

Daniel 11

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[0 : 0 0] Well, turn with me in your Bibles to Daniel chapter 11 as we come to the Word of God. And He has promised that when we come to His Word, that His Spirit is with us to speak to us.

Daniel chapter 11, page 748. This morning we come to the last, longest, and most detailed of Daniel's visions. Now if you've been coming to Trinity for some time, you've probably noticed that normally we preach through entire books of the Bible, chapter by chapter, section by section. And one of the consequences of that is that we come to a chapter like this one, which I probably wouldn't dare to tackle if it simply were up to me to choose a different Bible passage each week. Daniel 11 covers 400 years of history, including 13 major rulers. And unless you're doing a PhD in Second Temple Judaism or Hellenistic political history, reading this chapter may feel like riding a roller coaster through uncharted territory, dizzying and sometimes terrifying. But over the years, one of the things that has most increased my confidence in God's Word is looking into passages that initially may seem difficult or strange and finding in these passages vitally important truths that we need to hear today.

[1 : 2 3] So that's what we're going to do today by God's grace. Read with me. This is a long chapter. I won't read every verse, but I do want us to get into the text. We're going to start at verse 2. So here we go.

Daniel 11, starting at verse 2. And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a force shall be far, 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 is 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.

[2 : 3 0] But she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her and he who supported her in those times. Let's go down to verse 14. In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail.

Then the king of the north shall come and throw up 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 as he wills, and none shall stand before him, and he shall stand in the glorious land with destruction in his hand. He shall set his face to come with 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 back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found. Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom, but within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle.

[3 : 46] In his place shall arise a contemptible person, to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant.

And from the time that an alliance is made with him, he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. Let's go down to verse 29. 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. When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

[5 : 11] Let's pray. Lord, we come to your word this morning. We thank you that you bid us come to you and listen and hear what is good.

We pray that you would help us to understand this difficult passage. We pray that you would open our hearts and minds to hear what you have for us today. In Jesus' name, amen. So what I want to do today is not to give a big history lesson.

Okay, I'm not going to go verse by verse and explain which king this is referring to, and which year, and which battle. If you're interested in that, I've put a brief summary in your bulletin of the major historical references in this chapter.

So you can see the basic outline of what we're talking about. If you want more details, this is a great chapter to look in a study Bible. That's why there are study Bibles and other background resources. So you can see some of the historical background that will help you understand what it's referring to. But what I want to do today is to ask, why is this vision here?

[6 : 14] What is it meant to show us? And this morning, we'll see three things. We'll see first what it shows us about God. Second, what it shows us about politics.

Third, what it shows us about hope. God, politics, and hope. Very relevant topics. Number one, and we're going to dig in by God's grace.

So number one, God is on the throne even when it doesn't seem like it. That's what we see about God. And as we've been going through Daniel, I've become increasingly convinced that this is the main message of the book in both the stories and the visions.

You know, so many times in the stories in Daniel, it seems like God is far away. Right? In chapter one, when Jerusalem is plundered and Daniel and his friends are taken away to Babylon.

In chapter three, King Nebuchadnezzar mandates that everyone bow down to this golden image. Otherwise, he'll throw you into the fiery furnace. Chapter five, King Belshazzar openly mocks the name of the Lord, taking the sacred vessels from God's temple and using them at a drunken party.

[7 : 24] But what we've seen, if you look at all those stories, that in every situation where it seems like God is far away, he's still on the throne.

He's still working out his purposes. He's rescuing his servants. He's vindicating his holy name. And then we come to the visions, the second half of Daniel.

And Daniel's looking forward to the time when the people would return back home from exile.

They'd rebuild the temple in Jerusalem and resettle the land. But what we see here in this chapter is that they would be sandwiched in between two powerful empires, which are referred to as the King of the North and the King of the South.

So it's in reference to the promised land, what Daniel calls the glorious land, the land which is now around Israel. Israel. And these two empires, the Seleucid dynasty in Syria and Babylonia to the north and the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt were often at war with each other, going back and forth. And then at one point, one particular northern king would turn on God's covenant people for no apparent reason and attempt to completely wipe them out in a violent persecution.

[8 : 42] That's what we saw in 21 to 35, sort of that last section of the vision that we read. But what we're going to see here is what we've seen throughout the book.

