

# Daniel 11

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[ 0 : 00 ] Again, that's Daniel chapter 11. Please stay seated due to the length of this passage. And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.

Then a mighty king shall arise who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills. And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled.

For his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these. Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority.

After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up and her attendance, he who fathered her and he who supported her in those times.

[ 1 : 21 ] And from a branch, from her roots, one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.

And he shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but shall return to his own land.

His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress.

Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north, and he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail.

For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude greater than the first, and after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies. In those times many shall arise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail.

[ 2 : 40 ] Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siege works and take a well-fortified city, and the forces of the south shall not stand or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand.

But he who comes against him shall do his will, and none shall stand before him, and he shall stand in the glorious land with destruction in his hand. He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them.

He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage. Afterwards he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence.

Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall and shall not be found.

Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an ex-sactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle.

[ 3 : 47 ] In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in with flatteries, warning and obtaining the kingdom by flatteries.

Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. And from the time that an alliance is made with him, he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people.

Without warning, he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his father's fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoils, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army.

And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army. But he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. Even those who eat his food shall break him.

[ 4 : 47 ] His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.

And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land. At the time appointed, he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before.

For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant.

Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.

[ 6 : 02 ] When they stumble, they shall receive a little, and many shall join themselves to them with flattery. And some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the god of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished.

For what is decreed shall be done. He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all.

He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know, he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.

He shall deal with the strongest fortress with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him, he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.

[ 7 : 12 ] At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him with a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through.

He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand, Edom and Moab, and the main part of the Ammonites.

He shall stretch out his hand against the countries and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and silver and all the precious things of Egypt.

And the Libyans and the Kushites shall follow in his train. But news from the east and the north shall alarm him and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction.

And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to an end with none to help him. This is the word of the Lord.

[ 8 : 12 ] Thanks be to God. This would be the point in the service where if you were in an African-American church, you may hear short cries of, Help him, Lord.

Well, if you're wondering on this morning, what kind of sermon will emerge from Daniel 11, that's understandable. And you're not the first one that has wondered that.

One scholar has noted, we do not see how it could be used for a sermon or for sermons. Hopefully today's message will not confirm that.

The chapter that we have before us today is dense and challenging. John Calvin, the reformer, in his commentary, he took over 100 pages to explain this one chapter.

Yet what we have before us, friends, is in fact the word of God. And because it is the word of God, it is profitable. It is useful for us as we grow in godliness for the glory of his name.

[ 9 : 35 ] Let me pray and we'll get into the text. Heavenly Father, we bless you. Give thanks to you this morning for your truth that has come to us over the years, through the centuries.

And it lands here this morning among us today. So open the eyes of our hearts. Enable us to see. Enable your servant to speak.

Pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. The larger unit that we find ourselves in actually began in chapter 10 on last week.

It's a prelude of sorts. An introduction and what we find here in chapter 11 as well as in chapter 12. On last week, we encountered combative, angelic beings battling in the invisible realms on behalf of the nations.

Persia, Greece, and the Jews, God's own people. If you notice in chapter 10 and verse 21, there we see the mention, but I will tell you what is inscribed, and here it is, in the book of truth.

[ 10 : 50 ] You see that there? The angel, guiding Daniel, proceeded to show him the truth that was actually contained in the book. You see that in chapter 11 and verse 2.

I will then show you the truth. Okay? So we're going to see what was contained in the book of truth that was there.

This chapter includes what was there. What we have before us, friends, is a prophetic preview. It covers, it gives us a glimpse of the powers that would dominate Israel for the next nearly four centuries, 370 years or so.

Daniel's day in his latter years down through the second century B.C. and even beyond that. That's what the writer is showing us in chapter 11.

Listen, the chapter is fascinating and so accurate in what it predicts that there are those who really believe that this is not predictive prophecy.

[ 12 : 06 ] This is not prophecy beforehand, uttered by Daniel in 6th century B.C. Rather, they would call it prophecy after the fact. That is, it's history cast in the literary genre of prophecy itself.

And they would say that the author is a second century writer in the Maccabean era who wrote to encourage the faith and the endurance of God's people in that very, very difficult time.

This then, in their opinion, would explain the accuracy. Not the fact that the prophecy came from the heart of God who knows and can predict everything.

But, now, while much could be said for that particular view, to defend it or to challenge it, today's message assumes that we are looking at a word from God through Daniel on the basis of the vision that we see, chapter 10, verse 1, in the third year of Cyrus the king, roughly 536 B.C.

So, what is it that we see in Daniel 11? It's certainly not simply information for us to take in.

[ 13 : 23 ] I want us to see three things on this morning that will help God's people really triumph in the midst of trouble. And I think that that's part of what's in mind, in the author's mind, why God gives this word.

