

Daniel Sermons-Wayne Barber-2

THE BOOK OF DANIEL STUDY BY DR WAYNE BARBER Daniel 7-12

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Daniel 7:1-8; 24-28 Hang on, Brother, the King is Coming

Turn with me to Daniel 7. Somebody asked the question: How do you eat an elephant? Well, you eat it one bite at a time. You don't try to swallow the whole elephant. And as we go through Daniel, you'll begin to notice how one scripture will shed light on another scripture. And we'll just inch our way forward. It'll be a little frustrating to some of you, I'm sure. You want to get the whole picture and hurry up and get at it. But we want to take it slow and make sure we understand it and make sure it's God's Word speaking to our hearts.

The title of our message is "Hang on, Brother, the King is Coming." Hang on, He is coming. Some of you may wonder, "Why do we go through all this historical stuff in the Word of God? What do I care about Babylon? What do I care about Medo-Persia? Why do I care about Greece? What do I care about early or ancient Rome?" Well, folks, listen. This is when it gets real personal. If you don't care about Babylon or Babylonia and Medo-Persia and Greece, if you don't care about those things, then you don't realize that He's

already told you what He was going to do among those nations and He's done it. Now He's told you what is going to happen in the latter days. As He has done it here, He'll also do it as He says in those latter days. So it's a very personal message if you'll allow it to be that.

Now, as we start chapter 7, something you need to know. Chapters 1-6 are chronological. In other words, it starts at 605 BC and you can see it progress all the way down until really up to 500 or early 500 BC. So it starts at 605 and goes all the way down. It's chronological; not year after year, but in a chronological sequence. Chapters 7-12 are not chronological, and you can get very confused studying Daniel if you don't know that.

Let's go back to review what we've seen so far and show you how it's chronological. Chapter 1, 605 BC, verse 1 of chapter 1 when Nebuchadnezzar moves in and his first siege of Jerusalem takes place. That's when Daniel and his friends are taken out of his homeland and taken over into Babylonia. That's in verse 8 of chapter 1 when Daniel says, "I will not defile myself." Obviously Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said the same thing; or Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, as is their real Hebrew names. They all make the statement: "We will not defile ourselves." Folks, do you realize that we wouldn't even have the book of Daniel and all the revelations that are there if they had not made that vow? It's because Daniel made that vow that God honored him and gave us what we have now in the book of Daniel. Very critical chapters.

Well chapter 2 is when Nebuchadnezzar has his first visible encounter with the Holy God, the most High God, our God. And God gives him a dream, and this dream really causes him turmoil and trouble. Daniel interprets that dream. In that dream he sees a statue. Now you have in your bulletin this morning a little sheet of paper. You'll need this before we get through. I've colored a little bit on mine, but you'll need this before we get through. On the left side is Daniel 2, what I'm talking about right now. This is the statue that was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, and of course, as we've already studied, it was four kingdoms that God was revealing to Nebuchadnezzar about and He was telling him what was going to happen in the latter days. Basically all the Gentile pagan nations of the world have their conclusion right here in this statue. He said the head of gold is Babylon; the upper torso of silver is the Medo-Persian Empire, which by the way comes in to effect in chapter 5 of our study. Belly and thighs of bronze, that's Greece, the Greek Empire, you see the dates there. The legs and the feet, the legs of iron and the feet of iron and baked clay are the fourth kingdom, the Roman Empire.

Now you also remember that He wasn't just referring to the legs of the statue, He wasn't just referring to the feet of the statue. He was referring to the toes, verse 42 of chapter 2 of Daniel. The toes, the ten toes, there's something about those ten toes that He's referring to: the latter days of Rome. We've never seen that time yet in history: that's the latter day part of the prophecy given to Nebuchadnezzar.

If you go back to chapter 2 just for a second, let's remember some things here. Chapter 2:34, after he gets the statue, you see it pictured for you on your little insert in the bulletin. Verse 34, "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay, and crushed them." Now, who was that stone? We believe that's the Lord Jesus Christ, made without hands, obviously born of a virgin, the God-man. And verse 35 says, "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

Now for those people who believe that we're in the Kingdom now, that there's not going to be an earthly kingdom, you tell me how that this has been fulfilled. Because there are other kingdoms on this earth and we've never seen the ten nations of Rome that's taken place that's also prophesied in Daniel 2. There's going to be an earthly kingdom set up on this earth and the Lord Jesus Christ, the King, will set up His kingdom right here on this earth. That's what He's telling us. Verse 36 goes on and says, "This was the dream; now we shall tell its interpretation." So we see then that the stone will come.

Now look at verse 44, "And in the days of those kings," what kings? Back up, verse 42, the toes of the feet, all of those are kings and the days of those kings, when there's a United States of Europe, when all those ten nations will come together, individual nations, but one. In the days of those kings something is going to take place: the King is going to set up His Kingdom. Now, that's the latter day prophecy that is revealed in chapter 2.

Well, that's chapter 2. Chapter 3 tells us about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, how God delivered them and the fire did not touch them, only burned off that which bound them.

Chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar has another dream, only this time it has nothing to do with the nations of this world, the empires of this world. It has to do with Nebuchadnezzar and his pride and God tells him about a tree and that tree is his kingdom and to cut that tree down but leave the stump there with the roots in the ground. In other words, He's going to salvage his kingdom, but He's going to do something in the life of Nebuchadnezzar to humble Nebuchadnezzar. Look in verse 37 of chapter 4, the key verse to that whole chapter. It says, "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, exalt, and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just,

and He is able to humble those who walk in pride." Seven years He humbled Nebuchadnezzar. Made him eat like an animal: he ate grass for his food. He would wake up in the morning with dew all over him just like the cattle in the field. He had a form of insanity for seven years and finally at the end of seven years chapter 4 says he looked up and when he looked up he began to praise God as the God, the One who rules. He doesn't rule any longer, but God rules. He'd been humbled. And this is the dream and the story of Daniel chapter 4.

Well, in chapter 5 we see another Babylonian king being humbled, only this time the whole kingdom comes down. And this is Belshazzar, a distant relative of Nebuchadnezzar, and he sees the handwriting on the wall in the midst of a drunken feast. He's taken the vessels of gold and silver that were taken out of the temple of God in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and he fills them full of wine. They have a drunken orgy, and in the midst of this drunken orgy and sacrilege to the things of God, ghostly fingers appear on the wall and they write a message: "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. Thou has been weighed in the balances and you're found lacking," and therefore judgment came. And the last verse of chapter 5 says, "So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two." So we see the fall of the Babylonia Empire.

Now we see the second kingdom, the upper torso, silver, we see it coming into existence: the Medo-Persian Empire. Well, chapter 6, Daniel is an old man now, up in his early eighties. He's in the lions' den now and we see how God spared him in the lions' den. Well, that's chapter 1 through chapter 6, and chronologically you can see it just go right on down, ending up in the first year of Darius who is the Medo-Persian king who ruled along side of Cyrus.

Now we get into chapter 7 and this is going to be, I think, an exciting chapter. We're going to be here for several weeks in this chapter because I want you to see it a piece at a time. Now in this chapter we're going to see Daniel having a vision. It's different now. Not a pagan king, we're through with them. Now we see Daniel having a vision. Look at verse 1, "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel saw a dream and visions in his mind as he lay on his bed." Now watch what he does. He does something different than the pagan kings. When they had their dreams they called for somebody to interpret them. What did Daniel do? "Then he wrote the dream down and related the following summary of it." Aren't you glad he wrote it down? We have it now to look at, and God the Holy Spirit, working through His prophet Daniel gave him a dream, its interpretation, and we have it today written down for our benefit.

Well, verse 2, "Daniel said, I was looking in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven," the atmospheric winds of heaven, north, south, east, and west, the tumultuous winds, "the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea." Now, be real careful: there are some people who interpret the great sea as the Mediterranean Sea. But as I studied in Isaiah and other places, to me the emphasis is many, many times, and more than not, it is used as the sea of nations. So out of this sea of nations, out of the Gentile world, the sea of nations, there's a stirring going on, a turmoil going on in this earth. And up out of those Gentile nations it says in verse 3, "And four great beasts were coming up from the sea, different from one another." So one after the other, four great beasts come up out of the Gentile nations of this earth; being stirred up by the four winds of heaven.

And so we get into these beasts. Now right here, on your little insert, write the lion, the bear, the leopard, and then that fourth beast unlike any of the other three. I want us to look at it this morning. I doubt real seriously anybody will jump up and go to the mission field after this message, but we're doing spade work folks. If we're going to understand it we're going to have to go through messages like this. We're just going to have to dig in and we're going to have to understand it the way it is put down. So you bear with me, pray for me. It's God's Word and God's Word is alive. Is that not correct? His Holy Spirit will do a work in our hearts if we'll just listen to what He's saying.

Alright, the first beast, corresponding to the head of gold. Now before we even look at that, look at verse 17 to make sure you understand. Daniel 7:17, "These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth." That's why I believe that sea terminology there is referring to the earth; so four great beasts that are rising up out of the earth. And remember one other thing, and this is going to help you; boy, when you get to Revelation it will really help you. You cannot separate a king from his kingdom. Now you remember that. Remember Daniel 2? Nebuchadnezzar is used as the head of gold. No, it isn't! It's Babylon: one and the same. You cannot separate kings from the kingdom. That will really help you later on. Four kings: four kingdoms is what he's talking about, raised up from the sea of nations upon this earth.

Alright, the first one. He says in verse 4, "The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it." Now what is that first nation? We have, I don't believe any doubt whatsoever, that it is Babylon, corresponding to the head of gold. This is Daniel's vision, this is Nebuchadnezzar's vision. Nebuchadnezzar saw a statue; Daniel saw four beasts which is the true character of this statue. The nature of the statue is the heart of the beast. Blasphemous names, Revelation tells us, were written upon the forehead of all the kingdoms of this earth; the beastly characteristics of these kingdoms. And the first one is a lion representing Babylon. Now, it said it had wings on that lion. Well, what are the wings for? Wings make you swift to do something. A lion is powerful, it's dominant, but it's also swift because it's given that ability to move quickly.

Now there are three reasons why I believe he's talking about Babylon, and perhaps you might agree. First of all, in chapter 2:37-38 as Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he says, "You are the one, the head of gold. You are the king of kings." Now he didn't mean the king of kings; he meant the king of kings on this earth. "It is you who has all this superiority on this earth. You're the top dog. You're the head man."

Well, think about it for a second. A lion is the king of beasts and the eagle is the king of all fowl of the air, and so there is no other above them, just like it was with Nebuchadnezzar: none above him. To me it has to be Babylon that he's referring to in this first beast. Well, the second reason I believe it's Babylon is because of the winged lion. Now we have some things to help us out. We're looking back at Daniel; Daniel is looking this way; we're looking back. As a matter of fact, you get to Revelation and it lists the beast in backwards order. Isn't that beautiful? John saw them from this side in. Daniel saw them from over here looking that way. One of the things I see in it is what the archeologists have come up with. They have discovered winged lions gracing the royal palaces that were in Babylon. And it has already been decided by secular people, we don't have to worry about them, but they have already given credence to the fact that the winged lion was a symbol of Babylon. Jeremiah, as a matter of fact, spoke of Babylon as both a lion and an eagle. And I've got the scriptures there but I won't bother to read them all to you. Ezekiel spoke of it as being an eagle in 17:3. Habakkuk spoke of it as being an eagle in 1:8. So we see the contemporary prophets of Daniel also calling Babylon both a lion and an eagle, so we see then the winged lion being Babylon.

I want you to notice something else that is even more powerful in this verse. Notice the change that takes place in this beast. Verse 4, "I kept looking until its wings were plucked," no longer had that swift capability, "and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it." In other words, the whole characteristic of a beast with its power was taken away from it and it was rendered to stand on its hind legs like a man, even to the mere thinking of a man. Does that remind you of anybody that was king of Babylon? Who? Nebuchadnezzar, that's right. What did God do to him? Buddy, you talk about humbling a man, taking his wings off of him, taking the power away from him. God took that away from Nebuchadnezzar. Made him a mere man; as a matter of fact, rendered him so peaceful that he became very humanistic in the right sense. It became very humanly oriented in what he would do: be concerned with human concerns. No longer the conquering beast anymore. He became like a man, thought like a man, very reasonable in his old age before God finally allowed him to die. And so we see then the lion with two wings being Babylon, equal to the head of gold on the statue revealed to Nebuchadnezzar.

Well, the second beast we come to resembles a bear. Verse 5, "And behold, another beast, a second one," comes after the first, "resembling a bear." And the next few things are just incredible. "And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'" Now how do we know that that's Medo-Persia? Well, first of all, since we know it's four kingdoms, we know from the book of Daniel that it has to be Medo-Persia; I mean, it tells you in chapter 5, the kingdom that overthrew Babylon. But there are other ways.

You know a bear is more massive in size than a lion. But it's a lot slower than a lion. If you'll study the history of the Medo-Persians, they were a much more vast empire than Babylon, but yet they moved much slower than Babylon had moved, and it took a lot longer for that empire to cover the territory it finally encompassed. But, you see, bears are brutal. I want you to look with me in Isaiah 13. It's speaking of this empire and it shows you the brutal characteristics of the Medo-Persians. Isaiah 13:17-18, to show you the brutal characteristics of this empire he's speaking of, the second beast. It says in verse 17, "Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them, who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold, and their bows will mow down the young men [now watch], they will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, nor will their eye pity children."

Like the brutal characteristics of the bear, the Medo-Persians will move in and plunder and rape the land. Listen, years ago I used to study about bears. I was just enthralled; I couldn't get enough of them. Outdoor Life, Field and Stream, anything I could read about it. I'd read the stories about how they'd kill a man, become obsessed with human blood, and how they would use animals as decoys to kill other men. And how they would get in these big parks and then I couldn't sleep all night. But I'd read about the brutal characteristics of a bear. And all of that came to haunt me when I was over in Romania last year, because we were walking down the road in the mountainous area. Somebody yelled, "Look out! Look out!" I said, "What's wrong?" And I looked up and it was about dusk and I looked up and there was a brown bear standing in the road as close to me as this piano right here. Now the brown bear wasn't really after me, he was after the garbage cans in the motel behind me. But I had a sneaking suspicion that he was not going to allow me to intimidate him whatsoever.

And I didn't know what to do, so I yelled, "Boo!" And he backed up about two steps and thought, "Who is this dummy thinking he can scare me by yelling boo?" One of the guys with us, one of the pastors from Bucharest, had a sack and in the sack was apple strudel. I'm glad that bears enjoy apple strudel and not human flesh, because he took the apple strudel and threw it up on the bank. The bear got a whiff of it and walked over and decided he like that and walked up in the woods and we were able to get by that bear. But I tell you what: bears are brutal.

The bears. There are three things about this bear that I want to show you that I think will be interesting. Alright, first of all, in verse 5,

it was raised up on one side. Now, you'll never find a time in the Medo-Persian Empire, two kingdoms now that have come together, where one of them does not somehow dominate the other. As if one side of that bear is more powerful and raised up above the other. As a matter of fact, in Daniel 6 we find that the Medes were much more powerful than the Persians. If you'll look with me in Daniel 6:8 it tells us by the way it denotes the names there. It says, "O king, establish the injunction and sign the document so that it may not be changed, according to the law," now watch this, they always put the predominant one first, "of the Medes and Persians." So you see in the raising up of the side of the bear at that point it was the Medes.

But look with me at Esther 1:19. This is several years later than the other one was written and notice what it said, "If it please the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media." Turned around. And so we see that there was never a time that they were equal. That bear raised up on one side.

But go back to verse 5 of Daniel 7. Look what it says, "and three ribs were in its mouth." Now, I don't know about you, but it doesn't take too much to figure that out. If he's got three ribs in his mouth at one time, those ribs belonged to something. Now he has three bones in his mouth. What does that tell you? It means there must be three conquests somehow. He's got the bones in his mouth. History tells us, and thank you history for we so appreciate you stepping in at this point, we don't need history but it sure documents and it doesn't have to document, but the Word of God stands on what it says. History documents there were three kingdoms that this powerful nation conquered. One was Babylon, we know that; one was Lydia, Lydia is modern day Turkey; and then Egypt. All three of these were the three ribs in the mouth of the bear.

And then the third thing he says, "and thus they said to it, 'Arise, devour much meat!'" It's incredible as you read the history of the Medo-Persians how they were insatiable with a desire to conquer more and more and more and more and more land. And so, as it says, this is the Medo-Persian Empire. The second beast.

Alright, let's go to the third beast. Verse 6, "After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back [not two wings like the lion] four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it." Now, right now you think a lot of what I'm saying is speculation, but wait until we get to chapter 8 and some of the other chapters. It tells you that it's Medo-Persia; it tells you that it's Greece. But right now we've got to settle; we're not over there yet. So this nation has to be the nation of Greece. "Like a leopard;" and you know a leopard is known for how swiftly it can make its attack. And the key general of all the Greek Empire was Alexander the Great, and it is told in history of how he made overnight moves. He would march his men day in and day out just to make a swift surprise attack on someone. He conquered more land, more empires than any general ever known in the history of man. It came to a point that he thought he had conquered it all and sat down and wept because there were no more kingdoms to conquer. And at 32 years old, after a drunken orgy, he got a fever and because of that fever he died. Thirty two years old!

And what does the verse tell us? It said the beast also had four heads and dominion was given to it. Do you know what his kingdom was divided into? Four parts; as he died it took four kings to take over all the land that he had conquered. Lysimachus took over Greece. Cassander took over Macedonia; Seleucus took over Syria and Babylonia; and Ptolemy took over Egypt.

That's the four heads that took over his kingdom when Alexander the Great died. So we have Babylon, a lion with two wings; we have Medo-Persia, a bear; we have Greece as a leopard with four wings, swift and can move quickly. And we see those empires. Now we come to the one that concerned Daniel. Folks, I'm telling you! You say, "This is not personal to me this morning!" Oh, buddy, you better believe it's personal this morning. That fourth beast, you'd better look at it and look at it close.

Look what it says in verse 7, "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast." You see, up until now we've had history document everything the Word of God said. We know God did exactly like He said He was going to do. Watch this: "and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong." The words dreadful and terrifying mean there that it was fearless. Why was it fearless? Because it was extremely strong; it had nothing to fear. As a matter of fact it goes on to say, "it had large iron teeth." Of course that iron corresponds to those legs of iron that we saw on the statue in Daniel 2. "It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different," now watch this, "it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns."

Now before I go any further, let me show you something here. What we're seeing is Rome in three dimensions; basically in three time periods. First of all you see ancient Rome when it was like legs of iron, when it's here with its teeth of iron and it crushed and it trampled. We know that took place and you'll see on your statue over here the Roman Empire ended about 476 AD. That's when ancient Rome goes away. We're not talking about ancient Rome. Everything that the Bible says about its being with iron and crushing and trampling is exactly the way it happened. That's the way Rome was. As a matter of fact it fell from within; nobody conquered it, it fell from within, from moral decay from within.

But we see a second stage of Rome, and the world has not yet witnessed this. Remember the ten toes of chapter 2? What does it say again in verse 7, the last part? "and it had ten horns." Ten horns: we know that those ten horns—matter of fact look over in verse

24, it tells you what they are. It says, "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise." Can you separate a king from his kingdom? No! The ten kingdoms, the ten kings. There's going to come a time, like I said, there's going to be like a United States of Europe, when ten nations are going to come together. Folks, everybody is watching the Middle East. You're looking the wrong way! Look at Europe! Something is going to happen in Europe long before something happens over in the Middle East. There's going to be a conglomeration of ten nations that are going to come together, loosely federated, and yet they're going to be a world power; not to conquer, those things have gone out. What's it going to be for? You write it down: for the mighty dollar. You write it down.

Napoleon, Charlemagne, tried to recreate the Roman Empire; they could not do it. No man has ever been able to do it. God alone is going to allow this to happen. He's going to bring up these ten nations and they're going to come right out of the old ancient Rome. It's going to come out of that part of our world. Ten nations loosely federated together but united as one kingdom. That's the second stage of Rome; we've never seen that. That's the latter days, folks. We've never seen that. History says nothing about that. I'm telling you, when you think about what's going on in Europe right now, you ask any European what excites him more than anything else and he says, "1992, 1992." Over here in America we're sound asleep. We don't even realize what God has said and what He's doing over there in Europe.

You know what's going to happen in 1992? One passport, one currency, that's when those nations are going to come together to form that European Common Market for the purpose of economics in this world. I want to tell you something: if they choose any kind of currency other than ours, what do you think is going to happen to the dollar overnight? And all the people in America thinking nobody can break us, we're financially wealthy. You watch what God can do. Lot of speculation right now, so I'm going to get away from it. There's going to be another stage when ten nations come together.

But there's yet going to be another stage. Actually, you can look at it as one or you can look at it as two. Something else is going to happen. Out of those ten nations something is going to appear. Now this is when we get to a part it doesn't even talk about in Daniel 2. Look at verse 8, "While I was contemplating the horns," ten horns, ten toes, we see that, "behold, another horn." Now, if you'll look on your beast, that's an ugly thing isn't it? Right here on the front of the forehead is a little nub: that's the eleventh horn, that the little horn that's going to rise up, right here on the forehead. Now watch what he says in verse 8, "behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots." In other words, how's he going to come to power? He's going to conquer three of the ten somehow. I don't know how. "And behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts."

Now folks, we need to concentrate on this little horn. Some people say it's a man. Well, yes, it is. But you can't divorce a man from the powers behind it, and next week I'm going to show you in Revelation that explains the thing so clearly that nobody can miss it. There will be a power behind it, but there will also be a man in front of it. Who do we know this man as, being the little horn? What would we call it? The Antichrist, you best believe it. And when is this all taking place? Latter days, all of this is in the latter days.

Now watch and this is very important to God's people, the Jews. Look at verses 24-25, "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. And he will speak out against the Most High," watch the next phrase, "and wear down the saints." The word for "saints" there is simply the word that means "the Holy Ones." Always attributed to Israel in the Old and attributed to the Christians in the New. So I believe what he's talking about here is Israel, God's people, His covenant people. As a matter of fact, from chapter 8 through chapter 12, we deal with Israel. Up to now we've dealt with the Gentile nations.

Now watch: "and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law." In other words, he'll be lawless. He'll make his own laws, "and they will be given into his hand." They? Who are the "they"? Those people, the saints, Israel, "will be given into his hand for a time [the word "time" means year], times [two years, three years now], and half a time." How long is that? Three and a half years.

Now folks, that's the last three and a half years of this age. He's telling you what's going to happen. Something is going to take place. Oh, I want to preempt next week. We're going to get into Revelation. And we're going to see what's going to happen as the woman and the male child and the dragon, but I can't get there yet. We're in chapter 7. But something is going to happen in the last three and a half years of this age and there's going to be one who is going to do battle against the saints of God, the holy ones of God, Israel! You see, this begins to take shape now. Now don't jump ahead of me. It will all fit if you'll just go with me as slow as we're going to go.

Alright, look again in verses 26-27. We read in 24-25 of how he's going to be given power for three and a half years to subdue the saints, but it says in verse 26, "But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him."

How is he going to be destroyed? Remember the stone of chapter 2? What is it going to do? Crush the statue. "Well, Wayne, does it

mean that all those kingdoms will be present at that time?" Well, wait a minute, wait a minute. When Medo-Persian conquered Babylon it didn't destroy it; it just conquered it, it absorbed it into itself. When Greece conquered Medo-Persian it didn't destroy it; it absorbed it into itself. When Rome conquered Greece it absorbed it into itself. All the kingdoms that have ever been known on the face of this earth will all be wrapped up in this particular individual and the kingdom behind it. And that kingdom ultimately will be destroyed and nothing will be left, not even a trace. And remember what chapter 2 said? And His kingdom will fill up the whole earth and no one will be there to overtake His kingdom.

Now for those that believe we're in the kingdom now, personally I just believe you've missed it. I'm sorry, love you to death, you've just flat missed it. You tell me we're in the kingdom right now, but let me ask you a question: does righteousness prevail and are there other kingdoms on this earth that would be evil at all? And have you ever seen the ten nations come together? Have you seen any of this take place? No! It will be in those days that the kingdom will come. It will be an instantaneous setting up of His kingdom on this earth. The kingdom of grace that we're in right now is a progressive kingdom. His kingdom will be instantaneously set up on this earth. It will be on this earth and Jesus will be the King of that kingdom.

So hang on, brother, the King is coming. Along with the king is His kingdom. And we've got a lot more. Now don't you jump in there and try to read between the blanks, don't pick up Hal Lindsay and everybody else and try to figure it all out. Don't you do that! Let the Bible speak for itself. We're going to inch our way through this. Next week we'll take a little bit more about this little horn; a little bit more understanding of who he is. The following week we may do something on the kingdom that is to come, what we can look forward to on this earth. But we're just going to inch our way through.

Everybody has been trying to get me to force interpretations on this thing; I'm just not smart enough to do that. I do know what it says and we'll stay with that. But I do know one thing: the King is coming.

You know, I was up in Pennsylvania at a retarded children's home one day and I tried to preach. And I couldn't think of the right words to say but every time I mentioned "Jesus" I noticed something. All those precious about 300 crammed into an auditorium, every time I'd say Jesus, they'd go, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" These big old tears would get in their face. I noticed every time I said "Jesus," or every time I read a verse about God loving us. And the Holy Spirit gave me a leading and I threw away everything I was going to say. He said, "Now just repeat yourself and repeat the verses that build our faith." I started going through them, John 3:16 and the different verses, and every time I'd read one of those verses they'd go, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus," and those tears would just stream down their face. And then they stood up, they stood up and raised their hands and said, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." I tell you what, I wonder sometimes who is retarded. When they come together and hear the name of Jesus it just pulls their inner being out because they love Him and they worship Him.

There's a little retarded children's home in Kentucky. Remember "retarded" is in quotes. Preacher went there one day and told them about Jesus and he said, "Now listen, He's going to come again, He's going to come again. I want you to watch the eastern sky." They said the next several weeks they couldn't keep the windows clean on the eastern side of the building because every time they had recess, every time they had lunch, anything else, they'd run to those windows and they'd put their face up against those windows and they'd say, "Is it today? Is it today Jesus is coming? Jesus is coming."

Well, folks, do you believe He's coming? You go back to the history books and it'll tell you it exactly happened in Babylon, in happened the same way the Bible said it in Medo-Persia, happened the same way with Greece, happened the same way with Rome. And God says, "It's going to take place the way I say it's going to take place. And when I say it's going to happen." And I don't know about you, but I'm a part of the group that believes that the church is not even in Daniel at all. He didn't even understand the church. I believe as we get to chapter 9, of the 69 and the 70th week, I think we're a little parenthesis in there and in the mean time we're here and we're taken up and we're gone and then He has those last seven years. That's what I believe, I don't know, you may disagree with me. If you want to stay here, help yourself, I'm going with the first bunch. There's going to be a group of us going out of here. There's going to be a group of us going out of here.

Jesus is going to come for His church and then one day as He establishes His kingdom, destroys the nations of this world, He's going to come with His church, we'll be with Him, and He'll come riding on a horse with a sword in His hand and He won't be the weak little man on a donkey riding into Jerusalem. Buddy, He'll be the King, the King of Kings, and He'll set up His kingdom on this earth. Amen!

Daniel 7:8-25 The Rise, Reign and Ruin of the Little Horn

Turn with me to Daniel 7 as we continue studying this marvelous book, and in particular this marvelous chapter about the latter days, about what's going to take place in the end of the ages. As a matter of fact, next Sunday morning we're going to be talking about His Kingdom that will come; today we're just sort of easing in to it and by next Sunday morning, if we haven't raptured, we'll be ready

to, that's for sure. But Daniel 7, and I want to talk to you about the rise, the reign, and the ruin of the little horn.

Let me say that again. The rise, the reign, and the ruin of the little horn. Now, I'll not finish all this this morning; as a matter of fact I'll probably just do a sufficient job to confuse you. I'm praying that I won't, but we're going to get just far enough and then stop and take it a little bit at a time.

I had the great opportunity to go over to Nashville and to speak at a men's conference. And there were about 150 men there. About 70 of which on Saturday entered in to a bass fishing tournament on Old Hickory Lake over by Gallatin, TN. Well, I haven't fished in hurricanes, but I think fishing in a hurricane would be a lot calmer than fishing in what we fished in yesterday. One thing I learned right quickly: if you ever want to throw forward, just turn backwards and throw and the wind will blow it back that way. It's amazing! You don't throw this way to get it there because the wind was blowing so strong it would blow the lure behind you. But if one thing any fisherman understands is this: if you have a fishing rod in your hands, especially if you use a casting reel, and you've got that thing cocked down and you're ready to throw it, and there's a strong wind blowing at you, if you don't know what you're doing, you're about to experience some great frustration because you're going to have something happen to that reel. Fishermen call it professional override. What it is is a backlash, and you're going to have a tangled mess in your hands like you did not want. You do not throw into the wind unless you know what you're doing.

Now you say, "What's that got to do with Daniel?" Well, friend, the winds blowing, blowing strong in these days. Our thoughts are all turned towards the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and when we cast out there in front of that wind, to find some understanding in the Word of God, we better know what we're doing or we're going to end up with a confused mess. What most people do with prophecy is they buy this book and that book and they try to put their theology together by what everybody else is saying without paying a bit of attention to what the Word of God has to say. I've not studied Revelation. This is my first time to ever study prophecy. How many of you would fit into that category today? Well, those of us that are honest enough to admit it, and we don't know everything about it, we're going to take it slow. The rest of you have it all figure out: bless you. But let us get to it our own way. We're going to take it a little bit at a time, we're going to cast out there in that wind, hopefully we know what we're doing, and we can walk away from here understanding what thrill it is to know and understand God's Word.

Well, it's very obvious in chapter 7 that Daniel is intrigued with the fourth beast. Now, I'll not go back and preach last week's message over again. We know there were four beasts that were revealed to him in a vision. But it's the fourth beast that really catches his attention. Verse 23 tells us something about that. It says, "The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms, and it will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it."

Now what's going to be different about it? Well, you see, this fourth beast is Rome, this fourth kingdom, and it's going to be in sort of like three dimensions, three stages. We see it's different from the other kingdoms. They rose, they fell and that's all you ever hear about them again. This one, however, will be strong in a certain period of its history as we study. We see ancient Rome as being one of the great, most dominant kingdoms on the face of this earth, way up until about 491 AD. But we see then it begins to divide; it begins to filtrate into the seed of men all around it and we don't see the streak for a long period of time. However, there is going to come a time in Rome's history that it will sort of resurrect again if you please, and it'll be ten nations that will come together somehow in the geographical location of old Rome and these ten nations will form a United States of Europe. They will be together and yet they will be separate. There will be ten kingdoms and ten kings and yet there will be one empire or one great kingdom.

It says in verse 24, "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them." Well, I'm getting ahead of myself. If these ten kings that he's concerned with, he's really intrigued with, verses 19-20 say, "Then I desire to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast." This was really intriguing Daniel, so he had to have it revealed to him as we're going to have to have it revealed to us. Now, there's going to be another stage coming out of those ten nations, those ten horns as it says there in verse 24, it says, "and another [horn] will arise after them." And it's this one we want to look at today. Verse 8 says that he's the "little horn." The little horn of Daniel 7, and that's what we want to zero in on this morning.

The rise of the little horn

We want to see the rise, we want to see the reign and we want to see the ruin of the little horn. We won't see all of that today, but we'll begin to look at it. Alright, first of all, the rise of the little horn. Who is he? What is he or it? What is going on? Is it a person? Is it a kingdom? What is this little horn?

I don't think there can be any doubt, or there should be little doubt that this is referring to a person here. It's talking about a person. If you'll look in 7:8 it says, "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn," now watch this, it has the characteristics of a person, "possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts." And we begin to see that there is a personality attached to this little horn.

Over in verse 24 it even says some things about him. It says, "and another will arise after them, and he [notice the personal pronoun there, "and he"] will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings." And verse 25, "And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time." So it appears to me that what we're dealing with here is that this little horn is an individual. He has personal traits to him, he's a very arrogant, a very boastful type of person, and I think he's speaking here of the Antichrist.

Well let's push on a little further. How is he going to rise to power? What are going to be the distinctions of this? There are three things that we need to look at from Scripture. First of all, it will be a slow, gradual rise to power. "While I was contemplating the horns," verse 8, "behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them." Now that phrase, "came up among them," means it grew up slowly, gradually. As a matter of fact, if you've ever been deer hunting and somebody came in and bagged a buck but it was a little button buck. You know what a button buck is? That's when the horns have just barely pierced through the skin of the head of the deer.

And they bring him in and say, "Oh, man, isn't this wonderful? I killed a buck today." What that person is really saying is, "Thank the Lord! I thought I had shot a doe, but I found it and sure enough the horns had popped through the skins." Because no deer hunter, I don't care who they are, unless they're standing ten feet above the deer, can see those little buttons that pop up. They're hardly recognizable. And those little buttons that will pop up on that young buck deer will begin to gradually get bigger and bigger and bigger. Nobody is every watching, nobody is ever looking. You can't really see it. It's not that distinctive.

And to me that's the idea: he'll grow up gradually; nobody is paying attention to him. He'll begin to come to power. So it'll be a slow coming up. But secondly, it will be a mark to the way that he comes to power. It will be a distinctive mark to the way he comes to power. It says very clearly "He'll subdue three kings." It says in verse 8, "[he] came up among them, and three of the first horns [these were kings] were pulled out by the roots before it." And it says the same thing in verse 24. It says, "and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings."

Now if I was going to be watching for someone like that to rise up, that would be the distinctive mark: he gradually begins to come up among them. And I think when it says among them, that's the geographical area that he's talking about; it will be in that area of our world, and out of that area will come another king, another ruler. But as he comes up he will be marked distinctively as he begins to come to power by subduing three of the other kings. Now some people think that means in a military coup or something like that. Be real careful! Don't read into this what it doesn't say. It may be economic; it may be all kinds of ways. It may be in such a subtle way that the world will completely miss it as he rips them up out of their roots. We don't know what he's saying, but somehow he'll subdue those three kings.

Well, but then thirdly, it will grow ultimately to be larger than the rest. Verse 8 says he's a little horn among the others. But then look at verse 20: he grows larger than his associates. Verse 20 says as it goes on down in the verse it says, "that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates." So it appears pretty clear to me that we're dealing with a person and a person that will one day rise to power over in Europe in the area of ancient Rome where ten nations will come together. One will come out and this one will be marked distinctively when he comes to power by subduing somehow, and the Bible doesn't say, three kings. He'll take them out by their roots and he will ultimately grow to be larger than all of his associates.

Now there's a rule of studying this that I think will help you. It's one of those little things you do when you throw into the wind to keep your reel from back-lashing. Do you know what that is? Remember this: you cannot separate the king from his kingdom. Now remember that, because when we go to Revelation in a minute, we're going to get into some deep water, but if you'll hang on to the guidelines. How do we know that? Already taught to us in Daniel chapter 2. He told him about four kingdoms and when he interpreted the dream, what did he say? He said, "Nebuchadnezzar, the first kingdom, the kingdom of gold is you." Now did he mean him or did he mean Babylon? He meant both. You don't separate the king from the kingdom that he operates with. Remember that and I think it will help unlock some doors as we go in a moment to Revelation.

So we see then that the Antichrist is being prophesied here to Daniel. Doesn't that thrill you this morning? This is a long time, friend; matter of fact, this is back before any of this had taken place hardly. And it's prophesied to Daniel. Why would it be prophesied to Daniel? Well, in chapter 9 you'll see: because he's a man that was burdened for his people. This whole book concerns God's people and it concerns God's holy city Jerusalem. You're not dealing with Christians in the book of Daniel, you're dealing with Israel; and that's a burden on Daniel's heart. Now remember that as we go through it.

So one day there's going to be an Antichrist that will come up; a man who will speak blasphemous things against God as we'll see in a minute. His rise will be slow, gradual, he'll subdue three kings and then he'll grow larger than his associates.

The reign of the little horn

Well, secondly his reign. And I doubt very seriously that we'll go all the way through this one but let's go as far as we can. But anyway, his reign, verse 25. I still think that there's merit in going slow, don't you? We're just going to inch. Somebody said a long time ago that "inch by inch, life's a cinch; yard by yard, life's way too hard." So this morning we're going to go inch by inch. And it's going to frustrate some of you prophecy students because you've gone a lot further than the rest of us, but you leave us alone. You go home and tell everybody else how ignorant we are. We're going to find it out on our own. So all of you that have not studied, you stick with me. We're going to learn it, but we're going to learn it right by going slow, okay?

His reign. When he comes to power, what is it that God wants us to know about this king? Why did He single out this king? There have been other kings that have come to power, why does He single out this one? What's this got to do with God's ultimate purpose in the latter days? Well, in verse 25 we're going to see the first characteristic of him in his reign, what it's going to be like. He will be a very feared person by Israel. He's going to treat Israel in a horrible, traumatic way; not only that, he will speak blasphemous things against God.