Even when it doesn't seem like it, God is still on the throne. Even when his kingdom seems delayed, even when his kingdom is opposed, even when his kingdom appears small and insignificant, God is still on the throne and ultimately his kingdom will survive and remain forever. How do we see this? How do we see that God is on the throne in this chapter? Well, we see it in three ways. We see it at first in how the vision is framed. If you look at chapter 10, verse 21, this is the angelic messenger who we saw last week who's speaking to Daniel. And he says, I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth. It could also be translated the trustworthy book. And then chapter 11, verse 2, now I will show you the truth. And if you look all the way to chapter 12, verse 4, which is actually the end of the vision, he tells Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book. So this angel, it's as if he's opening up the book of history, the book that belongs to God.

[10 : 06] And he's reading to Daniel out of it. That's how this whole vision is framed, is that it's from this book that is from heaven, from God.

And so the point is, everything that's described here, chaotic as it may seem, is ultimately within God's control. God's not surprised.

God's not thrown off course by what happens. He's not anxiously wringing his hands and wondering what he will do. God is sovereign over the past, present, and future.

So we see God's on the throne and how the vision is framed. We also see that God is on the throne in what the vision describes. And pretty much everyone agrees that chapter 11 accurately and sometimes very precisely describes the history of this period, at least through verse 35.

We'll get to 36 through 45 and what they're referring to. And in fact, scholars who don't believe that predictive prophecy is possible, they all assume that this chapter must have been written after the events that it describes because it describes them so accurately.

[11 : 18] Now, I do want to acknowledge, if you're into this, Bible-believing scholars don't all agree on when Daniel was written. Some argue that parts of the book may have been written later on the basis of the literary genre and parallels in Akkadian literature.

Now, that's complicated. I'm not going into that now, but I'm happy to talk after the service if you want to talk about that. But here's the point. Now, this chapter refers to real people and real events that are known and discussed in other ancient historical sources.

So in this way, the Bible is not like the Book of Mormon, for example. Okay? According to the Book of Mormon, in 600 BC, some of the Israelites were exiled to Babylon and others found their way to America.

Never heard that, did you? The Book of Mormon then describes their life in America, mentioning horses, oxen, sheep, pigs, goats, elephants, wheat, barley, figs, silk, steel, brass, plows, swords, and chariots.

But here's the problem. There's no historical or scientific evidence that any of those plants, animals, or technologies existed in America before the 16th century, when Christopher Columbus and other Europeans started coming.

[12 : 35] Or there's no other source that says that Israelites crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 600 BC. By contrast, we can identify most of the people and events referred to in this chapter and the description fits well the historical time period.

So we see God is on the throne in how the vision is framed, in what it describes, and in how the vision unfolds. Notice there are several references to God's timing. Look at verse 24.

The end of verse 24 says, he shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. Then verse 27, end of verse 27, they shall speak lies of the same table, but to no avail for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.

Verse 29, at the time appointed, he shall return and come into the south. And verse 35, the end ends by saying, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

So there's all these references to the appointed time, God's timing. Even when the world seems chaotic, the course of history is unfolding according to God's appointed time.

[13 : 49] We see human beings here making plans, taking initiative, scheming and conniving, but ultimately God holds the reins. God is Lord over time and history.

And one day he's going to blow the horn and the game will be over. But at every moment in history, God is still on the throne, even when it doesn't seem like it. So that's the first thing we see in this chapter.

Now, what does this mean for us? What's, how do we, what does this truth mean for us today? Well, throughout the history of the church, many Christians have believed and hoped that Christ would come again during their lifetime.

Many people in many centuries and decades have looked around at the world and said, we got to be right near the end. And we can make it because the end is right around the corner.

And you know what? That may well be true. And the Bible says we should be ready now to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Jesus said he would come like a thief in the night, suddenly and unexpectedly.

[14:55] And that's a good thought to meditate on. Am I longing, anticipating that day when Jesus will return? Am I living my life day to day in light of that?

Or has my love grown cold? My attention shifted to pleasing other people and getting ahead in this world? Am I harboring patterns of sin, procrastinating and compromising instead of confessing and repenting?

Knowing that Jesus could return at any moment should spur us on to pursue holiness and pursue the Lord without delay. But let me also ask this question.

What if Jesus doesn't come back for a hundred or a thousand more years? Can you remain faithful to Christ? Can you seek to leave a legacy for future generations who will come afterwards?

Even if the end still awaits the appointed time. You know, the Christian life is more like a marathon than a sprint. Daniel's writing to encourage God's people who are living in the middle of history.

[16:11] Who are living in troubled times that aren't yet the end times. Notice how often he says the end is still yet to come. The end is still yet to come. He's writing to encourage God's people who are in the middle.

