



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Daniel 11:1-45

Daniel

"Crimes, Follies and Misfortunes"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you Jim. We are in Daniel chapter 11. We have one more lesson. And with great prophecy – and I'm going to read part of the text. There are 45 verses in this chapter and lots of detail. So I'm not going to read the entire chapter. It gives us a general sweep of history. The portion that I'm going to read is what is not history, at least yet. It is prophecy. And that's beginning with verse 36. It reads from verse 36 to verse 45, which is the prophecy of the antichrist:

"Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.

"At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with

horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. But he will gain control over hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow in his heels. But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him."

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank you for this time together and this opportunity for us to read the Scriptures as we have done and reflect on the meaning of the text. We come to a passage in the Bible that is a fascinating passage from many perspectives. It's a text that's full of historical detail, some of which the meaning of which would elude us as we simply read through it. It requires a great deal of study and help. And yet, one thing that does certainly come through as we read the passage as a whole, and that is you are the God of history and you control all of the details of it.

And that's the God that we serve, and what a blessing that is to know that our God is in complete control. And as this passage indicates, we're coming to that point in history – someday, maybe soon, but certainly we're coming to it. All of the events, according to your sovereign hand, are orchestrated and moving toward it, when you will defeat evil and you will establish the kingdom on the earth. The world has gone through a lot. It must still go through a lot.

But at the end of the all, there's glory and triumph for you and your people. So we give you praise for that. And that should affect the way we look at life and live in the meantime. You're always on

your throne and you're the one that rules. And so we're to live life in obedience to you and complete trust in you, and rest in the promises that you give.

And those promises are absolutely reliable. We praise you for that. We pray that you would instill these truths in our mind as we go through this passage of Scripture. Bless us, build us up in the faith. We pray that the ministry of the Spirit of God would be active within us and He would guide us in our thinking.

Bless us, bless us spiritually. But we pray also, Lord, for the material needs of your people. We all have them, every one of us. Some of us may be in good health and enjoying financial stability and security at the moment, but others aren't. Others are sick, others are struggling with various issues.

They're your people. You're intimately acquainted with all of their needs, all of their concerns. And I pray, Lord, that you would give them relief, that you would bless, that you'd give health, that you'd give stability, that you'd give encouragement. Every one of your people is sealed with the Holy Spirit, and He's the comforter, He's the encourager.

I pray that He would encourage them, encourage them in light of your Word, with the promises of your Word, and with the promise that, ultimately, we're all leaving this world. This world isn't our home, but we're going to a place that's eternal, glorious. And someday we'll occupy this world in a new heavens and a new earth.

And we give you praise and thanks for that. Our future is settled and sealed, and our present is secure because of what you've done in the past, what your Son has done for us. We thank you for Him. We thank you for all that we have in Christ. We pray your blessing upon us now. May He be magnified. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] The English Historian, Edward Gibbon, once called history "little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind." He would know. He wrote the massive

work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. So he had some reason for having what might seem to be a cynical view of history. The 11th chapter of the Book of Daniel does little to challenge that opinion.

It is the register of the rise and fall of empires, the crimes of kings, and the sufferings of people. But it's not just a register of misdeeds and misfortunes. And the Scriptures aren't cynical; they're realistic. In fact, one of the great testimonies of the reality of Scripture, the self-authenticating nature of Scripture is that it is so real. It speaks to life as we know it.

No, it's realistic, but it's not cynical. It's hopeful. The Word of God is that in this chapter as well. Chapter 11 ends in triumph. But getting to the end of chapter 11 is not easy.

It is not only the record of the last vision of the Book of Daniel, it is also the longest vision in the book. And it is one that is full of obscure details from ancient history. Getting through it is, as the British would say, like wading through treacle, which means plodding through molasses. It is slow-going. If you've read through Daniel chapter 11, you know that.

And you should read through Daniel chapter 11. It is rewarding; a rewarding read, a rewarding chapter. In fact, it might be the most important prophecy in the book. I say "might be," because I think chapter 7 is the seminal chapter. It's probably the most important, but this is certainly second to that.

We can't look at it in all its detail. The commentaries do that. But we can summarize much of it. It has three parts. The first is from verse 1 through verse 19, which is about the history of the ancient Near East from the time of Daniel to the appearance of Antiochus Epiphanes. The second part, from verse 20 through verse 35, covers the career of Antiochus, expanding on the things that were prophesied in chapter 9.