So what we begin to see in his reign, when he comes to power, he's going to be a man who obviously is not afraid of God. We've already seen in the scriptures that he's going to be lawless: he's going to change the laws. He's not going to listen to anybody and there's something else significant about him: he's going to zero in on Israel and buddy, there are some dark days ahead for those Jews that have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.

Okay, look at verse 25 and it begins to help us understand it. It says, "And he will speak out against the Most High," as a matter of fact, very blasphemous as we'll see in other chapters in Daniel, "and wear down the saints of the Highest One," and don't read "Christian" into the word "saints." The word "saints" simply means "holy ones." That was attributed to Israel in the Old and is attributed to Christians in the New. But these saints are God's people, folks. These are the holy ones. These are the ones that God is dealing with during this particular period of time. "And he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time [which means a year], times [two years], and half a time," which is half a year, so for three and a half years. That part of his reign God focuses in on to Daniel. He wants him to know that this man is going to be significant in the life of Israel. He's going to have a blasphemous character towards God, but there's going to be three and a half years of his life that's going to be unlike any ruler we've ever known on the face of this earth. He's going to be a terror on this earth and all hell's going to break loose on this earth.

Now for three and one half years all that fury is going to be released toward Israel, which has something very important to say to us in latter day prophecy. Okay, so he's going to be blasphemous and he's going to be feared by God's people. You know, if I was a Jew today and rejected Christ, I'd pay a lot of attention to this because there is going to come a time in the future that is going to be very important to God's people.

Well, let's just see if we can now get real confused. Look in Revelation 12. We're throwing out in the wind now. Are you ready? Your reel all fixed up right; do you know what you're doing? You say, "Brother Wayne, do you?" Well, I'm not sure. Let's see. Revelation 12. Now you're going to see in Revelation two different beasts and you're going to see beasts come up with ten horns. It is established in Daniel what the beast is with ten horns. What is it? It's the fourth kingdom in the latter day stages of the latter day prophecy. Hang on to that fact because I'm about to confuse you. If you'll stay with me I'm going to confuse you I think for a real good way. Sometimes, if you confuse people, then come back to where you confused them, you can straighten them out. Unless I've already confused you.

Revelation 12:1-6. Three characters we need to understand. First of all, the woman: "And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Now that really could give you a lot of speculation as to who the woman is. Let's move on, verse 2, "and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth." Now we know that this woman is significant because she's about to bear a child. We know from verse 5 that it's a son, a male child. Now who would you think this woman is? Well immediately somebody will say, "The virgin Mary."

Now whoa, don't jump the gun. You're going to see in a minute that this woman is going to be persecuted for three and a half years. I want to share with you, yes, it would include the Virgin Mary if you'll look at her lineage there in Matthew, it comes right out of the Jewish heritage, but it is not her, it is Israel! Israel was the nation God chose and promised Abraham that a seed would come from him one day. And Galatians 3 tells us who that seed is. But I'm not going to tell you yet. The woman: the woman is Israel. I don't think there can be any doubt, not just a little doubt, there can be no doubt it's the woman, from what we read later on.

Verse 3, there's a second character in this scenario and it's the dragon. "And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns," now this adds something to the picture we've already had in Daniel. We've seen the ten horns, the ten nations, but what in the world are these seven heads? Hopefully we'll see that this morning; if not, next time; "and on his heads were seven diadems" or crowns. Now who is the dragon? Look down in verse 9, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan." How about that? So the dragon here that he mentions with ten horns and

seven heads and seven crowns is none other than the devil, old Satan himself.

Now this ought to be where the confusion starts entering in "Wait a minute. I thought you told me that the beast with ten horns was a kingdom in the latter day stages of Rome." I did, but right here it says he comes up and he has ten horns. "Now how can this be the devil? You've already told us the guidelines." I told you I was going to confuse you. Just stay confused for a few minutes. It won't hurt you a bit. Just stay right where you are.

Now the third character we've got to see in this scenario is the male child. In verse 5 it says that "And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron." If there's any question who this is, folks, maybe we could lead you to know Jesus before the day's over and you can just get saved. This is the Lord Jesus Christ. There's only One who is to rule over all the nations of this earth with a rod of iron. He is our forever King and isn't that wonderful that we can start seeing him be prophesied right here in the Word of God, and we're going to see Him lifted up tonight; "and her child was caught up to God and to His throne."

Now what he does here, the author of Revelation, gives us a timeline and I wish I could draw it for you this morning, but let me just see if I can give you a mental image. In verse 5 it starts with the birth of the male child, and we can almost even tell you when that is because of chapter 9. It gives the date up to His crucifixion. We know that He was born and it starts with that. It goes to the Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, skips the death, burial, resurrection, skips the whole thing. He's not concerned with that. He says He was caught up to God. What does that tell you? There must have been 33 years elapse right there in the middle of one verse. As a matter of fact, in one sentence there's a time gap. See how confusing Scripture can be sometimes? It jumps from His birth, right to His Ascension.

And then, between verse 5 and verse 6 he gives you a bigger time gap than you ever thought. He jumps from the time of Christ's Ascension all the way to the last three and a half years we've been looking at in Daniel of this age. Isn't that incredible? And he tells you something about the woman who is Israel. Look what he says in verse 6, "And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days." How many years do you think that is? That's three and a half years. They had 360 days in a year. Three and a half years. Now where have we seen three and a half years before, but said a different way? "Time, times and half a time." Remember that in Daniel 7:25? Now we're seeing a parallel here. Oh, this little horn, he's going to have real power during a period of time. And remember, it said that it was given to him only for three and a half years. And during that three and a half period of time he's going to do something to Israel and Revelation is beginning to give us a little bit more understanding of all of that.

Well, let's read because now he answers what he just said. Verse 7, "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon," who is Satan, "was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him."

Now we most of the time interpret this as if it has already happened, and certainly to the degree that Satan was cast out of heaven that is true. But he still has an audience in heaven; he can still go back to the Father. He accuses the brethren day and night; there is angelic warfare in the heavens. So this has it, as I understand the Word of God, being a final casting down of Satan. And to me, contextually, it fits more that this is going to happen at a specific period of time in history, actually specifically right before the last three and a half years that God's been talking about in Daniel and already suggested in Revelation 12. Look at verse 10: "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night.'"

Now look at verse 12: "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them." Why would the heavens rejoice? Hey, man, you don't have to put up with this sucker anymore. He's been cast out; he can never enter these heavens again. "Woe to the earth...; because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." How long does he have on the face of this earth? How long a time does God give him when He ultimately cast him out of the heavens? How long? Three and a half years. What is he going to do during those three and a half years? Verse 13, "And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished [now, listen, that does not mean that she wasn't persecuted. She was nourished during this time: this is hope for Israel. God is going to watch over His children. One-third of them will be saved and then comes their day of atonement it says in other places] for a time and times and half a time [three and a half years] from the presence of the serpent."

So the scene begins to develop even more. Why is God bringing this out to Daniel? He's not just giving him a history lesson, He's trying to tell him that in the latter days that there's going to be a little horn to come up and that little horn, when he comes up, is going to do damage to the children of God, to the holy ones of God, Israel. And for three and a half years there's going to be a reign of terror on this earth like the world has never known.

But you say, "Now Brother Wayne, that's fine. I understand the little horn. But what's this got to do with Satan? It says here that Satan is the one who's persecuting the woman." Are you beginning to put it together in your mind? How can you disassociate the people he's going to use from the evil that he is himself? He is going to be working through what? There's going to be a ten nation federation; somehow those people are going to give their power to a man and that man is going to be the little horn that we're talking about.

Listen, in all three of them it talked about him having horns, seven heads, and seven crowns. Let's look at that: Daniel 7. Actually Daniel 7 doesn't talk about the seven heads. Let me tell you what the seven heads really are. The seven heads, and I have to bring this out from the Scriptures next week because I didn't write it down but it popped in my mind. It might just solve something right here. The seven heads represent seven kings, and, friend, if you'll look at the seven kingdoms that have been on this earth, it says five have fallen, one is, and one is to come as we'll see later on in another passage in Revelation. If you'll look at all the kingdoms that have been there: there's Egypt, there's Assyria, there's Babylon, there's Medo-Persia, and there's Greece that have fallen. One is, and who is writing the book of Revelation: John is writing it. Rome is! But there is one to come, what's to come? That revived latter day empire of Rome itself.

And in those seven heads, they have blasphemous names written across their foreheads, which means that every nation on this earth has always dishonored God. They've always gone their own way and built into each kingdom are some things to do with other kingdoms that they've taken over. And so all the evil on earth is represented in those seven heads, and all those seven heads are somehow represented in those ten nations, and behind every bit of it is Satan himself. He's the one causing the evil. But I want you to know something: God has him on a leash. He only has time that God says he has and God's going to use everything he does for His own purposes.

Alright, just to show you this: Daniel 7, we've already seen the beast with ten horns. Let's just leave that alone for a minute. Revelation 12, we've just seen that this dragon is going to have ten horns on his head and seven heads and seven diadems. But now look in chapter 13 of Revelation. And we see another beast and we see that this beast becomes a personality. Here we have another picture of the Antichrist. But I want to show you something. Verse 1, "And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names."

And as we continue to compare Scripture with Scripture it appears to me that that's the kingdom. But he goes on, "And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion." Isn't that amazing? When Daniel saw it, he saw the lion first, then he saw the bear and the leopard, but it's exactly the opposite with John. Why? Because Daniel is looking this way and John is looking that way. It's the same beast, just seen from a different perspective. Isn't that incredible? "And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority."

Look at the personality starting to develop automatically out of this. "And I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;" Be careful how you interpret that! Be real, real, real, real, real careful how you do that. Maybe later on we'll get to that. "And they worshiped the dragon, because he gave his authority to the beast [who gave the authority to the beast? The dragon gave his authority to the beast]; and they worshipped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?' And there was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies; and authority to act for forty-two months." How long is that? Three and a half years; time, times, and half a time; or twelve hundred and sixty days. It's all the same thing, so there is a time period here. Wherever you see that just stand up and shout! I know now what Daniel is talking about!

Why would he bring up this little horn? Because there's going to come a time in latter day prophecy that this man is going to grow up and take power. But behind him will be ten nations, and behind all of it is going to be the dragon, Satan himself. Look at Revelation 17:12-13. Don't try to figure it all out; we're just putting some things where I think it will help us. "And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth [that is so exciting; we'll have to do that later] and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour." Look at verse 13: here's the verse. "These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast."

It's very obvious to me that those ten nations are going to come under the leadership of this one individual with the little horn that's going to rise up. But behind the whole scenario is going to be Satan masking himself. That's the way he always works. You'll see in Daniel, he's behind all the pagan governments of this world. He's behind the Hitler's and the Mussolini's and all of them. But above him, with unseen hands that we can't even see, is a God that is completely controlling his destiny and knows the day and the hour that his end is going to come on this earth.

But friends, I can't go any further, because if I do I'll just dig a hole I can't get out of. This is just a start; we're throwing out in the

wind. The wind's blowing, man, things are happening in this world. What's going on? Make sure you've got your reel fixed just real good. Don't throw it out there and expect to get answers if you don't start listening to how the Word of God puts this together. I'm open for correction. I'm not the authority in this church. God is the authority and His Word is the authority, and what I learn I'll pass on to you. And where I miss it, I'll come back and tell you I missed it. But we want to honestly approach this thing as learners that have to have truth revealed to us by the Holy Spirit of God. Amen? And He is coming.

And I want you to think about something. We haven't gotten to verse 9 of Daniel yet. Because verse 9 of Daniel is going to come at a time when God says, "That's it! Boom! That's enough! Three and a half years are over with." And buddy, the courts are going to set up. Judgment is going to come and the King is going to ride in and that's when you're going to see Him set up His Kingdom and He's always had it. It's going to be an eternal kingdom. He's always been our King and He's going to be an eternal King. It's all going to take place.

"Aw, Brother Wayne, I just don't believe it." Well, help yourself. I didn't say you had to. We're going to get into chapter 8 and I believe chapter 8 was thrown in there just for our benefit, not for Daniel. Daniel couldn't—what's it going to do for him? He's going to show you how Medo-Persia and Greece fell, just exactly the way he said and within 200 years it takes place right there in front of your very eyes. And so the skeptic says, "Well, I can believe that because it's already happened." Isn't that the dumbest thing you ever heard? When it was spoken of it hadn't even been thought of by anybody.

Well, friend, if it happened in Medo-Persia and Greece like he says in chapter 8, you better write it down, it's going to happen like he said in chapter 7 to the rest of what's going on in this world.

I asked the question I guess I've asked many times. Are you ready? Are you ready? My daughter said something to me the other night. I'm so grateful the Lord brought this back to my mind because it ministered so much to me I was afraid I was going to forget it and it came to my mind. She'll be twenty in October and a lot of things can be on a twenty year old person's mind, especially a young girl who thinks about one day marriage and children and things like that. So what she said so ministered to me. She said, "Daddy, if there's one thing I want in my life, one thing." And I said, "What's that?" She said, "If there's one thing I want more than anything else is for Jesus to come."

I tell you, that has so blessed me. That's all she wants. All she's living for. Friend, you might as well pitch this thing in the trash can if you're living for this world. It's not going to do you any good, just frustrate you to death. It's already late and you're going to miss your lunch. Been a whole lot better to stay home and watch television. What are we here for? Man, this ought to thrill the socks off every one of us. We ought to get up in the morning and say, "Praise God, maybe today You'll come again for me. Today, is it today, is it today? All I want in my life is just to see Jesus face to face." Our King who is the forever King.

Daniel 7:9-14 Thy Kingdom Come

Turn this morning to Daniel 7. The message entitled this morning will be "Thy Kingdom Come." We've been looking at the little horn of Daniel 7, found in verse 8 and also in verses 24-25. Let's go back and just sort of remember these verses.

Verse 8 says, "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts." And then in verse 24, "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise [this is latter day Rome that we're getting a picture in prophecy]; and another will arise after them [this is the little horn, and notice the personal pronoun] and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time [one year], times [two years], and half a time," which is one half year. So for three and one half years there's going to be a reign of terror by this little horn toward the nation of Israel in the latter days.

Now it appears from what we've studied so far that this little horn is an individual. We would call him the Antichrist. So far we have seen his rise; his rise will be a gradual one, like a horn that grows out of an animal's head. It will be small at first and yet it will grow to be larger than all of the rest. And his rise to power will be marked by his subduing three kings, three of the ten of those nations that will form latter day Rome. We don't understand all of that, how he will do it, how he will take away their power, but somehow it's spoken of in God's Word.

We've seen his rise, but we've also seen a little bit from Daniel 7 of his reign. In verse 25 again we see some interesting things there. It will be for three and a half years there he will wear down the saints of God and will speak blasphemy against God. He will be boastful; a very arrogant type of Antichrist, obviously against anything that God would be for. It seems interesting to me the visions Daniel had zeroed in on those last three and a half years. If you could make a time line and go all the way to the end of this

age and back it up three and a half years, that's when he starts in Daniel 7:25.

During those three and a half years he will war against the Holy One, that's Israel. Israel will go through a very difficult time; this is their day of wrath. This is the day of Jacob's distress; this is when God through that chastening of His people will bring out of them one-third of all the Jewish nation at that time who will come to their day of atonement and will one day bow down to the Lord Jesus Christ and that will mark the end of that tribulation time and that's when our forever King will return to this earth.

You see, he will be given power by Satan himself during that last three and a half years. As we saw in Revelation, the dragon will ultimately be cast out of heaven—the dragon being Satan—and Satan then will unleash all of his furor against the woman of Revelation 12, and that woman is Israel. And so I believe personally what he's saying here is that he will incarnate this Antichrist during that last three and a half years. And all of his fury toward Israel will be unleashed through this man who will break a peace treaty with Israel in the mid-time of that seven year period of tribulation; and that last three and a half years will turn against them. Not only will it be that he's empowered by Satan, but he'll have all the nations, those ten nations, behind him. Revelation 17 says they give him their power and they give him their authority. So we see a kingdom and we see a king, but we see the evil power of Satan empowering the whole scenario as they zero in against Israel in these last three and a half years.

He'll reign longer than that but in Daniel's vision it seems to be important that those three and a half years are brought out. Now, is there more to his reign? Yes there is. But remember, we're studying Daniel 7, we're not studying Revelation and we'll pick up more and more about this man as we go through the book of Daniel. What I want to do this morning is move ahead and begin to look at his ruin.

The ruin of the little horn

Look at verses 9 through 14. Oh, I'm telling you, fasten your seatbelts. This is when it gets exciting. Verse 9, "I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

Now we want to see some things about this kingdom. But the first thing I want to share with you is that it ought to be the desire of every believer that God's kingdom come down to this earth; that Jesus be vindicated.

I was reading the paper this past week and saw where Ted Turner had begun to make his blasphemous mark against the Lord—and I can call him by name because it's on record and it's in print and it was there for all to read—when he said that he has all these things against fundamentalists and conservatives because of the fact that they say that a man is born with original sin and that a man is born a sinner. And then he goes on to say that there's good in every man and all these kinds of things. My friend, listen! There's going to come a day and we need to write it down and understand it from the Word of God that every man is going to be judged for those kinds of words, that the Lord Jesus is coming back and there will be a judgment on this earth and man will be judged according to the deeds that he's done in his body. There's going to be a kingdom to come. Jesus will be vindicated and He'll rule on this earth from one end to the other end and that's what ought to be the heart cry of every prayer that we ever have.

You say now where did you get that in the Word of God? I'll show you. Look in Matthew 6, but don't lose your place in Daniel. Matthew 6, so clearly it's brought out. Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray. And so often we jump right in to application and we overlook interpretation. We forget the context of what's going on in this time and who Jesus is speaking to of His disciples and how His ministry when He first came was to Israel. Look in verses 9-10 of the Lord's Prayer. Now He teaches them a model prayer. He didn't say "Pray these words." He said, "Pray this way." He just simply gives them a model.

And He starts off in verse 9, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." And look in verse 10, "Thy kingdom come." Friend, listen, the word "kingdom" there is a word that means a sovereign domain. God, Your sovereign domain come. Somebody would stand up and say, "Oh, Brother Wayne, His sovereign domain is in my heart. I'm a part of that spiritual kingdom." And you're correct, but understand something: when He uses the verb here "come," He's not talking about something that is progressive. He's talking about something that is instantaneous, something that is sudden: "Thy kingdom come. Oh God, bring it instantaneously. Bring it to this earth."

May I share a word with you? None of our efforts—and our efforts are not wrong—but none of our efforts are ever going to create a

society on this earth that is going to completely honor God. Now we might as well understand that. No effort of man will ever be successful in creating a society that will completely honor God. But God will bring that society into existence when He brings His kingdom to this earth. And He'll rule from one end to the other end, and that ought to be our prayer. Every day we get up, "Oh Lord Jesus, rule in my heart today. Oh, Lord Jesus, may Thy kingdom come. Come, Lord Jesus, to this earth. Be vindicated for all the people who will not bow their knee. Come to this earth."

And listen, one of these days we're going to be with Him on this earth, on this earth, folks. Are you listening? We're going to be on this earth with our Lord Jesus Christ whom we've not yet seen face to face. He will be on this earth and every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. That ought to be our prayer every time we bow our heads. Jesus said, "Pray this way: Thy kingdom come." And He's not talking about the spiritual kingdom of grace alone. Certainly that's an application. The interpretation would have to be the kingdom that God's going to set up on this earth.

Well, it's all of this that we're talking about now in Daniel 7. That kingdom coming to this earth and it coincides with the ruin of the Antichrist, of the little horn. We've seen his rise; we've seen his reign; now we're going to see his ruin. It's going to end. It will be short-lived. He will have a power given to him by Satan for three and a half years, but only for three and a half years, and then God's going to stop it and God's going to set up His thrones of judgment and we'll see the steps as we go through Daniel 7.

The heavenly scene: the thrones are set up

Look first of all at verse 9: the first step that we see that he brings out in verse 9 is that the thrones of judgment will be set up in heaven. Now this is a heavenly scene. But watch this, verse 9, "I kept looking until thrones were set up." Thrones were set up; why "thrones" in the plural? Well, if you're asking me, I'm really asking myself. I don't know. It doesn't tell us. "Thrones," plural; in other words, somehow there's going to be a huge court that is set up in heaven. I don't know who the people are going to be. I've not studied Revelation. I understand that elders are going to be there, celestial beings of the angels are going to be there. I don't know who all is going to be sitting at that court, I just don't know, but it is in the plural. And so we see not one throne, but we see thrones that are set up in heaven.

And remember, this is a heavenly understanding. Verse 26 says, "But the court will sit," and so the "court" gives us the idea that there's more than one; so there's these gigantic, spectacular thrones that are set up. Then he goes on to say, "and the Ancient of Days took His seat." Oh, friend, it's like God says, "Alright, the alarm has gone off. Times up! Enough is enough!" And He sets up His thrones and then it says the Ancient of Days takes His seat. That term "Ancient of Days" gives us the idea of the everlastingness of God. He's always been around, the ever-presence of God. From the beginning of time and will continue. He's an eternal Being.

And the Ancient of Days takes His seat. Now who is this? It couldn't be the Lord Jesus Christ because He comes up later on in the context. It has to be God the Father; the Ancient of Days takes His seat. You see, some people say that the Trinity is there at judgment, that's why the thrones are in plural. That cannot be from the context, because Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, comes up to the Ancient of Days a little later on in the verses. So we see all these thrones set up and we see the Ancient of Days coming in and taking His seat.

Now notice His description. You think how spectacular this really is, folks. We couldn't begin to imagine how glorious this is. It says as it goes on in the verse, "His vesture was like white snow," the "vesture" means His garments, "and the hair of His head like pure wool." What a picture of the righteousness and the holiness and the purity of God the Father as He sets down. There's no question when He makes a judgment that He is not right because He is a just God, a holy God, a righteous God. And He takes His seat there to make His judgments. It goes on to say, "His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire."

And verse 10 says, "A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him." Now that fire was a symbol of judgment; not only the glory of God, but the judgment of God. These are thrones of judgment. Do you know, people don't like to hear about judgment, but judgment is part of the gospel. When we preach it, we must understand judgment: it's coming because God is a just God. Look in Psalms 97:2-3, and we see just a picture of how these flames of fire are flames of judgment: "Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Fire goes before Him," now why? "and burns up His adversaries round about." They are fires of judgment. And so these are thrones of judgment that are being set up in the heavens.

But notice something else. In verse 10 look what it says, "Thousands upon thousands were attending Him," and look what it says, "and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him." If you ever had any questions that God had angels that serve Him, you read that verse, folks, and the number there means they're innumerable. Thousands times thousands; actually it's ten thousand times ten thousand. That's over a million. And then the myriads upon myriads means absolutely beyond the ability to number. Now you grab that. Is that too spectacular for someone? Is that a little too thrilling for somebody? Maybe you can't handle it. This is in heaven, friend. We're talking about something a lot bigger than our fragile little human mind.

In heaven the thrones are set up, the Ancient of Days comes down and takes His seat, and thousands upon thousands upon

thousands of angels standing in front of Him, waiting for that divine moment that God will execute His judgment, just like He said that He would do.

So the first thing we see is that the thrones are set up in heaven. How awesome that is. And the books are opened up, as you notice in verse 10. The court sat and opened the books.

Now what books is he talking about? Look in chapter 12, verse 1, and we get one idea of one of the books. One of the books is the Book of Life. Is your name written in that book this morning? This Book will be opened one day. I'm so glad that when God keeps His books, He's not like the way I keep my books. Aren't you? You don't ever have to worry. Those of you that are worrying that God's forgotten your name, forget that. Because He does it right, not like we do. I can't balance my checkbook, but I'm glad He knows how to do it. Look at verse 1 of chapter 12, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince," and by the way, he's the angel of signs to Israel. We've got so many thrilling things ahead of us in Daniel. "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."

Now here we have "book;" in the other chapter we have "books," plural. So one of the books has to be the Lamb's Book of Life, the ones whose names are written in that book. We know that one-third of all of Israel will be saved somehow, and that one-third will have their day of atonement and they'll have that time when they look up and they see the wounds in His hands and they say, "Oh, it was You whom we wounded," and they realize who the Lord Jesus is and they bow down before Him and He takes them on into His eternal kingdom. We know that will take place; their names are written in the book. So when the court sets in session, they open up the first book to see who the believers are during the time of the tribulation; who the believers are that came out of that great time of wrath in those last three and a half years.

But there's another book. Do you realize that God keeps a book of all the records of our deeds, of everything we've ever done? Do you realize that? Every man will stand to be judged according to the deeds that were done in his body. That's the teaching of the New Testament. Now, aren't you glad this morning that our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, that we don't have to stand for original sin? But we still have to deal with the consequences of unconfessed sin in our life. And also the pagan world, if God is a just God, no pagan will get away with how he acted in this world. And I believe what He does here is He opens up one of those books and He looks at the deeds of the Antichrist and all of his cohorts, and, buddy, His judgment is going to be according to their deeds that they have done in their flesh on this earth.

So it's a time of judgment: thrones are set up, books were opened up, and God's ready now to make His move. That's the first step; that's in heaven. We don't see that. Folks, listen, sometimes when you think that things are going on down here and God's just checked out, you just remember something: God knows exactly what's going on. If you could pull the curtain back, there's things going on right now in the heavens right now that you would absolutely be flabbergasted at. We're going to see some of that in chapter 9 and chapter 10 as we get a little further in the study of Daniel. Things are going on.

Habakkuk one day said, "Oh, Lord, when are You going to do something?" As if God wasn't doing anything. And God said to Habakkuk, "Habakkuk, you just relax and go back to sleep. You couldn't handle it if I did answer you." He said, "Oh, come on, God, tell me." This is my own translation here. And God said back to Habakkuk, "Habakkuk, alright, you want to know. I'm raising up the evil people. I'm raising up the wicked." Boy, that messed up Habakkuk's theology. He fumbled around for awhile and he came back and said, "Oh, Lord, how do you put up with those unrighteous people?" What he's really saying is, "That doesn't make any sense to me." And God said, "Habakkuk, you sit down, be quiet, write this down, you're going to forget it. I'm raising them up to purify my people that have rebelled against Me. And then when I'm through with them and when they've accomplished the purpose that I want them to accomplish, I'm going to put them down."

And in the last chapter of Habakkuk, you go back and read it, because God opened up the vision there and gave him a little idea what was going on because he couldn't see that God was in control all the time. All the time He's in control. Habakkuk said, "I will wait patiently upon the Lord." And bless his heart; isn't that wonderful? "I will wait patiently upon the Lord. When the vines are barren, I will trust in the Lord." Well, thank you, Habakkuk. He had to get a little bit of behind the scenes vision to understand that God's in control.

You know, you wonder why God gave this vision to Daniel. I wonder if it wasn't so that one day during that tribulation time, somebody's going to find a Bible, somebody's going to turn to the book of Daniel and one of those Jews during that time is going to stand up and shout and say, "Hey, folks! God's not through with us yet! Do you understand what the Word of God says?" And during that time perhaps that will be the means of great revival. Every time Israel ever had any kind of revival is when they came back to what the Word of God had to say. I really don't know: that's just speculation.

The earthly scene: the demise of the fourth beast

But then he changes from heaven back to earth. He changes the vision, pulls the curtain back and gives you a little glimpse of something spectacular, and shows you what is going on in heaven. Then he closes the curtain and comes back down to earth. Verses 11-12, almost simultaneously, with the setting up of those thrones in heaven there's going to be the demise of the fourth beast. Not just the little horn, but the fourth beast. Remember the fourth beast is Rome in the latter days. Watch this in verse 11, "Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking." He first mentions the individual. Now I personally believe in my own theology, and we'll look at this piece by piece as we go on through Daniel, that there's going to be a temple during this time.

We know that right now if you go to Jerusalem, there is no temple. There's a mosque there. There is no temple. But it appears there's going to be a temple. I personally believe at the beginning of that seven year period of time, as we'll study later on—and I'm really getting ahead of myself—when he makes a peace treaty with God's people, that maybe that's the time he'll allow them to rebuild the temple. I don't know, but anyway, there's a temple. And at the end of that first three and a half years, he changes. As Satan incarnates him and he becomes that awful power towards Israel, breaks his treaty. I believe that's when he moves into that temple as the Bible tells and begins to proclaim himself as God. He goes in and he doesn't just make some boastful words, he begins to proclaim himself as God. And I think it's during that time that the thrones are set up and God says, "Time out! Enough is enough!"

Well, it goes on: "I kept looking until the beast was slain." Now remember, you cannot separate a king from his kingdom. If you start doing that you're going to get messed up. He's a king, right, but behind him are ten nations that are giving him their power and authority. And even behind all of them is Satan himself. "And its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire." Does that not rhyme with Daniel 2? He said the stone will come, remember? Who's the stone? The Lord Jesus Christ. Crush the feet of the statue, which represents all the kingdoms on this earth, and he says when he crushes his feet it will be completely obliterated, there will be no trace whatsoever left known to man.

Now verse 12 could be confusing if you read it and didn't think about it. "As for the rest of the beasts"—now here's your liberal standing up and saying, "I told you there were other kingdoms in the latter days; not just one kingdom, latter day Rome, there were other kingdoms"—"As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time."

Now what is he saying? Folks, just pay attention to what he's saying. He's saying, "Listen, when Babylon was defeated by Medo-Persia, did Medo-Persia completely annihilate Babylon? No, they defeated them and they absorbed Babylon into themselves. So there was an extension of life granted to Babylon but no longer any dominion." Then when Greece moved in and took over Medo-Persia he not only took over Medo-Persia but they took over Babylon and Medo-Persia, all absorbed into the Greek. And then you get that final kingdom Rome, when it comes in and it takes over all these others, remnants of each one are still left in that fourth beast, and they're giving an extension of life, but no power. But what's going to happen here is that fourth beast will be slain. The ruin of the little horn will come simultaneously with the ruin of this fourth beast as the Lord Jesus Christ comes to this earth. And remember, we're only in chapter 7, so let's just stay with what chapter 7 says.

At any rate, immediately we see the heavenly scene, boom, the curtains are closed. We come back to earth and we see the fourth beast, this is the judgment of the nations, friend, when the Lord Jesus comes back. Buddy, you're going to see Him come, and when He comes back, that's your judgment of your nations as God completely annihilates any power on this earth.

Heaven: scene two – the eternal kingdom

And now we see the fifth kingdom: the eternal kingdom being set up on this earth. That's the third step in Daniel 7. First of all, the heavenly scene, the thrones are set up. Secondly the earthly scene, the beast and the little horn completely annihilated. But now we go back to heaven and watch what's happening in heaven. I love this: bouncing right back!

Alright, look at Da 7:13, "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven," oh, if I could have that cloud machine right now, just putting those clouds up. I could give you a little picture of what I'm talking about. Clouds wrapped around Him; "with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming." Who do you think that is? That's got to be our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God eternally. And now the Son of Man, He's the God-man and He's now glorified and He's coming up before His Father.

I don't know what that does to you, but something tender inside of me just strikes a chord, of the Son coming up before His Father. The Ancient of Days sitting there on His throne and One coming up before Him, One, like the Son of man. What's about to happen? It's about to happen friends, that He's going to mount that horse and He's going to come to this earth and He's going to set up that eternal kingdom. It says, "and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him," that Son of Man, "was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion

is an everlasting dominion.” That’s going to be the fulfillment of that prayer: Father, Thy kingdom come. He will one day and He’ll come to this earth and every nation, every tongue, every people, every language will serve our King of Kings, our Forever King.

It goes on to say that His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. One of the most precious things in the book of the vision to Daniel is as Daniel saw that the saints of God, the Israelites, would be trodden down and treated so roughly during that time, look now in Da 7:27: “Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One.” In other words, they’ll receive that kingdom. What happens to these that are saved during the tribulation, that great, awful time, is that they will be not only saved and not only have their day of atonement, but now they’ll inherit part of that kingdom. They’ll rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ on this earth.

And if you’re saying, “I’m wondering now, where’s the church? That’s wonderful, I’m excited for Israel, I’m excited for God’s people, but hold on a minute. What about us? We’re all a part of that picture, are we not?” You see, Romans 11 says that right now there’s a partial hardening of Israel’s mind: they cannot understand the gospel. Why? Because they’ve rejected Christ. What’s going on then? God’s just stopped the whole time clock and He’s now bringing in the Gentiles. And it says, “When the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, then Israel will be saved.” So we’re that little parenthesis in there. I personally believe in my theology that we won’t even be around during these seven years. We’ve already been taken out. We’re here; we’re gone. And now God’s dealing with His people.

But what about us in this kingdom: is there room for us in this kingdom? There are so many verses I just picked one of them and it’s probably not the one you would have picked, but there are so many good ones. Look in 2 Timothy 2:12. This is a challenge and a hope for every believer. Look what it says in verse 12, “If we endure,” now don’t worry about that phrase “if we endure.” What if I don’t? Well, look at Hebrews and it’ll tell you that every believer is going to endure. That’s part of the mark of the people of God. “If we endure,” but the key is how did you endure, not the fact that you will or not, but how did you endure? How did you respond to His Word and His life while you were here? “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.” That’s us, folks! And the degree of our ruling and reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ during that thousand year period of the kingdom being here on this earth, the degree of our ruling will be according to the degree of our enduring while we were here during the time before He comes.

Now, folks, a lot of people want to preach this message of pie in the sky by and by. “Let’s just get saved; God’s going to make it equal for everybody when we get there.” No way! No way! He’s a just God. You can’t mock Him by your life now and claim to know Him without one day standing before Him and the consequences of that will be directly measured back to you and back to me as to how we rule and how we reign with Him. Absolutely! You don’t get away with sin. Yes, you can confess it, yes, you’re forgiven, but the consequences are the key. Did this affect a brother that the damage is irreparable? You’ll stand before God for that sin. No way around that! I don’t understand all that but I’m not a just person other than that righteousness has been given to me. I’m not inherently righteous. He’s inherently just, friend, and He will give what is due every single person on this earth. Yes, we’ll rule and reign with Him, but it’ll all be to the degree that we were willing to endure with Him and respond to the truth of His Word.

Now that’s what makes it practical to me this morning. I know the books are going to be open one day. You can’t tell me if my name is in the Book of Life. I can tell you it is. Can you tell me that this morning? If anybody could talk you out of it, you better go back and check and see if it’s there. Friend, you know because you know! You don’t have to ask somebody if your name is written in the Book of Life. You know! Romans 8:16 says the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we’re children of God. First John 5:13, “these things are written that you might know that you have eternal life.” That’s one book, but what about the other book? What are you doing with what God has given to you, friend?

All of your lifestyle on this earth is going to somehow hinge on how you rule and reign with Him one day. The rewards are based now on how we respond to the truth God gives to us. The penalty has been paid for on the cross, but the consequences of our disobeying Him sometimes can be eternal and He’s a just God and knows when those times are. He’s the One who will render the judgment.

Can you pray the prayer now? “Our Father which art in heave, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come.” Can you pray that today?

Daniel 8:1-9 Just for the One Who Doubts - 1

Turn with me to Daniel 8. Well, I’m going to preach about the ram and the goat of Daniel 8. But, you know, I just trust the Word of God that it always affects the human heart and if you’re here this morning I know God has a message right out of this because we’re talking about the fact that many people doubt what God has to say in the book of Daniel. Maybe you’re going through a time right now and God hasn’t really come through like you believe in His Word He’s told you He’s going to come through. Well, friend, hang on. Whatever God says, He is going to do.

The one thing I'm learning about Him is He's slow as Christmas, but He's never late. Have you ever noticed that? He's slow as He can be, but He's never late. If God says it, He is going to do it. And Daniel 8, my message title is simply, "Just for the One Who Doubts – Part 1." And I really believe one of the major reasons it's found where it is in Daniel is because it's about this time that the doubter begins to service.

The liberals say that this couldn't possibly be a part of the book of Daniel, it is too historical. It is too literal; it happened too close to history. It had to have been written later on. And in Daniel 11 they say the same thing. Well, my friend, God is the Author of history and what we find in chapter 8 has already taken place. Isn't it incredible? It's already happened. I really believe it is there not so much for Daniel—Daniel died long before it took place—I think it's there for us to be able to look back and see that God said something was going to happen; it happened exactly the way He said it. And then we can say, "Well, if He says it's going to happen in the future a certain way, we can take it to the bank. God's going to do it exactly the way He said He would do it.

Well, to get into this and sort of a little review, let's look at a review of what we've studied so far in Daniel. Let's take the seven chapters, just quickly say a word or two about each chapter and see how it fits together to make the whole of what God is saying in Daniel. In chapter 1 we see a sovereign God and that sort of sets the stage for the rest of the book. It says in verse 2 that it is God who gave Jehoiakim over to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar thought that he was somebody; he thought that he was really the one who was conquering Judah. God wanted him to know that "you're doing nothing that I'm not empowering you to do. My people have turned against Me, my people have sinned and you don't get away with sin and part of the consequence is what's happening right now, and I'm just simply giving you the power to take over My people." So we see a sovereign God: He is in control.

But we also see in chapter 1 something else that sets the foundation of the book: that's four young men, Jewish men, teenagers about 15 years old who make up their mind they're going to believe God. No matter about what they see, they're still going to believe what God says. That's the key. They're going to honor Him; they're going to serve Him. That's chapter 1.