Living in war with wars and rumors of wars. A nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Times when it's easy to become discouraged and distracted.

But he says God is still on the throne. Even when it doesn't seem like that. And that's an anchor. That's an anchor for our souls when we live in troubled times.

Even if they last a really long time. So that's the first thing we see in Daniel's vision. God is on the throne. The second thing we see in Daniel's vision.

Is that politics. Despite its grand ambitions. Is full of frustration. And futility. Notice some of the patterns and repeated words.

[17:10] In this chapter. Kings arise. Verse 2, 3, 4, 7, 20, 21. I won't quote all the verses. But all these appear at least three times. Kings arise.

They become strong. They do as they will. They wage war and fight. They make alliances or agreements.

But in the end. Their schemes do not stand. Did you notice as I was reading. How often the word but appears.

To indicate that someone's grand ambitions were frustrated. Foiled. Rendered futile. Just a few examples.

Verse 6. After some years they shall make an alliance by marriage. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm. Verse 9. The king of the north shall come into the realm of the king of the south. But he shall return to his own land.

[18:09] Verse 12. His heart shall be exalted. He shall cast down tens of thousands. But he shall not prevail. Verse 14. The violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision.

But they shall fail. Verse 17. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom. But it shall not stand. Verse 18. Afterward. He shall turn his face to the coastlands and capture many of them.

But a commander shall put an end to his insolence. I could go on and on. Over and over and over. The grand ambitions of human political and military leaders are frustrated.

And foiled. And turned back on themselves. Notice how even the most successful leaders. The most intimidating conquerors in this passage come to a swift end.

Verse 3 and 4. For a mighty king shall arise. And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided. Verse 16 says the king of the north shall do as he wills.

[19 : 08] And none shall stand before him. But then in verse 19 it says he shall stumble and fall. And shall not be found. Verse 20. There's the one who sends an exactor of tribute.

Within a few days. He shall be broken. And verse 20. Verse 45. The end of the chapter. The most intimidating ruler of all. Whose conquering fury seems to know no bounds.

He shall come to his end. With none to help him. They all rise. And they all fall. Ian Dugan wrote. This chapter is the continual story of wars and rumors of wars. As one human ruler and empire after another seeks to gain power by cunning or force.

Yet though the tide in the affairs of men comes in and goes out. In the end it accomplishes precisely nothing. The balance of power in earthly politics may shift. But it never comes to a permanent rest.

[20 : 10] The king of the north attacks the king of the south. And vice versa. Back and forth. And back and forth. And in the end it all seems pretty meaningless. Human political ambitions end in frustration and futility.

Daniel wants us to see that leaders will rise up and become strong. And do what they want to do for a time. But none of them will last forever. In their arrogance and especially their overconfidence. They will fail and fall. Often more quickly than anyone expects. Now what does this mean for us? For one thing it's a warning not to worship political leaders.

In other words not to invest our deepest hopes or our deepest fears in politics. This past year hope and fear.

I think mostly fear. Have been powerful and prevalent. Both before and after the election. And there are many reasons for people's hopes and fears.

[21 : 14] Maybe some of you are hopeful. For the future of the Supreme Court. Hopeful that unborn children might one day be protected. Or maybe you're fearful. Fearful like the children of undocumented immigrants.

Who are asking will my parents now be deported. I could go on and on. Listing reasons why people feel hope and fear right now. It's a long list.

But when we look at our country and even at our own hearts. There's more than well founded hopes and fears. There's brash triumphalism.

Not so much here in New Haven. But in some other parts of the country. There's also reactive panic. Why have our hopes and fears.

I'd say not even just in this election. But in the last couple of elections at least. Why have they become such overwhelming forces. Not just out in the world. But among committed Christians.

[22 : 16] Is it at least partly because we have lost our spiritual anchor. In the fear of the Lord. And our hope in his promises.

And so we've transferred our deepest hopes and fears onto human leaders. Instead. Political arrangements are temporary and tenuous.

There are often surprising reversals. This election certainly wasn't the first. And it probably won't be the last. This is the message of Psalm 2. The Lord reigns.

Above the kings of the earth. He who sits in the heavens laughs. Even in the face of rulers. Who exalt themselves against God. Because God reigns supreme.

And one day he will bring every one of them down. And Psalm 2 concludes. It says serve the Lord with fear. He is the one. We should fear.

[23 : 14] And stand before with reverence and awe. And rejoice with trembling. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. We have hope in his promises. This is where our deepest fears.