Again, it's not simply so you can know these things. But, there is a reason behind the giving of this particular vision and allowing God's people then and now to see what was in this book of truth.

Here's the first thing. For them and for us, trouble was on the way. For God's people. Rough times were on the way for the people of God.

Such was the message that was contained in the book of truth. The chapter records kings and kingdoms and conflicts that would have bearing on the status of God's people in the days ahead.

And again, history bears witness to the truth that was communicated in this particular chapter. Just allow me to give you a few highlights along the way.

[ 14 : 30 ] Don't have time to get into the thick and the thin. I don't think that that would be profitable for me or for you. But, here's the first thing we note. And look at chapter 11 and verse, say, verse 2.

Persian rule would continue for a while but eventually it would come to an end. As predicted earlier in the book, both in chapter 2 and in chapter 7, the days of Persian rule were numbered.

they were going to come to an end. Verse 3. Alexander the Great, then a mighty king, this Grecian ruler, shall arise who shall rule with great dominion and do as he will.

This remarkable young ruler of Greece whose kingdom was eventually divided amongst his four generals. Again, that is a reference to Alexander in 4th century.

Two of the four parts of his divided kingdom are mentioned in the text. And we see that, again, we got the kings of the north and then we got the kings of the south.

[ 15 : 44 ] The area ruled by the kings of the south was centered in Egypt. Again, this was parceled out to Alexander's general Ptolemy.

Okay? And rulers who followed were the Ptolemies that followed him. The rule, the area ruled by the kings of the north were centered in Syria.

All right? And Seleucus was the Alexander general that initially took over that particular area and the Seleucids were those rulers that follow.

You see in verse 6, again, so you got the verse 5, the south and then you see the north. Again, these are what's being referenced in those particular verses.

In between, and here's the key thing, in between those two areas geographically, Syria on the north, Egypt on the south, guess who was there?

[ 16 : 41 ] That's the glorious land. where God's people had regathered. Huh? It was controlled from Egypt by the rule of the Ptolemies from 323 B.C.

to 198 B.C. and by the Seleucids of Syria from 198 to 142 B.C. So again, kings and kingdoms and conflicts and God's people in the glorious land right in the middle of this.

huh? Thus, Israel was dominated, God's people were dominated by one kingdom then another. If we look at verses 5 through 20, this highlights the various historic struggles between the kings of the north and the kings of the south, between Syria and Egypt, the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, kingdoms that came from the divided Greek empire.

That's what you see in those particular verses. One of the Seleucid kings is a person we are introduced, we're introduced to back in chapter 8. You remember Antiochus, Antiochus IV or Antiochus Epiphanes who was really the thorn in the side of God's people.

He's the little horn of Daniel 8 that we saw. And verses 21 through 39 really refer to him. His character, his antics, that's what's in view.

[ 18 : 04 ] And many believe that this particular ruler of that day, he prefigures the ruler of the, that's yet future, the Antichrist that is to come.

By manipulation, he assumed rule, his military successes carried him through Egypt and eastward into Persia and other territory and the homeland of the Jewish people was also his territory.

So he determined, he was determined to impose religious and cultural uniformity on all of his domains. And he led brutal suppression of Jewish worship at Jerusalem and generally throughout all of Palestine, the beautiful land.

Again, this was, he dominated, powerfully dominated in that day. This suppression came to a head and Dave talked about this a bit in his message on Daniel 8 that December 168 BC, Antiochus, he returns in frustration from Alexandria.

He vented his exasperation on the Jews. He sent his general with 20,000 troops under orders to seize Jerusalem on the Sabbath and 80,000, imagine that, 80,000 and over-the-top kind of slaughter of men, women, and children were killed.

[ 19 : 30 ] And there he erected an idol of Zeus, desecrated the altar by offering swine on it. This idol became known to the Jews as this abomination of desolation which serves as a type of the future abomination that would be set up in the Jerusalem sanctuary to be built in the last days.

This desecrated creation continued until that memorable day three years later where Judas Maccabeus rededicated the sacred structure to the worship of God. And of course, Hanukkah springs from that.

But I want you to look at the language here in this particular text. The language of the chapter is interesting. We see the word great used nine times in reference to the rule of these earthly powers. Look at verse 3. There is a great dominion. Look at verse 5. You will notice that as the authority shall be a great authority.

Verse 10 speaks about great and multitude of great forces and a great army. In verse 11 verses 13 and 25.

[ 20 : 43 ] Great wealth. Verse 28. Great fury. In verse 44. These were earthly forces to be reckoned with. So here we see earthly rulers doing, friends, what earthly rulers do.

