

## The Wise Will Be All Right

Daniel 10:1-12:13, Matthew 24:15-16, 2 Timothy 4:7-8

### **Slide 1**

Life can be confusing and even scary sometimes. Families struggle, there're financial challenges, emotional struggles, and marital stress.

Children make bad choices and adults take painful detours along the paths of life. Carefully laid plans don't work out and people we trust disappoint or betray.

Communities seem more dangerous than before, with more to fear like drugs, gangs, danger in the streets, ungodly influences, unbridled immorality, and greed.

There's danger online in social media, violent videos, or hyper-sexualized movies.

Our nation faces challenges like the pandemic, political turmoil, and the specter of overwhelming debt, along with economic and social inequality.

Throughout the world, there're wars, genocide, religious persecution, and daily crises. So, the question begs "*Will we be all right?*" Which is the same question Daniel asked.

### **Slide 2**

In chapter 1, Daniel was a young man, thrown into the pagan culture of Babylon. He was suddenly confronted with strange literature, a pagan religion, astrology, and sorcery.

He saw his friends thrown into a fiery furnace for their faith, and he himself was thrown into a den of lions.

He was in the banquet hall when the Persians swept into Babylon, and afterwards became a political figure in the mighty Persian Empire.

In these last chapters that we're going to look at today, Daniel's confused and worried. He's now in his mid to late 80's and he's troubled because he had another vision.

Daniel knew God could explain it, so he began to fast and pray for an answer. He persisted praying and fasting for three weeks, continually asking God for guidance.

Daniel 10:2-3, *"At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over."*

Finally, at the end of three weeks Daniel hears from God. A heavenly messenger appears to settle his mind about what the future would hold.

Think about it. Would you want to see into the future? You could make a killing in the stock market, move somewhere "safe," or warn your grandchildren about things to come.

Or maybe knowing the future might be troubling for you. You might panic and give up on life, or you might feel helpless to do anything about what you learned. This may be how Daniel felt.

Because not only is Daniel given a vision of a future war, Daniel 10 also speaks of a war that no man sees.

A war that goes on day after day and has a major impact on the wars that we see now on planet Earth.

Daniel 10:12-13, *“Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.”*

What a remarkable insight into the angelic realm we’re given in this passage! Daniel 10 lifts the veil that covers the natural and spiritual realms to reveal a battle that goes on in the invisible angelic sphere.

Think about it. This angel was restricted from getting to Daniel for 21 days (3 weeks) because of another being called the *“prince of the Persian kingdom”* who resisted him and blocked his way.

It was only when the archangel Michael, one of the chief princes, arrived that this other angel was able to get through to Daniel.

This is a reminder of the spiritual battle that is continually being waged, and one in which we’re part of despite it not being visible to the natural eye. We have no idea what’s going on around us!

But Daniel 10 gives us a glimpse of unseen influences which affect the affairs of men.

Demonic influences which will reach their climax when the kings of the whole world are drawn into battle against God and His people.

An influence which will reach its fulfilment just prior to the return of Jesus.

Now, turn to Daniel 11, where his troubling vision is explained. We’re not going to read Daniel 11 or this sermon would be like the title of last week’s message, *“This May Take a While.”*

Yet if you take the time to study it with some good commentaries at your side, you'll find that the first 35 verses read like a history of the time period 537-164 B.C.

It summarizes the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great, and the division of his empire into four parts with 4 rulers.

Then it describes the many decades of war and intrigue between the Seleucid dynasty of Syria and the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt.

In fact, the vision matches history so closely that some wonder if it was written after 164 B.C. because few, if any, prophecies in the Bible are so detailed.

On the other hand, Isaiah 46:10 points out that God can *"make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come."*

Someday, when we greet the saints from the second century B.C. in heaven, we may hear, *"Wasn't it amazing what God showed Daniel about the future? Too bad it was sealed up until we discovered it, by then it had all happened already."*

Or, we might hear, *"You didn't know it was written after it happened? We all knew that. If Baruch ben Sirach had written about the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, he would have been tortured and crucified. By setting it in the time of Daniel, he gave us a perspective we needed in such terrible times."*

Either way, the message is the same, God sees history before it happens; it's never a surprise to Him.

### **Slide 3**

In Daniel 11:36-45, the vision continues with an arrogant and wicked king but it doesn't describe any known historical event.