All of that, for us at least, is ancient history. The third part is different. From verses 36 through 45, Daniel sees events that are yet

to come. And specifically, he sees a person to come, the antichrist. That's really the most important part of the chapter.

Even so, the first part of the chapter, the part that is to us history, is almost, if not equally, impressive and significant. In the first 35 verses, it's been estimated that there are 135 prophecies that have been literally fulfilled, events that were foretold some 400 years before they happened. Modern critics stop at that, as you can imagine, and explain it away by claiming that the Book of Daniel was written during Maccabean period in the 2nd century BC, written after the fact. And, in fact, the attacks on this book, in the Book of Daniel, has been greatly attacked by skeptics and unbelievers. The most intense part of that attack has occurred here in chapter 11.

As critics see it, the only explanation for recording these events is that the author looked back on them. And you would imagine they would draw that conclusion, even without evidence. But they draw that conclusion because it's either that or this is prophecy, and then they would cease to be skeptics if they believe that. So they don't. They consider the Book of Daniel to be a book of history, not prophecy.

But the book itself claims to be prophecy, and that claim is supported by Jesus Himself. In Matthew 24:15, he makes reference to Daniel the prophet and quotes the book, quotes our passage, refers to the abomination of desolation. The problem the critics have is not historical, it's spiritual. It's not a problem of fact, it's a problem of faith. God, who ordained the future, who is the author of history, could easily reveal it to men through His prophets.

That's only a problem for those who do not believe in the Lord God, those who live with a naturalistic worldview. But our faith is in Him. And our faith is not only reinforced by this chapter – all the more because of what is fulfilled here – it is a reinforcement of our faith. Because it reminds us, once again, which we see all through this book, that God is in complete control of the events of this world and is moving them toward a triumphant end.

If Daniel stresses one thing, and if this Daniel has stressed one thing in going through the book, it's that God is the author of history. He is absolutely sovereign and we can rest and rely on Him, and what's coming is certain and it is glorious. So the first part of the vision given to Daniel has to do with ancient empires. First the Persian, then the Greek, and then two kingdoms that came out of the Greek Empire. Four actually, but it focuses, Daniel does, on two of those kingdoms, that of Egypt and Syria.

It begins with three Persian kings, and a fourth who is much richer than they were. The fourth is Xerxes, who reigned from 485 BC to 464 BC. He was preceded by Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius the Great. Darius invaded Greece and was defeated at the famous Battle of Marathon. Xerxes made a second invasion with a massive army.

I believe it numbered something like a million troops. This is what Gabriel referred to in verse 2 when he says, "He will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece." Xerxes crossed the Hellespont, defeated the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylae, went south and burned Athens, but was defeated near Corinth in the great sea battle at Salamis in the year 480 BC. The Greeks always remembered that, remembered the invasions of the Persians, remembered what Xerxes had done. So after years of that, they took their revenge when Alexander the Great conquered Persia.

He is the mighty king of verse 3 who will rule with "authority and do as he pleases." And he certainly did that. He conquered one kingdom after another. In fact, he conquered the world so quickly that when he had finished it is said that he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. He died suddenly in Babylon.

All of his descendants, his wives, his children, even his distant relatives, were murdered, and his empire was divided between his four generals. That fulfilled verse 4 that states his kingdom was "parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants." The prophecy then focuses on two of these four

kingdoms: Syria, ruled by Seleucus and Egypt ruled by Ptolemy. It is the story of international intrigue, political marriages, murder, and war. Or in the words of Gibbon, the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind."

But that's the gentile world. It's like a great sea, Isaiah tells us. It's never quiet, it's never at peace, it's always stormy and tossing up mud. "There is no peace for the wicked," he said. And there was little peace between these two kingdoms.

They had a common origin, but they were not at peace with one another. We're not going into all of the detail, all of the machinations and conflicts. I'll give one example of how prophecy was fulfilled. There are a number of prophecies. Verses 5 through 9 record the rivalry of two kings: the king of the South, which is Egypt, and the king of the North, which is Syria.

The daughter of the king of the South makes an alliance with the king of the North. It's an alliance that won't last. Verse 6 says: "She will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power." One of her descendants, according to verse 7, will come against the king of the North, defeat him and carry his idols back to Egypt. But later, the king of the North would enter the South.

Now, this happened when Bernice, a daughter of the Ptolemy kings of Egypt married Antiochus of Syria. The marriage ended when she was poisoned. Her brother, Ptolemy III got revenge. He attacked Syria, he looted the temple there, and he returned to Egypt with gold, silver, and idols from the Syrian tribe. Seleucus II of Syria sought revenge by invading Egypt, but without success, and he was forced to retreat.

