 11, “We do not see how it could be used for a sermon or for sermons.” H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), p. 525.

rather than God's will. No earthly kingdom lasts forever. That would make it divine. Don't expect America to last forever; that would make it divine. Only Christ's kingdom lasts forever. And this is especially true when rulers make their own will the rule of the nation like Alexander did. President George Washington said, "it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor." President Andrew Jackson said, "The Bible is the Book upon which this Republic stands." Isn't it scary how far we have come? We resemble Greece more than we resemble early America.

In verses 5-35 we have details of wars between the northern kingdom of the Ptolemies and the southern kingdom of the Seleucids.

Dan. 11:5 "Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion.

Ptolemy I Soter was the general who ruled over Egypt from 323-285 B.C. And this passage not only says that this first king would become powerful, but that one of his princes would become even more powerful than him and later in the chapter we learn that this prince would actually be one of the first four kings that received their kingdom at the same time! Huh? How on earth could that be? People who read this before it was fulfilled might have wondered how that could be.

Well, here's how it happened exactly as written. Seleucus, one of Alexander's four generals, received the kingdom of Babylon at the same time that Ptolemy received Egypt, so they did indeed start off as kings at the same time. But Antigonus of Babylon seized the kingdom and Seleucus fled for his life to Egypt. In Egypt, Ptolemy strangely welcomed him, made him a prince, and gave him command of his armies in Egypt. And he stayed there for four years, at which time Seleucus led his armies to defeat Antigonus in 312 B.C. at Gaza. At that point Seleucus returned to his own kingdom of Babylon and grew in such power that he became a threat to Ptolemy. We are talking about every verb, every noun, every detail of chapter 11 being fulfilled perfectly. The more I study Daniel, the more it sends shivers down my spine. I love this book.

Verse 5 says

...he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion.

Despite the enormous kindness of Ptolemy to Seleucus, Seleucus became greedy and started intruding into Ptolemy's territory and gaining more and

more power over him. His kingdom became the largest of all the divisions in the Greek empire. And he posed a threat to Ptolemy until the treaty mentioned in verse 6.

6 And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South...

That daughter is a reference to Berenice, Ptolemy II's daughter. "The daughter of the king of the South..."

shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement;

The idea was that Berenice would marry Antiochus II to seal the alliance between the two kingdoms. Her son was then to become the heir to the Seleucid throne. But things got real dicey, as the verse goes on to describe. It says,

but she shall not retain the power of her authority...

Why? Because Antiochus divorced Berenice and remarried Laodice. So Berenice is no longer queen and no longer retains her authority. But the next phrase shows that this divorce didn't work out so well for Antiochus:

and neither he nor his authority shall stand;

Antiochus II would lose both his kingdom and his life. But so would Berenice. The text goes on to say,

but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.

Berenice was given up to death. Her entourage was also killed. And her father who begot her, Ptolemy, would die unexpectedly. And the one who strengthened her for a time to the position of queen, her former husband Antiochus, would also be given up to death. Those are incredible details given 285 years before they occurred.

Here is how it all transpired. Thinking that he could consolidate more power, Ptolemy II, after years of bitter fighting with Antiochus, negotiated an alliance between the two kingdoms by giving his daughter in marriage to Antiochus, and stipulating that the offspring of the marriage would inherit the entire kingdom. Well, that sounded juicy to Antiochus. After all, Ptolemy was an old guy. He saw nothing but advantage in this arrangement.

But here's the fly in the ointment. Antiochus was already married to a very powerful and influential woman named Laodice. So as a condition for the marriage, Ptolemy forced Antiochus to divorce Laodice and to promise that the child of Berenice would be heir of the kingdom.

You can imagine how happy this made Laodice, and after Berenice's father Ptolemy died unexpectedly two years later, Laodice succeeded in getting Antiochus to divorce Berenice, and to remarry her. Why? Because Ptolemy is no longer alive, and he can have the throne without Ptolemy's

conditions.

But there is a wrinkle in these plans too. Once Laodice was married to Antiochus, and was now the queen, she was in a position to get even and she murdered Antiochus her husband, murdered Berenice, murdered her entourage who brought her, and murdered Berenice's child. Then Laodice ruled side by side with her own son as queen regent until her own son was old enough to mount the throne. Isn't that remarkable? Phrase by phrase the intricacies of this seemingly impossible and wretched soap opera were unraveled long before the events happened. Who would have ever thought that such a thing could happen?