And in the process, as often is the case, God's people are caught in the middle of the fray. One of the big ticket items that's in the sports world today has been the alleged intimidation tactics of professional football.

I want you to imagine with me two over six foot 300 pound linemen and they're bullying and trapping a David Ulrich sized man.

I mean, can you think about what that is? I mean, so that's what you're having. You've got these two bullying forces that come into view.

The northern bully is Syria. The southern bully is Egypt. There are these ancient near eastern power brokers that come into the picture. And God's people at that time, they were not much of a force to be reckoned with.

[ 22 : 02 ] They're small. They're frail. They're puny. They're in a state of recovery. Far from the glory days. They're pond-like in the hands of superpowers.

That's what they were. Now, while not to be reckoned with, and I understand this, and listen to this, David, this is good for you, son. While not to be reckoned with by human standards, they had the distinction of being God's people.

Isn't it interesting that God's people are often despised and ignored? God's plan for them is right at the center.

It's central. From God's vantage point, his covenant with his people, verse 28, verse 30, was holy and it was sacred. His place for them is described as the people and the covenant with them.

It's a sacred holy covenant. His place for them was a glorious land. NIV calls it the beautiful land.

But, from the worldly perspective, they're disregarded, both the place and the people, both of whom are precious to God, but they're disregarded, despised.

[ 23 : 25 ] Yet, in the eyes of earthly rulers, they're but another trophy to be conquered and possessed. Their perspective is earthly and short-sighted. But, listen to what the Lord had to say through Zachariah.

For, thus says the Lord of hosts, after his glory sent me to the nations who plundered you. For he who touches you, touches the apple of his eye.

Precious to him, despised on the one hand, but precious to the living God who is in a covenant relationship with them.

the visions of Daniel said, in essence, trouble on the way, more of the same. And so, more like Nebuchadnezzar, more like Belshazzar, they don't recognize that they are only allowed to rule by the sovereign hand and will of God.

Thus, God's people in view of God's ultimate rule over all things are hereby implicitly called to faith and endurance.

[ 24 : 35 ] Yes, oh, don't you love the song that we sing? Ye fearful saints, small, despised, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy.

They're big with mercy. Because the forces against them will come and go, they will not go away. This is the lot of God's people in the world.

One person that says we are picked out to be picked on. Picked out to be picked on. Don't we see that in life?

The small in stature, the minority of race, the poor in this world's goods, the so-called nerds, the not so popular, the not so pretty.

These are the despised, the looked down upon. They're not in the in crowd. They're the marginalized people. But yet these are the very ones, while picked out to be picked on by the world, have been from eternity past picked out to be saved by God and loved and redeemed.

[ 25 : 59 ] The Lord's despised few. Jesus talked about them a bit in Matthew chapter five. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are the bruised and the battered and the meek. And then notice what he says right at the end. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely.

On my account, notice what he says, rejoice and be glad. For your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You in good company. Rough times that God's people predicted and described. It's not that what Jesus himself spoke of. His only reference to Daniel.

Speaks about the abomination of desolation that we find here in this chapter, chapter eight. And that great sermon, that great discourse known as the Olivet Discourse.

[ 27 : 06 ] When are the sign of these, when are these things going to take place, Lord? He rose these things out. Did not Jesus speak of these things?

Troubles on the way for God's people. get ready. But also the chapter, the context helps us to see something else. Here's the second thing. God's people are not alone in trouble.

You say, well, Pastor Jay, where'd you get that? Well, the chapter is bookend. Look at chapter 10, verse 21. Did not I tell you, but I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth.

There is none that contends you by my side against these, except here it is, Michael, your prince. Look at chapter 12 and verse 1.

At the same, at that time shall arise Michael, the great prince, who is in charge of your people.

Interesting. Framing references about Michael.

[ 28 : 13 ] He contended against the supernatural powers behind Persia in Greece. These were these anti-Israel forces. Then he's noticed that Michael has charged Daniel's people.

God's people behind the scenes, could not be seen, had supernatural help. And guess what? He's not some unnamed agent. This agent had a name.

Michael, who is like God. That's what his name means. He was one of the chief princes. And he is your prince. He's been assigned to you.

Not only that, he's the great prince who is in charge of your people. People of God. Called in the middle of madness. Tossed about like a wet rag.

Picked out to be picked on. But you're not alone. And those of us who claim Christian faith, does not our hymnody speak of that particularly as it relates to Luther's?

[ 29 : 13 ] Did we in our own strength confide? Our striving would be losing. We're not the right man on our side. Not only supernatural help, but the help from the very son of God himself.

