

In Daniel 10 we saw last week the praying and fasting of Daniel as he was asking God to help him understand...

God's plan to restore Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple, and the kingdom of God.

Daniel wants to understand when the Messiah will come and how He will save His people.

We saw that Daniel's prayers set into motion an angelic journey which would involve battle in Persia.

The messenger who arrives is impressive, to say the least. **Daniel 10:4-6**

The Prince of the kingdom of Persia, a powerful regional demon, would attack this messenger.

A battle would continue for three weeks until Michael would come to help. **Daniel 10:12-14**

After delivering his message, this angel would be going back into battle. **Daniel 10:20-21**

Before this happens, this angel has a message to deliver.

It is a message delivered to Daniel, "a man greatly loved" by God. Daniel 10:11

It is a message about "what will happen to Israel in the latter days, days yet to come." Daniel 10:14

It is a message that will require courage to hear and understand. Daniel 10:19

It is a message "inscribed in the writing of truth." Daniel 10:21

The picture we are given is that God has His history, the world's history, written down even before it happens.

Could this be true?

In Revelation 5 we find talk of such a book. **Revelation 5:1-4**

This cannot be the Lamb's Book of Life. That shows up later in Revelation 20.

Why does John weep that no one can open the book?

This is a special book of the fulfillment of the promises of God. He wants those promises fulfilled.

Thus, when the seals on the book are broken, earthshaking plagues take place.

In this book are the awesome promises of God that will be fulfilled as the world ends.

One of the descriptions of the world, as this world nears the end, we find in **Matthew 24:5-14**.

"Wars and rumors of wars" Is this any great surprise?

We human beings are a most warlike race. You see this throughout history.

Some people think that if we just progress enough, develop technology, learn to love each other...

Then we will advance beyond wars and sufferings. It will be peace and harmony on earth.

But, no. Things have not gone that way.

Every century of human existence has made progress, but chiefly in being more violent than the past century.

In fact, the bloodiest most war-filled century in the history of the earth was the last one.

100 million people were killed in the wars of the 20th century.

When nations slaughtered one another in 1914-1918...

we called it "The Great War" or The War to End All Wars." But now it is only the First World War.

We developed bombs that can kill millions in one blast.

We are better than ever before, not at feeding people peacefully, but at wholesale slaughter.

Human beings are the only creatures that kill for pleasure, anger, or greed.

Animals only kill to eat, unless they are rabid or deranged... even the rabbit that eats my pea plants.

He is not evil, though I call him that.

What we learn from history is that we are deluded if we think we can solve our own problems.

People think, "If only we all work together, we can set this world aright."

We can fix the environment, end poverty and racism, cure disease and extend life.

But, despite all our advances, all these things are worse than ever before.

People think, "if only we could get Democrats in all the positions of power, then we could really change things..."

Or, "If only we could get Republicans and more conservative justices in place, then we could fix things..."

But both have happened before, and things got no better.

You might respond, "But, pastor, you are giving us no hope. This is a depressing message."

Well, the Bible communicated that human solutions are hopeless. But God has a solution.

So, then, you might say, "Well, then, we have nothing to do but to sit around and wait."

And I say, "No. He has given us much to do! But our assignment is not to find solutions or fix the planet."

We are called to witness, love, serve, and speak the truth.

We are to make this world a little better as long as we are here, to point people to Jesus, to love people...
And we are to be getting ready for God's solution to the problems.

Well, then does it matter who I vote for? Will you tell me who to vote for? Which is the right side?
There are indeed two sides... but they are not Republican and Democrat, Trump and anti-Trump.
Have you been paying attention in the book of Daniel?
What are the two sides?
The world's kingdoms vs. the Kingdom of God
It is this continuing conflict that constitutes the correct view of the world.

God is going to tell Daniel in chapter 11 a message "true and of great conflict." (Daniel 10:1)
Three great steps in the wars that will build toward the end... and then a skip ahead to that final great step.
These three steps that we will read about all take place between 400 BC and 150 BC
So, Daniel is writing about events that will take place in the 250 years after he is writing.

I. God raised up Medo-Persia and Greece according to His plan. Daniel 11:1-4

In the Bible, over and over, we witness a coming together of the schemes of man and the plans of God.
God's decrees determine what happens and the schemes of man only serve to accomplish God's plans.
How does this work? We do not know. But God does. That is the point.

So, God has determined first the victory of Medo-Persia over Greece.
There is a gap of 150 years between vs. 2 and vs. 3 and the ascendancy of Greece.
The "mighty king" of verse 3 is Alexander the Great as we learned back in chapter 8.
But, as soon as he arises, he will be gone and his kingdom broken into four pieces, not to his children.
This is precisely what happened to the empire that Alexander built.
His sons were murdered. His generals took control.
The four kingdoms were:

- Macedonia in the West ruled by Cassander
- Thrace in Asia ruled by Lysimachus
- Egypt in the South ruled by the Ptolemy
- Syria the North ruled by Seleucus

These kings thought that they rose to power through their own efforts and will, which was true up to a point.
God was the one who planned and allowed all this to happen.
In the conflicts between nations, God advances His plan.