What kind of applications can we learn from this?

I will only touch on one - modern politicians must learn to put principle ahead of pragmatism. Why do people engage in pragmatism? Because getting what they want is more important than principle to them. They do what they think will work. Well, this story shows that pragmatism doesn't always work in the long run. It backfires.

But history moves on, and in verses 7-9 we have the history of Ptolemy III Euergetes (247-222 BC) and Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226 BC).

7 But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place...

This is very precise language. Notice it doesn't say one of Berenice's children would arise. Her only child was murdered. It says this king would be a branch of her roots, not her offspring. Her roots would be her father and mother. And a branch that comes forth from her parents would be a brother of Berenice. And of course, that is exactly what happens in history.

Berenice's brother Ptolemy III Euergetes arose in his father's place to retaliate for the murder of her sister. Verse 7 goes on to say, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail.

The war described here lasted from 246-241 B.C., a period of five years. The Ptolemaic king not only conquered Syria, Cilicia and all of Asia, but he actually captured and looted the Seleucid capital, Antioch, putting the evil queen regent Loadice to death, but leaving the young Seleucus II on the throne. Seleucus had already been made king immediately upon his father's murder, so he was king all along as the text indicates, but it was Laodice who had been calling the shots. So with her death, he alone reigns. But verse 8 describes the results of this conquest:

8 And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North. 9 "Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall

return to his own land.

It is a matter of history that Ptolemy plundered the wealth of the nation taking 40,000 talents of silver. That's about 36 million ounces of silver. He also took a lot of other plunder including taking 2500 sacred idols captive into Egypt. I'll skip over some details.⁶ Verse 10:

10 However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife.

The king of the North in verse 9 was Seleucus II. His sons, Seleucus III and Antiochus III, did indeed stir up enormous strife. Both sons are mentioned in the first clause because for the first two years, both were involved in raising armed forces. But the second clause is in the singular in Hebrew because by the time they were able to invade the Egyptian empire, Seleucus III was murdered and only his brother Antiochus the Great was left. Again, there are no details of prophecy that are not perfectly fulfilled. Verse 11:

Dan. 11:11 "And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy.

Ptolemy IV (who was the king over Egypt) launched a counterattack with 70,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 elephants. He won a resounding victory and captured the entire army of Antiochus, with Antiochus barely escaping with his life by fleeing into the desert. So the prophecy was fulfilled of a multitude of Syrians being given into the hands of the Egyptians. Verse 12 goes on:

12 When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail.

He not only killed 10,000 Syrians, but in his pride he started slaughtering Jews as well. Earlier he had given Israel a favorable status. But here's what happened to change that. Ptolemy IV celebrated his victory by taking a tour of the Eastern Mediterranean provinces, and while he was in Jerusalem, his curiosity got the better of him. He wanted to see what it looked like inside the Holy of Holies. But when he tried to enter the inner sanctuary of the temple, he was resisted by the Jewish authorities. Offended, he revoked all special privileges to Jews, and many thousands suffered from his atrocities. But verse 13 tells us why he would not prevail.

13 For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.

6 The last sentence can be translated two ways: it can either mean that "he shall refrain some years from the king of the North" which would mean he wouldn't attack the king of the north for some time. This is the way the NASB, the NIV and the RSV have taken it. The NKJV stuck with the more literal translation which means that Ptolemy reigned longer than Seleucus II did. I prefer that translation, but both things actually happened. Despite being older than the northern king, he lived longer and reigned longer.

God had used Egypt to keep Syria from being an undue burden in Israel, and now he uses Syria to keep Egypt from being an undue burden. God sometimes protects His people by having humanists fight against humanists. Praise God! He even uses ungodly wars to protect His people.

Verse 14 describes how Antiochus had help from rebels under the Ptolemaic empire. This included Macedon and Israel.

Dan. 11:14 “Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall.