Because of this, it has caused some modern believers to speculate that the vision was a prediction of events still to come; events near the “*end times*.”

The establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 seems to be a key development that allows for the fulfillment of these end-time verses.

Since the vision involves “*the Beautiful Land*,” it can certainly be describing the land of Israel, which feeds speculation about future wars in that area.

On the other hand, maybe the point of this part of the vision is simply to let us know that the future isn’t always revealed clearly.

Yet, when we consider the many prophetic details of Daniel 11 that were fulfilled as predicted, we can have confidence that the remaining prophecies of this chapter will occur as God has ordained.

Though it isn’t clear to us today, history has shown that no matter how powerful evil kings or countries seem to be, the end is the same. Daniel 11:45b, “*Yet, he will come to his end, and no one will help him.*”

That was true of Rome, Nazi Germany, Stalin, Saddam Hussein and many others, and it’ll be true of all who stand against God and His people.

Now turn to chapter 12. At the beginning of this chapter, the vision jumps from the “*end*” of the events of chapter 11 to the final “*end*,” the end of life on earth.

Daniel 12:1-3, “*At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.*”

*Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."*

Rarely is the Old Testament so clear about the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and our heavenly dwelling. But Daniel's heavenly messenger speaks confidently of those things.

Our immediate reaction is, *"Tell me more."* But the messenger shuts off the vision at that point. Daniel 12:4a, *"But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end."*

Then Daniel sees a new vision.

Daniel 12:5-12, *"Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed." I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand."*

When would this all be fulfilled? Would it be in the second century, or would it be at the end of time when Christ returns to earth?

There's a hint in the phrase in Daniel 12:11, *"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the ABOMINATION THAT CAUSES DESOLATION is set up, there will be 1,290 days."*

That reference matches an event in the reign of the cruel Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, who also fits prophecies found in Daniel 8 and 9.

Remember? He's the one who defiled the temple, making it a temple to Zeus, and sacrificing unclean animals on the altar.

This defilement lasted about 3.5 years, which is about 1,290 days. His defeat and a subsequent miracle of lights is celebrated in the Jewish festivities of Hanukkah.

Yet almost 200 years after Antiochus defiled the temple, Jesus walked out of the temple, and told his disciples that it would be destroyed, with not one stone left on another.

Then, He went on to say, in Matthew 24:15-16, *"When you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."*

The initial fulfillment of His words came in 70 A.D. At which time Christians fled a Roman siege of Jerusalem, and the temple was leveled by the Romans.

Will there be other "abominations of desolation" in the future? Who knows? I don't know the future!

Maybe if I were one of the people in China whose church was demolished by the government, I would see that as an abomination.

Maybe as I see churches in America destroyed by false teaching and political deception, I would consider that as an abomination.

Maybe if I saw trust destroyed by failure of leadership or hypocrisy, I would see that as an abomination.

In Matthew 24, Jesus said there would be betrayal, false prophets, and wickedness in the temple of God, the church. Those certainly qualify as *“abominations that cause desolation.”*

#### **Slide 4**

#### Conclusion

HOW WILL THIS ALL END? What will happen to us, our children, and grandchildren, and everyone else in the world? Will we be ALL RIGHT?

Sometimes Bible study is as simple as paying attention when we read. Three times, the visions mention *“the wise.”*

Daniel 11:33-35, *“THOSE WHO ARE WISE will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered...SOME OF THE WISE will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.”*

God’s people may suffer persecution or loss, but when they stumble, they’ll be refined and purified. In the end, the wise will be spotless, blameless, and at peace with God.

Daniel 12:3, *“THOSE WHO ARE WISE will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.”*

Jesus accentuates this in Matthew 13:43, *“[At the end,] the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”*

Daniel 12:9-10, *“Go your way, Daniel...Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but THOSE WHO ARE WISE will understand.”*

The wise understand that God's in control. They keep going when times are uncertain or difficult and they understand that God is able to save.

Who are THE WISE? Proverbs 9:10 tells us, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”*

The wise trust God, count on God, and obey God, giving more weight to God than any person, circumstance, or power of darkness.

How do we end this series on the book of Daniel? I can't do better than quote the last verse in the book of Daniel.

Daniel 12:13, *“As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.”*

If we keep walking with God, we'll be all right. Our goal isn't just to survive but become RIGHT in every way so we'll be ready when Christ returns to bring us to glory.

Paul puts it this way in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”*