Well, in chapter 2 we see God breaking into a pagan king's life. You know God knows the hearts of all men. Nebuchadnezzar was one who would listen to what God was saying to him. We see that later on. He turns around and begins to acknowledge that God is the God. And He breaks into his life and gives him a panorama of history and lets him know what's going to happen to all the gentile powers on this world. What God thinks about our power, friend. And He's going to show him just a little glimpse of God's power: how the stone will come and crack all the kingdoms on this earth and that God will set up His own kingdom right here on this earth. He wants Nebuchadnezzar to see that.

Well in chapter 3 we see God delivering three of the four devoted young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, from the fiery furnace. And we see how God will protect those who honor Him. You may have to go through the fire, but He goes through with you and what a beautiful picture this becomes in the book of Daniel.

In chapter 4 we see God finally humbling Nebuchadnezzar. Old Nebuchadnezzar was a tough nut to crack and he still continued to be proud of what he had done. If you've ever studied history or looked in an encyclopedia at the city of Babylon, it's an incredible place. And he stood up one day, looking down over it all, just thinking "man, look what I've done." And God says, "Okay, enough is enough. Time out, I've got something to say to you, Nebuchadnezzar. I told you what would happen if you keep on this way." And for seven years he caused Nebuchadnezzar to live like an animal. Wake up in the morning with the cows and the dew on his head and he would eat grass for his main meal. After seven years of that kind of lifestyle finally Nebuchadnezzar said, "Alright, I give! God, You're the one who is in control. I acknowledge that. You are sovereignly in control." That's chapter 4.

Then in chapter 5 another fellow comes on the scene in Babylon name Belshazzar, and Belshazzar is a much more defiant person than Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was proud, but at least he was willing to listen when God finally spoke to him. Belshazzar was not that way. And so Belshazzar took the vessels of the temple that Nebuchadnezzar had brought over from Jerusalem and he took them and they had a drunken orgy. And they drank wine from it and they praised the gods of wood and stone, and so God moved in. And at this particular time in chapter 5, that's when that hand appeared on the wall and began to write, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. Thou has been weighed in the balances and you have been found wanting." As a result of that, Belshazzar that night died, and we see the rise of the second kingdom that we've studied: the Medo-Persian Empire. It started off with Darius the Mede moving into authority.

In chapter 6 what we see is Daniel being put into the lion's den because he will not break his consistency of devotion to his God. And we see old Darius, he liked Daniel so much, he tells Daniel, "Don't worry, Daniel. Your God will deliver you." I love that he had already figured that out about Daniel. Even tried to deliver him but he couldn't break his own law because laws of the Medes and the Persians could not be revoked. We see God closing the mouths of the lions and we see Daniel being rescued and delivered through that very difficult time.

And then in chapter 7, the chapter we just previously studied, spent three weeks on it, we saw Daniel's visions. Now the difference is, Nebuchadnezzar never wrote his down, but Daniel wrote his down and kept up with it. And we see Daniel beginning to have his

visions. Each one of Daniel's visions is chronological. We're going to see a change in the book now. It's not chronological in time, it jumps back and forth, but the visions are all in order. And the first vision that Daniel has is of the four beasts. In Daniel's visions, as opposed to Nebuchadnezzar's, we see the true nature of the kingdoms on this earth. Like animals, like beasts, they want to devour. And we see those four kingdoms, but we also see again those latter day prophecies of that little horn that rises up out of those ten nations that we've already seen, that happened not only in chapter 2 but also in chapter 7. Well, that brings us up to chapter 8.

Quite a lot has happened in the book of Daniel. By now the doubters have already arisen and saying, "Oh, hey, you can't say that God has predicted future prophecy. You can't say that He's going to do these things in the latter days." And again, that's why I believe He gives us chapter 8 and also chapter 11, just to show us that what He says is exactly right.

Now, he deals in chapter 8 with only two of the four kingdoms. I wonder if you can remember the four kingdoms. The first kingdom is Babylon. The second kingdom is Medo-Persia. Remember that? Third kingdom, Greece. And then the fourth kingdom is Rome. And it's not just ancient Rome, but it's Rome in the latter days that is the most concern to Daniel. When he has ten nations come together, a United States of Europe, in those days there's going to be a little horn to come up and that little horn will be the Antichrist.

Now we're going to look at two of those kingdoms in chapter 8. It's odd: why did he pick out just these two? I still think it's to cause the doubter to understand: I'm telling you what's going to happen. This all happened in about 200 years of the time it was prophesied to Daniel. And so God wanted us, I think, to be able to look back and see that God prophesied it and it happened exactly the way He would say it, and that's why we can believe the latter day history.

Now listen, in 2:4-7:28, the language in this book is written in Chaldean, it is not in Hebrew. It has only to do basically with the Gentile nations. Obviously it gives a little preview somewhat of Israel but not a whole lot. It's mainly what's going to happen with the Gentile nations. We're concerned with the Gentile world. But in 8:1 through chapter 12, we are dealing with Israel and how Israel fits in this. How do God's people fit into all this history that God has given us in the book of Daniel?

So with that in mind, are you ready? Let's jump in with both feet. What did Daniel see in chapter 8? Well, let's begin. Verse 1, "In the third year of the reign of Belshazzar the king, a vision appeared to me, Daniel, subsequent to the one which appeared to me previously." In other words, right in order, it was the next vision that he had. And it's interesting here. It says, "And I looked in the vision, and it came about while I was looking, that I was in the citadel of Susa, which is in the province of Elam." I didn't know that. "And I looked in the vision, and I myself was beside the Ulai Canal." What were you doing? Here he is in this vision and he finds himself in another place that he's not familiar with.

Well, if you look in the book of Esther 1:2, you'll find that Susa is the capital city of the Medo-Persian Empire at that time, actually of Persia. And so we see it as a very important city at that time. Isn't it interesting, here he is in Babylon and God just pushes the clutch in and puts it in another gear and shoots him forward and now he finds himself over in the Medo-Persian Empire in the capital city? And he begins to have this vision of what's going to take place. Well, it's going to be, first of all, a new look at things that are going to be happening.

Alright, let's look at the visions that he has. In verse 3, "Then I lifted my gaze and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last." I love to watch you while I'm preaching this. Some of you look at me like a calf at a new gate. Do what? A ram, two horns, the last one comes up longer, what are you talking about? Alright, let's look at this. What he's seeing here in the vision, very clearly it explains itself, is the Medo-Persian Empire. The ram is the symbol of the Medo-Persian Empire. Now in chapter 2, the Medo-Persian was the upper portion of the statue, remember the upper torso and the two arms. Why two arms? It's very important and I'll tell you in a minute.

Secondly, in chapter 7 what was the Medo-Persian Empire? It was a bear with one side raised up higher than the other side. Now here we have it in chapter 8 as a ram with two horns. Now the significance is just incredible. It just gets me so excited I just want to shout every time we get into it. First of all you see two arms representing the kingdom of Medo-Persia in chapter 2; then the bear with two legs raised up higher; and now the two horns. It ought to be apparent because what he's dealing with here is the kingdom; two kingdoms have been put together: the kingdom of the Medes, the kingdom of the Persians. Remember that. And when it mentions the two, that's why it's so significant: it's two into one. They're not as strong as other kingdoms because they're united together but they are still an empire.

Now, there's never been a time in the history of the Medo-Persian Empire that one of those kingdoms was not stronger than the other. As a matter of fact when they first are mentioned in chapter 5 it's Darius the Mede; because when they first made that merger the Medes were the more dominant of the two kingdoms even though they were one power in their self. But then later on the Persians became the stronger of the two. Chapter 1 tells us that when it reverses the name order. In about another hundred years the Persians are the stronger of the two kingdoms.

Now look what he says, this gets so exciting. He said there were two horns. "Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other." There's never been a time it hasn't been that way. Now why? "With the longer one coming up," when? "Last!" Now, what does that tell you in the history of the Medo-Persians? He's talking about Daniel getting this vision. He's being projected up into the future. He not only sees the Medo-Persian Empire, he sees the latter days of the Medo-Persian Empire when Persia is in dominant force of the two kingdoms. He's being thrust way ahead into the future. He sees it and he realizes that something is about to happen. Now look at verse 4, "I saw the ram butting westward, northward, and southward."

Now isn't that interesting? I wish I had a map that I could just pull down and just show you where this is located geographically. Do you realize that history documents the fact—it doesn't document anything in the Word of God, the Word of God, don't ever base your theology on history, base it on the Word of God. Where history doesn't document it, history is wrong, because this is right!—but what it shows us is that if you went to the east, it doesn't even mention the east, but you'd have gone to India. And history shows that they never went to the east. They went to the north, they went to the south, and they went to the west, but they did not go towards the east. How clearly and how accurately this is brought out. Like a ram they butted their way north, they butted their way south, and they butted their way over to the west. Nobody could stop them: two great empires merged together for a world power and they moved in and took over Babylon.

One of the thoughts that hit me that I didn't even see when I first studied it and a lot of things will hit me as we go through because I'm slow, but one of the things that really hit me was that this is the third year of Belshazzar. Remember this: he jumps back in time. It's while Belshazzar was on the throne, he's in Babylon. Babylon is in power. And the interesting thing here is, remember in chapter 5 when the hand started writing on the wall and then Daniel was a nobody in the kingdom. And the queen mother came and said, "You better bring this man Daniel, he can help you out." And Daniel comes in and he says, "Forget all your gifts, but I'm going to tell you what's on that wall."

Do you realize by that time Daniel had already had a vision and understood that the Medo-Persian Empire was going to take over the kingdom of Babylon? Isn't that incredible? I got to thinking about that and that just fired me up. It doesn't take a whole lot to get me excited. I can look at a wall and get excited, but it just got me excited. Because I got to thinking he's God's man. He wasn't left unaware of what's going on. God had already spoken to him and told him what was going on. He wasn't surprised when he knew that the Medo-Persians were going to take over. God had already told him that. He was just waiting on the time.

My friend, do you realize this morning that God has spoken in His Word to you and to me and He's told us what's going to happen in the latter days? There ought not to be a single one of us that's ever caught by surprise. Somebody says, "Oh, Brother Wayne, He's going to come like a thief in the night." Only to the lost! Not to the believer! We know the time, we know the season. We don't know the day and the hour, but we know what to watch for, folks. We've already had a revelation from God to our hearts. Just like Daniel, he didn't know the exact moment that it was going to happen, but he knew it was coming and he was not caught by surprise. Boy, that really fired me up, and it doesn't cost you a thing extra.

Okay, let's see what else he sees. First of all, the ram. Another picture of the Medo-Persian Empire, that old ram butting his way around, having his own way to the north, to the south, and the west, and how he dominates for a long period of time in the latter days of that kingdom because Persia is the stronger of the two. Well, we move on now to the second one. Verse 5, "While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes."

Now just make sure you know what we're talking about. Look in verses 20-21. Just to give you, and I didn't do this a minute ago but it may help you. He's having an interpretation given him by Gabriel the angel who had come to him to help him understand what he had dreamed. Verse 20 he says, "The ram which you saw with the two horns represents the kings of Media and Persia." So we know that's documented, he's already interpreted it himself. In verse 21 it says, "And the shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece." So we know this is Greece now. This is the goat, this male goat, this shaggy goat, that's coming from the west. And notice how he's coming. He's coming so swiftly it's like his feet don't even touch the ground. Oh, man, you begin to study about Alexander the Great, just take some time. He's the first real king that Greece ever had, the first real ruler that had any kind of authority or any kind of power and he moved across territory so quickly and so swiftly, that's why it was called the leopard in another place because he moved so swiftly and conquered whatever was in his path.

You say, "Well, how do you know he's talking about Alexander the Great?" Well, go back to verse 21, "The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king." You go back and study history and you can't find anybody else before Alexander the Great. He's the one that he's talking about. This first king, Alexander the Great, coming with the kingdom of Greece.

Now what happened? It says in verse 6, "And he came up to the ram that had the two horns, which I had seen standing in front of the canal, and rushed at him in his mighty wrath. And I saw him come beside the ram, and he was enraged at him; and he struck the ram and shattered his two horns, and the ram had no strength to withstand him. So he hurled him to the ground and trampled on

him, and there was none to rescue the ram from his power.” Now watch verse 8, “Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly.” Now watch carefully: “But as soon as he was mighty,” you notice that? “The large horn was broken.” In other words, Alexander the Great died, suddenly, right in the pinnacle of his power. History tells us that he was on a drunken orgy one night and he got fever as a result of it and he died as a young man. It says, “and in its place,” that horn’s place, “there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.” North, south, east, and west. Four people took over his kingdom.

Now it explains that in verse 22, “And the broken horn and the four horns that arose in its place represent four kingdoms which will arise from his nation, although not with his power.” There never is another time that Greece has the power that it had while Alexander was in charge of it. So this is incredible. This is why the liberals say, “No, this couldn’t have been written by Daniel. No way! This was written long after it happened and then interjected into the Scripture because it is too specific, it is too literal!” Folks, they just don’t know our God! God sees it long before it ever happens. God’s already spoken it, friends. He is sovereignly in control and He’s telling us, “You better pay attention to the prophecy in chapter 8, because I’ve told you exactly what would happen and it happened exactly the way I told you.” Take it to the bank, God’s Word is right.

Now four kings took over the kingdom of Alexander the Great. There was infighting for about twenty some odd years before they finally split the kingdom into four parts. Now, two of them are not that important to us. And I think it’s important to us that I bring out the names because we’re going to really see this in chapter 11. The first one was Lysimachus. He took over Thrace and Bithynia. Secondly was Cassander, don’t even worry about writing it down because we’re not going to get back to it. Macedonia and Greece; he took that part. But the next two, folks: that is important. Remember that statue and how Greece was the belly and the thighs? There are two thighs. Why are there only two there? Because there are only two of those four that become powerful or even meaningful to the future and especially to the latter days. Two out of those four. Which two are they?

The kingdom of the north, which is the Seleucus. You know, when I took history I didn’t pay attention and now I’m studying Daniel and I wish I could go back and take it over again. Do any of you feel the same way? I did not pay attention. I just memorized all my notes and did the test but I wish I would have paid attention. You see Seleucus I, he took the kingdom to the north, which is Syria. But in the south is Ptolemy. So the kingdom of the Ptolemies was to the south, Egypt. The kingdom of Seleucus was to the north, Syria. You say, “Wayne, what’s that got to do with the price of eggs in Russia?” Listen, it has a lot to do with it.

We need to understand where Israel fits into this. They warred back and forth consistently for over generations and this is the king of the north warring against the king of the south. Does that ring a bell to you at all of latter day prophecy? And listen, they begin to war back and forth, but guess what’s right in between them? Israel sits right between them! And every time they would war between one another, they would just trample right down through Israel, and trample right back through Israel, and trample right back down through them. And down through history the king of the north and the king of the south, they continued to war together.

You’ll find the verse in chapter 11 just thrill your soul. It says when the king of the north sat down with the king of the south that they would make agreements but that they never meant to keep them because they were deceiving and they lied to each other all the time. You look at the Middle East situation today. You wonder, can’t those people ever get along? NO! It’s been prophesied that they won’t get along, and there’s a lot going on over there that doesn’t meet the eye. The kings of the north, the kings of the south, how they war back and forth over generation to generation.

You say, “Now Wayne, this is tough. I came to church this morning and I wanted to go see Grandma this afternoon and feel better.” Well, you might can if you’ll just pay attention. If you’ll look at verse 9, friend, it will thrill your soul. “And out of one of them”—what’s the “them”? The horns, the four horns, one of those four kingdoms—“a small horn which grew exceedingly great.” Now wait a minute. Haven’t we talked about a little horn before? Oh yes, chapter 7. But now wait a minute. This is not the same one. The one in chapter 7 comes out of Rome, the latter day Rome. Isn’t that correct? Out among the ten; this is not out among the ten. This is out of Greece: a different horn altogether. But what is God trying to show us? Watch this: “a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land.” What’s the Beautiful Land? That’s Israel, folks.

Now he’s going to show you that there’s someone coming. Now what line did he come out of? It was either the kingdom of the north or the south, because the other two don’t even matter as far as latter day history goes. You know who it comes from? It comes right out of the north, the Seleucid dynasty, and it says “in the latter days of their dynasty” in verse 23. The latter period of it, and history just documents this thing and just slam dunks it. It’s exactly what happened. Way down the line of the Seleucids came a man by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes, and he moved on the scene and this man created more havoc and caused more horror and tragedy to Israel that any one single individual in the whole history of the nation. And God says “Now, Daniel, I told you in chapter 7 there’s going to be a little horn and for the last three and a half years on this earth he’s going to persecute the woman, which is Israel; he’s going to do things to Israel that Israel has never known about.” And I’m sure the doubters said, “Sure, right, tell me more.” And God said, “Alright, I’ll tell you more. In 200 years period of time I’m going to bring another one on. I’m going to give you a preview of coming attractions and his name is going to be Antiochus Epiphanes, and he’s going to come out of the kingdoms of the north. And he’s going to come out and what he’s going to do to Israel is just a little bit of what’s going to take place in those latter three and a

half years.”

Why in the world chapter 8? We need chapter 8, folks. If we didn't have chapter 8 people could be skeptical and they could be doubting everything God has to say. With this so clear, and literal step by step through history, it just blows anybody's mind. Do you want to know what it's going to be like in the latter days? Begin to get a picture of it right here in chapter 8. I'm glad, as far as my theology goes anyway—and nobody's convinced me better yet! And you can disagree with me—but I don't believe we're going to be here during the latter three and a half years. I don't believe we're going to be here the last seven years.

Some people say, “No, Brother Wayne, we're going in the mid-trib.” Well, you stay if you want. I've got reservations on the first plane. I don't care; I'm not going to fly with anybody who disagrees with that. Some people say we'll be here for the whole Tribulation. Now, what sense does that make? I've received the Lord, I haven't rejected Him. The day of wrath is not for those who have received him; the day of wrath is for a nation that has rejected Him. Can't we understand that? But anyway, something is going to take place in those latter days.

Man, I'll tell you what. If I was of a Jewish background and I was sitting in this church this morning, if I'd never bowed down and received the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and you're not about to do that, and you're living during this last seven year period of time, I'd get hold of this book, I'd memorize it, I'd study it every day. And during that time get on your face, friend, because it's going to happen just like He said it's going to happen.

You know what that does to me? It makes me understand that if He can handle nations and if He can handle Israel, and if He can handle all this stuff in history that I can't even begin to fully understand, I think He can probably handle a little peon's life like mine. “Oh, Brother Wayne, this isn't spiritual enough for me this morning. I just wanted to feel good when I left.” Man, you ought to jump up and shout.

What's going on in your life right now? What are you facing this morning? Friend, listen, God is in control. And the key is not to try and twist His arm and bend His purpose, the key is find out what He's up to and just cooperate. I did a meeting over in Huntsville, Alabama. And I had a thought that was given to me, man, it just stirs me up. And it came from one of the people in the conference. I'm supposed to go help them; well, they helped me. It's always that way. Like someone was telling me, the guy who cuts his own wood for his fireplace gets warm twice by that wood. Once while cutting it, once while standing in front of it. Well, that's exactly the way it is when you teach the Word of God and you go do anything: you get warm twice. I get warm by studying it and sharing it and then the response back.

But what they said was this: they said, “You know, in the Christian life the key word is not “commitment.” The key word is “surrender.” Now to some people commitment means surrender, but to most it doesn't. To most people it means, “God, I'll commit this hour on Sunday morning and I'll commit that hour on Sunday night. That's it.” The key is not commitment, not what you can give to God; it's what you're willing to surrender of your life to Him. If He's under control, He's the king, the mighty warrior. I best get down on my knees and give up because I'm not going to win fighting Him. I better give in to whatever He has in mind.

So I hope you can see that there's a message of hope in here for every believer, there's a message of thought that God is in control and we don't have to worry. Just as He had it happen with Antiochus Epiphanes, told us exactly what would take place and next time, by the way, we'll get into who this guy is and what he's going to do to Israel. But we'll find out what he's going to do and you're going to get the biggest preview of the Antichrist you've ever seen, exactly personified in Antiochus Epiphanes. A man who lived; a man who, just like God said, came right out of the kingdom of the north. And yet, God says there's one other one to come.

You know, if you ever look through something, the only thing I can picture is a megaphone. Do you know what a megaphone is? I think that's what it is; one of those big things cheerleaders use. It has a little bitty end right here and great big end right here. And the way I think that he's doing in chapter 8 is, Daniel's looking through prophecy, and right in the middle of that megaphone is a man by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. But as the picture gets bigger, by the end, there's the Antichrist. And he's able to look all the way to the end by looking through the medium of what's going to come on the scene within the next 200 years and get an idea of what the Antichrist will be like.

Isn't it interesting that in chapter 7 he mentions a little horn; then in chapter 8 he brings up a small horn, just to give you an illustration. But in chapter 11 he mentions the small horn first, and then he reverses the process and tells you about the little horn of chapter 7. He's saying something to us, folks; remember that. Don't translate Daniel out of Matthew. Just remember that Daniel has something to say. It doesn't mean that you can't fill in the blanks at places. Listen to why He's saying this to Daniel. Why is He saying it to us this morning?

I don't believe in the sovereignty of God like some people do. You heard about the fellow that fell down the steps and said, “I'm glad that's over.” I'm not quite at that point. I believe man has a will in this thing, but I believe the balance is so close, don't you move it this way and don't you move it this way. Hang that plumb-bob this morning. The sovereignty of God, the election of God, the choices of God, put that on one side of the plumb-bob. On the other side put man's responsibility to choose and to obey and let it hang

there. Don't try to understand it, just take your feet off and walk in your own sovereign grounds. You can't figure out God. And just let it hang there and bow to it and do whatever God tells you in the mean time. And one day we'll get to heaven and God will help us to understand.

Daniel 8:10-14 Just for the One Who Doubts - 2

Turn with me to Daniel 8. I'm going to continue to talk about the message entitled "Just for Those Who Would Doubt." I believe that's the only reason chapter 8 is even put in the book of Daniel. Now you say, "Brother Wayne, there are other reasons than that." I know, but that's just from my perspective as I've studied it. I just see old Daniel, I see some of the skeptics beginning to arrive and they start seeing terms like "latter day," they start seeing terms like "future," they start saying, "Oh, now come on. God couldn't be talking about those kinds of times."

And then he puts in chapter 8. He kinds of says in a way, "If you don't believe me, let me show you something. It's going to happen within the next 200 years; and way down the road when they look back, they're going to see that I said it and that I did it exactly the way that I said it." Well, in chapter 8 we saw the rise and the fall of the Medo-Persian Empire, and that's the ram with the two horns that we saw coming out in verses 3-4. But then we also saw the rise of the Greek Empire, and really he leaves us there. He's not as concerned with Greece as he is with that small horn that comes out of Greece.

Now go back to verse 8 and let's sort of catch up. In verse 8 he says, "Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly." Now that male goat was Greece. "But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken," that was Alexander the Great, "and in its place there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven." Now this is a little bit in review and sometimes these names get to running together in my mind. But let's see if we can remember them, alright?

Lysimachus took over part of the kingdom that was given up when Alexander the Great died. He took Thrace and Bithynia. But we don't really concern ourselves with him because he wasn't that significant. Cassander took over Macedonia and Greece. That really wasn't of that much significance either. But the next two really carry a lot of weight, particularly throughout the book of Daniel. And when we get to chapter 11 you're going to be glad that we talked about these things because they're going to come back and you'll understand them: king after king in these reigns.

First was the king of the south, and that was Ptolemy I. He took over the king of the south. That's very important, folks, because he's going to war with the king of the north. The king of the north was Seleucus. That was Syria. And the reason that it's important is because from chapter 8 on we're beginning to understand how Israel plays a role in all of this. Where are they when all these kings are warring? Well, Israel sits right in between Syria and Egypt and every time they would go to battle, they would just walk across that land. And we begin to see the picture that God is drawing for Daniel.

Now in verse 9 it says very clearly "Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land." Now this little small horn is not the Antichrist. Remember the Antichrist in chapter 7, the little horn, comes out of the ten nations of Rome in that latter day period. This one comes out of Greece, and guess which nation it comes out of? It comes out of the north, out the reign of those kings to the north; the Seleucid reign of the north. And this one man is going to bring great horror to God's people. And I just can't help it. From studying through Daniel I just feel it in my bones: God says in chapter 7, "in the latter days there's going to come a little horn, and if you don't believe Me, I'm going to give you a preview right now and there's going to be a small horn to come out of Greece. Now you pay attention. When it happens the way I said it was going to happen, you can take it to the bank that the little horn is going to be on the scene the last three and a half years of this age."

Well, Antiochus Epiphanes hated the Jews. He destroyed thousands of Jews just as was prophesied in Daniel 8. Now verse 23 says, "And in the latter period of their rule," and sure enough you're going to see in chapter 11 it was one of the latter kings of the Seleucid reigns that he came about; Antiochus Epiphanes. Now, what does God say he's going to be like? Remember what we talked about? Do you ever look through a megaphone? I guess that's what you'd call it. It starts off real small and it gets big. And I think what God is doing here is, "Okay Daniel, look through that little hole right there. Now look a little closer there. Now right down the road here there is going to come a small horn." And he pictures Antiochus Epiphanes, okay? But he won't seem to look beyond Antiochus Epiphanes because the big picture covers that little horn. He's giving him a preview of what the evil man that's going to be on this earth the last three and a half years is going to be like and how he's going to treat Israel.

Well, there are three things I want us to see about him in chapter 8 and we'll just be so smart when we leave here, alright?

He will oppress Israel and defy their God

The first thing that we learn about him is this: he will oppress Israel and he will defy their God. Now, I didn't say Judah, I just said Israel. He's going to oppress God's people, but let's just put Israel to kind of get the idea. He will oppress Israel and will defy their God. Verse 9 has already told us he's going to come toward the Beautiful Land. Now that term "Beautiful Land" refers to Israel. Now verses 10-12 gives us quite a bit of information as to how he's going to be towards Israel and towards their God.

Look at verse 10: "And it grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down." Don't you love the book of Daniel? Boy, you can just understand it just like that, can't you? Well, let's just look at it for a second. What does he mean "he came up to the host of heaven?" Look at Jeremiah 33:22, just one of the places this refers to God's people. Not his going up in the atmosphere someplace, but this is God's people. Verse 22, look what he says in comparing God's people to the host of heaven. He says, "As the host of heaven cannot be counted, and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me." And so He's picturing the host of heaven in a way of saying or talking about the people of God. What I believe he's saying is he's going to come right into that Beautiful Land and he's going to come against the host of heaven.

Look on in the verse. Not only does he say the host of heaven, it says that he will cause some of the stars to fall. If you'll look over in Daniel 12:3, that also refers I believe to Israel: "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." In other words, this evil man is going to come on the scene, this small horn coming out of Greece will be a man who is going to move against God's people. Remember we're concerned with how Israel is going to be affected. He will oppress the people in their land. Now remember that. And we're going to see in chapter 11 how this goes on over and over again. He's going to oppress the people in their land.

But not only will he oppress the people, he will defy their God. Look back again in verse 11, "It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host." You see, Antiochus Epiphanes took upon himself the name "Theos Epiphanes." He called himself a god. And you know something about how he goes into the temple and how he desecrates the temple there and he defies the very God of the people of Israel. He threw down the place of His sanctuary. Look on in the verse, "and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down." We understand from the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes that he goes in and disallows them to do any more sacrificing to their God. As a matter of fact, he's so evil and so vain that he even comes in and sacrifices a pig on the altar there in the temple to the god Zeus. He's a wicked, evil, horrible man. Not only will he oppress Israel—and there's an intense hatred that Antiochus Epiphanes had for Israel—and you'll see in chapter 11 that he even has a supernatural power, and we'll also see it here, has a supernatural power as he moves as if of evil moving against God's people.

He will oppress those people and he will defy their God. You know, one of the questions that has to come to your mind and comes to my mind: Why in the world would God allow that? Why would God allow His people to be oppressed by such a wicked man like Antiochus Epiphanes? You look at verse 12 and it's very clear. It says, "And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper." Do you know why it was? Do you know why God allowed Antiochus Epiphanes to do that kind of terrible thing to His people? I'll tell you why: because of their sin against God. You know, people don't like to hear messages on judgment. People don't like to talk about the consequences of sin. "Oh come on, Wayne. God's a good God, and God doesn't mind if we sin a few times and God just loves us."

Yes, God loves us. But He's a just God; and friend, man does not sin and get away with it. Israel consistently rejected God and you'll see in chapter 9 when Daniel begins to realize that they're going to go back to their homeland and Daniel sees the rejection of Judah, they consistently rejected God, he begins to confess their sins as his sin. Thirty-two times in chapter 9 he confesses their sin as his sin. He sees the wickedness of his own people and he fears for them because they have not yet learned their lesson. They have not yet turned back to God.

You see, God judges sin. There are consequences to sin. We used to have a sign out in front of the church that said, "You are free to make your choice. But you're not free to choose its consequences." There is no way. There is judgment to sin, there is consequence to sin. Now I realize we're in the Old Testament and a lot of people say, "Well, Brother Wayne, how does that relate to me?" That ought to be pretty clear. Friend, you choose to sin, it'll take you further than you ever wanted to stray, keep you longer than you ever wanted to stay, and cost you a whole lot more than you ever dreamed you were going to pay. It will cost a consequence in your life. That's the only reason God allowed it. He uses a man like Antiochus Epiphanes to come in on His people and to bring great wrath upon His people because His people had rejected Him and His covenants.

"And it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper." So we see then that he has been given power to do this. God raises him up just like Nebuchadnezzar and He's using him somehow to chasten His people. So the first thing he'll do is oppress Israel and defy their God. Now I can't wait until we start looking at that little horn again and you're going to see the same tendencies—well, you won't see it, hopefully we'll be gone; I believe that in my theology—but they're going to see the same thing on this earth the last three and a half years of this age there is going to be a man a lot worse than this guy, a lot worse than Antiochus Epiphanes, and he's going to do much damage to God's people during that three and a half years. But God Himself will nourish Israel and He

will care for Israel and so many of them will be saved at the end of that three and a half year period of time.

He will be a charismatic leader, deranged in his character

So, first of all, he'll oppress Israel and defy their God. But then, secondly, we see that he will be a charismatic leader, a man who is deranged in his character. Now we say "charismatic" and we have to sort of define it in this day and age. What I'm talking about is he is going to have a personality plus, that's what I mean; a lot of charisma. He's going to be the kind of guy that you would not think he would be the way he's going to turn out to be. But at the same time he's going to be a very deranged man. Look in verses 23-25: "And in the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue." That word "intrigue" can also be translated "flattery;" he has a way with words.

You know, we think of the Antichrist, and many people do, as some mean dude that everybody can recognize right off. Friend, he's going to be a man of words. He's going to know what to say, when to say it, and who to say it to. He's going to be a man who can flatter; a man with smooth words; a man with a lot of charisma. And that's how he's going to get into his position of power. And he's going to fool everybody. He's going to deceive everybody. He's nothing but a deceiver. And Antiochus Epiphanes was exactly the same. As a matter of fact, he was not even supposed to be the king there in the north. His brother's son was supposed to be the king, but since his brother's son was not on the throne he moves in too quickly and he begins to talk to the right people and how in the world he did it who knows. But he ended up being the king himself; he did it by intrigue, with flattery, by smooth words, by knowing how to talk. Man, if he was a used car salesman he'd be a billionaire. He knows exactly what he's doing.

So remember this now: he's going to be a man with a lot of charisma. Isn't it interesting that the characteristics of wickedness sometimes can be covered over by smooth talk and a lot of flattery? Have you ever noticed that? Boy, some people come to church every Sunday and they know the right words to say. They're so sweet and they'll just talk to you so nice and they'll walk outside the church and just rip their brothers to shreds and talk about you from now on. You see, you can cover that stuff over. And evidently this man knows exactly how to do it.

I remember when I was going through high school, I could fake a fever. I knew exactly how to do it; I learned quickly. That's why it took me so long to get saved: I learned the language of Christianity before I ever met the Christ of Christianity. And a lot of people do that. He knows exactly what to say, he knows exactly how to say it, and he knows exactly who to say it too. "A king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue."

But look at verse 24. Here's that supernatural empowerment of evil. It says, "And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power," notice this, "and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people." On one particular escapade of Antiochus Epiphanes, on his way home, he had been partially defeated down in the area of Greece and he was on his way back through the land of the people of God. On that one time he slew 80,000 Jews, he sold 40,000 into slavery, and he took 40,000 more back home as personal captives in his reign. This is the kind of man he was. He was a destructive man, a deceptive man, and he seemed to be moved by a power beyond himself, an evil power. He was supernaturally empowered by Satan himself to do the things that he did to Israel.

Now how else could God get some of these people to understand what He's talking about? He tells about a little horn in chapter 7, but then He says, "Now listen, guys, there's going to be someone like that and you can look at it some day." Not for their benefit: they're going to die; but for our benefit especially as we look back. There was a man who was insolent and a man who was a very dangerous person to Israel.

Well, verse 25 even tells us more, how he smooth-talked his way to power. "And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence." Isn't that incredible? "And he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease." Boy, there was no time to let down while he was in power. "He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency." Isn't that an incredible statement? "He will be broken without human agency." Now what God is beginning to show us is, even though this man is going to be a smooth talker, even though he's going to be endowed with a power that is beyond himself, even though he'll be very destructive and destroy many of the people of Israel, he's on a leash. He's on a leash and he can only go so far because the God who allows him to do that is also the God who is going to shut him down in the end. That's a good thing to remember, isn't it?

You know, it's only going to go on for awhile. God's going to allow it because God is a just God. Israel has sinned and that's the cause of the whole thing: the transgression. And you see in the latter days, in those last three and a half years, this is where a lot of people get confused. How come the Christians aren't going to be a part of that? Why? Man, I haven't sinned against God that way; I've not rejected the Messiah. I've received Him! These are for people who have rejected the Messiah. You see in some people's theology they can't seem to understand the New Testament. Yes, there are Jew and Greek in Christ, but it means individual Jews, not the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel has continued to reject our Messiah. They continue to reject our Christ, and so for that reason one day there's going to come a time of chastening for them, a day of wrath, the Day of Jacob's Distress. Three and a half

years, and if you want to understand that, then understand why Antiochus Epiphanes was allowed to do what he did. They rejected God; God used this evil man to bring them back to understand that God is a just God and punishes those people who reject Him.

He can go no further than God allows

So then, first of all, he will oppress God's people and he will defy their God: absolutely no conscience whatsoever. Secondly, he'll be a charismatic man with a deranged character. Hidden behind his flattery and hidden behind his smooth words, and hidden behind his deceit is a deranged man that's going to come on the throne that wants to take the lives of the people of Israel. But the third thing I want you to see, and that's all we'll do today in chapter 8, the third thing I want you to see is that he can go no further than God allows.

Go back to verse 13. He can go no further than God allows. One of the guys in our church was telling me one day he had a dog at home. And he was telling me about how he was on a rope and how that dog would take off running and you would think that the dog would have learned after being chained to that rope for years, how long that rope was. But it just seemed like that dog was just so excited that he would forget all reality and something would run through the yard and that dog would take off never remembering that he could only run so far. And every single time he would run beyond that and just about break his neck when he got to the end of that rope.

Well, you get the idea that Antiochus Epiphanes is on a leash. He can go no further than God allows him to go. And verses 13-14 tells you exactly how many days he has. Isn't this incredible? I just love Daniel! I mean, God not only tells that he's going to come on the scene, but He tells them how long he's going to be on the scene, and then he says, "He's through! I cut him off!" He's come to the end of his rope. Verse 13, "Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, 'How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply [I mean, if he's going to cut off the regular sacrifice, how long?] while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?'" How long is this going to last?

Look at verse 14: "And he said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored.'" Oh, I love history now; I'm beginning to love it. I've just got a lot to learn, I'm so thick. But isn't it wonderful: 2,300 days. That's about six years, 110 days; or if you take it evenings and mornings, some people do it three years, 65 days; some people do it six years, 110 days. I don't know. The significance to me is that it starts and it stops and God says when it's going to stop and you know it's only for a period of time. Thank God for the Maccabees and the Maccabean revolt. Anybody ever study about that and couldn't fit it into history?

But you know, I didn't know that the Maccabees, that was not their name. It was a term given to Judas. The old dad couldn't stand it anymore. Here they were going into the temple and putting the pagan offerings on there and he couldn't stand it anymore. And one day one of the high dudes was coming in, a royal commissioner, and he goes over and kills both of them and then he takes his family and runs up into the mountains. He just can't stand what's going on in the temple there. Well, that started it. And there was guerrilla warfare for awhile, he and two other sons were killed, and there were three left: Judas, Jonathan and Simon. They began to carry on what the daddy had started and it was Judas that was given the name "Maccabee." And the word "Maccabee" means the "hammerer."

Buddy, he started a revolt that did not stop and it was Judas who finally, one day, went into that temple and cleansed it of all that pagan junk and started a new day for the God's people. Matter of fact the Jews to this day have a feast that begins on December 25 and it's all to celebrate that Maccabean revolt. After the temple had been desecrated finally it was put back on course. So you see, he only has so long and whenever evil comes into your life or mine, remember something: it's for a season. Whenever you suffer, it's for a season. God has a starting place and God has a stopping place. And it's so good to know that He is in control of all of it.