Notice that people exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision. Even the pride of men is controlled by God’s providence. It was a fulfillment of prophecy. And how did that happen? Well, there were revolutionary Jews who convinced the people of Israel to secede - to throw off the yolk of Egypt and to assist Syria in its conquest of Egypt. However, even though they picked the winning side (there’s pragmatism for you), this passage says that they shall fall. How does that happen? Again, this remarkable prophecy, given 337 years before hand, was fulfilled when Scopas, the Egyptian general utterly crushed the Israelite rebellion before he went on to be defeated by Antiochus, and before he was forced to flee to Sidon. So yes, the Jewish revolutionaries picked the winning side, but they got toasted before the win happened. Verse 15 describes that siege of Sidon which led to Scopas’s surrender in 198 B.C.

15 So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist.

The choice troops of the South were the troops of the three Egyptian leaders Eropas, Menacles and Damoyenus, who were unable to rescue the besieged Scopas from Sidon. Verse 16 says,

16 But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.

Antiochus at this point becomes the dominant power in Israel, and basically has no one to resist him. Verse 17 indicates that Antiochus wanted the entire kingdom of Egypt and began a further invasion of Egyptian territory. Talk about greed and failure to be satisfied!

Dan. 11:17 “He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do...

So it says that he is successful in getting into Egypt. But the rest of the verse indicates that he suddenly has to make a treaty with the king of Egypt. Before this prophecy was fulfilled people might have wondered why a victor would make a treaty and why he would make a vulnerable opponent a sudden ally. That makes no sense. But in hindsight, it makes total sense.

History tells us that because Rome was threatening to attack Antiochus, he suddenly found it necessary to become an ally of Egypt (whom he had just been attacking). But he still does it with ulterior motives. There is nothing pure about his motives. Look at the second sentence in verse 17:

... And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him.

Antiochus gave his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy V to bind an alliance, but his purpose was to use her to undermine Egypt's policies and eventually take over. He wanted to destroy Egypt through her. She was to be his Trojan Horse. Well, it backfired, because Cleopatra fell in love with Ptolemy V and faithfully sided with her husband and against her father on every issue that came up. You can read about all of these details in the history books. But God writes all of this down hundreds of years before it happened.

Verse 18 describes further reversals as he began to conquer Asia Minor and Greece, but was conquered by the Roman consul Lucius Scipio Asiaticus.

18 After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him.

What's the reversal of the reproach? Antiochus had treated the Roman ambassador with contempt and humiliation, telling Rome that they had no part in Asia. Rome did not take kindly to that reproach. So part of the reversal of reproach was that Antiochus had to give up all the territory west of the Taurus mountains in Asia Minor and to stay out of Europe, and to pay an annual indemnity of 15,000 talents, equivalent to about 30 million dollars. To guarantee this payment, twelve high ruling members of the Syrian nobility were given into captivity as insurance. This totally ruined the ruling house and verse 19 says,

19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land...

Why would he turn against his own temple fortress? Well, he was bankrupt and decided to steal everything that was in that pagan temple in order to replenish his finances. But verse 19 goes on to say that while stealing wealth from a temple, he was killed - and we know from history that he was killed by a mob and disappeared. Verse 19 says,

...but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Now I enjoy just seeing how perfectly history was written ahead of time by God. God rules history, not man. As much as it may look like things are out of control, God is in control, and prophecy proves that this is the case. If God rules history, then we can have confidence in the future. God's plans will never be annulled.

A second application is that the battle belongs to the Lord, not to the strong. There were battles covered in this passage where the weaker forces won despite overwhelming odds.

A third application is that anger stirs up more anger, and bitterness stirs up more bitterness, and retaliation stirs up more retaliation. The Seleucids were said to be angry because they had been defeated by Ptolemy III. But Ptolemy III was angry because he was simply avenging the murder of his sister, who had been married to the king of the North. And the reason Berenice had been murdered was because Laodice had been replaced by her as Queen and she resented it bitterly. And as you go from verse 5-19 you will see one non-ending line of reasons why one country fights against another country. It's horrible. The anger of one country's leaders in verse 10 leads to the rage of the other country's king in verse 11. And on and on.