The man of God's own choosing. He will win the battle. He must win the battle. And of course Luther put it in other words. But again, that whole song speaks about God being a mighty fortress. But not only was there heavenly help, but there also was brotherly help. Look in verses 32 through 35 of the chapter. As it speaks about this ruler, probably still referring to Antiochus the fourth epiphanies here, he shall seduce with flattery those who violate the coveted.

But here it is, the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. and the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame by captivity and plunder.

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

[ 30 : 37 ] while, again, verses, the reference is likely to the Maccabean resistance that we find in second century, valiant men of uncompromising commitment to the law of God and their efforts actually meant survival for the nation in that day.

God raised them up, this band of brothers, if you will, from the devout sects that emerged from the Maccabeans came, the Essenes and others, the Pharisees emerged from them.

These were men who took a stand. And when the brothers do so, others find themselves following suit. Heavenly help on the one hand, brotherly help on the other.

Trouble's on the way. You're not alone in your trouble. But notice, guess what's going to happen?

Trouble one day will come to any end. That's what we see, particularly in verses 40 through 45.

While in verses 21 through 39 is likely a reference to the dubious career of Antiochus, when we get to verses 40 through 45, the verses seem to transcend to go beyond what is known of this second-century ruler.

[ 32 : 05 ] Though it appears here in the context of a prophecy related to Antiochus, it seems to represent another horizon as it relates to biblical prophecy.

It goes actually beyond him. While this individual is Antiochus-like, the verses probably refer to one known in scripture as Antichrist of the last days who will be a thorn again in the side of God's people.

If you look at the text, you find out that this person is self-willed and self-exalting, blasphemous, speaking things against the God of gods. He's prosperous, he's atheistic, he ignores God.

But here is tribulation, folks, in these verses. And guess what? God's people are in the midst of it. In verse 41, 10,000 shall fall, but these shall be delivered.

He speaks about these nations that would be delivered. And notice in verse 44, he will go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction.

[ 33 : 20 ] But notice again how verses 40 and 45 frame this. You see it there? At the time of the end.

Verse 40, the king of the south shall do this. But notice in verse 45, yet he shall come to his end. One of these days there will be a newsflash that will come out that will say this, simply this, game over.

Anti-God and anti-Christ forces of the ages will not have the last word. game over.

Paul speaks about that in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy with the splendor of his coming.

therefore in view of that fact, trouble is an earthly reality. We're not alone in trouble. There will be trouble until the end.

[ 34 : 31 ] But here we have a call to faith and endurance for God's people of the ages here. And yes, those of us on this side of the cross, far removed from this historical setting, the passage encourages you and me to take courage in view of what we see here.

There will be times because of your faith in Jesus that you too will be picked out to be picked on. Both individually as well as collectively as the church, as the people of God.

We too will be despised and scorned and mocked because of our identification with the Lord and with his people. Don't be surprised when trouble comes.

It's our lot. Didn't Jesus speak of this in John chapter 16? In the world, you're going to have tribulation. Be good cheer.

I've overcome the world. Did not Paul speak of this in Philippians? For unto you it has been given on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.

[ 35 : 38 ] Did not Peter write about it when he said, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing has happened to you? It's our lot.

As the people of God, some in our day experiencing it more than others. This year, oh yes, it is a word for those who are facing trouble in this world by reason of their identification with our God and with our Savior.

And thus we see here in Daniel chapter 11, it's a call for readiness, readiness for trouble when it comes. And folks, it will.

Are you ready? How can you be better prepared? As we think of this world and how loosely we must function in it for the glory and honor of God, but not be caught up with it and be overtaken? There were some of those who in that day defected. May it not be so of us. So there's a readiness for trouble on the one hand, but also there needs to be rejoicing in the midst of trouble.

[ 36 : 58 ] Jesus said rejoice and be exceedingly glad, did he not? And finally, remembering Jesus' example when he was in challenge by the cross.

Remember Jesus' example, Hebrews chapter 12, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith and for the joy that was said before him, what did he do?

He endured the cross, despising the shame, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. What shall we say to these things?

If God before us, who can be against us? Let me just read one final passage, a familiar one to us. Listen as we wind down to a close. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

[ 38 : 05 ] as it is written for your sake, we're being killed all the day long. We're regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things, we're more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I'm sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, or anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And therefore, we can take fresh courage. Let me pray. Heavenly Father, we love you. We thank you, oh God, for this passage.

And even in that day, trouble wasn't over, more to come. God's people were not alone in their challenges, both heavenly and brotherly help, but also there's an end game to it all.

And one of these days, Lord, the trials of this life will indeed be over. And we will gather around the throne worshipping you, who's led the way for us.

[ 39 : 26 ] So we bless you and we honor you and praise you this morning. Blessed be your name. Amen.