Well, it was 2,300 evenings and mornings for Antiochus Epiphanes and if we could shout it from the mountain tops to those people who are going to be stuck on this earth for that period of time of tribulation and if we put it on the billboards and whatever else, and just simply say that when that evil starts in the middle part of the 70th week, when those three and a half years start, if we could just say, "Hang in there, brother, he's only got three and one half years and when the final day comes, it's over." God settles it and then His kingdom will come to this earth.

I don't know how many people think, "Oh Brother Wayne, there's so much evil in this world." Josef Tson was over at a church in Huntsville and the pastor said he said something to me that just thrilled me. He said one of our men asked him, "Dr. Tson, what do you think Satan's next move will be in Romania?" And he said Josef Tson looked at him and he said, "Oh, son, will you get your mind off of Satan? It's not what Satan's next move is, it's what's God's next move is. Keep looking at the One who is in control of this whole thing."

I want to tell you something, folks. I get so tired of people chasing a demon under every bush, giving credit to everything Satan is doing. I understand that he's there and I am aware that he's there. I am alerted to his presence, but come on, let's start talking about what God's doing. He's the One who is in control of this thing. Twenty-three hundred evenings and days God says, and it's over.

Happy day, Satan, it's over on that day. Three and a half years in the last days of this age and then He says it's all over. Said, done and delivered.

Did you ever go swimming when you were growing up and had to go to a public pool? I remember Mama would take us over and drop us off with a lunch and I had my swim fins and a mask. She said, "I could always tell where you were in the pool because I'd see the fins up above the water. You never stayed up on top of the water; you were always down under the water." I used to love to do that. One of the things I hated all the time was when one person messed up, the life guard would say, "OK, everybody out of the pool." Just bothered me. I get that same idea when God says, "Okay, three and a half years. Everybody out of the pool. I'm the One who calls the shots around here. You do what I tell you to do."

That's the way it's going to be. Antiochus, you think you're big stuff buddy. In 2300 evenings and mornings everybody is coming out of the pool. You're through. That's exactly what God says. It all gets you excited after awhile. When I start going through hard times I'm trying to remember that there's going to be a beginning and an end in God's eternal purpose somehow. And I don't care what's going on in your life; God has a season and rejoicing coming: you just stay in there. You keep trusting the One who is in control. Quit worrying about what the other one is doing, just start trusting the One who is in control. Start learning to cooperate with Him, and watch the victory God will bring in your life.

Man, I just get excited. One of these days I'm going to get loud. This thing is really getting hold of me. I'd never preached a book like this. I've never been as thrilled in all of my life. I used to say it was ridiculous to study prophecy: learn how to live to day and don't worry about tomorrow. I was a pan-millennialist: everything is going to pan out in the end anyway. I've changed my mind and I'm wrong. Anybody I've ever said that to, I apologize to you. Friend, this is a purifying hope and this will just excite you to the point that you just want to shout. You just wait until we get to Revelation after we've done Daniel. As a matter of fact, I think I've got it figured out some good times if the Lord would come back for His church, if we could just plan it. Lord, if you could just let me know I won't write a book, but if I could just know the day, wouldn't that be wonderful.

But isn't it wonderful to know that even though all this evil is coming on the world, God let Daniel know something: He let him know it was only going to be for a time. You wait until we get into chapter 10. I've got a personal observation on chapter 10 that I can't get around it and I believe it's right. I won't force it down your throat, but I'm definitely going to tell you about it when we get there. I just believe that God is so concerned about old Daniel because Daniel is so concerned about his people and his holy city. It just seems like every time that angel comes, "Daniel, bless your sweet heart, finally we found somebody concerned enough that we can answer a prayer." And He just opens up the curtain and tells him everything that is going on all the way through the book of Daniel.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had some Daniels today? If the world and the church were full of Daniels, what God would be revealing to our hearts and how we would just rejoice in knowing that He really is in control.

Well, folks, there's an evil one coming to Israel, he's already come and he's gone. And that's one thing you'll find about any evil on this earth: it may have been, but it's gone now. That's the way it always will be. But the One who will live forever is the One who establishes kingdoms on this earth.

Daniel 9:1-19 What Do You Pray When You Suffer from Someone Else's Sin

Turn with me to Daniel 9. Of course we're getting into that chapter where we're talking about the 70 weeks and I know everybody is excited to hear about that, but you'll just have to wait a week, because it comes at the last part of the chapter. So often when you get into a book like Daniel you want to jump to the prophetic things and you overlook such rich truths that are in between. And what we're going to look at this morning is a prayer of Daniel; a prayer that he prays for his people. And I'd like to entitle the message "What Do You Pray When You Are Suffering the Consequences of Somebody Else's Sin?"

And you say, "I appreciate you title, where are you coming from?" Let me see if I can get you into the mindset that I have this morning. The book of Daniel has very clearly told us why God allowed Nebuchadnezzar and other pagan kings to just have their way with His people. In chapter 8:12 as we see in the future, it seems to form a pattern. In the future, hundreds of years after this was prophesied, there was going to be a man to come on the scene by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes, and this man was going to bring great terror and great trial to Israel, God's people. Why? Why would God allow this to happen?

Well, in verse 12 it says, "And on account of the transgression the host will be given over to the horn," the small horn; he's talking about Antiochus Epiphanes, not the little horn of chapter 7, "along with the regular sacrifice." You see, Israel had rejected God. Now we know from studying the history of Israel how they were the twelve sons of Jacob who had his name changed to Israel, how they had split. They had a civil war basically. The ten tribes to the north kept the name of Israel, the two tribes to the south were called Judah, and both of them continued to disobey and forsake God. Israel had long since been overtaken by Assyria and dispersed into

other lands. Now we see Judah and Judah continually forsook God as a nation. As a result there is a consequence, folks, to forsaking God: God's judgment fell upon them. God had told them exactly what would happen and it happened.

And so we see a nation then under the consequence of sin. But there's something to remember: it's one thing to single out a nation as a whole and to see as a whole they have rejected God. But remember this: God has always had a remnant. He had a remnant in Israel to the north; He had a remnant in Judah to the south. And here we see Daniel, a part of a whole. It's not his sin that has caused their captivity in Babylon. Now certainly he had sinned, obviously, just because he lied to his mother doesn't mean God put the whole nation in captivity. That's not what we're dealing with here. The sin of the nation was forsaking God. Daniel, as a sinner like anybody else, was a part of that, but he wasn't one who had forsook God in his life. So he was a remnant that was a part of a whole. And as a result of the whole, the nation forsaking God, he, a godly man, had to bear the consequence of the nation's sin. Do you see the picture?

What do you do when you're in a situation like that? Here's a man who at 15 years old had predetermined in his heart he would not defile himself: he would honor God at all cost. Jerked out of his homeland and for 60-some years now he's been in captivity in a pagan land. How does he feel about it? Put yourself into his shoes. What does he think about when he wakes up in the morning? Is he bitter? Is he mad? Is it somebody else's problem? Does he want to cast stones? Oh friend, if you can grasp the prayer of Daniel in chapter 9, it will so change your whole life.

I wonder who is here that is suffering the consequences of somebody else's sin. I think generally we could all say that in our country it has certainly forsaken God. We don't have religious freedom in our nation, we have religious toleration. We all know that. And it's just a matter of time to when the fuse is going to get shorter and shorter to where we're going to deal with some hard times in this country. I believe that as much as I'm breathing right now. So we could say then, you could say in your heart and I could say in my heart, "I haven't rejected You, God. How come I have to go through all the consequences of somebody else's sin?" We're generally in that boat this morning.

But not only that, I wonder if you're in a marriage situation this morning and you've never rejected God in your life, you love the Lord Jesus, and your spouse, whether it be your husband or your wife, that person has walked away from God and tremendous consequences have come upon your family because of one or the other's rejection of God. And you have to bear that same rejection; you have to bear that same consequence that has come from that rejection. Maybe you're in a job situation some place and you're in the same boat. You know, I've always felt sorry for the sailors in the boat that Jonah got in. For some reason, now they weren't bothering anybody, man they just went to work one day and happened to be that they had a man on there that had rejected God and because of that and he forsook the commandment of God, man, they had to reap a great consequence that really wasn't their fault: it was his fault.

Now, what do you do when you're suffering the consequences of somebody else's sin? Well, we're going to see, hopefully, in Daniel, how he deals with this. How should we as citizens of this country deal with the obvious apathy of our nation toward God? Obvious rejection of God in every arena practically that we can look at: how should we react, how should we respond, how should we pray?

Well, verses 1-2 begin our setting. "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years." That's incredible. Daniel is having his quiet time. You see Daniel praying a lot and now he's in the Word. He's in the books of a contemporary prophet of his named Jeremiah. See, Jeremiah prophesied at the same time. Isn't it interesting that Hebrews tells us that the prophets of old prophesied in part and in portion? In other words, none of them had the complete message. Each one of them had a part of the message and most of them did not understand the fullness of that message. And so here we see Daniel leaning over on another prophet, Jeremiah, his contemporary, and reading his word, reading what he has said.

And he sees in the book of Jeremiah, he sees that they are to return back to their homeland in 70 years. Seventy years was the appointed time for Judah to come back to their homeland; they've been out of their land for almost that time. Now this is in the first year of Darius, which would make that around 538 or 539 BC, so therefore Daniel has been there for 67 years. And only three more years until his people were to go back home. And look what he does in verse 3, "So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes."

Now something happened, something stimulated him as he was in the writings of Jeremiah. You see, the word for prayer there means to intercede, and the word for supplication translated means to plea for mercy. So he saw something, maybe from what Jeremiah talked about. Not just the 70 years, but Jeremiah very clearly brings out in his book why the people were in captivity and he understands that because of forsaking God during captivity—and my gut feeling on this thing is that when he was studying it he began to look around him and realize that Israel had not yet repented. None of them had turned back to God. He knew that in his heart and he knew that in three years they were going back to their homelands, and he begins all of a sudden to intercede for his people and to plea for mercy.

The last part of verse 3 says that he fasted, put on sackcloth and ashes, and that was their way of humbling themselves before God, preparing themselves for a vigil of intercessory prayer as he seeks God to plea for mercy. Isn't it interesting how many people who are in situations where they are suffering the consequences of somebody else's sin never even really think to pray except for themselves? They end up bitter, they end up throwing stones, and they end up thinking they deserve something, but I want you to see the humility of Daniel as he sees the problem. He's a godly man, he has not forsaken God, but he sees his nation has forsaken God, so therefore he prays, and look how he prays! That's what we want to look at this morning is his prayers.

He begins by showing his great respect for God

First of all in his prayer he begins by showing his great respect for God. He understands that God is a God that can be trusted. Now look in verse 4, "And I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, 'Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments....'" Now the word used for God there is a beautiful word. It is the word Yahweh, and among other things that it means, it also refers to the fact that He's a personal God. Isn't that incredible?

Daniel, seeing the problem, knows that his God is not unapproachable and so he approaches Him as a personal God. He's understood this for a long time. We saw this in chapter 6: he'd been praying at morning, noon, and night for a long time. He knew he could approach his God; he knew his God was as concerned and much more concerned that he was toward the situation. So he turns to Him and he says, "Alas, O Lord," Yahweh, the God that is a personal God.

Well, Daniel trusted Him and you know something that struck me is our prayers reflect the measure of our trust toward God. Listen to yourself pray the next time you pray. Listen to what you're praying for. Listen to the time you spend acknowledging the God that you really do trust Him. You don't particularly like the situation that you're in, but "God, I trust You, I trust You. You're a personal God. And I know, God, that You're concerned about me in the midst of the situation." Listen to what you're praying. Are you praying that way? You see, you verbalize what your heart attitude is. And as he prayed he showed his great trust that God does care about him.

But as he prays you see the integrity of his trust, and there are two things he brings out in verse 4. First of all, he knew that God's greatness must be respected. He says in verse 4, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God." Just looking up those two words, "great" and "awesome," you get the idea of just so magnanimous, I mean, He's so big. And I think what Daniel is saying is, "O God, thank You that You're a caring God, thank You that You're concerned about this situation, and, God, thank You that You've revealed in my heart You're so much bigger than this situation. You're so much bigger than this problem we're going through." He respects the greatness of God.

And then secondly he understands the faithfulness of God. Look what he says, "who keeps His covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments." Do you understand that Daniel understood that God was a faithful God, faithful to His covenants? Now, folks, all of us have been unfaithful at one time or not, but we know that God is faithful. Is that correct? You know, before he even gets into his prayer and his request that he's going to make in a few moments, before he ever gets there he makes sure that he has verbalized before the Lord in blessing Him, that he understands that God is in control and that whatever God does is right, His character is impeccable, and the fact that He is a God of loving kindness, even in the midst of judgment there is loving kindness. That's an incredible thing.

Now, folks, if you're in a bad situation this morning and you have not initiated that and somebody else has sin in your particular perspective and the sphere of your life and you have to live under that consequence. Remember something: whatever that consequence is and God has allowed it, God is a faithful God. Don't blame Him. Whatever God does is just, whatever consequence that is there is right. Don't ever think anything else. God's character must be respected. We don't even have to defend it: it defends itself.

And so he comes before God and says, "God, I look around me and I see all these people forsaking You and I see the tragedy that we're in because of it, but God, I know that You're a righteous God and in the midst of Your judgment there is that covenant-loving kindness to those who love You and to those who obey You."

Remember the one who prayed in the Old Testament? He said, "God, in wrath remember mercy." Isn't that precious? Even in God's judgment. You know, if old Jonah could have understood this about God, that whatever God does is righteous and just, if he could have understood that he would have hurried over to Nineveh. But he didn't want to go because Hosea and Amos had already prophesied that Nineveh and the Assyrians were going to take Israel captive. And he didn't want to be a part of a revival to a pagan nation that was going to take his own people captive. And he couldn't even see the fact that God's mercy was way ahead of Jonah. God was bringing revival to the people that were going to take his own people captive. And only eternity will show how God's loving kindness was way ahead of even His judgment with the people that He loved.

So, folks, listen, the first thing you don't want to do if you're in a situation like that is lose sight of the fact of who God is. That He's

bigger than your problem, that He's a personal God. He is concerned about you, but whatever is going on, don't you ever blame God. Don't you dare. He's a righteous God and not only is He righteous, if you'll look a little closer you're going to even see His loving kindness in the midst of His judgment.

So we see then Daniel praying. So God can be trusted, His stature is immense, bigger than our circumstance, His character is merciful. As a matter of fact, if you want to see God's real heart during the time of Israel's captivity, look in Jeremiah 29. Several of you have come to me with this verse and I don't know why I haven't brought it out before now. Jeremiah 29:11, do you want to see the heart of God? Here He is judging His people. Took them out of their land and gave them over to pagan kings. But look at His heart and look at His purpose in their life. Jeremiah 29:11, "'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord." Isn't that great? "I've got plans for you." "You're kidding; we're in captivity because we've sinned against You." "I know you are, but I still love you. You are My children, you are My covenant people." Boy, that just blesses me.

Sometimes when I blow in royally and my wife and family have to suffer the consequences of me making dumb choices, I'm so glad God doesn't throw me away. I may have to go through a period of suffering because God has established the consequence. I could make my choice, but I couldn't choose the consequence. But I'm glad God hasn't thrown me away, that God still loves me and has a plan for me in my life.

And he goes on and says, "plans for welfare and not for calamity, to give you a future and a hope." I think the King James says to bring an end to what you're going through right now. God sees a season of consequences and it's 70 years; but in all that His loving kindness is seen, His covenant faithfulness is there. So it's kind of like when Daniel begins to pray, he just reaffirms. Do you know what it means to "bless the Lord?" The word "bless" means to speak good things about Him. I think what he's doing is he's blessing the Lord in his prayer here. He's blessing, saying, "God, You're a faithful God. You're a God that can be trusted regardless. I have great respect for who You are."

He confesses the sin of his people as his own

Secondly, look what he does in his prayer. In verses 5-6 he begins to confess the sins of the people, now watch this, as his own sin. Look out now. He begins to confess the sins of the people as his own sin. Thirty-two times in chapter 9 he associates himself with the people of Israel. He calls it "we have sinned," "we have sinned," "we have sinned." Wait a minute, Daniel; do you understand what you're saying? You're living a godly life; you're doing everything you know to do to serve God every day. What are you doing saying "we"? You see, Daniel never put himself above anybody. He saw himself as a part of a whole and he began to confess their sin as his sin.

Now, folks, I want to tell you something. The problem we have many times today in our country—and one of the reasons we're not seeing anything different happen—is because so many people become bitter and they become angry, and they begin to point their finger and say, "It's your fault, it's your fault!" And they begin to attack "them" when it's really "us." We're all a part of it. Man, when you start seeing the abortion clinics open—and I hate to even mention the word. You know and I know that abortion is wrong. Anybody that believes the Word of God should not have an argument about that—but when you start seeing them open and you start seeing the pro-choice groups being noticed on television, you start seeing some of the atrocity that's going on in our society. Stop thinking it's "their" fault. It's "our" fault. We're all a part of this country and we ought to get on our face before God and confess the sin of others as "our sin."

That's what he was doing. He wasn't saying it's "your fault," he was saying it's "our fault." We have sinned against You. How had they sinned? Well, he tells you in verse 5. He says, "we have sinned;" the word "sin" means we have gone astray. We have missed the point; we have missed the mark of what You had for us. We first of all have "committed iniquity." And that means we have acted in a way that is perverse to God's way. Secondly, we have "acted wickedly," and that means we have done what we knew was wrong. They had sinned against knowledge, folks. They knew better. They had not sinned in ignorance, they had sinned against knowledge. That's what it means to act wickedly. "And rebelled," and the word "rebel" means as a nation they had simply defied God's authority. "God, don't You call us, we'll call You." Oh, what a sad scene in a person's life.

And how had they rebelled? It gives you two things there. First of all they turned "aside from Thy commandments," which means simply they didn't want God's authority in their life. Secondly, they turned aside from God's ordinances, which means they didn't want God's wisdom in their life. Because of turning aside of God's commandments and His ordinances, they had rebelled against God.

In verse 16 even takes it a step further. "Moreover," now remember, he's a prophet, but he says, "we have not listened to Thy servants the prophets." And I wonder if that wasn't spawned by the fact that he was studying from Jeremiah when he got this burden on his heart? Maybe somehow he felt even guilty himself by not paying attention to what Jeremiah had said to the people and letting them know exactly why they were in the situation they were in. He said, "We have not listened to Thy servants the prophets, who spoke in Thy name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land."

Friend, listen: don't ever think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. You and I are part of the whole and if our nation goes down and has to go through consequences, we're going to suffer those consequences. It may not be that you or I individually have done anything to forsake God in our life, but at the same time if our nation forsakes it, we're a part of that nation. And when we come to pray we don't come to cast stones. We don't come to be bitter, we come to get on our face and say, "God, we have sinned." You know, one of the things that eats me alive in Daniel is that it just won't let me alone. It just eats my lunch. I don't pray like I ought to pray for our government. We prayed for the government of Romania that their elections would be what they need to be. That God would allow His people to have an open door to preach the Word. How much time do we spend praying for our nation?

"Oh Brother Wayne I spend a lot of time fighting it!" But how much time do you spend praying for it? We have sinned, we have sinned. Nobody's fault but our own. Daniel showed great respect for who God is. He understood that whatever He does is right. You don't have to question it. Whatever God allows is right. He understands that. But secondly he confesses the sin of his people as if it were his own.

He acknowledges that they got what they deserved

And then the third thing he does, he acknowledges that they had gotten what they deserved. He just sort of inches forward, gets a little deeper each time we get to a new paragraph. He just says, "God, we have gotten what we deserved," verses 7-10. Look at verse 7, "Righteousness belongs to Thee, O Lord," again reaffirming the fact of the character of God. "God, righteousness doesn't belong to us; we have not acted that way. But God, righteousness belongs to You. You are consistent, You are just, Your character is impeccable. We'll never doubt You ever with whatever goes on on this earth.

Friend, there's a lot of people today angry at God because of their circumstance. And, friend, you're on a dead-end street if you're that way. Because whatever God has allowed in your life or whatever God has initiated in your life, however you want to say it, God's still in control. Whatever it is, don't ever blame Him for it. Don't ever blame Him for it. He is righteous and He is just. We're here to lift up His character. But he says to us belongs "open shame." And that's exactly what had happened to Israel; that's exactly what had happened. Publicly they were laughed at. They had made a mockery out of a covenant with God. Their city was in shambles, they had no testimony, no witness to anybody. And he says, "to You, righteousness, but to us, open shame."

Now there were several things that had caused that. Verse 7 says that they had done unfaithful deeds. They point back to their forefathers. They say, "O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which Thou hast driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds." In other words, they wouldn't have been driven out had they not disobeyed God. God is a just God and He says, "If you sin against Me," He had already told them specifically what would take place: they'd be driven out of their land. And God did exactly what He said.

So he said, "God, we deserve open shame, we deserve everything that we get." Verse 8, what had happened in verse 8 is they had sinned, "Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee." Verse 9, what had they done? Because they rebelled against Him: "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him." Why would he say that? God continued to be compassionate and forgiving even in their rebellion against Him.

Verse 10, "nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God," now watch this carefully, "to walk in His teachings which he set before us through His servants the prophets." Do you see what he's doing? He starts off and affirms the character of God. "God, You can be trusted, You're bigger than this problem, You're a personal God, You're concerned. But God, we know that whatever You do is in keeping with Your covenant. You're a faithful God, and, God, You also show loving kindness and we cry out for that loving kindness. In the midst of judgment we know that it's there and we need it. But we also need that loving kindness." And secondly he confesses his sin as the people's sin: their sin is his. And then thirdly he acknowledges that they have gotten what they deserved.

He remembers the faithfulness of God to his word

But the fourth thing that he does in verses 11-14, he begins to remember the faithfulness of God to His Word. In other words, he's just taking us one inch at a time. He starts off saying "God, Your character is right." Then he goes, "Righteousness belongs to You." And now he's going to show you why. He's going to show you that God has told them exactly what would happen if they disobeyed Him.

In verse 11, "Indeed all Israel has transgressed Thy law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to

Thy truth.”

Good night! Let me just see if I can get this out. There's so much he's saying here. He's reminding them of the covenant they were under, the conditions of that covenant. Now, folks, when I go to this don't you dare shift gears on me. This is to them, not to us. This is to them. But look what He says to them and look how He honored exactly what He said would happen. He tells them so clearly what's going to take place. Leviticus 26:23-24. He's just basically saying if you're going to sin against Me, you're going to bring consequence down on yourself. He says in verse 23, “And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins.”

Well, look at the contrast to this thing over in verse 40. He tells them something and this is what Daniel is remembering and he's bringing it back before God. “God, You did what You said You'd do, but You also said something else.” Verse 40, “If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers,” that's what he's doing! “in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me,” verse 42, “then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as and I will remember the land.” You see, part of the curse was, if you disobey Me, you'll be taken out of the land. And, friend, He tells them “if you'll come back to Me, if you'll confess, not only am I a God of judgment, I'm a God of loving kindness and if you'll come back and obey Me and confess your sins and confess the sins of your forefathers, then I will remember your land.”

What's Daniel doing? He's doing exact that. He's depending upon that faithfulness and loving kindness of God. Look in Deuteronomy 28 and you see Moses reiterating this to the people before they go into the Promised Land. He tells them basically if you obey, you'll be blessed; if you disobey there will be a curse. Verses 1-3: “Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the Lord your God. Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.”

And so he begins to go on and talk about the blessings they'll get if they obey God. He's already told them this, but look at verse 15, the contrast: “But it shall come about, if you will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.” And then it gives you a list, the whole chapter long, and even spills over to chapter 29, of what will happen if you disobey God. Don't make the mistake and drag that into the New Covenant and say God said the same thing to us. That's what He said to them. And Daniel is saying, “God, You said this to us and You have done exactly like You said. Your character is impeccable. This judgment that we're in right now, we deserve every bit of it. You have done exactly what You said that You would do.”

Now, folks, I'm trying to drive a point home. Stop blaming God! Folks, there are so many people that are bitter. “God, why did You do this to me?” Friend, you come back before Him and you bless Him and you recognize that He's a righteous God. Whatever He allows or does in your life is just, friend. He is sovereignly in control, and until you begin to pray for those others that are around you that are causing some of the problems that you're in, you begin to identify yourself with them, you're no better than they are. I'm no better than they are. I'm no better than the pagan judge that makes some of these dumb decisions about the abortion situation: I'm no better than he is. I'm just saved by grace. By the grace of God I'd have that mindset. And we come before God and we come humbly and we come with grace in our hearts and we come flat-out before Him and we say, “God, we have sinned. What we're seeing around us we deserve.”

But now, let's come on. He allows us for that plea for mercy. He allows us to plea upon the loving kindness of God. I want you to see this as we wrap this up, because the motive of his prayer now finally comes out. Friend, why is he praying? Is he praying so that he'll have a better deal in life? Is he praying so that he can go back home and forget all this captivity and enjoy life for a while? Buy him a motor home and see America? Is that what he's praying for? Is he praying so that life will let up on him and get rid of the pressure off of him? Is that why he's praying that prayer?

“God, in Your loving kindness, please turn away Your wrath.” Why does he pray that? And now you see why God is going to answer him. Go on down to verse 15, “And now, O Lord our God, who has brought Thy people out of the land of Egypt,” boy, he starts remembering something, “with a mighty hand and hast made a name for Thyself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked. O Lord, in accordance with all Thy righteous acts, let now Thine anger and Thy wrath turn away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people have become a reproach to all those around us.” Listen, they had lost their testimony. People laughed at Israel because of talking about their God.

“So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplications, and for Thy sake, O Lord, let Thy face shine on Thy desolate sanctuary.” You see, his whole key here is not him, it's his holy city, it's his people who have lost their witness. He says, “O my God, incline Thine ear and hear! Open Thine eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Thy name; for we are not presenting our supplications before Thee on account of any merits of our own,” God, I'm not coming before You because I'm somebody, “but on account of Thy great compassion” I'm appealing to You, God. Your compassion, show it to me.

And look at verse 19, "Oh Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Thine own sake," not for mine, for Yours! "O my God, do not delay, because Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." Do you know what the motive of his prayer was, bless his sweet heart? His motive was the restoring of the testimony of his people. The motive was for God's glory to come back into his people. It was not so that he could have a better deal in life, it was not so that he could go back home. As a matter of fact, history tells us he didn't even go back with them, folks. That wasn't the motive of his prayer. The motive of his prayer was that God could once again be glorified in his people.

Folks, I want to tell you something. Are you concerned with that anymore? How do you pray anymore? Do you pray that some of these things that are so wrong in our country, that they be changed? Why do you pray that way? Do you pray so that the Christians in America can once again glorify the Lord Jesus Christ? Is that the burden of your prayer? Is that the real motive of your prayer, or is it some self-centered motive that somehow you can feel like you've proved a point or you can come out and have a better way of life? That's not it; that's not it. "God, I pray that You'll have mercy because Thy people are a reproach to others. We've brought reproach to your name, and God, do it for Thy sake, not for mine, but for Thy sake."

You know, several years ago when we started praying for this church and we had a group of men that would come down, several weeks went by as we prayed and God did some marvelous things in us. Taught us, first of all, that we didn't know what we were doing. First night we spent 45 minutes repeating ourselves ten times and we ended up in the donut shop until 2:30 in the morning because we'd told our wives we were going to pray all night long. One night we started praying for revival. That was the key, that was the motive of our prayer: God, would You bring revival in this church.

And, I mean, it was like the gates of heaven shut down on us, and I can't explain that to you except for the men that were here praying. We began to discern, it was almost like God was shouting down from heaven, why are you praying? So you can have a bigger church? So you can brag a little bit more? So something can go on at the church? What's so special about it? And you know what God brought us to? To confess that as sin and we stopped praying for the church and we just started praying for this city and this nation and for the people around us. And, you know, it was like a ton lifted off of us and God's spirit just moved into that prayer meeting. I've heard some people say recently, "Boy, there's some godly pastors come into town." I'll tell you why. I think one of the reasons is because I know that nine years ago a bunch of men on Friday nights, all night long, began to pray for these pulpits and we began to pray that God would bring godly men in here. Why? Not so that the church could be glorified, not so the Southern Baptists could get a name for themselves, but so that Jesus could be glorified once again in His people. That's what our prayers were all about.

If you're praying just for your family, just so that you can have a better way of living until the day that you die, you've missed the whole point. You pray so that God can once again use the people who call Him by name, that the church would not be a reproach to other people. The motive must be God's motive, "for Thy sake, O God, deliver us. Not for our sake, for Thy sake, that Your witness might be seen again." We've talked more people out of joining this church than we have to join it. Friend, we're not building a mega church. Our hearts' desire is to become a lighthouse and to become an encouragement to other churches. We've had other people come over here and stay forever it seems like. And they get their directions and the Word in their life and they go back to their churches. Praise God for that kind of thing.

Who are we? We're not going to get some crown when we get to heaven because we had so many people on Sunday. We're here to be an encouragement and when we pray, it must be for all of God's people and when we see the consequences of sin, we must say, "Oh God, we have sinned." Stop pointing a finger at the government. Stop pointing a finger at some church that doesn't preach the Word, and realize when God's name is under reproach friend, you represent God's name.

Tell you one thing: I couldn't point a finger at anybody this morning. I just want to go crawl into a corner somewhere. Why do you pray? You know, one of the things, I'm getting older, but you know what's killing me? The older I get, the more I realize of the filthiness of my flesh. The more I realize. And you know what scares me? It's the times I've preached out of a predetermined fleshly mindset without really letting the Spirit of God speak to my mind and my heart. How do you study? How many books have you read about something? You're going to jump in somebody else's tent, so you've already predetermined what God's Word says. How do you pray?

I went to a seminar one time on prayer—probably did more damage to my life than anything else. I learned the five things that ought to be in every prayer and I came back and tried to do that and I couldn't remember which one went first and for weeks I was in bondage to prayer, a system. And I'm learning, friend, to get out from that bondage. Man, just get on your face before God and say, "God, who in the world am I to point a finger at anybody." I love what someone told me one time. He said, "Wayne, if God's ever going to use you, be the wrong one. Never be the right one. Be the wrong one." I said, "What if I'm not wrong?" He said, "That's what you think. Just giving your flesh the benefit of the doubt, go on, confess it to be wrong to start with." That's usually the place, folks.

Oh boy, Daniel is killing me. That God's glory might be seen once again.

Daniel 9:20-24 God's Faithfulness to Israel - 1

Turn with me to Daniel 9, and we come to that part that everybody's been wanting to talk about: the 70 weeks of Daniel. I'd like to entitle this "God's Faithfulness to Israel, Part 1," because there will be a part 2. There may be a 3 or a 4, I don't know. Right now I know there's a part 1 and a part 2. God's faithfulness to Israel.

So many people cannot understand that God has not finished with Israel. They think that when Jesus came it was all done away with and now it's just the wheat and the tares growing side by side. But they forget the everlasting covenant made with Abram that Abram was promised not only a seed who was Jesus Christ, not only a land which was Israel, but also he was promised a nation. And this was an everlasting covenant. Now when Jesus came He opened the door, but Israel had still rejected Jesus as being the Messiah. Therefore, during this time Jews, individually, Jews come into the covenant, but Israel as a nation has as a whole still rejected God. God is not through with Israel. And it's a wonderful testimony to His faithfulness to His covenant people.

Now we have seen Daniel in chapter 9 in fervent prayer for his people. Verses 3-19, he had been studying in his quiet time the readings of Jeremiah, his contemporary prophet friend. Jeremiah had said in his writing that the reason they had been put into captivity was their sin and their wickedness and their rejection of God, their transgression, but he also had said that they only would remain there for 70 years. Now those 70 years were about up. They were in the first year of Darius and so therefore about 538 BC, therefore about three more years before they would come back to their homeland. At that time Daniel had been there for 67 years.

And when he looked around him at his people, he realized that they had still not yet repented. They had not yet turned back to God, and he realized that they were going back to their land having still not turned back to God. And so he begins to be repentant. And he puts on the sack cloth and the ashes, humbles himself before God and he begins to plead for mercy before God. He confesses his people's sins 32 times as if it were his own. And it's in this precious posture of intercessory prayer that we find God interrupting him and the angel Gabriel coming to him and saying, "Hold it Daniel; that's enough. We're going to answer you. But we're not just going to answer you for your people Judah, we're going to answer you for all of Israel and we're going to take you right down to the last day on this earth, of this age, and we're going to show you that God still loves His people. But it's going to take a while before your prayers can be fully answered."

Look in verse 20, "Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. And he gave me instruction and talked with me, and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.'"

Now in this vision is a whole picture and notice he was praying not just for Judah but for Israel, a whole picture of what God is going to do with His people. And there are several things we need to see, two of which we'll look at this morning. First of all, as we get into it we need to proceed with caution and the first thing we want to look at is the focus of Daniel's prayer and God's answer to that prayer. There is a focus to that. Now if we'll proceed with caution, we might understand this before we leave this morning. When I used to trout fish with my Dad, years ago, I caught my first limit when I was eight years old in a trout stream with a fly rod. And my Dad taught me from the very beginning, "Now, son, if you're going to catch fish, you're going to have to be careful how you approach the stream and you're going to have to be very quiet and very careful in doing it." You fish upstream, you don't fish downstream. Now we're going to catch some fish out of this thing, but we're going to move real slowly. We don't want to spook ourselves and mess ourselves up as we go through it, alright? So let's look at the focus. This is what so many people overlook.

Look in verse 24, "Seventy weeks have been decreed," now we'll get to that in just a minute. Now watch the next phrase: "for your people and your holy city..." Now whether you like it or not, all the answers in prophecy about the church are not going to be answered in the book of Daniel. What God is revealing to Daniel has to do with His people and His holy city. I just wish that everything, the if's, the and's, the who's, the what's, the when's would all be answered in this as to when the church fits in and what's going to happen to us and all these things. Nope, you're going to have to go to another book to find that. This is about Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city. And not just Judah, but you're going to see that it's all of Israel before this vision is complete.

So the first thing is the focus and notice we hit that and we're running. Now the second one we're going to stay on for awhile. The second thing we need to look at very carefully this morning is that there is a specific time period that has been decreed for Israel to be broken of their self-sufficiency and that period is 70 weeks, verse 24. "Seventy weeks have been decreed," it's signed and sealed and you can't change that. "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city." Now here comes the deep water. What does the 70 weeks refer to? Is it 70 literal weeks, or what is it? And how can we look at it intelligently this morning and understand from God's Word?

Well, there are two things that may help you; it helped me. First of all, notice in verse 24; let the Scripture interpret itself now. There are six things that must happen before the completion or by the completion of these 70 weeks. Now if you'll keep that in mind, it may keep your doctrine a little more straight as you begin to try to interpret it.

Six things that must be completed before 70 weeks are over

There are six things that must be completed before the 70 weeks are over. First of all he says in verse 24, "to finish the transgression." The word "finish" means to restrain, to bring to an end. The transgression basically sums up the whole of Israel's rejection to God. Certainly encompassed in that would be their rejection of the Messiah yet to come and then also of the Spirit interpretation to them later on. So they have rejected God, and so the word "transgression" sums all their sin up with an attitude of the fact that they've rebelled against God: they have transgressed God. Now, before those 70 weeks are over or by the end of them, all of that has got to come to an end for Israel. It's got to be restrained, brought to an end. Alright, that's the first thing. And anybody who says that's already happened, you don't seem to understand. No, it has not.

Secondly, it says "to make an end of sin." Actually the word "sin" is in plural. It should be sins. And so here we see the specifics. The overall sin is the transgression, now you see the individual sins that come out of that. All of that has got to be brought to an end by the end of the 70 week period of time.

Thirdly, he says "to make atonement for iniquity." This is when it starts getting exciting and little chill bumps start running up my back. "To make an atonement for sin." Not just one time as they would do in the temple in the holy place, oh, no, but brother, for all eternity there as to be an atonement made. The word "atonement" means to cover and in order for Israel to ever be reconciled to God, their sin has got to come to an end and there's got to be an atonement made for it so that it will cover that and completely rid them of it so they can come on to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we know that Jesus did that by His shed blood on the cross, but that's not what he's saying here, we just know that. Alright, to make an atonement for sin. That's the third thing.

You can say, "Well, Brother Wayne, Jesus has already been on the cross, so evidently that's already completed." That's right, but look at the rest of them. The fourth thing he says, "everlasting righteousness must be brought in." Now here's the key: everlasting righteousness to Israel. Now you know and I know that Jesus made that potentially possible on the cross, but we also know that Israel has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Everlasting righteousness has not yet come to Israel and the key to that is the word "everlasting." It's not just a temporary thing: everlasting righteousness must come.

Then fifthly he said, "to seal up vision and prophecy." Now the word "seal" there, seal up, means when you're finished with something you seal it up and put it on the shelf. You're through with it; you don't need it anymore. So in other words, all prophecy has got to be fulfilled; it's all got to be finished, sealed up, and put on the shelf. It's not needed anymore. All prophecy sealed up.