That is exactly what is happening in Somalia, Bosnia, and in the Middle East. Strife is stirred up when people refuse to cover over a transgression. And we can use passages like this to teach our children why they must repent of anger, or hate, or bitterness, or desires to get even. It just gets worse and worse, and our hate will stir up the other person's hate. This can be applied in the church. Hebrews 12:15 warns us to "beware lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled." It's not just in the Middle East that this can happen. Your bitterness, when it is not dealt with by the grace of God, will cause trouble and will rub off on others – many can become defiled. And just as God's grace and Christian forgiveness is the only solution to the powder keg of the Middle East, only God's grace can enable you to forgive and promote peace when you have been hurt. And Paul's admonition is,

Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.

Teach your children the terrible results of anger, malice, hate and bitterness using Daniel 11. Proverbs 15:1 says "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Anger just leads to more anger. These kings may seem powerful because of their wrath, but Scripture says, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Prov. 16:32). It takes a lot more than military genius to control your spirit. It takes grace. And grace is a foundation for peace. We need to pray against the inflaming of passions in the Middle East by the Muslim clerics, by the news media, and by our own propaganda in their countries. We need to pray against passions handed down from father to son.

We must pray that God would bind that stronghold. Verse 20:

Dan. 11:20 “There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle. God hates taxes. And if you don’t believe that, read Dr. Fugate’s book on taxes.⁷ Seleucus IV Philopator reigned from 187-175 BC, and it is a matter of record that Seleucus did indeed impose far heavier taxes on Israel than on other countries and even came to rob the temple in Jerusalem. And the story of how he was resisted, and a few days later died is very interesting story which we won’t have the time to get into. You can read that in 2 Maccabees. But this summarizes by saying, “within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.” That is a perfect prediction of what happened. All of this was predicted 362 years before the events of verse 20.

Verses 21 and following deal with a wicked man named Antiochus Epiphanes - a man whom even secular history paints as ridiculously wicked.

21 And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.

Heliiodorus was supposed to have the throne. But he was young. Antiochus came into the capital pretending merely to be a guardian of his brother’s children and meaning no harm. No one suspected a thing. But through flattery, promises of huge gain, and playing one power against another, Antiochus had already managed to secretly negotiate support for his attempt to hijack the throne from his nephew. He got support from the king of Pergamos, key Syrian figures, and Rome. So when he came to Antioch and suddenly declared that he was king, and uncovered his cards, Syria gave in. They recognized that they didn’t have a chance of resisting. But this Antiochus Epiphanes was a kind of Antichrist who saw himself as God manifest in the flesh. Continuing at verse 22:

22 With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant. 23 And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people. 24 He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.

Though he started off with little support, Antiochus Epiphanes became very strong and swept away opposition in Syria, in Israel, and in Egypt. He became kind of a Robin Hood, pillaging and redistributing wealth to gain favor. The prince of the covenant is a reference to Onias the high priest who ruled over Israel, and who sided with Egypt at that time. This deposing of

⁷ <https://app.thebookpatch.com/BookStore/toward-a-theology-of-taxation/aaad0ef2-e834-4128-a4fa-cb594fe86a11?isbn=9780984742288>

the high priest in 175 B.C. and his later assassination in 171 B.C. marks the beginning of massive interference of the secular state into the church.

Reading verses 25-28.

Dan. 11:25 “He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. 26 Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. 27 Both these kings’ hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time. 28 While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land.

There is so much in that paragraph that I don’t have time to comment on. But Antiochus sought to manipulate Philometer and the young Philometer let his uncle think that he was being manipulated but was in actuality manipulating his uncle with his own lies. I see Washington politics all over this paragraph. But I am also blown away with how perfectly the psychology, the broken treaties, the lying, manipulation, wars, and backstabbing were predicted hundreds of years before the events unraveled. I deal with that paragraph in a couple sermons in my Daniel series, so won’t do so here. Verses 29-30:

Dan. 11:29 “At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. 30 For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. “So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. In 168 BC Antiochus invaded Egypt again, but this time he was not successful. These ships from Cyprus were the specific Roman fleet that came to Alexandria from their base in Cyprus at the request of the Ptolemies. Why was Antiochus so ashamed and grieved? Well, as the Syrians were moving to besiege Alexandria, the Roman Commander Gaius Popilius Laenus met Antiochus four miles outside the city and handed him a letter from the Roman Senate ordering him to leave Egypt or face war with Rome. Antiochus asked time to think about it. He wanted to save his pride. But the Roman commander drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and told him to respond before he stepped from the circle. Well aware of Rome’s power, Antiochus stood humiliated in silence for a brief interval and then agreed to the demand. He withdrew in utter humiliation.