And so it goes in the next verses of the Ptolemys fighting the Seleucus. Behind all of this is the lesson of chapter 10, that we looked at last week. The angelic warfare that's going on behind the scenes; what we don't see, what we don't feel, what we don't sense, but is there, according to the Word of God, with these princes, these demonic forces influencing various rulers and governments to their

purpose. And that's what was occurring. And all of this, though, was occurring for a greater purpose, God's purpose.

It was all about the Jewish people. That's what Gabriel said, you'll remember, back in chapter 10, verse 14. "I have come to give you," speaking to Daniel, "an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days." And all these events are given as background for the rise of one particular individual, the rise of Antiochus Epiphany, the persecutor of the Jews and tyrant who foreshadows the coming antichrist. The rise of Antiochus is recorded in verses 21 through 24.

His power was great. In fact, I would describe him as power-hungry sociopath who seized the throne that wasn't rightfully or legally his. I mentioned a few weeks ago that he was like the Shakespearian character, Richard III, who drowned his brother in a barrel of wine, murdered his nephews in the Tower of London, and poisoned his wife. Other than that, Richard was a lovely fellow. *[Laughter]*. Well, Antiochus is very much like that.

By means of deceit and the murder of his nephew, he became king of Syria. It wasn't his by natural descent, but he managed to gain it. In fact, in verse 21, he is called a "despicable person" who "seized the kingdom by intrigue." His rise coincided with Egypt's decline. The ruler that was there was too weak to stop Antiochus.

Verses 22 through 28 speak of easy victories for Antiochus. A treaty was made between the two kingdoms. But, again, it was done in deceit. It's described in verse 27. "They will speak lies to each other at the same table." What a picture that gives of deception.

They sit down at a meal together in a friendly environment, expressing friendship and good will toward one another. And the whole time, deceit is going on in the minds of all of the parties involved. That's probably a good description of a lot of the peace treaties that are made between nations, and much of what passes as international diplomacy, both ancient and modern. That's the heart of man. And that's the heart of man at work there.

"They will speak lies to each other at the same table." So the truce wouldn't last, didn't last. Antiochus invaded Egypt again. But this time he was defeated. Not by the Egyptians but by Rome, which at this time was a rising power in the West.

Rome had an interest in Egypt that was threatened by the expanding influence of Syria. And so the Roman fleet met the Syrians near Alexandria. In verse 30, they are referred to as "ships of Kittim," which is a reference to Cyprus. They came from there. Antiochus was given a letter from the Roman Senate, ordering him not to fight against Egypt.

In other words, stop all hostilities against Egypt. When he hesitated, the Roman commander, Gaius, drew a circle around Antiochus, and told him to make his decision before stepping out of it. Antiochus backed down and he returned to Syria. He was humiliated and he was angry, as verse 30 says he would be. And he vented his anger, his wrath, his frustration against the Jews.

He sent 20,000 troops into Judea to collect taxes. They came to Jerusalem, and on the Sabbath suddenly attacked the people, slaughtering thousands of them and plundering the city. It's described in verses 31 through 35. He abolished temple worship, he put an end to the sacrifices, and committed the "abomination of desolation" by slaughtering pigs on the altar of the temple. As a result of all of this, Judas Maccabeus led a revolt.

The Maccabees are referred to here in verse 32 as "the people who know their God will display strength and take action." It began when one old priest, Mattathias, stood up against the apostasy. Antiochus' Army had gone through the country installing idols and apostate priests to make sacrifices on pagan altars. Mattathias refused to participate. When one of the priests stepped forward to slaughter a pig in his place, Mattathias took a sword and cut him down.

He had five sons. They rescued him from the Syrian Army, the fled into the Judean hills, and from there they carried out a gorilla war against the Greeks. Judas was one of the five sons. He led the war;

he became known as Judas Maccabeus. Maccabeus means hammer. He was Judas the Hammer.

The war lasted two years. Many of the Jews died. Many died as martyrs for their faith. The Books of 1 and 2 Maccabees recount all of this, at least a lot of it. Judas died on the battlefield.

One mother died with her seven sons. This is recorded in 2 Maccabees chapter 7, a rather famous incident. She died with her seven sons. Each was tortured and burned to death. All of that is briefly referred to in Hebrews 11:35 of those who were tortured, but who were tortured and went to death with the hope of the resurrection.