And then the sixth thing that has got to happen is that it says, "and to anoint the most holy place." Now some scholars say it's the "holy one," and they have a good argument for that. Others say it's the "holy place." Well, if it's the holy place, it would have to be in the temple and we know that there's no temple at this particular time and so something has got to happen there: that hasn't taken place, if it's the holy place. If it's the holy one as He comes to reign as king on this earth, He has not yet come back to this earth in his physical form to be anointed, to reign as the king over His kingdom on His earth. That hasn't taken place.

So we begin to realize how we can unravel this thing. You see, these six things have got to be kept in mind. Any view that you have over here must somehow go along with these six things that have got to take place within that 70 week period of time. Now we come to the real backlash. Have you ever been fishing and you throw into the wind carelessly, not realizing that when you do that you're going to get a backlash if you use a man's reel? Now some of you use those little sissy things that you push little buttons on. I'm talking about a man's reel. And I don't mean one of those things that has a little magnetic thing on the side that keeps you from back lashing. I'm talking about if you're a real fisherman, you know what you're doing, you're throwing with the real kind of stuff. And if you throw into the wind carelessly it's going to backlash on you and make a royal mess. So what you do, you have to be real careful, know what you're doing when you throw into the wind because now we're going to have to see the second thing of this.

The 70 weeks

The first thing was the six things that have got to happen. Okay, we can push that aside. Now we've got to decide what about these 70 weeks. How much time period is that? How do we view that in terms of latter day prophecy? Now let's be real careful because we're throwing in the wind now. Make sure your thumb is down real good because you're going to get a backlash if you don't.

Obviously, it's not 70 periods of seven days. Now the literal there is 70 sevens; periods of seven. It's not really 70 weeks, that's just a translator's term. It's "seventy sevens." What we've got to decide is, are they days or are they years. Now I don't think it even bears mentioning that it can't be days. I'm going to push that aside and go right on. I think personally proper study of the Word of God completely blows that out the back door. Four hundred and ninety days after the decree that comes in verse 25, and we'll look at that in a minute, could not possibly have seen all of these six things fulfilled because we haven't seen them all fulfilled even today. So it

can't be days, so we have to go the next step and make them years. It's got to be 490 years.

Somehow God is saying, "Daniel, I'm going to answer your prayer, yes sir, I'm going to turn my wrath away from Israel; but it's going to come at a certain time. I'm going to send them back to their homeland, but that's not going to do them a bit of good. They're going to go right on rejecting Me, they're going to reject My Christ, they as a nation are going to stand against Me." But 490 years have been decreed so that Israel might be broken of their self-sufficiency. Now, let's look at this 490 years. If you'll note very carefully verses 25-27 is divided into three segments. Now you watch, I didn't write this. Now you watch: three segments.

First of all, in verse 25. Now we'll read part of this and we'll come back to it. "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince." Now let's just push that aside for a minute and I'll come right back to it. First period: "there will be seven weeks," that's seven sevens. Now if you use that as years, that's 49 years. That's the first division. Alright, secondly it says, "sixty-two weeks," or sixty-two sevens. How long is that? Well, that's 434 years. Now we've got two segments. Now if you add 434 to 49 you come up with 483. The problem is there are seven years left or one period of seven that's left. Well, now, where does that fit and how does that come in?

Look in verse 27, "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week." Well, look there, there's the other one: a period of seven years. So you've got 49 years, you've got 434 years, draw a line under that, and then you've got down here seven years. Now what are we going to do with that?

Well, let's look. It gets real exciting in verse 26. "Then after the sixty-two weeks," now when he says 62 you know that comes after the seven, so you've got actually 69 weeks. Are you with me on that? Let me back up just a second. When he says after 62 weeks, don't forget that before you have 62 you've got 49, or seven times seven. Are you with me on that? Stay with me now, I don't want to lose you, alright. I don't want to lose anybody. Like I say many times, I'm here to preach and you're here to listen; raise your hand if you finish before I do. Let's just stay together. Alright, so it's 69, even though it says 62. You've got to assume he's already got the seven in there. He's already said that.

So after 69 weeks, now how long is that? 483 years. Watch this: after 62 weeks, 483 years, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. Now what do you think that represents in the Lord Jesus' life on this earth? What would that be? Cut off: that's the cross, that's the crucifixion. Do you realize what is being said here? If these guys had paid any attention to what Daniel had happen in his life they could have predicted the very time that the Lord Jesus Christ would be crucified on this earth. Some people have even gone a step further than that and marked it down to His triumphal entry, but you at least have the time span that the Messiah would be coming to this earth. Isn't it amazing that there are many Jews today who reject the fact that the Messiah has ever come? If they'll go back and look at the prophecy of Daniel, it told them very clearly that He would be on this earth and would be cut off after a period of 483 years. Clear as a bell.

Now we begin to get a little backlash here. There are three decrees we've got to look at. It all starts in verse 25. When did this 490 year period start? He tells you. Verse 25, "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince," in other words, there's going to be a span of time there and it starts with the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Now here's where the complication comes. There are three decrees of the people to go back into their land. One in 538 BC, one in 458 BC, and one in 445 BC. You've got to choose now which one you think it is.

Let's look at those. First of all, look at the book of Ezra. Ezra 1:2-4. Now this is the first decree by Cyrus and this was in 538 BC. Could this be the time that he's talking about? "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem. And every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.'"

Now what does that decree for the people to go back and do? To build the house of God, to build the temple. Alright, that's the first decree. Look at the second one in Ezra 7, by Artaxerxes. This came in 458 BC. Chapter 7 and verse 21, "And I, even I King Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are in the provinces beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, may require of you, it shall be done diligently." And he begins to tell them how much money and all that it would take to restore not only the inside part of the worship of the temple but the order of that worship. And so Artaxerxes said basically, "One decree is to go back and build the temple, the other decree is to go back and restore order in that temple and the worship in that temple."

The third decree however, comes in Nehemiah 2 by the same man, Artaxerxes. Nehemiah 2:5-8, "And I said to the king," as he came, of course Nehemiah had that burden, "'If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it.' Then the king said to me, the queen sitting beside him, 'How long will your journey be, and when will you return?' So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a definite time. And I said to the king, 'If it

please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah....” And he goes on down, he’s getting a decree from Artaxerxes to go back now and rebuild the walls and rebuild the city.

Now which one do we choose? If 483 years from the time of this decree led us to understand the crucifixion of Christ, we have to be very careful in selecting which one. Now some people choose the 458 BC date. Personally, and I’m not going to fight with anybody, I picked the 445 BC time. That’s the last decree. And certainly if I’m wrong and you’re right and we don’t agree, that’s not going to hurt us: we can still go on in fellowship. We’re going to get to Jesus one day and He’s going to say it didn’t really matter anyway. But one of the three: 445 BC.

Now why do I do that? Well, they had 360 days in their years. They didn’t have 365 like we have. If you take 483 years, multiply that by 360 days, you come out with 173,880 days, and as far as I can tell, the scholars say you can pinpoint the date of His crucifixion in AD 32. Now there’s some other scholarship that comes up and says no, it was AD 30. I don’t know, but somewhere in that ballpark we have it. The point is that it’s on a time schedule and God told him exactly when He would come and when He would be on this earth and that in a certain period of time He would be cut off. That’s the key.

Isn’t it incredible that Israel has ignored the prophecy of Daniel? If they would pay attention to it, the One whom they slew on the cross, they would begin to understand it had to be the Lord Jesus Christ. With all the prophecies that back up before Him in the Old Testament.

You know, when I was in college we used to pull some pranks. I’m sure you didn’t do that. But some of you, I can tell which ones of you did. Some of you are real studious. You liked class. I loved college, I just didn’t like class. So we had to come up with something. We had chapel twice a week and chapel is a great time to take a nap to be honest with you. They had some of the most boring speakers I’ve ever heard in my entire life. Maybe part of it was we stayed up all night the night before, but still they were boring.

We had this guy coming in and they put out this little newsletter and they said, “Now listen, this guy is coming in and here’s what he’s going to talk on in chapel this week.” Now we’d seen it, and oh no! I’ve forgotten what it was now, but we got with a guy who worked on the stage crew. He had the only key as far as we knew to the little door that was behind the pulpit there. They had a pulpit and they had a little door in the back of it and you open that door and they stored stuff in there and they’d lock it up to keep people from going in there and taking it out. He had the key.

We said, “Listen, we need to do something just to make chapel exciting.” We got seven Big Ben alarm clocks. Have you ever heard one of those things? That would suffice for a fire alarm in most places. You could hear it six blocks away and they run forever. You can’t shut them off: they just go forever. That’s the kind you put on the other side of the room if you really want to get up for a class in the morning. So we got seven of those things. We figured that 20 minutes was about all we could take of the boring topic that he was going to be sharing on anyway. All the professors, all the presidential staff was going to be sitting on the stage. We figured this would be a wonderful day. So at 20 minutes after chapel we set the first one: we set the alarm. Five minutes later we set the second later. Five minutes later we set the third one, until we had done seven alarm clocks, and we put them inside that speaker stand, shut the door and locked it and we had the key.

It was the funniest thing I’ve ever seen in my life. Everybody stayed awake that morning because we just couldn’t wait to see what was going to happen. Watching your watch every second. We were in the balcony. All the athletes seemed like we sat in the balcony. We’d all look around and everybody was going, “It’s going to happen!” And the poor guy standing down front was trying his best to entertain the crowd and here’s the staff trying to look like they really were interested. They’re all faking it, but they’re trying to look like they’re interested. At 20 minutes after that alarm clock went off! It was so great. I mean, it just wiped the place out because everybody was waiting on it. And the president and all the people running around trying to get that door open. We got the key!

Well, after it finally goes off and finishes, the guy says, “You know, I was in college one time and we did funny things like that.” And we were thinking, “Oh, but you don’t know.” It’s going to happen again. And about five minutes later it went off! After about the fourth time, needless to say, chapel was over and we just left. Now you wonder why I told that. Folks, this is the thing I want you to see in Daniel.

We can argue from day in and day out: Is it 558 or 458 or whatever? The key is this: God set the time on that clock, shut the door, and locked it and He’s got the key. And buddy, it’s going to go off when He says it’s going to go off. That’s the key. Now I can’t believe these guys getting all bent out of shape with people on this stuff saying, “It ought to be this way,” or “it ought to be that way.” Don’t break fellowship over it. Just understand something: God was in control and God did it and Jesus came and was crucified just exactly the way He said it would happen and it was within a period of time that He said it would be within. That’s the key I want you to grab this morning. I think that’s the most important thing: that God said it, it happened, and there was no question whatsoever about it.

But here’s one more problem. I haven’t got time to work it out so we’re going to do it next time. I can’t wait. We’ve got another period

of time left, don't we? There's another period of time left in this. Seven years. Wait, we just talked about 483 years. Did you not see in your Scriptures that it's a period of 70 times seven: 490 years? Now where is that last seven years? Now this is the thing I want you to see. Well, there are several things I want you to see about it and I'll never get it all out like I got it in. First of all is this: could it be sequential with the 483? That's what a lot of "scholars" say. And they say that the 490 years have already happened. And so you go back to the cross and add seven years and that's it. That is it!

Now personally, that is poor hermeneutic to what we're looking at in this passage. It told me six things have got to happen before those 70 weeks are over with. My friend, you cannot document to me that those six things have taken place yet. They have not: not in Israel's life. This whole thing is about Israel. It has not taken place in Israel's life. They have rejected the Messiah and all these several things have not yet taken place, which means then there must be a gap between the 483 years and the 490th year. Has to be! There's no other way to look at it. If it hadn't happen, and we know six things must happen, you must put a gap in there somehow. And remember now; his whole vision was only about Israel. The church is not yet included. And it's still not included, but I think we can include it.

What do you think happened between the 483rd and the 490th year, that gap period? After the 483 years is over, that's already happened, that's all history. What do you think happened between then and that 70th week, that week we saw in verse 27. What do you think happened during that period of time? I don't think there is any other conclusion and again, I'm studying with you and I'm not the absolute: God's Word is the absolute. But I believe in my personal, humble belief, and I think I'm right, I believe in my personal belief it's where the Gentiles are allowed in. Here is your church, right there. What did Daniel know about the church? Zip! What did God say to him about the church? Zip! But what do we know about the church in the New Testament? We know a whole lot. We're looking back, friend, we're not looking ahead like Daniel was.

We can look back and begin to piece things together and the only thing that makes any sense in my mind whatsoever, and we'll look at that next time in Romans 11, is the fact that after those 483 years there was a gap, a parenthesis if you please, until the Gentiles, the fulfillment of the Gentiles has been allowed in and then, door closed, and now we've got the 70th week of Daniel. One final week of seven years. This also helps me understand, at least in Daniel, and remember this; this is why I don't write books, I change my mind a lot of times. I'm not writing a book on this. These people who write a book and say this is my view and I think it's right, to me, because boy, we're getting into some deep water here.

What I personally believe is why in the world would you force the church into that last week when it has nothing to do with the prophecy in Daniel? Remember that last week only had to do with "your people and your holy city." Is that not correct? If I'm studying it right. Why would you force the church into any part of that period? One of the things I'm discovering is, and there are a lot of arguments on it and there's a lot of scholarship that's come up with some pretty good conclusions, but they still don't rhyme with Daniel in my mind. They can't make me understand why God would even assume that the church was a part of that period if the 490 years had been decreed for His people, divided into three time slots and one time slot is yet remaining, why would you put the church in there?

You see, I'm going to make this statement next time and I think it's profound: Persecution is the wrath of the world poured out on Christians; tribulation is the wrath of God poured out on the world. Why can't we see that? How many people sit around and say, "They suffered around the Iron Curtain. I don't see why America shouldn't have to suffer." Whoever said we weren't going to suffer, folks? Whoever said we're not suffering now. "Well, I'm not suffering." Well, are you living for Jesus? That seems to be the question. If you're living for Jesus you're suffering, friend, because you can't get away from persecution.

What makes me think is that people are trying to make themselves God. Therefore if I was God, I'd put America into the tribulation. That's about the only thing I can come up with. Well, friend, I'm not God and you're not either and we're going to have to go with what He says. As far as I'm concerned at this point, and don't take this to the bank, but with 65 cents and this opinion you can get a cup of coffee at Shoney's. I think that there is that parenthesis after the 483 years up until the Gentiles are allowed in, then we've got seven more years left for Israel and that is when Israel is finally going to repent during that period of time. And that period of time is what we're going to be looking at next time.

I tell you what, I just get thrilled. You say, "Brother Wayne, I've studied this with you this morning. I'm so confused and not only that, I don't feel led to go to the mission field." Don't you love a message like this? You just dig and dig and dig, and you think, "That didn't inspire me much." Hey, it ought to just grab you. Listen friends, if God can handle Israel, and that's His covenant people and they're rejected Him like they have, you think God doesn't love you and me who are in a part of a better covenant than they ever even thought of, if they understand at this point that we're a part of that new covenant already? Don't you think that God can handle your life?

What's going on in your life this morning? If I ask you a question right now would you be honest enough? Are you going through a time of real trial right now and trying to make some decisions and you're wondering what in the world God is up to? Now can you understand from the Word of God that He already has a solution, and whether you figure it out or don't figure it out, and whether or

not you suffer or don't suffer, that doesn't have anything to do with it. God still has a purpose and God still is in control and all we have to learn to do is cooperate with whatever He's up to. And to me, there's your application to go home with. Whatever is going on in your life, don't you back out on God and think He doesn't know about it. He never slumbers and He never sleeps. Whether I'm right on mid, pre, or whatever else, I still think I am on pre, but it doesn't matter in a sense. It does and it doesn't. If we come to a point that we just cannot agree, we can still agree on one thing: God's in control and whatever we have to go through, buddy, His Spirit lives in me and I will not suffer beyond what I'm able to endure. Is that not a promise to us? Well, quit complaining and start thanking Him.

Daniel 9:25-27 God's Faithfulness to Israel - 2

Turn with me if you will to Daniel 9, and we're talking about God's faithfulness to Israel. Nobody can convince me that God is through with Israel. No way: it's part of that everlasting covenant with Abram. He promised him a seed, He promised him a nation, He promised him a land, and that was an everlasting covenant. Israel as a nation has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. Jew and Gentile can still come in and Jews do come in as individuals, but as a nation they've still rejected Him. But isn't it wonderful for His covenant faithfulness and His loving kindness that He has not forgotten them and He has a plan for them to be a part of His kingdom?

Well, what an incredible vision that Daniel has had in Daniel 9 of the 70 weeks. And I don't think that there should be any doubt that our conclusion is correct that the 70 periods of seven, that's literal there, 70 sevens could not refer to days. There's no possible way. Four hundred and ninety days from the time of the decree that we looked at in verse 25 to rebuild and restore the city of Jerusalem could not have accomplished all the things mentioned in verse 24. No way! So we must ascribe to that 70 period of sevens years, not days. So 490 years have been decreed so that Israel's self-sufficiency might be broken.

Now I've said that several times and I wonder if you think I'm just saying it off the wall. Look in 12:7. And this is when the latter part of the tribulation, the three and a half years, that difficult day when Satan's cast out of heaven finally and he incarnates the Antichrist and persecutes the woman of Israel. And this tribulation time is spoken to Daniel so that Daniel might understand. Verse 7, "And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever," and what it is here is the question has been asked how long will this go on, and he said, "that it would be for a time [one year], times [two years], and half a time [half a year; three and a half years], and as soon as they finish," now watch this, "shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed."

Israel's power, their self-sufficiency has got to be broken, and 490 years have been decreed in order that it might take place. And so as Daniel is praying for his people, God not only gives him an understanding of what will take place with Judah, but also Israel, all of God's people; and not just then but all the way to the end of time. How his prayer will be completely answered one day, but it's not during his time nor will he ever see it. Now in verses 25-26 it tells us that from a decree to rebuild Jerusalem, and last time we saw in verse 26 that after the 62 weeks, actually the 69, because there are seven included there, the 62 weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. Now that refers to His crucifixion. Four hundred and eighty three years from the decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, something will take place. What will take place here: that the Lord Jesus will go to the cross.

And again, hey, don't you just thrill with this? If they would have just paid attention; and yet they rejected the very Messiah who came during that time period. If they would have just listened to the prophet Daniel they would have understood who He was and they would have realized that He was the Christ and the Son of God. But He was cut off after that period of time.

Now the problem we're dealing with is, as we build on last time, is what takes place in the 483 years. Is there a gap between the 483 years and the last seven year period of time? Remember in verses 25-27 there are three divisions: first of all there are seven periods of seven: 49 years. Then there are 62 periods of seven: 434 years. That sums up to be 483. And then there is one more week that is mentioned in verse 27, "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week." Now is that week sequential to what we've talked about? Does it just add right on to it? Are the 490 years, have they already been completed? There's no possible way, because verse 24 says that there are several things to happen.

If 490 years are taken in sequence, then verse 24 must have been fulfilled

So, I'm getting ahead of myself. First of all, if you want to stay with me in sort of an outline—and my outline can be improved—here's the first thing I want to address: If the 490 years are to be taken in sequence, then verse 24 must have been fulfilled. Now let me slow down and just approach it that way, so I can stay with my notes. I remember the first time I ever preached, I got up and I had everything I thought together and I had all my notes down, about 20 pages because I had to write everything out. I was not brave enough to stand up here with just outlines like I have now. And I stood up and when I started preaching I got about midway through the first point and I knocked my notes off the pulpit. I was using hand motions and I'd been watching people preach and I was going

to try to really get into it. And I knocked the paper off and when I picked it up they were all out of order and I had page 1 and page 2, and that was where I was, and then I had the invitational time. And when I got started again, I was in the invitation. I was thinking to myself, "This has been either the shortest time I can ever remember or something is really wrong." What it was, I had left out points 2, 3, 4, and so for me to stay with my notes tonight, let me back up just a minute.

The first thing I'm going to address is this: if the 490 years are to be taken in sequence, then verse 24 must already have been fulfilled. Let's go back and review. Six things have got to take place. This is one of the foundational ways in which we can understand this passage. It says, first of all, "to finish the transgression," to restrain or bring to an end the transgression as a whole, their rebellion against God. And not only just against God, but they're going to reject the Messiah and that is the main transgression God is going to have to deal with them all about. That's the first one. Secondly, "to make an end of sins," and that's in the plural: sins. And all the different ramifications that it has that must be brought to an end. That remind me of Zachariah when it says that in that day a fountain will be open for sin and for all impurity. Pointing to that day we're talking about, pointing to what he's speaking to Daniel.

Thirdly, "to make an atonement for iniquity," and of course we know that word "atonement" means to cover, there has to be an everlasting atonement made for Israel before these 70 weeks can be completed. Of course we know that that's taken place. The Lord Jesus has come, died, resurrected, and ascended, already gone back to the Father. But they rejected Him. Remember, this concerns Israel, not you and me. I didn't reject Him, you didn't reject Him. They have rejected Him. So it's not yet taken place in Israel's life. Even though He died potentially for them, they have not yet received Him. Also it says, "to bring in everlasting righteousness," to where it prevails on this earth. And this coincides with chapter 2, that when His kingdom comes that righteousness will spread to the ends of the earth. And that has never taken place. There are righteous people all over the earth, but righteousness has not prevailed all over the earth.

Then it says, "to seal up vision and prophecy." In other words it's all fulfilled. It's sealed up; it's put on the shelf; it's not necessary any longer. It's already fulfilled. Prophecy has come to an end. That has not taken place. And then it says, "to anoint the most holy place" or holy One. And I'm not going to get into that argument over that theological debate of whether it's "one" or "place" right there, but we know neither of those could have taken place. So anyone can answer whether or not these things have happened: no, they have not. So what does that lead us to conclude? I don't see any other conclusion, and I'm open, folks, as we go through this: I am open. And I've already been shot at, so just keep shooting, but you're not going to change me unless you can convince me.

I had a guy tell me one time, "Stick with what you know until somebody proves to you that there's something better to take its place." Nobody has touched it yet. There are some good arguments, but I haven't seen it yet. So to me and my conclusion—maybe you, maybe not—I see a parenthesis between the 69th week and the 70th week of Daniel. There almost has to be. We know the 490 years has not been completed. We know the 483 have, so therefore there must be that parenthesis, there must be a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel.

The Gentiles fill the gap between the 69th and 70th week

Alright, secondly, and we alluded to it last time, some of this overlaps a little bit with it but that's all right. So what is it then that fills this gap? What is it that takes place during the period of this time from the 483 years when Jesus was crucified, what happens from that point until this last seven years begins and only God knows when that will be? All I can conclude is that has got to be the Gentiles, that has got to be the church of the New Testament.

Look in Romans 11. I wish I could just take 9, 10, and 11 and preach it like I really understand it fully. I don't. I'm sure most of you do, you're further than I am, but I'm telling you, these are some difficult passages of Scripture. You know, one of the problems we have I think in America is God always has to be understood or it must not be God. Friend, we're dealing with some things where everything is not going to be there for us as easily as we think it's going to be there. Some questions are never going to be answered until we see Him. Then we'll know as we're known. Romans 11:25, Paul has had quite a stern word to say to some of these Gentiles. He says, "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation," now here's what he says: "that a partial hardening has happened to Israel." In other words, when the gospel is preached they can't even hear. They still turn back to the Law of Moses. They still turn back to the Old Testament and so therefore they can't hear, their eyes are shut, they cannot understand. There's a "partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.'"

Now how clear do you have to be? There has got to be that provision there for the body of Christ, the church, during that parenthesis between the 69th and the 70th week of Daniel. Now, I began to think about this—and now again this is worth 65 cents and you can get you a cup of coffee, but this has been on my mind—"until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in." You know, only God knows when that is. I don't know when that is; you don't know when that is. We're talking about having our mission conference this fall and we've been praying about having a mission's burden. Man, if anything in the world should motivate us to get out is because we don't

know when that time is going to be. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be witnessing to somebody and he comes to know the Lord Jesus Christ and God says, "That's it! Let's go!" Boom! Take the church right on out. What an experience.

You see, this ought to motivate every one of us. We don't know when the fullness of the Gentiles is. We don't know when that period is going to come. We don't know when the last one is going to come up and God says, "Okay, the numbers are complete." Now, He would will that no one should perish, but that all would have everlasting life. But the fact is that man has his choice and man is going to reject Him. This is your balance line between God's selection and man's responsibility. And it hangs there like a plumb bob and you don't move it to the left or to the right. You just understand that both are there. Now when that time comes, when that day comes, buddy, that's when the door slams shut and we begin to see that last seven years come forward. That's the time, I believe in my personal understanding of Daniel, that's the time that God's going to say, "Now, for My people Israel. Now I have something to do in their lives."

Now we know that Israel will repent. Look in Zechariah. I was sharing with one of our elders before we got started. I just wish I knew more about prophecy. I got into Zechariah today just preparing a little bit for this message, and got before myself and over and beyond myself and got so engrossed in it I almost was late getting here. It's just amazing what's in this thing. I just don't know enough about it. And I apologize to you. I've never studied Zechariah. How many of you here have studied very carefully and studiously the book of Zechariah? Anybody? Okay, thank you; we're all here together. But in chapter 13:1 we know that there's going to come a day that Israel will repent, that Israel will come back to the Lord. It says in verse 1, "In that day a fountain," not a laver, not a laver that has to be consistently replenished, but a fountain overflowing "will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity." That's when it's going to take place. That's when that sin is going to be dealt with, that's when the transgressions will come to an end.

Look in verse 7. He says, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man, My Associate," the word for associate is like a kinsman, near kinsman speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, "declares the Lord of hosts. 'Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; and I will turn My hand against the little ones. And it will come about in all the land,' declares the Lord, 'That two parts in it will be cut off and perish.'" This is what is going to happen during that awful time, that latter time. Two-thirds of all Jerusalem will not make it, "But the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

Boy, you go to chapter 14, you go back into chapter 12, it's all through there. And it refers to that day when God's purposes for Israel will come about and also for Judah, all of His people. And they'll be brought their day of atonement and it will be all concerning that latter period of time, that last seven year period of time.

Now this brings up a question: is the church going to be in that time? Well, right at this point, and I'm not going to try to get outside of Daniel—I tell you what, one of the things I have understood in studying Daniel and you better stay with it, is where you get confused is to try to answer questions about Daniel outside of Daniel. That's where you get confused. When you jump to Matthew 24, when you jump to Revelation, when you jump to Thessalonians, when you begin to try to put this all together, look out; if you don't know what you're doing you're going to be much confused. That's throwing into the wind like we talked about last time. You're going to get a backlash bigger than you ever thought you were going to get.

But from Daniel now, understand what I'm saying, I don't know why people don't listen to what I'm saying, understand what I'm saying: from Daniel I see no place in that last seven year period of time that the church can fit. Why? Because this whole time period was decreed for Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city. So what must that conclude in your mind where my theological stance is to what is going to happen to the church? I believe we're going to be out of here, friends. I believe that's the rapture of the church. We go out of here before God now, the Father, deals with this nation that has rebelled against Him. We go to our bridegroom the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Father deals with Israel as He has told them He would deal with them.

Boy, the rapture of the church just thrills me. I tell you, we're going to do Revelation next, just write that down. I doubt that we'll finish it before the Lord comes back from what I'm getting out of this stuff. Maybe, I know the first thing He's going to do, He's going to set me down and say, "Now look, dummy. Let Me fill in some blanks for you. Boy, have you been off base." But I really believe that is when we go out of here, raptured.

Somebody says, "There's no rapture of the church. There's no noun in the whole Scripture that talks about the rapture." I know it. It's always in the verb form. I'd rather it be in the verb form. That's when we go out of here, friend. That's when He snatches us out. What do we want to talk about a noun for? Let's get the verb going. We're going to get out of here. He's just going to take us right out of here. He's going to do that and then the seven year tribulation takes place on this earth. From Daniel, just from Daniel, that's when I understand at this point. Now, we may get into Revelation—and I don't know what will happen—but right now, in Daniel, that's where I am. I will not write a book next week. That's where I am. I don't know where you are, we'll not fight about it, but like you're going to have to show me something better than what I've got so far to prove different. Those time periods were decreed for Israel.

Why would you force the church into a time that was meant for God's people of Israel?

Alright, so first of all, if 490 years had been sequential, verse 24 would have had to have been fulfilled. It's not, so therefore there must be a gap; there has to be. What fills in the gap? It must be the fullness of the Gentiles. That's where we fit in. Aren't you glad by God's grace we do fit in that particular period of time? Now we're in that third thing I'd like to share with you.

When will Israel repent?

When will Israel repent? I'm doing this as slow as I can and I'm trying to do it as simply as I can so we can all understand. When I was doing this at Precept and we had people studying five, to eight, to ten hours a week, and when we'd come together it was different. But when you come like we're doing now, if you're not putting that much time into it, I don't want to confuse you. So if I tend to overlap, I'm doing that on purpose. I'm just going to overlap and keep right on overlapping. When will Israel repent?

Look in verse 26. I think it begins to give us that picture of during the last seven years. That's when Daniel's prayer will be completely fulfilled that he's praying for his people. Verse 26, "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing," we know that, "and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." Did that not take place? The people of the prince. But who is the prince? That's the key. "And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined."

Now we've got to decide who this prince is: "People of the prince who is to come." Some people say since the city is destroyed and the sanctuary, that that has to be Titus. Well, I'm sure he's involved in all of this but that can't be who he's talking about as we'll see in just a second. If it was Titus it doesn't fit. First of all, if all these things had taken place, Titus had already come and done these things, verse 24 would have to be fulfilled. See how that thing keeps coming back to haunt you? You can't get away from it. There are six things, buddy, that better take place before you draw your conclusions as to who these people are. So it may involve Titus and certainly it did: in 70 AD he destroyed the city and destroyed the sanctuary, but that doesn't mean that's who he's talking about there.

Who is that little prince? And since it's not Titus, and these things have not happened, there's only one conclusion I can draw: that has got to be the little horn in chapter 7. That has got to be the Antichrist. It has to be. And so what he's doing here is showing him that in that last seven year period of time, buddy, there's going to be some difficult days and there's going to be a man to come on the scene. We've already seen him previewed in chapter 8 as Antiochus Epiphanes. We've seen him; we've seen a preview of what he's going to be like. He's going to do terrible things to Israel, and Revelation 12 has told us that Satan will incarnate him, and they will attack the woman which is Israel and drive her into the wilderness. That will be for three and a half years: a time, times, and half a time.

Alright, now what's going to happen here? Look in verse 27. It says "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week," and I believe what he's saying here is that the first part of the seven year period of time there's going to be a peace treaty by the Antichrist and Israel. I don't understand that, but that has to be. It says, "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week." Now at this particular point we know the temple has been destroyed and yet we find in other places in the New Testament when the Antichrist comes he will go into the temple and proclaim himself to be God. So when will Israel rebuild the temple?

And I believe this will lead us to another conclusion if we're fitting this correctly. I believe what he's saying here is that the beginning, the first three and a half years when he makes peace with Israel, that's when Israel will either complete it or build that temple and they'll go back to their regular sacrifices just like it was in the Old Testament. Everything will be set up just like it was then. Do you know what's going on over in Israel right now? Have you been reading anything? Are you opening your eyes? I'm not talking about Christian magazines, I'm talking about Newsweek, Time. They've got a whole article, several months ago, about how the priests are learning everything about the priestly sacrifice now. And they're going back and they're trying to get the ephods and the different garments for the priests to wear and how they're setting themselves up to get ready to go back to the regular sacrifice. Somehow they're getting ready to get back into that temple. We don't have it now, but it must come on the scene because we know that the Antichrist will go into that temple and he'll proclaim himself to be God.

So the first part of the seven years will be marked by the fact that the Antichrist will make a peace treaty with Israel. Now it goes on in verse 27, "but in the middle of the week." Now if you take half of seven, what do you get? Three and a half. How many times have we seen it? Twelve hundred and sixty days; a time, times, and half a time; three and a half years. Boy, that thing is just ringing in your mind if you study Daniel. It's all over the place. In the middle of the seven year period of time evidently he's going to break his peace treaty with Israel. And look out: that's when it all starts. Now this correlates to Revelation 12. That's when the dragon is finally cast out of heaven. And you say, "Well, I thought he was already cast out? He goes before the Lord and confuses us day and night." That's when he's finally cast out, that's when he comes down to this earth, that's when he incarnates the Antichrist and that's when for three and a half years they're going to persecute the woman. And the woman is Israel on this earth. That's Revelation 12.

So we see that "he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes

desolate." Boy, I tell you, this is going to be a difficult time, that abomination of desolation begins in that last three and a half year period of time. And so many of these pieces of the puzzle that I want to just rush ahead and share with you are coming up in Daniel. Don't get frustrated in one message if we don't answer all the questions. Hang on, because we've got several more chapters to go. We've got some beautiful things that are going to come out in the last portion of chapter 12 of Daniel when God helps him to understand the tribulation and help him understand why it's so necessary for Him to do what He does.

So we see a time line then. We see a seven year period of time, sometime in the future and has not taken place yet. Sometime around when the ten nations come together. Is that not correct? The ten horns of chapter 7 of the beast, when the United States of Europe is created. Out among those will come a little horn who will gradually grow stronger than all the rest. He becomes the Antichrist backed by the ten nations, incarnated by Satan himself for the last three and a half years. First three and a half, Israel is doing swell. Then he makes a peace treaty with them. Right in the middle he breaks that peace treaty, and that's when he makes his move on God's people. That's when two thirds are going to be lost, but one third will be saved as we saw in Zechariah.

Well, he'll be an abominable person, but only for three and a half years. But in the end it is decreed that he will be destroyed. Look at verse 27. He says, "even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed." Friend, listen, I told you last time like that alarm clock; that thing is set and is going to go off, and God says you've got a certain time on this earth that I'll give you free reign among My people. However, it says that Israel will be nourished during that time. God's going to provide for His people. But during that period of time he only has three and a half years and at the end of it it's stopped, boy, and that the end, that's when it's all over with. That's when God makes His move now to bring His kingdom to this earth. In the end it is decreed that he will be destroyed. Remember this: persecution is the wrath of the world poured out on Christians; tribulation is the wrath of God poured out on the world. By the way, we're in that right now. That's been happening for a long time now. But never like it's going to happen in the last three and a half years before the end of this age.

So what have we seen in Daniel's vision? Maybe I can completely get you confused right before we go home. First of all, the focus: what is the focus of Daniel's vision? Israel and the Holy City. And isn't it interesting how so many people say that God is through with Israel? Baloney: He's not through with Israel. Secondly, the time period: 70 weeks. Are they days? No, they have to be years; 483 years after they came to rebuild the city of Jerusalem what was to take place? The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah will be cut off. However, there are seven years left. What do you do with it? Do you add it to the 483 years? You can't, because there are six things that have got to happen if you do that. Therefore there has got to be a gap. What fills in the gap? The church. So when the fullness of the Gentiles happens, who knows when that's going to be, it could be tomorrow, folks, it could be any day now. When that happens, books are sealed, that's when the church goes out of here and that's when you start seeing the Antichrist make his move.

Do you know what I'm prone to believe—and here again, this will also get you a cup of coffee—I believe he's living today folks: the Antichrist. I believe it as much as I'm standing here and I believe in 1992 when that United States of Europe begins to be created we're going to see things happen so quickly.

You know, one of the things that is interesting to me is all these stories that are circulating around. Have you heard any of them? They're coming to me from all over the United States so evidently something must be going on. About a man who has been walking along, well dressed, and how the people are stopping and picking him up and how he's asking them if they are believers and whether or not they believe the Lord is coming and then they look in the back seat and he's gone. You know, that has to be either outright, absolute made-up lies or there's got to be something to that. Now, if they had let him out and couldn't find him anymore, that's suspect. Disappeared! I had a guy call me from another state and tell me the exact same thing. I've had them call me from all over the United States. I've had them tell me right here it's going on right here. Wonder if that's really real? You know, I love to play the advocate. I wonder if that's really real. Somebody says, "Oh, I don't believe all that stuff." Well, you can't disprove it, can you? What if that's really going on?

I wonder if He's beginning to plant His people all over the world now, His angels or whatever, to be able to come and give us that little message. I wonder how many of you here are ready to meet the Lord Jesus Christ? Friend, I believe we're living right on the edge. The clock is ready to strike midnight and the second hand is just right there at it. I believe that's the time that we're living in right now. I get to thinking about it sometimes and I think, "Dear God, what a wonderful time to be alive and what a wonderful time to be preaching and what a wonderful time to study the book of Daniel." Boy, just as we understand it.

Well, my challenge to you is, when you go home ask yourself if you're excited about His coming. One of the things I'm learning as I go from church to church over our country is there are a lot of churches that are so doctrinally straight, that if they lean they're going to break. But they're dry as toast. There is no life in them. Buddy, they've got the doctrine, they've got the discernment, they've got all that stuff, but there's no life at all because people have left their first love. Remember Revelation, you have left, not lost, you have left, buddy, you have walked away from your first love. And one of the things that makes you look forward to somebody coming is the fact that you love them.