Antiochus turned his humiliation and anger against the Jews. He had to have someone to take it out on. He had already had run-ins with them because they had rejected the high priest that he had installed. So verse 31 says,

31 And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; He did this by offering a pig on the altar as a sacrifice and then commanding

that no further sacrifices could be offered. And so the text goes on to say, then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

He placed a substitute altar and a statue of Zeus in the place of the brazen altar. He then commanded the Jews to worship this idol. Some obeyed and were flattered and elevated by Antiochus, and some refused. Verses 32-35 say,

32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. 33 And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. 34 Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. 35 And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.

This was a horrible time. Circumcision was forbidden, Jews were forced to eat pork, Bibles were burned, Jews were forced to desecrate the Sabbath, and in many other ways Antiochus showed a demonic hatred for anything God stood for. And multitudes died.

But this was also an encouraging time because it shows that defeat is not inevitable before a superior power. The Maccabean leaders led a godly revolt and over and over again their tiny forces defeated the Syrians against overwhelming odds. God was with them.

But verse 29 says that even this demonic persecution was allowed by God and could not have come one day earlier or one day later. It happened at the appointed time. I don't have time to outline the five reasons why God allowed this persecution, nor do I have the time to go over the exciting history that leads up to the time of Jesus and beyond in the rest of this book. But I've given you enough this morning so that you can have a confidence that every detail of Daniel's prophecies can be taken seriously if we hold to a Biblical eschatology.

There is absolutely no reason to add a gap of more than 2000 years between verses 35 and 36 as Premillennialists do and as some Amillennialists have been forced to do. Every word of every phrase in the rest of this book perfectly leads us year by year up to AD 70 at the end of the book. In fact, chapter 12 gave first century believers the precise number of days that Jews would continue to be killed throughout the empire after the temple was burned (1290 days) and the exact number of days before it would be safe to re-enter Israel (1335 days). 1335 days is the exact number of days from the day the temple was burned until the fall of Masada. After Masada fell, Jews could return to Israel without fear. So yes, there was a seven year war

against Israel, but it is not where Dispensationalists place it - in our future. Every detail of that war was perfectly fulfilled in the first century.

You can see why liberals don't like prophecy and try to misinterpret these prophecies. These prophecies show the hand of a supernatural God who is sovereign over all of life.

But in addition to valuing Daniel's prophecies, I also want you to learn to apply such books to your own life. There are many applications that we won't have time to make, but let me end with three more that can be made from chapter 11.

First, God knows how to frustrate the conspiracies of men and kingdoms. Starting in verse 4 all the way through verse 45 you keep seeing this word "but." Men have their great plans, but God throws a monkey wrench in the works. Seventeen times it says that someone tried to do something, but - and then it mentions a problem.⁸ 1 Corinthians 1:19 says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Politics in America is no challenge for God. What we should be more worried about is whether the church will repent. If the church is right with God, God's providence still has enough "buts" in it that He can handle the enemy. And I am encouraged by that. But if the church does not repent, God's "buts" are going to frustrate the church.

Second, the evils of these chapters are themselves God's judgments upon nations. Don't think that we have to wait for God to judge America for its evils. The free-slide into evil shows that God is already judging our nation by giving it up to a depraved mind. Romans 1 indicates that things "getting worse" is often a means by which God judges nations (Rom. 1:18,24,26,28). Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is [present tense] revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." The tough times mentioned in Daniel chapter 11 are God's judgments on nations that could care less about him, and when Israel became backslidden they suffered right along with the pagans. We grossly misinterpret history if we think that God's wrath is not being revealed in history against all ungodliness.

Dispensationalists and many Amillennialists say that we have to wait till the final day of history for any judgments to fall. That is absolutely false. Read Romans 1 carefully and you will see that God's wrath is presently being seen in our nation.

⁸ See the "but" in vv 4,6,7,9,11,12,14,18, 19,20,21,25,27,29,41,44,45.