Those who suffered that in the 2nd century BC would have been comforted by the things that are written in this book because Daniel prophesied all of that. They would have had the Book of Daniel. They would have read it and would have been encouraged by it, in a particular promise in verse 35, that the end had been appointed. This would end, they're told, and that end had been appointed, and so were the enemies of the Jews.

Antiochus met his appointed end. It was a miserable death. According to one account, he died insane. Now, all of that was future to Daniel but, of course, past history to us. What follows is different.

From verses 30 through 45, it's all prophecy. The angel told Daniel, back in chapter 10 in verse 14, that the vision was about what would happen in the latter days. And events of the passage that are before us, from verses 30 on, don't match anything that's happened in the past. You can look at these events, the record of Alexander, and how all of that fits with him and his history, and how all of this fits with the Maccabees and others. But when we come to these chapters, nothing fits with events of the past.

So we're not in that part of the chapter about things yet to come and, specifically, about a tyrant to come, the antichrist. The description of his character, his career and his demise match the prophecies of the New Testament that are given in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, in Revelation chapters 13 and 19. He's described here in

verse 36 as a "King who will do as he pleases." So in many ways he's like Alexander. He did just as he pleased.

He conquered everything that was before him. He also will be a conqueror. He will be arrogant and defiant. He will, we're told, "exalt and magnify himself above every God." Now, this is what Paul writes about in 2 Thessalonians 2:4. "He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship."

Now, that may mean that he is an atheist, that he believes in himself, and that he will arrogantly think that he can live and achieve his own desires and his own strength without the aid of any gods. That's possible. It would certainly fit with a modern worldview. But even if that's true, he will use religion to advance himself and to advance his cause. So, in that sense, he's not unlike a lot of political figures who get religion, as they say, around election time.

But this man will do more than that. This man will do that to the extreme. He will make himself the object of worship. Paul wrote of that. He writes in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 that he will sit "in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God."

That's what Daniel's writing of here. Paul very likely had Daniel before him as a source of what he was saying. Daniel describes him as a blasphemer. He will speak monstrous things against the God of Gods. He will denounce Christ, he will renounce the Trinity, the Triune God.

And yet, Daniel adds, he will prosper. This man will prosper. That's one of the great mysteries of life, isn't it. The prosperity of the wicked. That's an issue that the Bible takes up.

With great interest, great passion, great earnestness, it's the issue that almost caused Asaph to stumble, he writes in Psalm 73. He would have stumbled, he said, until he came into the temple of the Lord. Then he was able to put everything in perspective. **And the** way of illustrating, as we come into the Lord's presence, as we read His Word, as we reflect upon it and reflect upon His truth, that life is put in perspective for us and we can understand these things, and we

don't stumble. But those things are puzzling to us, the prosperity of the wicked.

But while the wicked have their day, they also have their end. And verse 36 tells us that "he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done." So this man's career is, Daniel says, so Gabriel said to Daniel, divinely decreed. Now, that causes people problems as well. Prosperity of the wicked is one thing, but then we have evil men as part of God's decree.

How can a good God, a wise God allow bad people and bad things to happen? That's the age-old problem of evil. Well, I can't solve that problem for you, not altogether. But one explanation is indicated here, and that is the indignation. "Until the indignation is finished," Gabriel says.

So "he will prosper," according to God's decree, "until the indignation is finished." The indignation is God's wrath. It's God's just anger, His righteous anger against sin. And this man, like many wicked men throughout history, is allowed to arise as judgment on sinners, on unbelievers. Men say of Christ, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

So God says, "Then you won't have Christ, you will have antichrist." And antichrist will arrive according to the desires of men. They'll be favorable toward him. He'll come, and the world will receive him. And not only that, the world will worship him.

This evil man, they'll worship him and he will put the world through tribulation. And you wonder, "How can a thing like that happen? How can people go after such a man as that? Well, that's happened, happened in history, happened in recent history. Walter Isaacson, in his biography on Albert Einstein, stated that in 1938 a survey was taken of incoming freshmen at Princeton University.

And the majority polled rated Adolph Hitler as the greatest living person, and Albert Einstein as second. Now, those were smart people. Young people, no doubt, but smart people. There were other very smart people at that same time. They admired Stalin, Uncle Joe.