I fly a lot and I love to fly and I get overwhelmed every time I get on a plane. I can't believe this thing actually does fly. I still feel that way. But I love to be in an airport and watch loved ones greet when somebody is coming in on a flight. That's the most fun. Just right before you take off and the plane is just arrived and you watch those loved ones and, man, they stand on their toes and the plane is taxiing up and they're trying to spot you in those little bitty holes. "There he is!" And, boy, they get off the plane and they can't wait to get right up in front of everybody and just push you out of the way, they're looking for somebody. The other night when I came in I was walking down the steps down here at the airport and there was a little girl. She stuck her head around the corner and she said, "Mama, people are coming now. They're coming now." I heard her Mama say, "Will you get back in here? You're getting in the way." "But, Mama, Daddy's back there somewhere." Loving her daddy, can't wait to see him.

Friend, I'm going to tell you something. There are a lot of Christians bitter, complaining, living in that kind of rot that we were saved out of, and you start talking about the Lord coming back again and it irritates them. It doesn't inspire them because they've left their first love, that's why. If the church is out of here before any of this takes place, I think we best get our acts straight. I think in the morning that should be the first thing we ought to start off: "Lord, You purchased me. Who am I to tell You what I'm going to do today. I'm just surrendering myself to You. And You just be Jesus in me today. Teach me how to love You and walk with You. And Lord if I'm wrong doctrinally, straighten me out. Make sure my heart devotionally is right and pure with You."

That's the key, that's where the light comes from. That's where the adventure starts.

Daniel 10:1-14 Three Insights to Prayer - 1

Turn to Daniel 10. Now I'd like to begin talking to you about three insights into prayer that God has just really put on my heart. You know, truth is like a diamond. You can look at it this way, and you can look at it this way, and somebody can look at it this way. It's still the truth; I just like to take a perspective of what really ministered to me as I got into the book of Daniel, particularly in Daniel 10. Three insights into prayer.

Well, we come today to chapter 10, and so far we've seen that Daniel has had three revelations or three visions. In chapter 7 in the first year of Belshazzar, that's the first year of Babylonian rule, he had his vision of the four beasts. And remember, of those four beasts, it was the fourth one that he was particularly concerned with, and that was Rome in the latter days. It was different from the other beasts, and of course the little horn comes out of chapter 7. We see this picture of the Antichrist that will be there in the latter days and the tribulation time, particularly as he deals with Israel.

Then in chapter 8 the third year of Belshazzar he has another vision and this time it is of the two little kingdoms that he's had before: the ram and the goat. Medo-Persia and Greece, and of course this is a vision that was of the ram and of the goat and it had to do also with the small horn that comes out. Now that small horn came out of Greece, not Rome, and it's not the same one as chapter 7 but it's a preview of what it's going to be all about: Antiochus Epiphanes as we've already studied.

Then in chapter 9, 13 years go between that one and the next one. In chapter 9 he has his third vision, and here it's in the first year of Darius, who is actually the king over the Medes that has taken over. And this also has to do with the 70 weeks, 490 years, that have been decreed to break Israel of their self-sufficiency. And now we come to chapter 10, the third year, it says in verse 1, of Cyrus as he has his fourth vision that we've looked at so far.

Now let's read in verse 1 and we'll find that this vision has to do with great conflict. It says, "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict." The word "conflict" has to do with war, pain, strife, struggle, and it all had to do with Daniel's people. Look in verse 14. As the angel comes to give him understanding it says, "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future." As far as I can understand from an historical perspective, this is during the time when they have just gone back into their homeland. And as I can understand history, and I certainly can stand room to be corrected, but I believe here that Daniel stays back in the land. He hasn't gone with the people as they've gone back into their land.

Verses 2-3 tell us that the vision came again as a result of fervent prayer. Verse 2 says, "In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all, until the entire three weeks were completed." Daniel was fasting and praying for three solid weeks, and then God begins to move to him and give him this fourth vision. There is something that impresses me about the prayer life of Daniel. I can't get away from it. So, again, I want to share this from my heart to you. I'm learning, I'm a learner, I've never told anybody I have arrived. But there are some things that are beginning to sink into my mind about prayer that is going against what I have read and heard and things over the years. I'm beginning to understand that prayer is much more something that God does and then lets me cooperative with, than it is something just that I do.

I'm beginning to realize that there is a sincerity and seriousness about prayer that I wonder if I have learned yet. I am learning it. I want to learn it. I want to be in prayer like God wants it to be in my life. I don't think there is probably anybody here that feels any differently. You see, prayer to most people today, particularly in America, you don't find this in other places in the world, is basically a grocery list. Kind of like the "honey do's" that you get on Saturday when you think you have a day off. "Honey do this, honey do that." It's kind of like we do our prayer like that. "God, I want You to do this. God, I want You to do that. Oh, by the way, God, would You do this? Now to this, this, and this. Now Lord, I've got to hurry so don't You call me, I'll call You. And would You take care of those things until I get back?"

And it seems like that becomes the essence of what our praying is all about. It seems to be two things involved in it as I observed my own life and other's life. Sometimes it's begging God to do something materially. Have you ever stopped to analyze what you're talking about to God in prayer? Most of the time it has to do with physical, tangible, temporary, meaningless things in our life: things that are material. And we spend our time trying to get God to give us what we really want Him to give us. Think about it the next time you pray. Just ask God to help you realize what you're praying for. What comprises your prayer? How many times is "I" involved in the midst of that prayer?

But the second thing it seems to involve is that many times, and this is the thing that is really on my heart this morning and I've got to share it like it is, alright? And where it falls, it falls. Sometimes it's opinion and that plus 65 cents will buy you a cup of coffee at Shoney's. But this is where my heart is this morning.

Many times, and what I'm observing, everywhere I go and just about every area I find this: we're trying to twist God's arm to get Him to do something exciting. To get Him to do something miraculous. Do you know why? Because we in America have become bored with the mundane. Folks, this is so burdening me this morning. It's funny, I've preached this once before and it's having a different effect on me now that it did then. It's a real burden to me. I see so many people that are just bored stiff. Christianity is not real unless God's doing something big and exciting, unless I'm getting goose bumps or I'm sweating funny, or I'm talking funny, God's not doing anything. There's no thrill in my life: God, I'm bored. I go to school every day, I study, students will tell you. I'm bored, God, do something bigger in my life. If Jesus is really Jesus, do something that I can see, touch, and feel. Make me feel better, God.

It appears that we've fallen into a trap in our country, taking our understanding of prayer not from the Word of God but out of our own fleshly senses and out of what we're reading and out of what we're hearing. As a matter of fact we even go a step further. After you've had one experience, if it's supernatural, you've got to have one to beat that one or it doesn't qualify anymore. And God just isn't coming through. We live in the days of the Star Wars, mystical. You know, they're making billions of dollars off these movies. Do you know why? Because that's what intrigues America now; anything that's twilight zone. Boy, we like that stuff. We like to think as something as mystical and over here and over there. Prayer becomes, like I said, that which we try to use to cure our boredom.

You know what I think has hurt us? I think in America, because we have television, we need to be entertained every time we do anything. We come to a special service and it's wonderful, but as soon as that special service is over, well now, God, what can you do to thrill me? What are we going to do to compete with that? I know last year when we had a Praise Pageant, somebody asked, "Well how in the world are you going to compete with that?" Good grief, folks. We're not competing with ourselves. We're just trying to be obedient to the Lord as we see His leading in our lives.

So many people have lost the understanding that Christianity on a gut level many times doesn't involve the feelings and many times doesn't involve the spectacular and there are no lights and there are no microphones and there's nobody speaking and there's no music in the background. We're just in the valley, folks, and we're just real people with problems every day, but with a God that lives within us and a God who is helping us deal with those problems day by day. Making the right choices, nobody shouting, no angels around, nobody we can see, touch, or feel, but God is there. Where are we going to in our prayer?

Several years ago I shared this with you and I share it again from my heart. A young person that I so dearly loved, his mother and father were struggling, and so we just kind of took him under our wing when I was in youth work. He came to my house one day and, boy, he just wanted to be everything God wanted him to be. And I really believe he started off with the right heartbeat. "God, I just really want to be what You want me to be." But he made a statement to me one night. He came to me after the group had met and he said, "I think we're just not there. I think there's more. I think there's more to Jesus." Now there's a reality to that. Certainly the more I deny of myself, the more I realize of the Lord Jesus in my life. Certainly that's true. But I picked up something in his voice that sort of disturbed me because I could sense in his life that he, along with what I shared before, he was bored with his whole life. He had an upper middle class background and anytime he wanted anything he had it. His mother and daddy owned a restaurant and he could go eat anytime he wanted, take his friends there, he had his own car, he didn't really need or want for anything. So all of a sudden, God was not God unless it was something bigger or better than the last time he'd been with you.

He said, "I think we've missed it." He said, "I think there's more in this Christian life. There's more." He came by my house one night and told me on the porch, "What God could do with you if you just had the second blessing. What God could do with you if you would just get the Holy Spirit? If you could just speak in tongues, if you just had something from above that was something ecstatic; what

God could do with you.” He walked off my porch and I was so saddened in my heart. Always looking for something more. Jesus somehow in his vocabulary was what he was seeking, but he really wasn’t seeking Jesus. He was seeking another experience to compare with the one he had had before.

I lost track of him. He left our church, went to the church that deals with assigned gifts and I just sort of lost touch with him. Two years ago I got a phone call from one of the young people in that group. Side by side. Isn’t it amazing how two people can hear two different ways? Heard the same message. And that person called me and said, “I hate to tell you this, but our buddy Bob has been killed tragically in a car accident on his way to New Orleans. Going down through Mississippi he was on one of those side roads and a car pulled out in front of him and he hit him head on.” But he said, “But that’s not really the tragedy of the story.” And I said, “Why?” And he said, “The tragedy of the story is that he just never could seem to find what he was looking for and he was on his way to New Orleans to become the director of the New Age Movement in that city.”

It started with a young man who felt like there has to be more, and my friend, if you don’t think there isn’t more, you’ve missed the point of what I’m saying. But instead of seeking Him, instead of seeking Him through His Word, he began to seek the thrill of it. And, friend, I want to tell you something: that to me is a trap that we’ve fallen into in this country. I’ve fallen into it, you’ve fallen into it, it has affected my prayers in the past and I’m even struggling sharing it this morning because it is something that just is heavy on my heart. Jesus ought to be enough.

A man that was in our church not long ago, we took up an offering and gave it to him. You know what I wanted him to do with it? I wanted him to take it and use it on his family; that’s what I really wanted. I knew it would be about five years’ salary over where his country was, and I knew that he could take that, he could get him a refrigerator maybe, or get him something over there. And you know what he said to me? He said, “I wouldn’t touch a dime of that for myself. I want to put that into building a facility to train people to love and to seek the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And I got to thinking about it. He doesn’t live over here. He doesn’t have the mall out here. He doesn’t have everything at his fingertips. He doesn’t want anything but just Jesus in his life. Good grief, folks! Where have we gone? When you study the prayer of Daniel, he just would never fit the mold of what everybody is saying spirituality is in this day.

There are two things burdening me this morning and another one I’ll have to wait until next time, because I’ll never get to it. Three things about prayer basically that I just want to share my heart with you. I never asked anybody to agree with me. God’s Word is the absolute. You don’t have to agree with me. But what I’m sensing and what I’m seeing in the Word of God is speaking to my heart. I want to share that with you this morning. I could teach chapter 10 in a different way and you could probably do it in a different way, but that’s not where I’m coming from.

Daniel’s prayer in chapter 10 was initiated by God, not by Daniel

First of all is this: Daniel’s prayer in chapter 10 was initiated by God, not by Daniel. I’m going to document that in a minute. I’ve got a statement and I wrote it down and I think it might be profound, but I doubt it because I never usually say many things profound. But here’s the statement that God gave to me, or at least I believe He did: People that are judgmental usually are the authors of their own spirituality. People that are judgmental are usually the authors or the originators of their own spirituality.

They witness and somebody comes to know Christ. “Look what I’ve done! I prayed. God answered me. Look what I’ve done! I’m doing it.” Yet I see in Romans 11, all things are “of Him and through Him and to Him.” I’m beginning to discern something in my own personal prayer life: that real prayer, real prayer as I’m seeing it in Scripture, is something that starts with God, not with man. And God has a purpose and God wants man in on that purpose because God wants him to have the joy of cooperating with Him and being blessed in all that God can do. Prayer God initiates.

Verses 2-3 shows that he’s been in prayer. “In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all, until the entire three weeks were completed.” Now, if you didn’t know the situation, didn’t understand the setting, you could say, “Man, that guy is a spiritual guy. I’m just not spiritual. I need to do the same thing Daniel does.” And here we go off on another tangent, chasing another whim of the flesh. But if you understand something: he does something in verse 4 that caught my attention. He says, “And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris,” and he goes on to explain his story.

Now why did he pick out and single out that day? I don’t know, he doesn’t say. But when I saw that, in my heart, it just thrilled within me because I know what that first month is on the Hebrew calendar. That’s the month of Nissan. And I began to realize what was going on in that three week period of time. If this was the 24th day that he got an answer, he’d been praying for three weeks. What was going on during that time? Friend, if he’d have been back in Jerusalem, had he not been in captivity, do you know what he’d have been celebrating with all of his friends and all the ones that were there? He’d have been celebrating the Passover Feast. The Passover fell on the 14th day of the first month of the month of Nissan. And the Passover Feast was something that was initiated when the people of Israel were allowed out of Egypt. They were delivered and rescued out of Egypt.

And how did they get out of that land? Remember the shed blood of the lamb and how the blood was put on the doorpost and as a result of that, as a celebration of that, they were to keep a Passover Feast year by year by year to show God's merciful hand and God's powerful hand, God's redemptive hand, and His deliverance among His people.

But the second thing that went on during that time was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. If you were a Jew living in that time and living in Jerusalem you'd have had to get all the leaven out of your house, which is all the sin out of your life. And the two pictures together draw a tremendous illustration of what redemption is all about. Daniel was no fool. Daniel knew that just because the people had gone back to their homeland, that didn't mean they were free. Freedom is not simply the loss of oppression. He knew that the only true freedom of any believer was when he was repentantly a servant of the Holy God. When he had turned to Him and would obey Him at any cost. And I personally have a conviction that during this time, and the reason he was motivated during this season of prayer, was because perhaps he had heard the same thing that Ezra had heard and they'd gone back into the land.

There's a statement in the book of Ezra that says, "O, Lord, when will we ever learn? You have dealt with us, we've been in captivity and now we've come back and we still forsake You." And I think what's happened is here is old Daniel is back in his land. And what has happened is that he knew that the people hadn't changed any. They were still going on their own way. They were still living in their own self-sufficiency. And then during this precious period of time God begins to move on his heart with a burden to pray because God has something to say to Daniel and God's going to honor his prayer to get that message across to him.

It seems to me a principle is beginning to form in my mind in my own personal prayer life: That usually a crisis is where it all starts, no matter what degree. And God Himself manipulates that thing. God Himself allows it in our life. And when that crisis comes, God drives us to Himself and when we get to Him we have to go to His Word. How can you separate His Word from Who He is? And when we come to the Word, to find that wisdom that will come down from above and God answers us and we cooperate with Him and He does what He says He'll do, then that cycle continues and goes right back to where we can give praise to Him and we can't take praise for ourselves.

Is there a crisis going on in your life? You know, I hope you're hearing my heart. I'm just beginning to be aware of just how wicked my flesh really is. Are you aware of that? Have you grown beyond that somehow? How often do we say, "Oh boy, I prayed God, I got in touch with God this morning." And what we're really saying is that I believe God would agree with what I want to do. I've certainly gone through the motions, said it all, even cried some tears and I'm going to go do what I was going to do anyway. To me the real prayer, when you really meet God and you really discern that God's up to something in your life, it is through His graciousness to create a crisis and through that crisis He drives us to our face before Him and in that is where we meet Him and find out what His wisdom is all about and God comes through and continues that cycle.

Helps me better understand the book of James. "Count it all joy, brethren, when you encounter various trials." How could I count it all joy if I didn't know that God was up to something in my life when those things begin to happen around me? Real prayer appears to me to be God-initiated. And when I say that, I say that very cautiously. It appears to me; I don't drive that down your throat. You study and see what you come up with. But I sense that God initiated Daniel's prayer.

Daniel, even through fervent prayer, did not get the answer he would have wanted

Secondly I see this: Daniel's prayer, as fervent as it was, three weeks fasting, all the different things, fervent as it was, he did not get his answer. He did not get the answer that he would have wanted through God. In other words, the answer wasn't as good as he wished it could have been. Here's Daniel, not praying now for them to go back home; they've already gone back home. Now he's really burdened for his people, and as he's in this fervent, mourning prayer over his people, God answers him. Verse 14, remember it's great conflict, but verse 14 says, "I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days."

You know, even Daniel couldn't twist God's arm. Have you ever tried to do that? "God, I really want to do this and I'm going to twist and twist and twist until I get my way." And we just so badly want to have our way. I'm sure his desire would have been, "God, just zap Israel, make them understand and cause them to repent." God doesn't work in the way that we would work.

You know, I think we're living in a time, at least I feel the pressure of it, and we're living in a time that when people look at you and you don't have all the answers, they don't think that you're really spiritual to begin with. Friend, when we start having all the answers, when we can figure God out, He's no longer any bigger than our brain, and, friend, that's not much of a God. You can't figure Him out, I can't figure Him out. Daniel is praying and he's fasting, he was going through a difficult time. But there were no answers that he would have desired to hear. He'd already heard that it was going to be 490 years and now he hears nothing but that of great conflict.

I begin to pick up as I'm around people, and I travel over the country and I hear people asking me different questions, and this has been a great education for me, by the way. Whenever I'm gone from this church just thank the Lord because it always does me good coming back; teaches me something that I couldn't have learned any other way. And I hear things being said and I feel a

thermometer of what's going on. And I hear people wanting to remove certain words from their spiritual vocabulary, like death, suffering, pain; we don't want to have those things in our vocabulary. So when we come before God, since we're a father to our children, we begin to interpret what "good" is. And we ask God to do something based on what we think He ought to do. When God doesn't come through that way we don't think we've gotten in touch with Him.

You know, I think we've got a distorted view of God's will, don't we? Romans 12:2 tells us what God's will is all about. It says, "So that you might prove to yourself what is the good and acceptable and the perfect will of God." Do you realize all we basically have is hindsight, other than what our walk by faith in the future? We don't know what is ahead. Some of these guys talking about wishing they knew what was ahead of us, I don't want to know what's ahead of me. I'm just glad that God knows what is ahead of me. If you knew today what was ahead of you friend, it might cause you to do some interesting things. Hezekiah said, "God, I want to live 15 more years." God said, "Alright." And those 15 years were some of the most horrendous years he had ever lived. I wonder how many times he cried out and said, "Oh God, I wish I'd never said that."

We don't know what's ahead. You see, when Daniel prayed for Israel he had a true burden for them, but I'm certain that his whole answer would love to have been from God, "Okay, Daniel, I'm going to do it and I'm going to do it right now and Israel is going to be everything I want them to be." But it wasn't, because God knew how hardheaded Israel was, and God knew what it was going to take all the way down to the end of this age to break them, and it involved pain in that answer. And you would think, and I would think, if I were God I wouldn't have done that. I would have done it differently. Look at all the suffering that Israel has had to go through because of that. Why couldn't God have stepped in and done something differently? Man, when we get there, after the tribulation, and when that one-third of Israel has been saved, I want you to walk up to one of them and ask them whether or not it was worth it. Because then it is going to be good and acceptable and perfect.

I wonder if I could ask you a real personal question. How many of you are going through the throes of some type of decision right now and you're really struggling, perhaps right in where we're talking about today? We've been dealing with some decisions about our children and my wife said something in the car the other day that was so profound I need to listen to her so much more. She made the statement, "You know what this proves to me?" I said, "What's that?" "You just can't figure God out."

You can't do it, friend. I want to tell you something: when you start walking by faith, and you start wanting for what God's will is in your life and in my life, and when we start praying that way, we're going to appear as fools to this world because it just doesn't make sense.

Well, two things. I think that real prayer, from what I see in Daniel, from what I see in Daniel, is God-initiated, not Daniel-initiated. He didn't have a judgmental view toward anybody. Man, he had a broken heart that went clean through his toes. And he spent his time actually repenting for their sins. And then secondly, the answer that he gets back is not one that I would have believed he would have chosen to hear. As a matter of fact we know that it made him weak when he began to realize the suffering that was going to have to come to his people before God could finally break them of their own self-sufficiency.

Well, like I said, I never intended to be the absolute and certainly God's Word is the authority. But as you go through your search and the truths about prayer, I trust you'll pray for me. I'm trying to understand it. I've been going through something the last two years that's interesting. I really thought I had it all together. I don't know whatever convinced me of that. Boy, I just don't know anymore. It seems like the more I see things I see it from a different perspective. I can say this to you though. When the crises comes in your life, don't prejudge anything and don't premeditate what you think God is up to. Just thank Him, because He never slumbers or sleeps. And, buddy, He must have something up His sleeve that He wants to show you about Himself that will blow your mind.

Stop trying to figure Him out. One day when we stand before God, He's not going to ask me what you thought about what I did. I'm going to find out what He thought about what I did. I'm not here to please you and you're not here to please me. We're here to please Him. And in our prayer time, how much of it is self-initiated; so therefore everybody else is always the wrong one. Friend, when it's God-initiated I don't every find anybody else to be the wrong one. Daniel confesses himself to be the wrong one, not Israel. And don't worry; the answer He gives you probably won't be the one you're looking for. But learn that whatever God does is right.

I guess it's been on my heart so much is because I've talked to so many people lately that are struggling. And I heard a lady say, "You know, I'm not really sure that I even need to pray anymore." That's odd. How many of you have ever felt that way? I have too. I have. I've wondered sometimes why even bother with prayer. Because I had a distorted understanding of what life is all about and especially what prayer is all about. Now I've got a distinct feeling that I've probably raised more questions that I've given answers. That's good. Let's solve them in the Word and quit letting somebody give us the answers. I'm going to search. I definitely don't have it all together, but I'm learning something about my prayer life. A lot of it has been Wayne-initiated, not God-initiated.

Well Daniel, his prayer was initiated by God. He wasn't a self-initiated man; he was a God-initiated man. That's why he was not judgmental. As we made the statement last time, and I still think it's right, people that are judgmental normally are the originators of their own spirituality. They begin their prayer life, they are the ones who witness, they are the ones who go and they look down their nose on anybody else who doesn't do it their way.

Second thing we saw was that he didn't hear what he would have liked to have heard. Now to catch you up if you're visiting and weren't in the last service, this is in chapter 10. Let's just read down where these verses are. "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict," that's an answer he did not want to hear. This is something he would not have wanted to listen to, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.

"In those days I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks. I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all, until the entire three weeks were completed. On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult."

Oh, what an answer he got back. How God ministered to Daniel. You know, in chapters 11-12 you really see what was given to him and in chapters 5-6 you begin to see how God interprets this to him. The message that he got, the one of great conflict is chapters 11-12.

The spectacular is rare and isolated when God deals with us in answered prayer

Now I want us to look at this heavenly visitor and I want us to see the third aspect of Daniel's prayer that really has spoken to my own personal heart. And that's this: the spectacular—this is a principle from Daniel's life—the spectacular is rare and isolated when God deals with us in answer to prayer. Did you hear that? I don't know if I worded it correctly. I always have difficulty with points. How do you put them? And sermon titles, I don't know. You put them the way you want to. But the way it came to me was: the spectacular is rare and isolated when God deals with us in answered prayer. Even with His prophets it's rare and it's isolated.

Now let's look again in verse 4, "And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold," now, who in the world was this? "there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, he eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult."

Now there are four different speculations as to who this was, and you're just going to have to make up your own mind. It doesn't tell us who it was. Some say it's Gabriel. If you look back in 8:16, you find Gabriel being mentioned. It says, "And I heard the voice of a man between the banks of Ulai, and he called out and said, 'Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.'" And so Gabriel comes to Daniel and gives him an understanding. In chapter 9 we also find Gabriel in verse 21. It says, "while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering."

But the problem we have with that particular view, that it's Gabriel in chapter 10, is first of all, why does it take such lengths to describe who he is? And secondly, when Gabriel came to him in the two previous times, he came to reveal something to him alone. And it appears that the angel in chapter 10 is a warring angel and his special role is not simply in revealing what God has to his men, even though this man came. Well, so it could be Gabriel. Who knows if it was Gabriel or not; I don't.

Then secondly, some say it was Jesus. And I'll tell you where they come from in a second. But if you'll look over in verse 13 there is a problem to this. If the same person is in verses 5-6 that is on down in verse 10 and on, then we have a problem. Verse 13 says, "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia." Friend, listen: in any spiritual war, regardless of what it is, Jesus does not need the help of any angel. Friend, He's God and if it's the same person in verses 5-6 that is found on down later on, we have a problem.

But there is a view that I came across that makes a lot of sense. There are some people who say in verses 5-6 that was Jesus, but in verse 10 it simply says, "a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. And he said to me," and it doesn't say who he is and it could be that an angel picks up in verse 10, but the first vision that he gets is of the Lord Jesus Himself. You know that picture of Him with the flaming bronze and this thing is a beautiful picture just like it is in the book of Revelation. So it very clearly could have been Him, like it was with Joshua when the captain of host came and just stood there. And Joshua said, "Whose

side are you on?" He said, "Wrong question. It's not my problem whose side am I on. Whose side are you on? Get your shoes off, son. You're on holy ground." I love it!

It could have been very similar to that situation. As a matter of fact, if I had to make a decision right now as to where I was, I really lean that way. I think the Lord Jesus came and just stood in front of him. I mean, not in all of His splendor, we couldn't handle that, but He just stood there in that glory in His presence and, boy, it just wiped old Daniel out. Well, that's the second thought about who this person was.

Thirdly, some say it's Michael the archangel. But that's a little interesting, because we just read he has to send help for Michael. It's interesting how Michael could be there and also helping himself. That just doesn't make a whole lot of sense. Plus Michael is assigned to Israel and this angel seems to be fighting over the Gentile nations, the battle over the Gentile nations.

And fourthly the final view is basically is that it is some other high angel that we don't know anything about that was specifically assigned for this task to come to Daniel just at this time. Well, you'll have to make up your own mind because it just doesn't tell us who it was. But it was certainly an angel from verse 10 on. We know that for a fact. From verse 10 on that was an angel dealing, I believe, with Daniel. Now, whoever it was in verses 5-6 literally blows Daniel away. Folks, in his presence it just wiped him out.

Look at verse 7, "Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground."

Literally, if you want to take the right out of the text and understand the meaning there, he fainted; fainted dead away. Friend, you don't sleep with your face in the ground. You try it: go home tonight and lie down on the floor and put your face down on it. Say, "Ah, that's what he did; he just lay down and went to sleep." No, he fainted, just fell flat out. I mean, it just wiped him out. Whoever this person was and again we don't know, but whoever this person was, there was such a glorious aura around him that just put old Daniel right down and just wiped him completely out.

You know, the question that we have to come to as we look at Daniel's life—and it's been quite spectacular so far—why is it that God was so spectacular in sending who He sent to Daniel? Why is it that God had to do this in such a glamorous way to Daniel? And, here's the second question that comes: do we have the right to expect God to do those spectacular things in our lives?

Now here's where the caution flag begins to go up. Boy, there are many people—and I periodically will turn the television on and listen when I go home at night. Do you ever do that? And just see what's floating around and my wife really doesn't like for me to do that anymore. Sometimes I get angry and we're going to ruin our television set one night. But I just enjoy hearing things that are going around—and I notice there are certain people in television that enjoy passages like Daniel 10. Oh, they love it. And they'll pick passages like in Ezekiel 8 or Isaiah 6 and they'll go through Scripture, they don't preach the whole counsel, they'll just simply single out those types. "This is super natural, this is mystical. I like that." And they'll begin to preach on that, almost as if they're telling the viewer, "This can happen to you if you'll just believe God, if you'll just walk with Him. God will do that to you. A 700 foot angel will stand in your front yard. Man, you can have a real experience with God."

I like what John McArthur said one morning. He said a member of his church came into him one day and said, "Brother John, Jesus came in my bathroom this morning and spoke to me." You know, if you don't know anything about John McArthur, he's got a wonderful wit about him. And he looked at him and said, "Well, what was it like? Did you talk to Him?" "Oh, yes, we had a wonderful conversation this morning." John said, "What were you doing when He came?" "I was shaving." John said, "Did you keep on shaving?" He said, "Oh, yeah, He's my friend. He just came to talk to me." And John said, "You didn't get in the presence of Jesus, friend. Jesus walked into your bathroom, friend, you'd have crawled through the tiles to get into His presence. You couldn't have stood it if He'd come that way."

But you see, a lot of people think, "Boy, my life is boring. I want to be like Daniel. God, will You do something in the morning? Tell You what, God; I'll even get up at 4:00 if You'll do something like that. I want You to move in my life. I want to be thrilled. I want to have goose bumps." Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Lord would just come into my room and speak to me? I wonder how many of us could handle it.

Daniel's experience was an isolated, individual experience of a prophet of God in the Old Testament

There are two things that I want to share about this that I think will help us as we go through it. And help us to bring it off the page and somehow apply truths in our own life. First of all is this, and we need to nail this down; this was an isolated, individual experience of a prophet of God in the Old Testament. Now, friend, when you start making application, if you're a prophet of God out of the Old Testament, I'd like to talk with you after the service is over today. It's interesting: I'd like to know what's coming up. And if you're wrong, friend, you've just disqualified yourself. There are no more prophets like we saw in the Old Testament. It's a brand

new day, brand new covenant. And we need to remember that this was an isolated, individual experience of a prophet of God in the Old Testament.

Verse 7 even tells it: "Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision." Not that he was alone, he had men with him. Why didn't God let them see it? I don't know. God just let Daniel see it, and such a dread or fear fell around him that the other ones ran away. Kind of reminds us of Isaiah 6 when it says, "In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord." Now, what in the world would that be like? I don't know. I don't know, but he saw something of the Lord's presence and glory and he said, "Oh, woe is me: I am a man of unclean lips." And, you see, that was Isaiah.

But in Ezekiel, if you want to read Ezekiel, I picked it up this afternoon and was just reading through it. Good night! I mean, that thing starts off with a thriller. I mean, those four men coming towards him and the faces like the face of a man and a bull and I've forgotten the other one, and an eagle, and how they come and the wheels beside them and as they came the Spirit would move and wherever the Spirit would move, they would move and when he stopped, they stopped. It was the most incredible thing I've ever read in my life. Then you get over in chapter 8 and it says, "God reached down to me and just pulled me up by the hair and took me behind the scenes to show me the degradation of the priesthood of that day."

Now, folks, that's not bad; that's thrilling and exciting, but it happened to Ezekiel, it happened to Isaiah, it happened to Daniel, but for a specific purpose. You see, these kinds of spectacular things that God does, and we find them in Scripture, appear to be isolated, individual experiences for some purpose that God has in their life. I think a principle that might help us as we try to walk in this Christian walk and understand that the mundane does not mean that God has checked out, and when nothing thrilling is going on does not mean that God has gone anywhere. Hebrews 13:5 says, "I'll never leave you nor forsake you." He's always there, He's always in control, He always knows exactly what's happening.

But I think one of the things that would help us, listen, is you don't build your theological expectations on isolated individual experience. Can I say that again? You don't build your theological expectations on isolated individual experiences.

I remember when I was just beginning to discover a lot of what God can do and what He has done, I was working in a Baptist assembly in Virginia. And one night I had just been talking with some guys during the day and they told me, "God did this in my life." And to this day I don't know which God. They convinced me, but, man, they had this great experience with the Lord. They saw Him do something and the conversation amongst all of us got to be miraculous type stuff and God does miracles every day, friend.

I want to show you something, what God showed me that night. I went out in the back and I got down on my knees. It was late and everybody had gone to bed. And I said, "Oh, what a perfect time." I mean, it was beautiful. It was up in the mountains and I could see the city of Lynchburg sitting down there in the valley and it was just gorgeous. Full, clear sky, the stars were out. And I got out there and I thought, "I'm going to see God do something." And I said, "Oh God, just do something. I know You're out there. I know You flung the stars into space and I know You spoke the world into existence, but oh God, just do something to let me know You're there."

Isn't that about the dumbest thing you could possibly say? You're looking at a universe that scientists, it blows their minds every day. You take a science book off the shelf some place; it's already out of date. They can't figure it out. And here you are looking into the vast universe, and they say that our universe is just a part of another universe and a part of another one and part of another one. And I'm saying, "God, show me something. If You're really out there, show me, God." I don't know what I expected. Maybe a plane would crash. I saw one fly by. I didn't want to hurt the people, but "Do something. Let it catch on fire and land and let everybody live, but just let me see You do something. Lord, drop a star out of the sky, just throw that thing across all the way and I'll just take that as a sign." Man, I stayed there for about a solid hour working myself up trying to get Him to do something. I was in a lather. And God hasn't done anything yet. Maybe He doesn't love me like He does my friend. How come they had an experience and I didn't have one.

About that time, I know that it had to have been the Lord. He made me conscious of something that I had overlooked. A breeze was blowing, and for some reason or other that breeze just sort of caught me right in the face and just went on. And I thought, "Wait a minute. The wind. That's a miracle. Jesus said nobody knows where it comes from; nobody knows where it's going. You know what we have done? We have forgotten, friends, the very fact that your heart is beating right now is a miracle of God. We have forgotten about the fact that the sun rising in the morning is a miracle of God. He set this into existence. We have somehow projected ourselves beyond the mundane. We have projected ourselves into the twilight zone. God, You have to do something big or I don't believe You're out there.

That's crazy, folks. You want to see the greatest miracle God's ever done on this earth? It's not somebody speaking in tongues, it's not somebody seeing the Red Sea parting, it's not somebody seeing these other things that we've seen in Ezekiel and Daniel and Isaiah. You know what the greatest miracle on this earth, and I really, honestly believe that's what Jesus was talking about in the greater world, we'll never do anything greater than Jesus. You find any miracle on this earth that is greater than what the Son of Man

did on this earth. Well, friend, the greatest miracle is salvation and the transformation of the human heart. You know what a miracle is? A miracle is when I'm at home and my wife and I have a "religious disagreement," a "holy argument." The greatest miracle is Wayne dying to Wayne and asking my wife to forgive me because the presence of the Holy God lives in my life. That's miraculous, folks.

It's miraculous when you get fired on a job and you don't hold bitterness to the people that fired you, but you trust a sovereign God to somehow work it out in the end. You know God has a purpose. That's a miracle. God has invaded the human heart. What are we doing by thinking God has to do something big or great to impress us? So for whatever it's worth to you, I think that we need to remember that we don't build our theological expectations on isolated, individual experiences.

Friend, we're all going to have experiences. I could share some with you and you'd think, Wow. You could share some with me and I'd go, Wow. But I guarantee you some of yours are better than mine. Some of mine might be better than yours. Does that mean I'm any different than you are? Do you realize, folks, Jesus is supposed to be our experience. That's it. That's it. Man, we're chasing after what He can do, rather than just simply seeking after who He is.

You know, I heard a story and I think it sort of brings the point. There's a story of a man who survived the Johnstown Flood and he died later on, not because of the flood, and he finally got to heaven. And all the saints were in heaven and St. Peter called a testimony meeting one night. "Okay, we're all going to share. We've got about a million here." This is all in heaven now. "Let's just share a little bit." And so everybody came together and he runs up and says, "Now if you've got a really good experience that you had on this earth, you come up here and get your name on this list."

This guy runs up and he grabs the guy that's taking all the names and he said, "Man, put me in the front of the list. Put me somewhere on top." He said, "Why?" He said, "Man, I survived the Johnstown Flood. You won't believe how we survived that thing. Man, it was something else. You put me at the top of the list." And the guy got excited. "Whew, that's good. Let's see. Okay, I'll put you right behind Noah."

"Oh, Brother Wayne, I have had an experience." Well, brother, I hope you have hundreds and hundreds more, but quit building your theological expectations off of isolated, individual experience. Stand on the Rock of a person and quit thinking you're more spiritual than somebody else because something has happened to you and when you talk to them it seems pretty boring in their life.

I've often thought of the poor housewife that hears messages on what God is supposed to be doing in their life. You know, I didn't realize what they did until I've had to do a few of those things. I didn't realize that. Man, I got a lather worked up just vacuuming upstairs the other day. I'm thinking, "I'm sweating like a hog and I hadn't even got to downstairs yet." You think of a young mother sitting in a congregation like this, hearing someone standing up and saying, "You can have these marvelous experiences, spectacular things. God will come in and clean your house." You think of her with small children. You know, I'm trying to be humorous about this but I'm really serious with my point.

Listen, folks, there's a lot of people under such condemnation because they haven't "had those kinds of experiences." So? Listen, when you just love Jesus, that's enough. You can even get joy out of changing a baby's diaper, but that is a miracle in itself if you do. What I'm trying to say is we live in America, man, and if you're not having something with the bells going off and the sirens going off, it seems like something is wrong with your life. There's nothing wrong with you. Probably a whole lot more right than the ones that they are going off. They had pizza before they went to bed.