And last, Israel is called the “Glorious Land” or literally the “Beautiful Land” in verse 41 not because it was so beautiful in topography. It was not. There were many lands far more beautiful. The reason it was a glorious and beautiful land was because of God’s glorious presence in its midst. And God’s presence is what makes all the difference in a country, a church, a home or an individual. Those things are glorious only if they are filled with the glorious Spirit of God. Do you have the Spirit of God in your life? Unless you are united to Christ and submit to Him you can’t have the Spirit’s glory. May each one of us benefit as we seek to take to heart and apply the lessons of Daniel. Amen.

Material left out of sermon:

Just a few of God’s purposes in persecution:

- Punishment of corruption in the church in verse 32.
- Second, to purify the church in verse 35. God wants our holiness more than our comfort. And that persecution was designed to refine and purge the remnant and make them white. Antiochus tried to eliminate the true faith, but his persecution actually made it stronger. One way or another God will produce holiness in the church. If it does not come about through peaceful means such as at Pentecost, it will come about through discipline.
- Third, it promoted resolve to never again compromise in verse 28. And when you read the Maccabees, you see incredible stories of men, women, and children who preferred death to compromise. I would love to see a movie done of that Maccabean period of history.
- Fourth, verse 32 says that the persecution led to a closer personal walk with God. “The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.” That was Paul’s goal in life - “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” - that I might know Him (Phil. 3:10).
- The fifth way that God prepared His people for this persecution was to cause them to study and understand the Scriptures in verse 33.

But the last section of this chapter, verses 36-45 deal with King Herod and lead us all the way up to the time of Jesus. Many people who have agreed with my exegesis so far want to put a gap of 2000 years between verses 35 and 36. There is no basis for that, and it should automatically make their eschatology suspect. Philip Mauro says on this passage, “The strongest magnifying glass would fail to reveal the slightest indication of any such ‘break,’ but on the contrary every item of the subject-matter of verses 34,35 and 36 is connected with the one which precedes it by the conjunction ‘and.’” On the other hand we find strong reasons for the view that the prophecy is just what it appears to be, namely, an outline, in continuous historical form, of the main events of ‘the latter days,’ that is to say, the second term of

Jewish national existence.” (p. 137).

Against the Premillennial viewpoint that says this is all future to us, I would point out that verse 41 says it is a time when Edom, Moab, and Ammon still exist. The last of the Moabites are reported to have passed away in the sixth century AD, but the other two peoples were annihilated and ceased to exist by the second century AD. In my series, I give numerous other reasons why this cannot refer to our future.

The Maccabean successors were eliminated with Herod’s murder of Aristobulus in 35 BC. As a result of eliminating any legitimate successors, Herod was able to do as he wanted. I won’t get in depth like I did in my Daniel series, but let me start by reading verses 36-39.

Dan. 11:36 “Then the king [and this king is not the king of the north or the king of the south, but a king of Israel caught in between those two powers - 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. 37 He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women [in other words, neither male nor female deities], nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all. 38 But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses [the Caesar cult was the god of fortresses - Herod honored it, even though he didn’t believe in it; it was a purely political gesture]; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things [Josephus shows the astounding amount of money Herod devoted to the Caesar cult, filling Israel with Roman temples]. 39 Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain. Every detail of this fits Herod perfectly, as Mauro and Farquharson have shown.

- Herod was utterly unrestrained in doing according to his own will (v. 36a)
- He became the highest authority (v. 36b)
- He engaged in blasphemy (v. 36c)
- He had no regard for God or Jesus (v. 37)
- He honored and promoting a foreign god, the god of fortresses (which was the Caesar cult), and he did so with riches (v. 38)
- His ruthlessness (v. 39)
- His climbing the ladder of success (v. 39)

And many other details of history that are seen in this passage. The one detail that some might question is whether he exalted himself above every god and whether he spoke blasphemies against the one true God. But he did. I’ll quickly list four of the ways he fits. 1. First, he honored the Caesar cult, which was known as the god of fortresses. According to Josephus, “[Herod] filled his own country with temples...” (Wars I, 21:2) and demanded homage to Caesar. He didn’t do this because he believed in the Roman gods,

but simply because it was a way of promoting himself in the eyes of the Romans. 2. Second, and perhaps more to the point, were the many images and statues of Caesar which Herod placed throughout the land for worship and to which he demanded an oath of loyalty. He even had the audacity of placing a huge golden eagle, the symbol of the Caesar cult, on the temple, causing a near riot in Jerusalem. 3. But perhaps the greatest blasphemy occurred when the wise men came to worship the new born baby Jesus. Herod pretended to want to worship Him also, but made plans to destroy Jesus. 4. Another way in which he blasphemed God was to claim to be the Messiah. The Herodians believed that he was the Messiah, and an entire Jewish sect developed around him. So the attempted murderer of the Messiah pretended to be the Messiah.