And what it illustrates is that very smart people can be duped. Everyone can be. And that certainly is what will happen in the future with this very intriguing charismatic figure who will come on the scene. He will put the world through tribulation. But that tribulation is God's indignation, His judgment on sinners. It will be terrible, but it will be temporal. It will end.

The antichrist will last until the indignation is finished. Then he will be destroyed. God has written history and He has written it with a good end. Verse 36 gives a summary of the rise and fall of antichrist. The rest of the chapter gives the detail of it.

In verse 37 and 38, he is described as a man who rejects religion. That is he personally rejects it. He uses it. But, personally, his creed is might makes right. He has, we're told, "no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women."

And that expression, "desire of women," is curious for those who read this. You wonder what does that mean. He's not interested in women? Is this a description of him – a moral aspect of this man. And that's possible.

But in light of all that's said, that "He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or the desire of woman, nor will he show regard for any other god," it seems to be a restriction of some religious aspect. And I think what the expression, "the desire of woman," is a reference to is the hope of the Messiah, because Jewish women desired to be the mother of the Messiah. That was the great hope of a Jewish woman. So the desire of Hebrew women was Christ, that is the Christ the Messiah. They anticipated that.

He rejects them. He rejects that person and he rejected that hope, or will reject it. His hope is in something different. His hope is in something material, not spiritual. His hope is in military might.

That's what verse 38 means by "he will honor a god of fortresses." It doesn't mean that he will worship or trust in Mars or some god like that, but that he trusts in war, he trusts in might and in power. The German commentator, C.F. Keil, explains: "The god of

fortresses has the personification of war." He will make "taking of fortresses his god," and he will worship human power above all things.

And what Gabriel is saying is, in effect, whatever is most important to a person is his or her god. If a person devotes himself to making money, then money is his or her god. If it's being beautiful, youthful, then beauty or health is that person's god. This man's god is might, it's power. And in verse 39 is the prophecy of his success.

Strong fortresses will fall to him. He will destroy everyone who opposes him, and he will reward those who support him. He will give land and power to them who follow him. He will cause them to rule over many, we're told. Now that is, again, another one of those subtle testimonies to the reliability, the accuracy, the voracity of the Word of God, because that's what men do.

They reward those who follow them. It paid, it will pay, to be a follower of the antichrist, to serve the beast, to carry out his will. He rewards those who do. He makes them to rule over many, gives them land as a payment of their loyalty. So many will follow him, many will be loyal.

It will serve their immediate temporal interest. But there will be opposition, and the last verses tell of the wars of the antichrist. And we shouldn't be surprised by that. Because, as Isaiah says, the gentile world is like the roaring sea. It's always restless, there's no peace.

And there would be no peace for this man. This man will conquer and enrich himself, and even be worshipped by the world but not wholly and completely. There will be opposition. We're told in verses 40 through 44 that he will fight the king of the South. We can't be at all certain of what this – of who this king of the South is, or the king of the North who's mentioned in verse 40.

Earlier in the chapter, in the days of Antiochus, their South was Egypt. And so we would think that's the meaning here, so that, possibly, this refers to an alliance of nations that will include Egypt, maybe an Arab league of some kind. The king of the North mentioned

here seems to be another opposing army. And some have suggested that that king is a reference to Russia. But it may be a reference to the antichrist.

There's a difference of agreement of how we interpret this verse. So the statement, "The king of the North will storm against him with chariots," may mean the antichrist will storm against the king of the South. And one of the reasons for taking that interpretation is the North earlier in the chapter was a reference to Syria ruled by Antiochus Epiphany, 'cause this Antiochus is a type of the antichrist, he is seen to be a reference to him. It's difficult to know these things, but either way, what is being stated here is the antichrist will be a powerful warrior and will triumph over those who oppose him. That's described in the remaining verses of the chapter.

We read, for example, in verse 40 at the end of the verse, that "he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through." Interpretation given by most is somewhat speculative, how we interpret these great future events that are to occur. And so because they're somewhat speculative – we don't know for certain what is going to happen – I think it's wise to hold these views loosely and without dogmatism. But still, there's a reasonable scenario that's been given to them. Verses 41 through 43 describe the antichrist entering "the Beautiful Land," which is Israel.

This is midway through the tribulation. He will come, perhaps, on the pretext of protecting the Jews. And he will do that on the grounds they have a firm covenant that he makes with them where it's prophesied of the antichrist that he will make his covenant with the Jews, but then he will break it. He'll drive the opposing armies out of Israel. He'll pursue them into Africa where he will enrich himself.