Daniel experience was to give God's prophet a special message from God

Alright, secondly. This was an isolated, individual experience to a prophet of God. Secondly, I think this will help as we view this experience. This was to give God's prophet a special message from God. Understand what I'm saying: God's prophet, a special message from God. It was not to take chapter 10 and jump to the New Testament and begin to build theology out of it. If you're studying Daniel, why did he do it in Daniel's life? Quit thinking that this has anything to do with the New Testament. It has to do with Daniel, it has to do with Israel, and God had a specific message to Daniel in the midst of it.

You know, in verses 10-11, let's notice what he says. "Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees." Something else that has impressed me is every time Daniel would get weak, he would just have a touch and he would be strong. Isn't that incredible how God does that in our life? But anyway, "And he said to me, 'O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.'" Folks, I want to tell you something: this miraculous, spectacular event that took place in Daniel's life was a calculated move by a sovereign God. You don't understand it; you just accept it and you believe it.

He was sent from God to Daniel. God has something specific in using the spectacular to communicate to Daniel. You know, God wanted Daniel to know something and because He wanted him to know something, He wanted us to know something. So we have it in print right here and we can understand it from God's Word. And you know what I think it is? And again, understand what I'm

saying. But I believe it and nobody's convinced me differently yet. You know what I believe He's doing? Following the whole of Daniel, the context of Daniel, that even though the message that he got about his people has been very, very difficult, God wanted somehow to assure Daniel. "Daniel, it's going to be tough for your people. Four hundred and ninety years and it's going to be a major conflict and war and pain and suffering and strife. But, Daniel, I want you to know something: God still loves Israel. And, Daniel, when you go to bed at night, don't you ever worry about that because God is sovereignly in control of His covenant people. And He will not let them all go. He will bring them back to Himself."

Two things: first of all he pulls the curtain back. Now, something is going on in the heavenlies that we're not even aware of. There's a spiritual war in the heavenlies, very clear from Scripture. And he pulls the curtain back and says, "Daniel, I want you to see something. I want you to see something. Look behind these curtains." And he shows him first of all that God is winning the battle in the spiritual battle over the Gentile nations. The Gentile kingdoms that we saw in chapters 1-7. Notice what he says in verse 12, "Then he said to me, 'Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this,'" how long had he prayed? Twenty one days, right, three weeks? Alright, "from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words." God already had the answer. That's why He had you pray. He wanted to tell you something. But somehow He uses the vehicle of prayer. There's just a strange mystery to me about that.

Verse 13, "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia," now, who is the prince of the kingdom of Persia? Now we're talking about angels speaking to him so we've got to be talking in spiritual terms, so the prince here has got to be a demonic prince, one of Satan's own, who evidently wanted the nation of Persia. He says, "the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days." How long was he praying: 21 days, "then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia." Isn't it interesting that he mentions the Gentile nations first?

And he goes on to say a little later on, he says, "But the prince of Greece is on its way." What was the next king that followed Medo-Persia? It was Greece. And evidently Satan began to understand that God is doing something with the Gentile nation. Satan would much rather use them for his own purposes, but the problem with Satan is that he's a creation, he is not the creator. It is not a co-equal power and God wanted Daniel to know, I believe, that "I'm winning the war in the heavenlies. Daniel, something is going on beyond your comprehension and it's a battle in the spiritual heavenlies." And I don't understand all that friend, but I'm winning it and I believe what this angel is saying to Daniel is, "Listen, we're carrying out his orders and we're seeing to it that he does exactly what He has decreed in His Word that would happen to the princes of Persia."

Not only Persia, but Greece and all of them: God is in control, folks. I'm telling you, the way people would have you think today, Satan is in control. And friend, it's like Josef Tson said just not long ago. A man walked up to him and said, "Josef, what do you think Satan's next move is in Romania?" He said, "Friend, that's not the problem. The problem is what's God's next move in Romania?" We're so hung up on what Satan is doing in the heavenlies. Friend, he wanted to see what God's doing in the heavenlies and He's winning the war over the Gentile nations, bringing about the decreed Word of God of what will take place on this earth. There's a heavenly battle going on, friend, and God's winning it.

But the second thing I think he does is he pulls it back just a little bit further. "I want to show you something else, Daniel." Look at verse 20, "Then he said, 'Do you understand why I came to you?'" I love that phrase. "But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come." And we're going to whip them, too. Because God is going to see to it that His will is carried forth. But look in verse 21, "However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. (Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.)"

Now what in the world is he talking about? I believe that what's happening here is that he's telling Daniel, "Daniel, this is tough on you, I know. And you love your people; you've grieved over your people. And it's going to be tough; it's going to be hard, it's going to take a long time before your people can be broken. But not only is God winning the war in the heavenlies and manipulating what He's doing in history, but, Daniel, He's assigned Michael the archangel to Israel. Daniel, do you know who is the one fighting for Israel? Do you know who the one is in chapter 12 that takes his stand to defend Israel? It's Michael. You can't touch Michael, friend. Michael is the one who has been assigned to your people."

You know, I want to remind you of something. This angelic conflict in Daniel had nothing to do with Daniel. Can I say that again? This angelic conflict had nothing to do with Daniel. He was simply let in on some information. Daniel was not fighting those forces; God was fighting those forces in the heavenlies. And I want to suggest something to you and you can throw it right back at me if you want to. That's alright. Friend, to interject ourselves in to that arena of warfare is to misunderstand what Ephesians 6:12 is talking about. I don't, through my prayer, crawl into the heavenlies and do anything. But listen, it's going on: yes. And there is an adversary: yes. And he has a demonic force: yes. But what am I supposed to do with that demonic force? I supposed to do one thing and you'll not find anything else. I'm to stand, just stand and don't budge.

Well, then, how do I stand? Look at 1 Peter 5:8. You know a lot of people talking so much about the devil anymore, that I think we've

lost complete sight of the fact who God is and what He is doing. I saw this the other day and it just dawned on me. It just jumped out at me. "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith." Not in "your" faith; the literal there is "the" faith.

Let me show you something what Peter tells these persecuted believers of Asia Minor. You know what's behind your whole persecution? You know where it's all coming from? It's Satan working through the lives of disobedient and lost people. Yes, that's where it's coming from. But you can stand and you can resist and I'll tell you how. It's so clear to me. First of all he says, remember, you stand firm in the faith. What does that point to? Not just the gospel of salvation but, friend, the whole counsel of the Word of God. Your stand, first of all, has got to be within the sphere of the Word of God.

How am I going to stand against Satan? Friend, I'm not going to chase him around. I'm just going to stand. If he wants me, he's going to have to come find me. I'm going to chase Jesus around. He never told me to pursue evil, He told me to pursue righteousness. Is that not correct? What in the world are we doing running around trying to find him? Don't you worry, you find Jesus and he'll find you.

How do you stand? Within the sphere of your faith. Now watch this: "Be of sober spirit," the word *nepho*. There are two contrasting words in Scripture that have just thrilled me as I begin to understand it, as we run it through the New Testament. *Nepho* is the word that is used there for being of sober spirit. Sometimes the word *sophron* is also translated "sober," and you get confused as to what he's saying. Why do the translators get so mixed up? Well, *sophron*, which is not the word used here, is for Christians to use sound judgment. In other words, it talks about a saved mindset, but it's referring to things that are legal for us. I can eat, can you eat. It's alright for me to drink or whatever, but to moderation. Now, if you want a term that has anything to do with moderation, that's the word *sophron*. In other words, you exercise your senses and your self-control in the spirit and make sure that when you eat, you eat to a certain moderation, or when you whatever you do.

Isn't it interesting that that is not the word used when it comes to wine in the Scripture? The word *nepho* is used. And the word *nepho* as I can understand it in the New Testament refers not to use in moderation but to totally abstain from. Stay away from it. Stay away, don't you even touch it. Friend, there's a whole closed area to the Christian life. Do you know that? There's not only "do" in the Christian life, there are "don'ts" in the Christian life whether we like it or not. And those "don'ts" have anything to do with the flesh and we are not to touch it, not even touch it: stay away from it. And that's the word he uses here. In other words, what I see is when I'm in the counsel of God in the faith, there are certain things, if I'm going to walk in victory, I'd better not touch. And that would take me about six years to finish applying that. I think it applies to the devil.

The second thing is, in the faith, I'm to be on the alert, like a sentry. Friend, I'm to be in the faith to the point that I know what God says, because I understand from my personal feeling about the Scripture is, the battlefield is between my two ears. And Satan would love for me to begin to grab a humanistic message in this world. But if I know the Word of God, a red flag will go up and friend, I can stand firm in the faith, not touching anything that Satan could ever use to work against me in my life, and being on the watch for anything that does not conform to the Word of God.

Friend, I've said it before and I'll stand on my own two feet and say it again. I may be knocked down with it. Our resistance to Satan is, in effect, our submission to Jesus. You know what I'm discovering? I see it everywhere. There are churches all over this country preaching Jesus. Yes, they know who He is, they know what He did, and they've got their doctrine so straight that if they turned one way they'd break. They've got it. But they're leaving something out: the life of Jesus becoming our life. That's what is missing. And, friend, if you are dying to yourself daily to the flesh—and by that it means you're in the Word of God. You can't die to the flesh and not be in the Word of God. There's no possible way. Because when you die to what you want, you're going to have to find out what He wants and to do that you're going to have to come to the Word of God.

I said this for years over and over again like it's a broken record: until you and I get into the Word for ourselves, quit building what you think off of what I think, because I change my mind too much. Build it off of what God's Word says. But when you study it have some kind of hermeneutic. Don't grab a verse here and a verse there and put them together and build a doctrine off of it. Take the Book as it is and study it as it is and let that build you and make you strong to stand there. And when we start doing that friend, it is no longer Wayne's way and Wayne's will, but now it's God's way and God's will. Satan can't touch the believer.

There's a teaching going on about being demonized, passive voice. And the conclusion is that since you can be demonized in its passive voice, and since the demon evidently is in control of you, you have to be delivered in order to walk differently. The only problem I have with that, from Scripture—not from experience, do you understand what I'm saying? Friend, experience will blow us out of the water right now—I'm saying from Scripture. I find in the Christian life in Colossians 1, that when I walk worthy, and please Him in all things, there are three present, passive participles that move in. In other words, God takes over me. He does it, I don't do it. I'm just walking worthy of Him and He's in control of me. So the passive voice is used there to show me that He now is interjecting His life through me. And listen, if the passive voice is true on the positive side, as a result of my obedience, then on the negative side it must be true of my disobedience. My deliverance, friend, is at the cross on my face before Jesus as I begin to now walk in the

reality of what His Word says. I have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the precious kingdom of His dear Son.

Now is that to say I don't believe in demons? Are you crazy? I know good and well that they're around. Does that mean I don't believe in Satan? You crazy? I'm not dumb or stupid. I know he's around. But, folks, I also know that I don't live in the same covenant that Daniel lived in and, friend, there's no way in the world a demon is going to stop the prayer to almighty God that I pray. Do you know why? Because I don't approach Him as if He's there and I'm here. He's in me. And the only thing that ever delays any answer to my prayer is either my own disobedience or the fact that God just decides to wait a little while.

Folks, that's where I am, and in these days there are a lot of different sounds. Let's remember this: when we disagree it's not that we don't love one another, but if we love the Word we're going to have to come somewhere towards an understanding. Second Peter says that the Scripture is of no private interpretation. Either I'm so flat wrong I'm in left field, and if I am would you pray for me. Don't cast me out of your fellowship; pray for me that God would enlighten my mind. But, friend, I want you to know that I'm not going to fight with you if you disagree. I'm going to pray for you the same way. Somewhere we've got to strike some common ground. Does the Christian life work or doesn't it? Do I have to depend on you to deliver me or do I depend on the Deliverer who lives in me? Do I come to His cross and do I depend on His shed blood? And it says, and I want to remind you in Revelation, they overcame him. How? By the word of their testimony, by the blood of the Lamb and they didn't even love their lives: even unto death.

Why is it any different in a Christian life? You might be here and you think you're under some oppressive thing. Usually, from what I discern in Scripture, if I'm under anything that is holding me down passively, it's the result of my own choice. And if it was the result of my own choice for me to be in that dilemma to begin with, I've got the power of the Holy Spirit to make a new choice. And I can choose to do what God's told me to do. I think a lot of times what we're seeing in deliverance is nothing more than a person you thought was a Christian. As best I can understand it, deliverance in Scripture and this is where I am too, might as well put it all on top of the table, I believe deliverance is salvation, friend. The absence of the demon has never meant anything in Scripture. It's not the absence of the demon; it's the presence of the King. Jesus said, "If I cast out Beelzebub, by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, My kingdom has come upon you." You dare Satan to enter that kingdom. I'm just property, friend.

I'll try to illustrate it a different way. Don't you bother my kids; I'm going to fight for them. You know, when you come into my yard to get my family, forget this thing about having peace towards all men. I may have to blow your brains out if you're going to hurt my family. How people take that thing the wrong way. I want to tell you something: if I'm that way about my kids, what do you think God thinks about us? Folks, we have been saved to the uttermost. Quit worrying about what Satan is doing. Be aware, be alert, but also be sober. Start looking and seeing what God is up to. And whip Satan right where he belongs. Jesus, Jesus, what can wash away my sin? Nothing, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Victory in Jesus, my Savior. The word means rescuer, deliverer, for what? Forever? That's right. I sometimes could just shout. I don't come towards victory, friend, I come from it. I just have to learn to appropriate it at the cross and under the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, be careful when you look through Daniel 10. Don't build your theology on an isolated individual experience that God gave to a prophet for a specific, calculated reason. Don't for some reason think that you're that way and don't be bored with the mundane. God is in mowing the grass just like He is in preaching the Word because He's in the one doing both. That's the key.

Daniel 11:1-4 A Vision of Conflict - 1

Daniel 11. You should have gotten a little handout this morning. What that does, that's the result of a lot of people put together here, lot of time. And chapter 11 cannot be understood just basically from reading it in the sense of who are the "he's," who are the "him's." You just can't do it. History has got to help us so therefore we did this, got permission from the Lockman Foundation, the American Standard Translators, and they said to help ourselves. So we just put verse 1 all the way down through verse 45 and as best we could filled in the blanks as to the "he's," "him's," and whatever else is in there so you'll know the different historical people that are spoken of in prophetic history right here in Daniel 11.

Now you must understand, Daniel 10, Daniel 11, and Daniel 12 are all together. Man has put in the chapter divisions and many times you think you've graduated from one into the other, but it's all a flow. The vision of great conflict that you begin to see in chapter 10 is illustrated and brought out in chapter 11 and chapter 12, so it's all a part of one scene. Don't be confused about that.

I'd like to preach on a message this morning entitled "A Vision of Great Conflict – Part 1." And you're going to have to stay with me on this one. I hope you'll come back tonight. Each piece that we're talking about now is a piece of a puzzle and if you don't get them all, you'll miss a huge gap in what's being said in chapter 10 through chapter 12. Let's go back to chapter 10 and make sure we're warmed up and know what's happening in chapter 11.

What's going on: Verse 1, chapter 10, a vision now of great conflict will begin here. In verse 1 it says, "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision." Now look over in verse 14 and you see the people that the vision concerns. And this is so important to understanding Daniel: "Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen," now watch the next phrase, "to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future."

Now go back to verse 5: something happens in verse 5. Daniel, in the third year of Cyrus, has something happen to him. First of all, a majestic, heavenly being appears before him. Now, we don't know who that was, there are many ideas on it. Now many people believe it was a theophany, in other words a pre-incarnate picture of the Lord Jesus Christ: Jesus Himself appear to Daniel. I don't have any problems with that if in verse 10 on you make that an angel. I have trouble Jesus ever needing the help of any angel to defeat anything in the heavenlies. I have trouble with that. If you make 5-6 the Lord Jesus, and certainly it appears it could be, then you must change in verse 10; from that point on it's an angel that touched him. I just don't know.

Let's look at it. It says in verse 5, "I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult." It was that big, guttural bass vibrating sound.

Well, look with me just for a second and see why people think this might be the Lord Jesus in the book of Revelation. I'll show you where that view comes from and you can see they have a point. Revelation 1:10, it says, and this is speaking of John the apostle who has been exiled to the island of Patmos, it says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, 'Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.' And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last."

So that vision of the Lord Jesus to John on the island of Patmos is very similar to what happens to Daniel in Daniel 10:5-6. And you can understand why some people think that might be the Lord Jesus Christ. At any rate, whoever it was, this majestic, heavenly being causes Daniel to do the same thing: he falls in a dead faint. Verse 7 says, "Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision; nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. So I was left alone and saw this great vision; yet no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength. But I heard the sound of his words; and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground." He fainted, is the way we'd put it. He literally passed out: he was so overcome and overwhelmed by this majestic being, he literally just passed out.

Something caught my eye that I just couldn't get away from and I almost wanted to preach a sermon on it, but I just couldn't do that, it wouldn't materialize into a message. But I've got to bring it out. Three times, in Daniel 10, Daniel is touched by this heavenly messenger. This is so precious to me and I hope you can get into the story with me. Daniel is in his 80s, folks. And he's loved God for a long time. He made up his mind long before he was ever taken captive and taken over into Babylon that he would not defile himself and he wouldn't dishonor the Lord. He just loved God and how God ministers to him at this point just thrills my soul.

First of all in verse 10, "Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees." He passed out, and this hand touches him and all of a sudden he comes awake and he tries to get up and he's just shaking and he's overcome. It's an awesome thing, folks, when this heavenly being stands there in his presence. Then it says in verse 11, "And he said to me, 'O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.' And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling." Here he was, having passed out, and the messenger of God touches him. And when he touches him he speaks to him and the word he speaks to him were strength and he was able to get up on his hands and knees and then he was able to stand up and he's just shaking like a leaf.

Well, if you go on in verses 15-16, again he has to be touched. You see, the vision was overwhelming him, folks. He'd prayed for Israel, he'd prayed for his people, he loved his people. He had obviously heard of the fact they'd gone back to their homeland and now they'd already turned and gone back to forsaking God. He's confessed their sin as his sin; he so wants God to lift off His hand of wrath off his people. And the more he gets, as God reveals to him, is more and more great conflict. And it's just overcoming him.

Verse 15 says, "And when he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became

speechless.” In other words, “Daniel, I’m going to do something,” God’s telling him, “but it’s going to be all the way to the latter days before your prayer can ever fully be answered. It’s going to take that long for Israel to break of their hard-heartedness towards Me.” Verse 16 says, “And behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips.” Boy, doesn’t that grab you? I mean, it had to be a corporeal being; he had to be in the appearance of a man to touch him like that, “then I opened my mouth and spoke, and said to him who was standing before me, ‘O my lord.’”

Then again in verse 17 he talks about his breath had been taken out of him, and verse 18 says, “Then this one with human appearance touched me again and strengthened me.” Three times as this vision was unveiling to him he had to be touched to even handle what God was saying to him. And I thought about in your life and in my life in a similar way—not certainly in Daniel’s way, we’re not prophets—but when we have to face some of the realities of our life, and we have to face some of the things that go on in our life, how God is so precious to touch us and to speak to us and how his voice always dismisses the fear and gives us strength. We can stand and we can hear what God has to say.

As a matter of fact, the only time that I can find that Daniel really says anything is in verse 17, and to me the humility just completely flows out of him. He says, “For how can such a servant of my lord talk with such as my lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.” Do you see the humility? Does it grab you? Daniel is not like what we’re hearing in these days. Oh, I hear people all the time, “Well, I had a vision of the Lord. A 700 foot angel appeared before me. Somebody came in my bathroom this morning.” John McArthur was talking about somebody told him, “And spoke to me this morning.” And it’s almost as if they say it in a braggadocios boastful way, “Look at who I am. God spoke to me.” I don’t see that heartbeat in Daniel, do you? I see a humble 80-year-old man overwhelmed with the fact that he just doesn’t deserve a thing in the world that God’s doing, but God having moved in his presence just overcome that he could even be included in what God was speaking to him. What a precious picture. Well, that doesn’t have a thing to do with chapter 11 but it just blessed me as I was studying it.

So we had this vision that came to Daniel. What is this vision of great conflict? Well, look in chapter 11. If I was putting the chapters together—and who am I, but I like to think about it sometimes—if I was putting these chapters together I would have started chapter 11 with verse 2, not verse 1. I don’t know why they did that. Verse 1 is just a flow right out of verse 21. Let me show you. He says in verse 21, this is the angelic visitor that is talking to Daniel. “However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. (Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince. And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.)”

You know, there is something here that really strikes me: somehow these two angelic beings, Michael and whoever this other one is, they have a real affinity with one another. And evidently there have been some times that they’ve had to help each other out, and somehow it all has to do with God’s decree spoken in heaven and carried out in the heavenlies by His spiritual beings. It has something to do with that. You see, back in 13 it says that Michael came to help him, but he says, “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia,” the demon of Persia, this is some kind of struggle that is going on in the heavenlies to make sure that God’s decree is carried out. I don’t understand all of that and if you do, you’re certainly a far greater person than I am: help me out, “was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.”

So he had Michael’s help at one time, but then he tells us in 11:1, “I also had to go to help Michael in the first year of Darius.” Now if Darius and Cyrus ruled simultaneously, at the same time, Darius over the Medes, Cyrus over the Persians, it would appear to me that that would have been along about the time that Cyrus makes his decree for the Jews to go back to their homeland and to rebuild the temple. If that’s the case, and I don’t know if it is or isn’t, if that’s the case, then evidently he needed some help to make sure that God’s decree was carried out by these pagan kings and whatever struggle was going on, he made sure that it took place.

And isn’t it a beautiful picture here, folks? Even with the struggles that go on in the atmosphere, something that we don’t even know anything about, God wins that battle, friends. And whatever God says happens the way He says it. And He’s got all kinds of ministering angels making sure His plan is carried out as He decreed. His will in heaven is going to be done on earth, friend, because He is God.

Well, verse 2, to me, really starts chapter 11 and the vision of great conflict. Now, don’t lose what we’re talking about. This is the most difficult chapter I’ve had to deal with, so you pray for me now and I’m going to do it. And you stay with me. You can do it. Week before last I thought I’d done so well, I thought I had done so well explaining all of that, and somebody walked up to me afterwards, looked at me and said, “Man, you have lost me.” And I’m thinking, “Oh, no.” Now, if you’ll pay attention and stay with me maybe you can understand why this is important for us.

You remember chapters 8-12 has to do with Israel. Chapters 1-7, that’s a Gentile nation. Now all of this stuff he’s going to be telling you in chapter 11 is important to Israel, and if you’ll pay attention to it you’ll see how it becomes very developed. Alright! Chapter 11 beginning in verse 2 is so literal that the liberal scholars just absolutely have a fit; they can’t stand it. It’s just too literal history. They say, “God does not speak that way. It had to be done after the fact.” Now, folks, you have your choice whether or not you’re going to

believe it's what God Word says it is or whether or not you're going to be in the company of those who try to interject their own opinion which makes you God and not the One who authored this book.

Chapter 10 verse 1 very clearly told us this was a vision given to Daniel and that Daniel himself said he understood. Now if that's God's Word, accept it. Quit worrying about what all the liberal theologians say. They say that you ought to throw the 11th chapter out: it didn't even happen until after it all had taken place. You see, the difference in God and a historian is this: a historian has to watch it happen, and then he writes it down. God has already seen it happen and prophesied it long before it ever takes place. This is prophetic history, not just history after the fact. Okay, with that understood, let's jump in and see what it says.

Here's the vision of great conflict beginning in verse 2. He says, "And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece." Now who in the world is he talking about? Without history you could not properly interpret chapter 11. That's awkward because we've never had to fool with that in any other book, but we do in Daniel. Let me give you the names of those three kings. I want you to see that history documents what God says.

There were three more kings. First of all is a man by the name of Cambyses. Second one is Smerdis. Thirdly is a man by the name of Darius. I've already seen one but it's not the same one. Darius and his last name Hystaspes. Those were the three kings; history documents that those three kings followed Cyrus, and then the fourth king comes on the scene. That's what he said. He said there were going to be three more kings to rise in Persia, then a fourth, and something is going to be unique about this fourth king. His name is Xerxes. We've got to understand this or you're not going to understand the rest of the vision. Alright, Xerxes. What is it about Xerxes?

Well, we know he's going to attack Greece. But look what it says in the verse. It says, "Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece." This is something that I found in history that was very interesting. History records that it took him four years to gain this wealth and these riches in order to get his army to a point that he could in fact attack Greece. During which time it says he amassed a fortune of wealth of all of his various attacks that he would make as a military general. Matter of fact, look in Esther 1:1-9. Now the Hebrew name of Xerxes is Ahasuerus. I think I like Xerxes better. Ahasuerus and you see him brought out in Esther 1, or at least we think that's who it is. This fits the description. It says, "Now it took place in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces, in those days as King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne which was in Susa the capital, in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for all his princes and attendants, the army officers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of his provinces being in his presence, when he displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days, 180 days." Now, folks, that's a lot of wealth.

Displayed for 180 days. "And when these days were completed, the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all the people who were present in Susa the capital, from the greatest to the least, in the court of the garden of the king's palace." Then it goes on to explain some of his wealth, some of his royal majesty.

Can you imagine a banquet going on for seven days? I think I could live with that. I think we ought to have church fellowship to go on for seven days. But he had a big banquet to celebrate all his wealth, to celebrate all the things he had amassed during those four years. But after those four years, because of his wealth, evidently he was able to do what he wanted to do and now he works up an attack upon Greece. And history tells us the reason probably, we don't know, probably was because his father, that's that Darius guy that I told you about, his father had attacked Greece, but had been humiliated by Greece and they think that what Xerxes was doing was simply vindicating his dad and that's why he wanted to attack Greece.

Well, verse 2 just drops us off. Boom! That's all it says. So all we know then from that point off is that Greece is going to come on the scene in verse 3. What you do know from history is all he did really, to amount to anything, is to stir up the anger of a man by the name of Alexander the Great and he was to live to regret the day that he ever attacked Greece, because that great general spoken of in verse 3 is Alexander the Great. Let's go on, verse 3, "And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases." That's Alexander the Great.

Look at verse 4, "But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass." Now, where have we seen that before? If you've been paying attention, we've already seen this before. Look back in 8:8. Remember the male shaggy goat which was Greece and the conspicuous horn that came out? And that conspicuous horn was Alexander the Great. Look in Daniel 8:8: "Then the male goat magnified himself exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken," that's Alexander the Great, "and in its place," just exactly like we see in chapter 11, "there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven."

Now, it tells us some more in this verse that I think is very interesting and history documents. It says that his kingdom, there was a lot of fighting over his kingdom. Obviously if he was a great king his descendants would pick up the throne. But we're going to see in a

verse that it's not them that takes over the throne. It says, "though not to his own descendants." There were three descendants of Alexander that should have probably gotten the throne. First of all was a half brother who was mentally ill. Secondly, he had a true son by the name of Alexander, and thirdly he had an illegitimate son by the name of Heracles. Any one of those three could have qualified to take over his kingdom.

However, as history tells us, they were all three murdered, and so after all the fighting and all the murdering, there were four generals that took over his kingdom. Now you say, "You're losing me, this is not important." Yes, it is. For the four winds, to the north, south, the west, and the east, now you can just take the west and the east and by the way they're mentioned for you on that little handout, all of this is right there. You could take two of them and just push them out of the way. Lysimachus and Cassander, just push them out of the way. They haven't got anything to do with Israel whatsoever. But there are two in that line of those four kings that took over his kingdom that are very significant to Israel. And this is the part that we're now getting into. This is when you begin to see why all this history and why this is important.

The king of the north, which is Seleucus I, the Seleucid dynasty, and the kingdom of the south, Ptolemy I, which is the Ptolemy dynasty of the south, these two kingdoms became very important to Israel. Now, folks, what he's doing is setting you up and helping you understand who is going to come out of one of those dynasties that is going to cause much harm to Israel.

Now, why are the kings of the north and the kings of the south important to Israel? Now in your paper that you've got there, you have them all listed, all the way down through verse 20, and they've got all the different kings, how they fought back and forth, fought back and forth, now why did that have anything to do with Israel? Let me tell you why. The kingdom of the north is Syria, the kingdom of the Seleucid dynasty. The kingdom of the south is Egypt. And Syria and Egypt, the king of the north and king of the south, are going to fight against one another. Guess what lies right in between? A little place called Israel. Daniel had a vision of great conflict. "God, what's this vision all about?" And God said, "It's going to start in just a few more kings, Daniel. And it's going to last until the latter days, and it's going to be conflict like Israel has never known because they have rejected me and their transgression is great. It's going to take that much time to break the self-sufficiency of Israel."

And so we begin to see why all the pains that were taken to give you these two dynasties: because it was the dynasty of the north and the dynasty of the south that warred back and forth. For a while the north would be dominant. For a while the south would be dominant and it goes back and forth, but every time they go to fight one another, poor old Israel is lying right in the middle and they get trampled on back and forth, back and forth, for all of these kingdoms fighting one another. That's very important.

You look back in 8:23, very important. There's somebody going to come out of either the kingdom of the north or the kingdom of the south that's going to be very, very important to Israel. Verse 23, "And in the latter period of their rule," and you have it there in those little handouts that I gave you if you'll follow it down through. Antiochus Epiphanes is the man spoken of in chapter 8 and also the one we're going to look at tonight spoken of in chapter 11 beginning in verse 21. He's going to come out of one of those dynasties. This is why it was important for him to set this up and to give such a literal picture of what is going to happen. It's going to come out of the kingdom of the north, the Seleucid dynasty.

Out of that kingdom, it says here, "And in the latter period of their rule." God's Word is so right. History documents the fact that in one of the last kingdoms there was old Antiochus Epiphanes, how he comes on the scene. He doesn't deserve the throne; he seizes it as we'll look at it tonight. "When the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue." Now, folks, that begins in verse 21 of your text. I'm not going to go through all of these wars of the kingdoms of the north and the kingdoms of the south. That's something that I gave to you; you can look at that and have all the fun that you want. But when we get to verse 21, out of that northern kingdom is going to come a man and that man will be a preview to Israel of the Antichrist of the latter days. Pay attention, Israel, because God is saying something through Daniel. A vision of great conflict. They don't know what great conflict is yet because one day when the Antichrist comes it will be the worst time of all history and friend, I don't think it's that far away.

Three and a half years he's going to unloose all hell against Israel. And at the end of that three and a half year period of time, they'll finally break. They'll look at Jesus and say, "It is You that we have crucified," and on that day they will have their day of atonement and God will save one third of all Israel. We know that's yet to come, but to give a preview he takes a lot of pain to set it up and say there's going to be a man just like him that's going to come in this day and time from the kingdom of the north, Antiochus Epiphanes.

Well folks, as you go home this afternoon, I know you're going to wonder how in the world does this apply to me? I'm not real sure. I've asked God to just let the Holy Spirit bring application to each individual heart. I don't know. I know what it does for me. Let me ask you a question. Have you ever struggled at all with the inerrancy of God's Word? At any time in your life, I don't mean you're struggling now, but if any of you ever struggled even just a little bit with the inerrancy of God's Word, would you raise your hand? I've got mine up. I struggled with it one time.

You know, the thing that just drives one more nail in the doctrine that says God's Word is inspired is Daniel 11. It blows me away, and I love it to watch the liberals scramble. They have to try to come up with some theory there, a theory here, they have to cut out

half of the verses because to even take their theory you've got to cut out part of it to even interject it into what Scripture says. God said, "Daniel, you stand up." And He touched him. "Daniel, you can speak, go on, don't be afraid. Daniel, stand up. Let Me tell you exactly what's going to happen. You can receive this. It's going to start pretty soon. There's going to be that old boy coming out of that kingdom of the north, Antiochus Epiphanes. I said it, Daniel; it's going to happen, Daniel."

It's interesting in chapter 8; you have a picture of the little horn which is Antiochus Epiphanes. Chapter 7 you have a picture of the Antichrist. But he reverses it in chapter 11. In chapter 11 he starts off with Antiochus Epiphanes, then jumps and shows you the Antichrist and shows you the previews. For all the doubters. Any of you have any people in your family or friends or somebody around you that believes that God is finished with Israel? Well, folks, they're going to have to cut Daniel out of the Bible. God is not through with Israel. And, friend, it's going to happen just like he said it's going to happen.

We've already studied chapter 9 about those 70 weeks. Six things have got to happen before those 70 weeks are over with, and, friend, they have not yet happened, so therefore you must not be through yet. There are three and a half years of the worst terror ever going to be on this earth. I'm thankful, as far as I can understand; I'm not going to be here. Some people disagree with me and say, "Brother Wayne, we're going to be here during the tribulation." You stay, I'm going, friend. When He shouts, I'm gone. If you want to stay, help yourself. Send me a postcard. Why would a church have to go through the great tribulation? Tribulation is always going to be here. Persecution is always going to be here, but not the great tribulation. This is the day of Jacob's distress. It hasn't got a thing to do with the Christian, and that's when God is going to bring them back to Himself. It all starts with Greece. It all starts with one of those kingdoms to the north, a man by the name Antiochus Epiphanes, and begins to give you a preview of coming attractions.

Folks, 2 Timothy 3:16 says something that I like. "All Scripture is inspired by God." The word "all" is a fantastic word. It means all. It means each and every part plus the whole is put together. God did it once and God will do it again like He said He's going to do it. Boy, I tell you what. You know what this tells me? I can go home and I can trust this Book.

Take the Scripture home with you; come back tonight because we're going to look at old Antiochus Epiphanes. You think you saw him in chapter 8; you're really going to see him in chapter 11. That rascal is going to get his in his day. Only ruled 12 years, but one of the worst 12 years in all for Israel that they've ever known about.

Daniel 11:21-35 A Vision of Conflict - 2

Turn with me to Daniel 11. I hope you're seeing in Daniel 11 how sure the Word of God really is. When God says it, He means it, that ought to settle it. That's like somebody went into a church one time and saw a banner that said, "God said, I believe it, that settles it." The fellow walked in and said, "You know that's all wrong. It ought to be, "God said it, that settles it, it doesn't matter if you believe it or not." That's a whole lot better way to say it. Well, that's the way we are in Daniel 11. There is a lot of room for discussion on many of these verses and you understand, I hope, that I'm approaching this as tenderly and as cautiously as I can having never been a student of prophecy before. I tell you what, my fire has been lit. I am so excited about what we're studying in these days.

Well, this is "A Vision of Great Conflict – Part 2." Now all of chapter 10, chapter 11, chapter 12, they all fit together. It started back in 10:1. Daniel has a vision of great conflict. Verse 14 of chapter 10 says very specifically, "this is for your people," in other words, Israel, "and also concerning the latter days." And so it's very important to remember that. Now we mentioned it this morning and let me mention it again tonight to keep this in balance in your mind. Way back in chapter 7 we saw portrayed for us, a little horn that's going to come out of that latter day Rome with the ten nations, the United States of Europe, if you please. There's going to be a little horn to come out of that place. It's going to get bigger than the others and of course we tied that into Revelation. We begin to realize that's the Antichrist. It could really be no one else. And he'll have power over Israel for the last three and a half years of this age. That will be from the middle of the tribulation time, the great tribulation, until the end. He'll make a peace pact as we saw in chapter 9 with Israel in the first part of that last week, the seventieth week, and in the middle of it he'll break it and that's when Satan is finally cast out of heaven.

Satan will incarnate him and with the power of this new Rome behind him, he will bring great persecution to Israel. The result of that however will be that one-third of all of Israel will be saved. That will be their day of atonement. God is not finished with Israel yet. And so we see the little horn of chapter 7.

But in chapter 8 remember, we saw the small horn, different from the one in chapter 7. For the small horn in chapter 8 comes out of Greece, not out of Rome. And we saw very clearly that it had to be a man by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes who was probably the worst individual that had ever been known to Israel at that time. He brought great persecution to the people. So we see the Antichrist, then we see his preview there in chapter 8. Well, we see that reversed here in chapter 11.

In chapter 11 it doesn't start off with the Antichrist, it starts off with Antiochus Epiphanes. Verses 21-35 we believe, I believe, is talking about Antiochus Epiphanes. Again, another, little bit more clear picture of who he is. But then in verses 36-45 it appears to me, and we'll document this the next time we come together, that he speaks there of the Antichrist. So he just reverses the whole thing. We see this interplayed all the way through Scripture.

I had a thought this afternoon. Do you realize to the liberal theologian who believes that chapter 11 was written after the fact, do you realize he would almost have to have a deceptive motivation to even say that? He would have to erase verse 1, particularly of chapter 10, and there's so much of that Scripture he would literally have to say was just put in there to deceive everybody. Because if it wasn't as God said it, you'd have to take that out. Daniel said, "I saw this revelation."