The text says that he shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. Josephus records not only how Herod prospered in his advance in power, but sometimes almost miraculously so, and his dynasty continued until the destruction of Jerusalem in the Jewish war of the first century AD - till the wrath had been accomplished. Where previously it was pagan kings who prospered in their persecution of the true Israel, it was Herod and his dynasty who now prospered. It was Herod the Great who murdered not only the infants of Bethlehem, but so many other righteous men. Let's quickly look at the last six verses

Dan. 11:40 "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him;...

In my series I point out that this is a mistranslation. If this translation were correct, then it would refer to the time when Antony put Herod on trial and Herod was so convinced he would die, that he ordered his wife put to death should he die so that no one else could have her.

But I think the literal translation fits the history much better and is more sensitive to flow of this verse. The phrase "attack him" is made up of three Hebrew words meaning literally "shall push with him." It doesn't say shall push at him, but shall push with him. So translated literally this should say, "At the time of the end the king of the South shall make a push together with him." If you take the passage that way, then the whole thing opens up. It is describing the beginning of the Actium War, and is a beautiful summary of Plutarch's Life of Mark Antony.

For those of you who have never read that, let me give you a little background. Antony was supposed to succeed Julius Caesar, but unexpectedly, the Senate sided with Octavius who became Caesar Augustus. However, because of the power of the Senate, Octavius decided to throw his

lot in with the powerful Antony and another power broker named Lepidus. This was the period when Rome was jointly ruled by this threesome called the Triumvirate. In 42 B.C. the triumvirs crushed the republican party led by Brutus and Cassius at the battle of Philippi. Antony went back to Egypt which was his part of the Roman empire.

In 34 B.C. Antony decided he wanted more. He alienated himself with Octavian by sending back his sister whom he had married and invading provinces of Octavian. With the help of Cleopatra and Herod, and with a magnificent, well trained army, he invaded Syria. And that is exactly what this text says. It was the ruler of the south who attacks first. “At the time of the end the king of the South shall make a push together with him.”

The next phrase indicates the result: Octavian or Caesar Augustus fought back and invaded Antony’s territory, but the way he attacked was interesting. Though both sides had amassed enormous numbers of infantry, the infantry was not engaged at all. The battle was determined on land by chariots and horsemen and on sea by large fleets of ships. So verse 40 says, “and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships.” I read in Plutarch how the infantry was not used at all. If you study the wars that went on in that region, this is remarkable. The infantry are not mentioned here for a very good reason. Though they were almost always key, that was not the case in this battle.

Verse 40 goes on to say,

...and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

He conquered Africa, Upper Cilicia, Paphlagonia, Thrace, Pontus, Galatia and many other provinces from Illyria to Armenia.

Verses 41-43 show that Ceasar Augustus (now assisted by Herod who changed sides) would fight against Antony, Cleopatra and their allies. Verse 41 says,

41 He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. It’s astounding that Edom, Moab, and Ammon completely escaped this invasion. But if you read the histories of Plutarch, Pliny, Strabo and Dio Cassius, you will see that there was a historical fulfillment that is exact and precise. Herod, being the clever man that he was, made his peace with Caesar Augustus before Caesar reached him, and he accompanied him with pomp and ceremony. He gave him money and all the fine food and wine that his army wanted. Just slightly earlier, he had gone to Caesar in the clothes of a commoner, had told him that he was defeated and accepted that, but asked

Caesar not to judge him by the fact that it was Antony that he had been loyal to, but by the fact that he had been a loyal subject to Antony and would be just as loyal now to Caesar. It was such a moving speech, that Caesar reinstated him as king of Israel, and through the rest of this passage, Caesar and Herod are now in concert. Through the rest of his life Herod proved very loyal to Caesar Augustus. Verse 42 goes on:

42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 43 He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt...