And when he hears rumors of other armies coming, he returns to Egypt, verse 44. We read about the treasures that he accumulates for himself, in verse 43, over the Egyptians. But then, verse 44, "rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go

forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many." Then he will make Jerusalem his capital.

In verse 45, it is prophesied that "He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain." That's when he will set himself up in the temple to be worshiped, break the covenant with the Jews and then begin a great persecution of them. But it won't last. "Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him." No one will be able to help him because it is Christ who will come and destroy him.

Christ will simply speak the word. And as he speaks, He will lay waste the army of the antichrist, and He will cast him alive, along with the false prophet, into the Lake of Fire. All of that according to the prophecy of Revelation 19:19-21. So in one chapter and one vision, we have the broad sweep of history from the rise of the Persian Empire to the destruction of the antichrist. In some ways it is little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.

But it is much more than that. It is the promise of the defeat of evil. That's the great encouragement of this chapter, one of the great encouragements of it, the great lesson that we receive. We are impressed in a very negative way very often by evil events. We see it all around us.

We're somewhat immune to it. But then terrible events happen periodically that arrest our attention. And we wonder, "How can these things happen?" How long can this kinda thing go on?" The media has been able to bring all of that into our living room on the nightly news or the newspapers.

But what this is saying is it's going to end. The end has been appointed, and it will occur. The promise of this passage is evil will be terminated. It will be brought to an end. A chapter filled with numerous prophecies that have been fulfilled validates the truth of that, validates the integrity of the Bible and the promises of the Bible.

Something like 135 prophecies are fulfilled in the first 35 verses of this 11th chapter. That itself is a strong validation of the integrity of the Word of God. And it demonstrates it's not merely a human book. It's not a book like Edward Gibbons' *Rise and -- Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It's not just history.

This is something beyond that. This is history, this is prophecy. This is a divine book. It is a supernatural book, and we can rely upon it. We can rely upon its truth and trust in its promises and assurances.

And what it assures us of, as we've seen all through this study in the Book of Daniel, in each chapter, is that God is in control. He can reveal the future events because He has planned them all. Now that, and only that is a God that we can trust. So this is a chapter of great comfort. God is sovereign.

Nothing can frustrate His plan of the ages. Or to put it more personally, nothing can frustrate His plan, His personal plan for you and your life because He's planned it all out. He's involved in your life. You wonder at times, "Where's God? Why did this or that happen?"

"Why am I going through this? Why is this my lot in life?" And we can't always give an answer to that, an immediate answer, a precise answer. But we can know is we know who is in control, and He works all things to our good, and He's on the throne. And the day is coming when we'll be in His presence.

And when we are in His presence, all of these things will be made clear to us, and we will marvel over how all of it worked out so perfectly and so well, and we'll rejoice in it all. And I say that on the basis of faith in the God that I worship. What's clear from the Bible is He is a good and loving God. He is infinite in all those ways, and He's absolutely sovereign and we can trust in Him. And the hope that we have as those who have trusted in Him is a glorious future.

His kingdom is going to be established, and we can thank the Lord God for making us citizens of that kingdom and giving us that hope. But if you're here without Him this morning, if you've not put

your faith in Jesus Christ, that's not your hope. And you don't live under the constant providential care of a good, loving, all-powerful God. But you can. Recognizing your need and turning to the Savior, turning to the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the penalty, paid for the price for all of our sins in the penalty He suffered at Calvary.

He receives all who do. Trust in Him, look to Christ. He receives all who do. And then rejoice in the hope that you have and in the security that yours in the present. May God help you to do that, and help all of us to rejoice in all that we have in the Lord God, and to look forward to that future day when He returns. Let's pray

[Prayer] Father, we do thank you for the truth of this great prophecy, this great final vision that was given to Daniel. It's full of historical detail and what we might be inclined to dismiss as minutia. But it's not that. It's great detail, but it illustrates a point. And that is you are the God of the details, as well as the great, sweeping plan of history.

You're the God of it all. You're in control of everything and we can rest in you; we can rest confident in you. Your people passed through great trials and storms. Those Maccabean saints did, and they were faithful, in some cases, to a terrible end. But they were faithful, as the author of Hebrews tells us, "to the hope of the resurrection, the hope of the kingdom to come."

And we have that too. And we can know that if we pass through difficulties, it's all according to your decree and your plan, and you will bring us through to a glorious end. May we rest in that. Strengthen our faith for it, and give us grateful hearts for all that we have in Christ. It's in His name we pray. Amen.