And our deepest hopes should be directed toward the Lord alone. Now you might say. Well what does that mean practically? Does that mean Christians should just be apathetic about politics? Stop following the news. Withdraw from the system. Go off the grid. Just let things be the way they are. Because it's all in God's hands anyway. Well no.

Now I will say. Some of us may spend too much time following the news. John Piper said. About a year ago. One of the great uses of Twitter and Facebook.

Will be to prove. On judgment day. That our prayerlessness. Was not from lack of time. If keeping up with the news feed.

[24 : 18] Is primarily feeding your anxious fears. Rather than equipping you to live wisely. And love your neighbors more effectively.

You should cut back. Pray more. Actually talk to your neighbors. If there's news you really need to know. Your friends will probably tell you anyway.

And so what if you seem like the person that doesn't know everything. And hears it from other people. They'll. If you know. If your friends really care about you. They'll tell you what you need to know. Most of the time.

But we shouldn't simply withdraw. And become apathetic. About politics. Daniel himself. Was a lifelong government official. And he wasn't working under wise kings who feared the Lord.

For the most part. He was working under arrogant pagan rulers. Who sometimes passed terrible legislation. The first half of Daniel is an example of how God's people.

[25 : 21] Can seek to be faithful. Even in high government office. This is an important and noble calling. Some of you might be called to go there.

Or to advocate for more just policies. To work in the midst of ungodly and broken systems. And seek to be a redemptive.

And healing. And wise influence. With discernment. And patience. And prayer. And all of us at the very least are called to pray.

For our political leaders. Whether we like them or not. Whether we agree with them or not. But however involved or distant we might be. Politics like every other part of human life under the sun. Is full of frustration and futility. Now Daniel 11 focuses on political and military history. More than a lot of other places in the Bible.

[26 : 22] Now there is plenty in the Bible about political and military leaders. Political and military history. But the Bible also contains the stories of ordinary people. People who wouldn't make the news then or now.

Who God nevertheless used to build his everlasting kingdom. Right? Not just in prominent urban centers like Jerusalem. But in overlooked rural areas like Nazareth and Bethlehem.

In the book of Ruth. God's plan of redemption begins with a devoted Moabite widow. An immigrant outsider who comes to a foreign land.

In order to care for her disgruntled mother-in-law. In the book of Samuel it starts with a depressed woman. Crying out to God in prayer.

That's how God's redemption starts. That's how God's kingdom is built. God can use anyone he wants. He can use Daniel.

[27 : 21] He can use the highest government official. And he can use the lowest and most neglected person. So let's keep politics in right perspective.

And don't let it become your religion. Let's invest our fears and hopes. And bring our fears and hopes before the Lord. So even when it doesn't seem like it.

God's still on the throne. Despite his grand ambitions. Politics is full of frustration and futility. And finally this chapter tells us about hope. When we're living in the middle of this world.

In the middle of history. Where does our hope come from? Well starting at verse 21. Verse 21. This chapter speaks of the rise.

Of someone that it calls a contemptible. That is either a vile or a despised. Or both person. Who rises to power through deception and cunning. And like the other rulers who have gone before him.

[28 : 22] He rises up. Verse 21. He becomes strong. Verse 23. He wages war. Verse 25. He attempts to make an alliance. Verse 27. But he goes even further. Verse 24 says.

He shall do what neither his fathers. Nor his father's fathers have done. And then in verse 28. It says. His heart shall be set against the holy covenant. Verse 30. He shall be enraged.

And take action against the holy covenant. In other words. This ruler specifically targets. God's people. And attempts to destroy them. Now this section is referring to a ruler.

Whose name was Antiochus Epiphanes. Who ruled from 175 to 164. I'll explain a little more about what he did. But he specifically targeted God's covenant people.

And attempted to wipe them out. Now in one sense. This wasn't anything new. Right? If you read the Bible. God's people have always had opposition. They've always had enemies. Ever since they began to exist.

[29 : 25] But in another sense. This attack was an unprecedented crisis and challenge. Let me explain. Eight hundred years before Antiochus Epiphanes.

King David conquered the city of Jerusalem. And then his son King Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem. Where God promised to dwell with his people.

And since then. Jerusalem had only been conquered once. And it was by the Babylonians. And the prophets.

Told the people of Israel exactly why it happened. They said God let the Babylonians conquer your city. And destroy the temple because of your sin.

Because you didn't listen to God over and over and over and over again. God let everything be taken away from you. He let you hit rock bottom.