If you read the histories you discover that this too was amazing. Cleopatra tried to flee with the wealth, and when that was not possible threatened to destroy all the wealth by fire. Caesar managed to talk her out of it. But this again is a key point that marks the timing of this prophecy. The wealth of Egypt in the time of Herod was astounding. After this pillaging, Egypt was never again anything more than a squalid, poor area, to this day. Again, the timing cannot be any later than Herod. Verse 43 ends by saying,

...also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.

To follow at his heels means that their conquest would follow shortly after Augustus left. And of course that is what happened. Cornelius Balbus had a remarkable victory in his name over those two countries, immediately upon the heels of Augustus conquering Egypt and going back to Rome.

Thus, verses 40-43 are a parenthesis that shows how Herod got mixed up with both Antony and Caesar. The last phrase of verse 43 (“shall follow at his heels”) clues us in that Caesar has left the area and we are returning to the main subject of verses 36-45. There is no other king in Palestine once Caesar leaves. So Daniel returns to the main subject of Herod in verse 44:

44 But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.

What was the news from the east and north that troubled him? Matthew 2 tells us. The Magi said,

Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Very literally, news from the east troubled him. Later in the chapter it says, Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

That was a massacre as a result of news from the east. What about news from the north? Antipater, his oldest son, was in Rome. He wanted to do away with rivals to the throne, and he falsely accused two of his brothers of conspiring to kill their father and take the throne. Josephus says that this

caused Herod to break out in a great fury and to not only kill his sons but many others whom he thought might have supported them. There are many, many quotes that could be given to show his fury and the numbers of people killed by Herod at this time.

45 And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain;...

Notice the plural tents. He had two campuses to his palace, one in the temple area on the holy mountain and one in the upper city. Yet it was between the seas, that is between the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas. I don't see how this could fit anywhere else in Rome or Egypt. This can't refer to Antiochus Epiphanes, Caesar or any other historical figure other than Herod. Even those who see this as being future, admit that the reference to this palace has to be in Jerusalem between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. Can you see how every detail fits Herod? The last phrase says, ...yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Herod died of horrible diseases which and was unable to find any relief or help through medicine. Five days after killing his oldest son, he died. The sad story of his death is told by Josephus. When it looked like no treatments would work for his illness, he commanded his sister to put all the nobility that he had locked up in the hippodrome to death when he died. His reason? He told them that no one would mourn his death otherwise.⁹ So the historical fulfillment of the troubles at the time of Christ's birth are exact and precise.

I won't get into chapter 12, but it shows what happens later in that century - the great tribulation, the war against Jerusalem, and the first resurrection. It even predicts the exact number of days that the killing of Jews would continue throughout the empire once the temple was destroyed - exactly 1290 day, only stopping in AD 73. But it warns the readers not to think that danger is ended within Israel during that time. It warns the people in verse 12 not to come back into Israel until 1335 days had transpired, which is the

9 Here is part of Josephus's account. Antiq. 17:175 (17.6.5) and when they were come, he ordered them all to be shut up in the hippodrome,⁴ and sent for his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, and spoke thus to them:—"I shall die in a little time, so great are my pains; which death ought to be cheerfully borne, and to be welcomed by all men; but what principally troubles me is this, that I shall die without being lamented, and without such mourning as men usually expect at a king's death." [...]

Antiq. 17:178 (17.6.5) He desired therefore that as soon as they see he hath given up the ghost, they shall place soldiers round the hippodrome, while they do not know that he is dead; and that they shall not declare his death to the multitude till this is done, but that they shall give orders to have those that are in custody shot with their darts; and that this slaughter of them all will cause that he shall not miss to rejoice on a double account; that as he is dying, they will make him secure that his will shall be executed in what he charges them to do; and that he shall have the honor of a memorable mourning at his funeral. [...]

Antiq. 17:193 (17.8.2) But then Salome and Alexas, before the king's death was made known, dismissed those that were shut up in the hippodrome, and told them that the king ordered them to go away to their own lands, and take care of their own affairs, which was esteemed by the nation a great benefit; [...]

exact number of days from the burning of the temple until Masada fell to the Romans. After that date, it was safe to reenter Israel.