II. God raised up Egypt and Syria according to His plan. Daniel 11:5-20

Now we focus in on two of these kingdoms. Why these two?
It is because the battle between the kingdom of Syria and Egypt would take place around Jerusalem.
It is Jerusalem that principally concerns this prophesy and these plans of God.
The kingdoms of Egypt and Syria play political ping pong with Jerusalem for the next 150 years.

Just a taste of how the world works in the realms of the great and powerful under the hand of God:
"The daughter of the king of the south" in verse 6 is Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II.
She was arranged to be married to Antiochus II, grandson of Seleucus.
Unfortunately for her, Antiochus II was already married to a woman named Laodice.
Laodice did not like the new arrangement and murdered Berenice, Antiochus II, and their child.
Which provoked the brother of Berenice, Ptolemy III, to attack Syria and pillage Antioch. (vs. 7)

And, so, back and forth... in the conflicts between nations, God advances His plan.
The "beautiful (glorious) land" of verse 16 is Palestine, the Promised Land, Jerusalem and the region around it.
They continue to fight over God's land until something happens in verse 21.

III. God raised up Antiochus IV Epiphanes according to His plan. Daniel 11:21-35

Who is this "despicable person" who arises? He is the "little horn uttering great boasts" of Daniel 7:8.
He is the 7th ruler of Syria after Seleucus and he is a usurper. He had no legitimate claim to the throne.

In the flow of history in the world, this guy is neither great nor powerful. He does little of importance.

Why, then, is he such a focus of this prophesy?

It is because he fits a description that is especially important in the Bible. He is an antichrist.

What is an antichrist? It is not his great power that makes him so. Let us see.

From the point of view of the Jewish people of the 2nd century BC, this man was an imposter and a monster.

He was a devious politician and a deceptive intriguer.

He built his kingdom by lying, looting, threats, and flattery.

When he was forced out of Egypt by the Romans,

his embarrassment turned to anger which he took out on the Jewish people. (vs. 28)

He sent his tax collector to Jerusalem ostensibly on a peaceful mission.

But, on the Sabbath, he massacred the people in the Temple and plundered the city.

Antiochus then outlawed the sacrifices, the Scriptures, and observing the Sabbath and feast days.

On December 15, 167 BC he erected a statue of Zeus in the Temple and sacrificed swine to it.

This was indeed an “abomination of desolation.” (vs. 31)

What should the people of God do at such times? **Daniel 11:32-35**

“The people who know their God will display strength and take action.”

What kind of strength? What kind of action?

We are told. Read on.

1. “Those who have insight will give understanding.” Speak the truth.
2. “They will fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity, and by plunder.” Be prepared to suffer.
3. (vs. 34-35) Beware of deception. Don’t listen to lies.
4. (vs. 35) Get ready for the end.

Verse 36 moves us along in understanding.

We never quite leave Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and yet we are thinking beyond him.

IV. God will raise up the Antichrist according to His plan.

Daniel 11:36-45

Someday, before the return of Christ and the resurrection, will come the Antichrist.

It is clear in the Bible that there are many antichrists, (1 John 2) there is a spirit of antichrist, (1 John 4) and then there will be the Antichrist. (1 John 2:18, 2 John 1:7)

The “many antichrists” are described as such because they are like the Antichrist who is to come.

Before we close, I want to observe in the text how to recognize the Antichrist or those like him.

You need to know this so that you will not be deceived.

Because we are warned in every place about his deceptiveness.

I want to caution you against immediately identifying Trump or Pelosi... they are too old and don’t fit.

I do want to urge you to really think about the nature of this person and be prepared to guard against him.

You will recognize Nero, Hitler, and many Communist dictators.

1. The antichrist will hate the Jewish people. We have seen this in history. We see it in the text.
2. He will seek to outlaw the Bible, Christian worship, witnessing, and service.
3. He will try to force people to worship him and his gods, whatever they may be.
4. He will deny that Jesus is God, the Messiah, and seek to convince people that this is a lie. (1 John)
5. He will speak well, and most people will love to hear his speeches. (vs. 32)
6. He is a murderer and kills people to achieve his goals. (whole chapter)
7. He is a narcissist, magnifying himself, and he blasphemes God. (vs. 36)
8. He is a political and military conqueror, operating with deception and secrecy. (whole chapter)
9. He seeks to gain great amounts of money and riches. (vss. 38, 43)
10. His kingdom will end, though until the very end he will say that it will not. (vs. 45)

So, be on your guard... and commit to memory **Daniel 11:32**.