[30 : 28] It was your own fault. And then in his mercy. God didn't leave him there in exile. He brought him back home. And then they were in Jerusalem.

And of course things went back and forth. But the city of Jerusalem was still belonged to the people of God. But then here. Verse 30 to 35.

We see a violent attack on God's people. And it's not described as a punishment for their sins. It's simply described as an irrational, hateful, all-out attack.

By an ungodly tyrant on the people and the worship and the truth of God. And it was successful. In 167 BC. This man Antiochus Epiphanes and his armies.

Plundered and burned Jerusalem. They killed thousands of Jews. He invaded the temple. Halted the daily sacrifices. Their worship of God. Dedicated the temple to a pagan god, Zeus.

[31 : 30] And offered a pig. An unclean pig on the altar. He burned copies of the scriptures. Executed people who possessed them. Outlawed circumcision.

And put to death mothers who had circumcised their sons. Compelled Jews to offer sacrifice to idols. And eat unclean meat on pain of death. And he offered rewards to Jews who compromised and embraced paganism.

This was perhaps the most difficult trial that God's people had yet endured. The exile had been painful. But they sort of knew why they were in exile.

The prophets were very clear. They were like, this is your own fault. You got yourself in this mess. Now God's going to get you out of it. But you got yourself in this mess. But now, they were being targeted and massacred for no apparent reason.

Persecuted for their faithfulness. And who could know how long it would last? Why was God letting it happen? You know, suffering is always painful.

[32 : 37] But if you know why you're suffering. And if you have a sense of how long it's going to last. You can usually deal with it. But if you have no clue why it's happening. And no idea how long it's going to last.

That's when we're most prone to despair. And do all kinds of other unwise things. To run away. We go into fight or flight mode.

What is the hope that can sustain us through painful trials that we can't explain? When there's no apparent end in sight. What is the hope that can enable us to persevere in faith?

Like the people who he describes in verse 32 to 35. Look at how he describes these people. The people who know their God. Will stand firm. And take action.

The wise among the people. Will make many understand. They will stumble. That is, they'll suffer. And they'll be tempted. But in the end, they'll be refined.

[33 : 38] And purified. This is the kind of life that Daniel is calling us to live. It's the kind of life that Daniel lived as well. But this is the kind of life that the book of Daniel commends to us then and now.

Standing firm. Leading others to understand. God's will and his word and his ways. Going through a trial and being refined and purified through it.

But what is the hope that empowers that kind of present endurance even through intense suffering? We have to go on. Because I didn't read to the end of the vision. Now verse 36 to 45.

Before we get to the hope. Things get even worse before they get better. So verse 36 to 45 describe the time of the end. These verses describe a king who in some ways sounds like Antiochus Epiphanes.

But in other ways sounds even worse. Verse 36 to 39. He does as he wills. He exalts and magnifies himself above every god. Honoring the god of fortresses.

[34 : 41] That probably means devoting himself to conquest above all else. Verse 40 to 45. Paint a picture of the king of the north sweeping down. Overwhelming the king of the south. In a massive attack.

Taking over the holy land. Conquering Egypt and other north African nations. His military conquest surpasses everyone who comes before him. But verse 45. His kingdom will fall.

He will come to his end. With no one helping him. Now how do we interpret verse 36 to 45? What is it talking about? Well these verses are not a precise description.

Of Antiochus further conquests. And eventual downfall. Antiochus never conquered Egypt. And he died while he was on a campaign in Persia. Some scholars understand these verses to be painting a picture in general about Antiochus' downfall.

Saying that he would meet his end like other arrogant rulers who had gone before him. But I think the best way to understand these verses is that they're pointing to someone like Antiochus.

[35 : 42] But beyond Antiochus. Now many biblical prophecies are a little bit like a painting of a distant mountain range.

Sometimes there's a particular event, like a particular mountain peak, that appears very clearly and distinctly. At other times, you get a vivid overall impression of what is to come.

But you can't quite tell where one peak ends and where the other begins. At other times, the painting is highly symbolic. And the symbols are intentionally designed to be reapplied in multiple situations.

I think something like that is going on here at the end of chapter 11. And I've explained this in more detail on your bulletin insert. The part about the abomination that makes desolate.

Now that's actually in verse 31, which is clearly referring to Antiochus. Right? Who went into the temple and invaded it. And dedicated it to the worship of a pagan god. And refused to let people worship the one true god there.

[36 : 50] But Jesus quotes that phrase in Matthew 24. And says it's referring to something that would happen in the future. Probably when the Romans came and destroyed the temple in 70 AD.

And Paul uses very similar language to speak about a man of lawlessness. A sort of antichrist figure who is still yet to come. Here's the point. The end of chapter 11 is partly about Antiochus. But it's also painting a picture of increasingly violent opposition to God and his people. That will arise periodically all the way until the end of history.

But then we come to the end of the vision. Where we see the hope that sustains us. So go to chapter 12. Chapter 12, verses 1 to 3.

At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.

[37 : 55] But at that time your people shall be delivered. Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And here's the hope in verse 2 and 3. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.

Some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above. And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

However, the ultimate hope of God's people then and now is what's promised here in verses 2 and 3. The resurrection from the dead.

Now so far in the book of Daniel. In chapter 3 about the fiery furnace. And in chapter 6 about the lion's den. We've seen that God delivers, can deliver his faithful servants from death.

Right? Daniel's friends are faithful. They don't bow down to the idol. They get thrown in the fiery furnace. And the fourth man stands in there with them. And they come out unharmed.

[38 : 57] And we see God has power even to rescue his servants from death. In chapter 6, Daniel gets thrown into the lion's den.

And he's rescued. But at the end of the book we see our ultimate hope. Not just that God sometimes rescues his servants from death.

But in the end, he will deliver us even through death. And that will rise to everlasting life.

And this is the hope that sustained the people of God through the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes. Many of them were martyred. Including probably the most gruesome and yet inspiring story of the period.

And I won't give you all the details. It's in a book called Second Maccabees. That's a historical account of the period. But it includes an account of a woman and her seven sons. Who were tortured and killed one by one.

[40 : 03] With mom looking on. As they refused to bow to the tyrant's demand to forsake the Lord. And as they were tortured.

They proclaimed their hope in the resurrection from the dead. One of them said as he prepared to die. You are depriving us of this present life. But the king of the universe will raise us up to live again forever.

The third put forth his tongue. He would often cut out their tongues. And then cut off their hands. And bravely stretched out his hands. And said it was from heaven that I received these. For God's sake I disregard them.

And from God I hope to receive them again. And finally the mother stood courageously. And said to her sons. It was not I. Who gave you life and breath. Nor was it I who arranged the elements you were made of.

Therefore the creator of the universe. In his mercy will give you back. Both life and breath. Because you now disregard yourselves for his sake. See it's the hope of the resurrection.

[41 : 09] That sustains us through painful and traumatic trials. That we can't explain. When there's no apparent end in sight. That's the hope that strengthens God's people.

Who are persecuted for their faithfulness. It's the hope of the resurrection. That gives us strength to love well and wisely. Even when we're not loved in return.

It's the hope of the resurrection. That gives us courage to stand firm. In the ways of Jesus Christ. Regardless of where the cultural. And political winds may blow. Because you see the hope of the resurrection means.

This life is not all there is. So we don't make our decisions. Simply based on. What's going to work out for us. In this life. Because we know that God has a greater promise.

And a greater hope for us. The apostle Paul said this. In Philippians 2. He said live as children of God without blemish. In the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.

[42 : 14] Among whom you shine as stars in the sky. He said this is how we're called to live. Like Daniel described. Like the wise people. Who lead many others to righteousness.

Shine as stars in the sky. As you hold firmly to the word of life. This is our hope.

We have a savior who's gone before us. Who faced. Death on the cross. And the wrath of God. That we deserved. And the fury of the rulers of the world. Who rejected him. And mocked him. And killed him. He's been there.

He's been through it. And he rose again. So that we could have eternal hope. So that we could know. That our God is still on the throne.

[43 : 12] Whether it seems like it or not. So we have a secure basis for hope in this present age. Because of the promise of the resurrection to come.

Let us pray. Almighty God we pray that you would.

Give us courage. And steadfastness. To live as your people. To trust that in.

The back and forth. Of this world. The rise and fall. Of. Nations and powers.

And our personal fortunes. Lord help us to find our hope and our strength. In you. Lord as we sang earlier in the service.

[44 : 17] May you be. Lord Jesus. Our cornerstone. Christ alone. Cornerstone. Weak made strong in the Savior's love. Through the storm.

He is Lord. Over all. Lord may we live. With that hope. Because you have risen from the dead. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Well please stand. As we. Conclude our service. We're going to proclaim that Christ is risen. And proclaim the hope. That we have in him. As we sing our final song.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.