Well, before we get into verse 21 tonight and we start looking at Antiochus Epiphanes, would you look back in chapter 8 and let's just read one more time verses 23-25, talking about the same man we're going to be looking at tonight. And so much of this overlaps itself. And at the risk of just boring you to tears, we're going to plow our way on through it. That's the difficult part we're in right now in chapter 11 of Daniel. Verse 23, "And in the latter period of their rule," whose rule? Well, the four generals that took over Alexander the Great's kingdom. Certainly the one to the North and the South as we saw this morning were the important ones and the latter days of the Seleucid Dynasty in the north a man came about known as Antiochus Epiphanes, just exactly like the Word of God said, "when the transgressors have run their course, a king will arise insolent and skilled in intrigue." And here I believe what Daniel is doing; he's looking through something like a megaphone. He's seeing Antiochus Epiphanes that we're looking at here. But all the way through the end he sees the latter days and sees a preview of the Antichrist.

Verse 24 says, "And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power." And remember this: that's an important statement. It's not his own power. He's allowed to have this kind of power. It's an evil power, but God's granting it for a reason. Back in verse 12 it's on account of the transgressions of the host of God. Israel has rejected God. God is allowing this persecution to come to them to drive them back to obedience to Him. "And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform his will; he will destroy mighty men and the holy people, and through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence and he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency."

Now that's what we've already seen in chapter 8 about Antiochus Epiphanes. Now we move to verse 21 of Daniel 11. I just wanted to make sure you realized that you're talking about the same individual and I think he's doing the same thing. He's just simply saying, "I'm saying this about Antiochus Epiphanes and it's going to take place. And if it is you can take it to the bank that the Antichrist will come about just like I'm telling you in my word."

So verse 21 we see it says, "And in his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue." Let's just work our way from verse 21 down to verse 35. Or let's put it this way: as far as we can get tonight. Now I hope you got the handout. If you don't have one that we passed out this morning, we should have some back in the foyer. If you don't get one and somehow we ran out, if you'll call the church office we'll run you one off. Because we have taken verses 1-45 as best as we could and tried to put the names in there for all the "he's" and all the "him's." One of the most difficult passages of Scripture that I've ever been through.

The king of the north will be a despicable person

But let's begin in verse 21. Four things about the small horn of chapter 8, Antiochus Epiphanes, as a preview of the Antichrist who will come in the latter days. First of all, and I think verse 21 says it very well, he will be a despicable person. And that's what is being told to Daniel at this time. And I think that is very well put. He starts right off and describes his total character, inside and out. Contemptible, despicable is the words that will describe this man. The word "despicable" comes from the root word meaning to despise. So he was a man who was very shrewd; he was a man who was very untrustworthy.

But go on in verse 21. It says this, "on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred." Now, if you'll look on your little sheet that we passed out this morning, in verse 21 we tell you the story there. He was not to be the one to take the throne. However, he took it, he seized it. How did he do that? It says, "but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue." Now, that word "intrigue" tells you a lot about this despicable man. The word "intrigue" comes from the word meaning "slippery," "slippery place." But actually here it would be used as "slippery actions." He's very smooth, folks. He knew exactly what to say, he knew exactly who to say it to, and he knew exactly when to say it. That's something about him. He was a man of intrigue, a man who was very slippery and very smooth.

This is exactly the way the Antichrist will be when he comes to this earth. So many people will think that he is a man of peace; they'll think he's a solution to all the world's problems. It will be incredible how he'll sucker people to himself, but inside of him he's a deceitful man. He is a despicable person. As a matter of fact, I understand that from history that he bribed so many people to get the kingship. In other words, he told them and promised them offices, very high offices, he promised them money and wealth and

anything else he could promise them. He used that method of deceit and those flattering words to get to the place that he would get to. And so we see the fact that he's a very slippery person. As a matter of fact, I even understand from history that he talked Rome into backing him. Incredible. Whereas later on Rome backed Egypt and stopped him on one of his campaigns but at the first part they would even back him. He knew again, what to say, who to say it to, and he knew when to say it. He was a despicable person; a preview of the Antichrist.

The king of the north will be a defiant person

Well, verse 22 takes us a step further. He was not only a despicable person, but he was also to be a defiant person. Verse 22 says, "And the overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant." It's very interesting here. First of all it shows you his military genius, just like the Antichrist will have when he comes about on this earth. He defeats all the armies who invade his territories. He has such an ability to do that. Remember, though, it's not his own power; remember that now. It's not his own power: he's being allowed to do this, just like the Antichrist will. Because it is God, remember, who raises up kings and sets up kingdoms. It's God who puts them down whenever He's through with them to accomplish His purpose.

The last part of verse 22 is interesting however. It says that "also the prince of the covenant." Now, what in the world is he talking about? Now what I'm going to share at this point is strictly speculation: we don't know for sure. But I think what he's talking about there is the high priest of that day. The high priest was the man by the name of Onias III. He was the high priest of Jerusalem at this time. Antiochus Epiphanes, to show you how defiant he was, he could care less about the high priesthood of all of Israel. God didn't scare him, friend. As a matter of fact, later on he's going to proclaim himself to be God just exactly like the Antichrist will do. He's going to desecrate the temple, all these other things. And so defiantly he was going to shatter that priesthood.

As I understand history, Onias III had two brothers. And evidently this shows you some of the depraved heart of Israel at this time. Jason was one of his brothers, and Jason, it is said, bribed some of the people who were close to Antiochus Epiphanes so that he could get the priesthood. Now what in the world has an emperor got to do with the priesthood of all of Israel? However, somehow it worked and Onias III was pushed out of office and Jason moved in. Later on there was another brother, to show you the kind of things that went on. A man by the name of Menelaus and he also bribed, with a higher bribe, to get Jason's spot. In the mean time, he kills Onias III. Well, it's a mess. You ought to study the history of all this stuff. I'm just summarizing; it's a mess.

Well, the Jews get very upset. First of all, what's Antiochus doing interfering in their priesthood and doing what he's doing? And so they revolt: they revolt against the high priest, they revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. And when this happens, this causes, the one we're looking at here, Antiochus Epiphanes, to raise up against the Jews. In other words, he's always had that hatred for them, he has absolutely no respect for their priesthood whatsoever, a very defiant man, and, buddy, when that revolt moved—and you'll see later on in the Scriptures when it talks about that we believe this is when it takes place—when that happened he just literally smashed and shattered the high priesthood of Jerusalem. And he got his own puppet high priest into the office that he could side with, and later on we see all the desecration that he brought to the temple.

So he was very defiant. You talk about God; he would laugh in your face. He had no respect for our God whatsoever. And he shows this by the way he dealt with the priesthood there of Israel. So he was a very despicable man and he was going to be a very defiant man. Absolutely no respect whatsoever to the religion of Israel.

The king of the north would be a very deceptive person

And then, thirdly, he was going to be a very deceptive person. Not only was he despicable, not only was he defiant, but he would be a very deceptive person. And from verse 23 on down to verse 28 we begin to see how deceiving this man really was. First of all, let's look at him in his own land. Verse 23 says, "And after an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people."

Now, let me tell you what's going on in all the history in verse 23. You see, he makes an alliance with the king of the South. The king of the South, of course, is Egypt, and that's Ptolemy VI. Actually, it ends up being his nephew. He's kin to him because of his sister Cleopatra that married into the lines of dynasty there of the kings of the South. So he makes a treaty there with Ptolemy VI. Why does he do that? Because he needs to buy some time. You see, old Antiochus, anything he ever did had deceit written all behind it, and the only reason he makes this alliance with the kings of the South is he doesn't want anybody bothering him while he builds up his army. In the meantime, while that's going on, he conquers many areas. That's what it's talking about here in verse 23: "He will go up and gain power with a small force of people." His little army begins to gain a lot of respect because he's whipping this person, that person, these others, but he doesn't have to contend with Egypt; he's with a peace treaty with Egypt all this time.

Well, verse 23 shows then that he gains a lot of respect with a small force of people. Well, in verse 24 look what it says: "In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time." Now what's happening here is in his own land; this is not outside his land. This is not him conquering somebody else. But what he

ends up doing and as far as I can understand from history, the people in his kingdom were very poor people, and so he comes on like a modern day Robin Hood. He decides to go into his wealthy people, takes their wealth away from them, and gives them to the poor people. Well, what do you think that does? That wins the poor people over to his side and what he's doing, he's building favor, he's building an army, he's getting ready to attack the one he's supposed to be at peace with in Egypt: the king of the South.

He's a deceiver. Anything he ever does is deceptive and it's all for his own personal gain. You've got to see that about Antiochus because the Antichrist is going to be the same way, friend. All he wants is that greed for power. That's all he wants and he's doing it very deceptively.

Well, not only in his own land, but outside his land. Verses 25-28. First of all in Egypt, now notice what he does now. He's supposed to be at peace with Egypt. It says in verse 25, "And he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army." He's had some time now at peace with them to build up his army. Now he turns now on his very kinfolk, that Ptolemy VI is his own nephew: "so the king of the south will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war." As far as I can see in history it says that the army of the south was actually bigger than his army and so they have a mighty confrontation. But remember, the power that he has is not his own power. Things are working because God's allowing them for a specific purpose in the life of Israel: "but he will not stand," that's not talking about Antiochus but the king of the south, "for schemes will be devised against him."

Well, this was a time of all kinds of corruption, even in Israel, but especially with these pagan kings. Here are the people in the king of the south's own army that begin to turn against him. He's got a bigger army than Antiochus Epiphanes but his own people begin to turn against him. Verse 26 says, "And those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain." The people who ate at his table, the closest generals he had to him, turned on him in the hour of conflict and they would not support him, allowing Antiochus Epiphanes to defeat the king of the south.

One historian made the statement that it seems like with the intrigue already spoken of about Antiochus Epiphanes, he may have had something to do with that. Even though it's a long way away, he might have had something to do with causing those generals down there to turn against their own leader. Who knows; we don't know that.

Well, in verse 27 it says something else. Now what happens is he takes Ptolemy VI prisoner and takes him home. Now watch: "As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil." Now, this is the most interesting story. I just wish I could take this history and put it up here and we'd just read it and say "amen" and go home. This is very difficult preaching, by the way, and not the kind I would choose every time I get in the pulpit. But if you'll hang with me there's some really interesting things going on here.

He takes Ptolemy VI back to Egypt. Well, as soon as he's gone, and as soon as his army disappears, having conquered Egypt, they put Ptolemy VII on the throne. They're not about to recognize the fact that he's conquered them. And so when he gets back and he's got Ptolemy VI in prison there, he gets with him and he says, "Listen, I need to side, we're blood, let's side together. Let's you and I go back down to Egypt. Let's go back down there and whip them. You can be king and I'll be the one who conquered all of Egypt. We'll work together; you go with me." And so he talks Ptolemy VI into doing that.

History tells us they got as far as Memphis which is down in that region, and that's as far as they could go. It didn't turn out like they wanted. It says, "They speak lies to each other at the same table." The only reason he was siding with Ptolemy VI was to get his help and support in re-attacking Egypt to take the kingdom over. And it says, "but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time." In other words it's not over with yet. It won't succeed. Had he succeeded perhaps we could say verses 36-45 could be Antiochus Epiphanes: no way folks, because the end has not yet come. God stopped him dead in his tracks. He got as far as Memphis; he put Ptolemy VI king over Memphis but that's as far as he could go.

Now watch with Israel. You see, first of all you see how deceptive he is in his own land. Take money away from the wealthy, give it to the poor just simply to deceive them into becoming a part of his own army. Then you see him with Egypt, how he makes a peace treaty with them, turns right around, attacks them, conquers them, and then when they put a new king on the throne, sides with the one he takes prisoner to go back with him. He's constantly a man of deception. Well, it goes on in verse 28, "Then he will return to his land with much plunder." Now he's embarrassed. Now, friend, back in those days when you've gone out to a military campaign and you don't come back with much plunder, the people realize that you've been humiliated. And he had been humiliated, but he takes a lot of plunder back just to save face among his people.

But watch how he deals with Israel. And, folks, this is why this is all in here. Because Israel stands between Syria and Egypt and on his way back he's got to go through Israel. Watch what he does, "but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he will take action and then return to his own land." Friend, he sets his heart against them. He is going to devastate Israel because of the fact he was defeated, whatever, they become a whipping boy for him. And verse 29 says, "At the appointed time he will return and come into the South." And that takes me to the next step.

So first of all we see that he is despicable; secondly we see that he's defiant; thirdly we see that he's deceptive. And I almost left this

out of verse 28: when he goes back and he turns against the holy covenant or when he turns against Israel, history records he slew 80,000, he sold 40,000 into slavery, and he kept 40,000 to take back with him as his personal slaves. So this is the kind of devastation that he's bringing to Israel. A very deceptive man.

The king of the north was a very determined person

Well, the fourth thing that we want to look at tonight: he's despicable, he's defiant, he's deceptive, but finally, he was a very determined person. And you see that not only with Egypt but also with Israel. He was a man that was not going to be humiliated; he was a man that was not going to take anything less than victory for an answer. Verse 29 says, "At the appointed time he will return and come into the South." He can't stand it. He got to Memphis, they got defeated and now he says, "I'm going to go back. I'm determined! I'm going to whip Egypt one more time." And it says, "but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before."

And history records exactly what happened. It says in verse 30, "For ships of Kittim," that's Rome, folks, Rome that had once sided with him now turns against him and sides with Egypt, "For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened." They're going to defeat the old boy and they're going to turn him back to his homeland. Well, you saw what one humiliation did to him. This time, buddy, it's a total defeat. And this time that much more anger is going to be vented towards Israel: "and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action;" now what does he do? "So he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant."

This is a sad, sad verse. The Jews that are there, there are apostate Jews that will not stay honorable to the covenant and they're going to turn against their own people. And he's going to come back and through bribery and through intrigue, he's going to gain even more of his army right from the ranks of the very people of Israel. Verse 31 says, "And forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice." Now some historians believe this particular event takes place when the Jews have revolted because of the high priest situation I told you about a while ago. We don't know that for sure, but what he does now is he is going to desecrate the sanctuary. He's going to do away with the regular sacrifice. He goes right into the temple, he sets up an altar to Zeus or to Jupiter, which was a pagan god of that day, and he sacrifices a pig on the very altar that those little lambs were slain in obedience to the Mosaic Law.

He outlawed any Mosaic sacrifice and he took something pagan, he took something and polluted the very altar right there in Jerusalem. And it says, "And they will set up the abomination of desolation." And that's basically what that's speaking of, how they will defile completely what the temple was all about. Verse 32 says, "And by smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant." He's consistently gaining forces out of the very people of Israel: the apostate Jews that will not stay true to God.

But here's the good part, the last part of this Scripture. And it will so happen, by the way, in the latter days, in that last 70th week when all the persecution comes by the Antichrist, it will happen the same way. "But the people who know their God will display strength and take action." Probably referring to the three Maccabees there, Judas and his two brothers and how they were the ones who finally revolted. Their Daddy saw one of them walk into the temple one day to make a pagan sacrifice and he couldn't stand it and he went out and killed him and killed another royal official and then the whole family ran up into the mountains.

He was killed, two of his other sons were killed, but Judas took over. And the word "Maccabee" there is not a family name. The word "Maccabee," and you've heard of the Maccabean revolt, the word "Maccabee" means "the hammerer." And he got the name Maccabee because he was unwilling to let them continue to desecrate the temple. It was Judas Maccabees, the hammerer, who finally cleansed the temple several years later and they were able to restore the temple worship.

Verse 33 says, "And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many." You're going to see this in chapter 12. In the latter days when the Antichrist comes, thank God they're going to have this book. As a matter of fact, he says, "Seal it up! And keep it until that time." And there are going to be people at that time, I believe, that are going to come back to the book of Daniel and those people are going to give understanding to many and these will be the ones that will lead precious Israel back to the Lord, as they look back in Scripture and they'll have understanding and they'll know how to lead the people. Yet, it says, "yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days. Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy." And this just shows you more and more turning away. It gets bad!

You know, folks, we've studied this in James and everywhere else: when you're persecuted and going through difficult times, you put a man under the squeeze, you'll find out what he's made out of. And you're going to find out the apostate Israel during this time. Verse 35 says, "And some of those who have insight will fall," why will they fall? This is beautiful, "in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time." Not the end of that time. I don't believe he's saying that. I believe it's going to be passed on from generation to generation the fact that when you're persecuted you stand true to God, "because it is still to come at the appointed time."

Verse 36 says, "Then the king will do as he pleases." Now who is that king? We'll talk about that the next time we come together. I

believe he takes a mighty leap in talking about this pagan man called Antiochus Epiphanes in verse 35 and I think he just takes like a slingshot. Have you ever shot a slingshot? And I believe he pulls it back like that and goes and shoots us all away to the last three and a half years of the great tribulation, the days of Jacob's distress. And he shows us that's exactly the way it's going to be during that time. You say, "How can you prove that?" Well, I can't, but I have some pretty good ways of giving you why I think the way that I do.

So what's old Antiochus going to be like? We studied him in chapter 8 and now we're studying him again in chapter 11. It must be important; it's been brought up twice in the book of Daniel. First of all, he's going to be a despicable man. He's going to be despised. Secondly, he's going to be a defiant man, could care nothing about the God of Israel. Thirdly, he's going to be a very deceptive man. But, fourthly, he's going to be a very determined man. And he's going to bear down on Israel. And that's what was prophesied to Daniel.

Did it take place? History says it certainly did, exactly the way God said it would take place. So we have a little bit of a preview here. There are those who say, "Aw, there's not going to be any great tribulation. Jesus is going to come, one judgment, the wheat and the tares going to be side by side and a new heaven and new earth automatically going to be there." Well, friend, if you believe that, there's a whole lot of Scripture you're going to have to cut out of your Bible. I have a friend who is so adamantly opposed to anything we're teaching in the book of Daniel. He thinks the kingdom is here now, bless his heart. We are in the spiritual kingdom aren't we? Of grace. But he thinks that's the same kingdom talked about in Daniel and he just has the hardest time understanding anything else.

You take him to Revelation 20 and you show him the 1000 years, he looks at it and says, "I don't even see it." I don't know if he's blind or if he's not reading it or what. Isn't it amazing the people that are convinced the other way will not pay a bit of attention to what you're trying to get them to see when you try to reason with them from the Word of God. They will not do it. So friend, if you disagree with us, I love you anyway. You pray for me and I'll pray for you. One of us is wrong and as soon as you agree with me we can walk on. No, I won't do that. I say that facetiously, but so far, as far as from my study, I can't see it any other way. Nobody has convinced me. I've read the books, I've heard the arguments, I hear them all the time. Nobody has convinced me that God's finished with Israel.

I think people forget that God promised Abram a seed, which was Christ Galatians 3 tells us; a land; and He also promised him a nation. And it was an everlasting covenant. Now how do you handle that? "Oh, I don't know." Well, that's what I thought: you've got to deal with it. And one day when that tribulation comes I've got another friend that believes we're going to go out in the mid-tribulation. And you know what the mentality of the mid-tribulation usually is? The grass roots mentality is they've suffered behind the iron curtain, there ought to be suffering in America. It wouldn't be fair for God to let them go through all that if America is not going to go through some difficult times. Well, that sounds good, I can also assure you I believe in my own personal theology that we are going through some tough times. But, friend, why in the world don't you look at what the Word of God says? He didn't say the 70th week was for Christians. He said the 70th week was for Israel, "your" people, and the holy city. How do you cram the church into that? I can't do it.

I believe Jesus is going to come for His church. And folks, if 1992 is what He's been talking about... If that European Common Market comes together, you think it's not going to come together? You can write it down, it is going to happen. Had a man in our church just recently went to a big seminar, he's in a big business, and it said, "Gentlemen, you better get ready for what's going to take place in Europe in 1992." Those nations are coming together. You say, "Is that what he's talking about in latter day Rome?" I don't know, but it just might be. And if it is we're right on the heels of what's going to take place with the church. I believe He's coming for the church to take us up.

Somebody said, "Aw, the rapture is not in Scripture in the noun." That's right: it's the verb. I'd much rather be in the verb, wouldn't you? Who wants to talk about it; let's go, friend. It's there in the verb. Thessalonians is going to have to be cut out of your Bible if you don't understand that we're going to be taken up in the air. We're going to go up to meet Him. That day is coming. I believe it could be today, don't you? I believe it could be tomorrow. Wouldn't that be wonderful? I still think maybe He just might have enough grace on us as a church to do it right in the middle of one of our praise times on Sunday evening. Right in the middle of "our God is an awesome God, He reigns from heaven above with wisdom, power, and love our God is an awesome God." Wouldn't it be wonderful if He came right in the middle of "God"? And for those of you who might be left, study Daniel.

Daniel 11:36-45 A Vision of Conflict - 3a

Daniel 11, what a tremendous, tremendous chapter in our study of the book of Daniel. Our message is entitled "A Vision of Great Conflict, Part 3". We've seen two parts of this vision that Daniel has had. Chapter 10, verse 1 says that he had a vision of great

conflict. In other words, it was going to be very difficult for his people. Verse 14 of chapter 10 says it's about his people. In the future there's going to be great conflict for Israel. Daniel had been fasting and praying and asking God to remove His wrath from His people, but Daniel had to understand that Israel had rejected many things of the Lord and particularly would reject the Messiah one day and there would be great, great conflict in their life until their self-will could be broken.

And so God begins to reveal this to Daniel's life. And we see part 1 of that great conflict in chapter 11. Chapters 11-12 is in detail the great conflict of the vision we're told about in chapter 10. Part 1 of it begins in verse 2 as we see the fall of the Medo-Persian Empire. They're going to be three more kings, he says, until a fourth one will come on the scene and he will attack Greece and all he will do basically is stir up the wrath of a man by the name of Alexander the Great; the great general of all of Greece. Verse 3 shows us that he rises up, he comes to power, and verse 4 immediately jumps to his death. When Alexander the Great died at an early age of 33 after a drunken orgy, they had to divide his kingdom among four of his generals. It took 24 years of fighting amongst themselves and finally they divided his kingdom among four generals.

Out of those four generals, only two of them are significant in the history of God's people, Israel. Now remember, chapters 8-12 of Daniel have to do with Israel in the latter days; 1-7, the Gentile nations; 8-12 has to do with Israel. Two of those generals will fester kingdoms that will come about that have to do with Israel in the latter days. It will be the kings of the south, or the Ptolemy dynasty, which would be Egypt. And it will be the kings of the north, which will be the Seleucid dynasty of Syria. Over the years, and we see it verses 5-20, how they will fight back and forth, king of the north attacking the king of the south; or the king of the south attacking the king of the north. Where does Israel fit in all of this? Syria, Egypt and right in between is Israel, the whipping post, the whipping boy. And every time they would go to fight one another they would have to plow right through the land of Israel. Many times they would even take out on Israel the fact that they had been defeated in their campaign.

Well, that's part 1 of the vision of great conflict. It's going to be difficult and God's telling Daniel, "Daniel, it's not going to end just because your people have gone back to their homeland. It's going to continue for God's people. Look in chapter 12 verse 7. I want to make sure you understand that God is not a mean God, He doesn't have a club in His hand, He's not trying to beat down His people, but because of their transgression, because of Israel's self-sufficiency, they have to be broken, and it's going to take 490 years, chapter 9 tells us, before they can be broken.

Verse 7 of chapter 12, and we'll discuss the context when we get there. "And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time." Daniel wanted to know how long? How long will this great, horrible conflict last and he refers to the latter days: three and a half years. But why would God allow it to happen? Watch this: "and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed." You see, Israel's self-sufficiency, Israel's own rejection of God, had to be broken. They're going to have to be humiliated before God can woo and win them back to Himself.

Well, we see then part 1 of the conflict of the kings of the north and the kings of the south. Part 2, as we've already looked at, begins in verse 21 and carries through verse 35. There's going to be a man to come on the scene that's the worst of all in Israel's history. He will be a man that will persecute and bring great terror and great horror to Israel. And he's prophesied here in verses 21-35. As a matter of fact, verse 2 down through verse 35 is such literal history that the liberal scholars cannot handle it. They say God would never be that specific.

Well, my friend, this is prophetic history and God nails it down exactly the way it takes place. We're going to find in verse 21, or we've already found, that he's going to be a despicable person. He's referring here to Antiochus Epiphanes; he's the man who came on the scene out of the Seleucid dynasty of the kings to the north that was going to cause great, great tragedy to Israel. He'll be a despicable person, he'll be a defiant person in verse 22, he'll be a deceptive person in verses 23-28, and he'll be a very determined person in verses 29-35. He's going to come in and be determined to destroy Egypt, but he'll not be allowed to do that, the kings of the south. He'll be determined to destroy and annihilate Israel but he'll not be allowed to do it. He's a very determined, despicable, defiant, and a deceptive person. He was prophesied to bring about great terror and you can write it down, history backs it up, he did exactly the way God said that he would do. What God's Word says, friend, always holds true. When God says it, you can stand on it. It will always hold up.

Well, we begin to realize that Antiochus Epiphanes is only a preview of coming attractions. We've seen part 1 and part 2 of that vision of great conflict. But part 3 is more horrible than Daniel could hardly stand. This was a part of the vision that made his knees become weak. This was the part that made his mouth to become speechless. He even fainted at one time; he could not handle the great conflict that God was revealing to him that would have to take place to Israel. And it had to do with the latter days.

All Antiochus Epiphanes is, is a preview of one who will come in the latter days; mind you, the last seven years of this age. For three and one half years he will bring awful horror and tragedy to Israel. That man is the Antichrist. Verses 36-45 we have a gigantic leap. It's like a slingshot and he takes you from Antiochus Epiphanes and shoots you right on into the latter days, right on into the time of the great tribulation, the days of Jacob's distress that will come on this earth.

But before we get into that, let's remember what we have seen in Daniel and Revelation about the Antichrist. Some of you may be visiting with us this morning and don't realize that the Antichrist is prophesied in the book of Daniel. Turn back with me to chapter 7 of Daniel. Let's look first of all at verse 8. And remember, he's dealing with the fourth beast, and he's dealing with Rome, not in ancient Rome but in latter day Rome. A time when there are going to be ten nations, ten kingdoms that will come together in latter days. We've never seen this happen before. We see some things similar to it with the European Common Market coming about in 1992. A United States of Europe if you please, but it's talked about in Daniel.

In verse 8 it says, "While I was contemplating the horns," ten of them obviously, that's those ten nations, "behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts." Now jump over to verse 24. We've already studied this, but this is just to refresh your mind. Verse 24, "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them," and this is it, this is the Antichrist, "and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times, and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time [one year], times [two years], and half a time [half year];" in other words, for three and a half years.

And we also saw in Revelation 12 as we were studying chapter 7 that the Antichrist will be empowered by Satan himself. Satan will be finally cast out of heaven and it will be during the middle of that tribulation period of seven years. And for three and a half years he will incarnate this Antichrist. And he will, with all the evil that Satan can muster within a man, the body of a man, he will persecute the woman who is Israel. There will be ten nations as we saw in Revelation 17 that will be the power behind this man. He will be a tyrant like the world has never known and he will do severe damage to Israel during those days.

Daniel 9 tells us that he's the prince who is to come, that he makes a covenant with Israel for one week, or seven years, the last seven years of this age, and in the middle of that seven year period of time he will break that covenant and he will then persecute Israel. Now God, in Daniel, is wanting Daniel to know something, not just for Daniel's sake as we'll see in chapter 12, but it's for the people who will be during that day. As a matter of fact he tells Daniel after he finishes this vision, "Seal it up. Seal it up. There will be those who will come in future days that will need this revelation." It was not just for Daniel, it will be for the people going through that horrible time, sometime on this earth. We have it in the Word of God.

So verses 36-45, it jumps to the latter days. It jumps from Antiochus Epiphanes, verses 21-35; it jumps now to the latter days and gives us a picture of the Antichrist. It's in reverse of what we've already seen. In chapter 7 we see the Antichrist, in chapter 8 we see Antiochus Epiphanes. But in chapter 11 we see first of all Antiochus Epiphanes, then we see the picture of the Antichrist.

Now, let's proceed very carefully. We're in controversial waters. I do not profess to be a theologian by any stretch of imagination and not much of a scholar. We're in controversial waters. When you get to verse 36 there are those who say there is no possible way there can be a gap between verse 35 and verse 36. How can you dogmatically say that there is a gap? Friend, I'm not dogmatically saying that there is. I'm just 99.9% sure that there is. I still see that there's room for discussion on the matter. But there are two reasons that I believe that there is a gap. You're going to have to think on your own two feet: you're going to have to think for yourself. Remember this: I am not the authority. The Word of God is the authority. And Peter tells us in 2 Peter that the Word is of no private interpretation so I will never stand behind this pulpit and force my belief down your throat unless it concerns the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and the means by which we might be saved. When it gets to eschatology and it gets into areas like this, there is some room for some discussion. But like I said, I'm 99.9% sure that what I'm saying is right, so when you agree with me you'll be alright. And I'm kidding! I'm kidding when I say that.

There is no record of any history of events of verses 36-45

But there are two reasons. First of all, historically I want you to see why I believe there's a gap between verse 35 and verse 36. There is no record in any of history and there's not one historian, not one commentator, that can say that the events of verses 36-45 have ever taken place. They cannot do it. They tried to force it into the life of Antiochus Epiphanes but it will not fit. In order to fit their liberal theology they're trying to use it as some other king that has already come and already lived. But there is not one single documented evidence of history that verses 36-45 has ever taken place. It is yet to come. However, verses 2-35 is so specific that they even think that it was written after the fact. When you get to verse 36 however, you drop off the edge. There is no historian that would ever stand up and say absolutely, certainly that this has taken place.

As a matter of fact, one of the early church fathers, Jerome, wrote this. And this is back in the 300's AD, he wrote this and I thought it was interesting in reference to Daniel 11:36. He said, "The Jews believe that this passage has reference to the Antichrist, alleging that after the small help of Julian, a king is going to rise up who shall do according to his own will and shall lift himself up against all that is called God and shall speak arrogant words against the God of the Gods. He shall sit in such a way as to sit in the temple of God and shall make himself out to be God and his will shall be prospered until the wrath of God is fulfilled." Now watch this. "For in

him the consummation will take place. We, too," Jerome says, "understand that this refers to Antichrist." That was written in the 300's AD.

And so there's no historical evidence to say that verse 36 through verse 45 is a continuation of the life of Antiochus Epiphanes. However, from verse 36 through verse 45 it just drops off the edge. It has to be history yet unfulfilled. It has to be latter day prophecy.

There is not textural evidence that verses 36-45 have occurred

Secondly, not only the historical evidence but the textural evidence itself. If you'll just look at the text there are three clues there that really ring my bell. We have seen a pattern in our study of the book of Daniel that whenever you see these words, "the end time," or the "end of time," or the "appointed end," any time they are mentioned they refer to the latter days. Even though however historically they may have an immediate end, they have within it a prophetic end which is in the latter day prophecy.

Look at verse 35; there seems to be a transition there that is so apparent. He says in verse 35, "And some of those," and this is during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, "who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge, and make them pure, until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time." And he appears to look through the end of Antiochus Epiphanes' reign all the way down to the latter days and the end of this age.

Secondly, in verse 40. Now remember this: Antiochus Epiphanes came out of the kings of the north, the Seleucid dynasty, so he was the king of the north at that time. Look at verse 40, "And at the end time," notice the phrase now, "the king of the south will collide with him, and," now watch this, "the king of the north will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships." Now, if he is the king of the north, how can the king of the north come against him, you see? So it's obviously referring to a different time, a time that is not yet taken place.

And then in 12:1-2, how could anybody not relegate this to the latter days, the latter days of this age? It says in verse 1 of chapter 12, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise." Boy, I tell you what, this gets my blood flowing. Michael, the prince over Israel, the angel assigned to Israel. Buddy, whenever Michael stands up you better believe it's in defense of the people he's been assigned to. He stands guard, "over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake," look here, he's talking about a resurrection of the dead, and he says, "these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

How in the world could somebody take those two verses and force them into the life of Antiochus Epiphanes who doesn't even come close to what he's talking about in verses 36-45. So I have personally concluded in my own theology at this particular point in my walk—and I don't write any books, remember that, I change my mind too many times—my conclusion is that he has made a jump. Like that slingshot I was telling you about. He takes his man, Antiochus Epiphanes, shoots you all the way to the last three and a half years of the tribulation period.

Now what do we see that is going on? This is part 3 of the vision of great conflict. What is it that God wants Daniel to see? God wants him to understand how hard-hearted Israel really is and what it's going to take to humiliate and break them. But isn't it wonderful that God is not through with Israel yet? When Jesus came He didn't do away with Israel, Israel is still there. God had covenanted with Abraham; not only a seed, which is Christ, not only a land which is Palestine, but He also covenanted a nation which is Israel, and that's an everlasting covenant and God's not through with them yet.

Now there are two things that I want you to see this morning about the character of the Antichrist that God is revealing to Daniel here in 11:36-45 that will be coming about in the last days. I'm telling you, folks, you don't have to buy this. My opinion and 65 cents usually will get you a cup of coffee at most restaurants. Jack and Kay Arthur just got back from Israel. Fifty four of them went along on a trip. While they were there they got to go into the place where they are making the vessels for the temple worship to be restored one day. They saw the golden pots, the golden plates; they saw the actual robes that are being made for the priests. They held them in their hands. The cornerstone is there. It weighs something like 40,000 tons, it's there! It's happening right now.

If all of this is going on around us, is somehow to do with latter day Rome and the United States of Europe, if the European Common Market truly is that prophecy of latter day Rome when it comes together in 1992, do you realize that the antichrist is alive today somewhere in this world? Do you understand that? It could very well be. Some skeptic could stand up and say, "Oh, Brother Wayne, what do you know?" I don't know anything, but I know something about Daniel. It sure gives me a suspicion something is going on in our world. Why has the Communist wall come down? A man gave me this thought one day that just keeps rolling around in my mind, I wonder if now God has not brought down every wall that would hinder any of His people going back to their common land of Israel. You know, that's the only reason history revolved around Israel, friend. But we've got to look at Europe first, and something is going on. He may be alive this morning. We may be keeping Daniel and then going to Revelation in the most appropriate time in all of history as we find a purifying hope knowing that Christ is coming again.

Character of the Antichrist will be of a lawless man

Well, there are two aspects of this man's character that I want you to see, and he brings it out so clearly in verse 36 of chapter 11. Now get your fingers ready because we're going to be doing a lot of turning here in a minute. It'll be a good morning to learn the books of the Bible. Alright, first of all he will be a lawless man. In verse 36 now notice, "Then the king will do as he pleases." Now somebody would say it has to be Antiochus Epiphanes. He was a lawless man, yes, he was; but nothing like this man. Nobody will stop this man. He will become law. You see, Antiochus Epiphanes was whipped by Egypt and then he was stopped by Rome. This man will be stopped by no one until God shuts him down. It will be different than Antiochus Epiphanes. This man is a totally lawless man and will do as he pleases.

Look in chapter 8, verse 25 again of Daniel, and let's just see now what we've already read; make sure we put this together. "And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence. And he will magnify himself in his heart, and he will destroy many while they're at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency." And so we see then that he's going to be a destroyer, one that's unbridled, one that can do as he pleases.

Verse 24 says that "And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power." Not only will Satan incarnate him, God is going to permit him for an appointed time to do what he will do. Look in chapter 7, verse 25, "And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law." In other words, he will change the law. You see, folks, he will be so lawless that he will become the law. That's why 2 Thessalonians 2:3 calls him the "man of lawlessness." Look in chapter 13:7 of Revelation. A man who will be a lawless man, verse 7, and it's very clear about what God says about this man as the antichrist. "And it was given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him." An extraordinary man with an extraordinary power is coming to the thrown in this age that we're talking about. He'll be the antichrist; he'll be a lawless man; he will do as he pleases. Nobody can stop him.

Character of the Antichrist will be of a godless man

Secondly, not only will he be lawless, but he will be a godless man. Let's look at that in chapter 11:36, "Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god." Now hold your place there and go back to Revelation 13:15. Notice here that it's talking about the false prophet at first. "And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed." In other words, he's going to demand to be worshipped and if a person will not worship him they will be put to death. He exalts and magnifies himself. Not only is he the law, but he proclaims himself to be God.

Look with me again in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and notice what he says, still speaking of a man of lawlessness, "who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God displaying himself as being God." And that's the sick character that we're talking about that's going to come on the scene. And let me just read one more verse for you here, Revelation 13:6 says, "And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven."

Now Daniel 11:36 says "he will speak monstrous things against the God of gods." Monstrous things; that word has the idea in the Hebrew of the fact that he's separate and apart from what he says. There have been many people on the face of this earth that have blasphemed God, but this man will be a blasphemer second to no one. Incarnated by Satan with the total evil in his presence, he will be the worst blasphemer that ever lived on the face of this earth. Only he will say such monstrous things against God. He's empowered totally by Satan and he will prosper.

Look what it says, verse 36, "and he will prosper until the indignation is finished." Now folks, what we need to see here is that he's on a leash and he can only go as long as God says that he can go and then it's over with and God moves in. Look at verse 37 to show you how godless he is. It says, "And he will show no regard for the gods of his fathers." Now look out, we're in controversial waters again. That term "god" there is Elohim, which is the plural name for God, but however is used in many secular writings to refer to pagan gods. It's not just in reference to our God. It's a plural god. It can be taken from that particular phrase that he'll have no regard for the gods of his fathers; that he was of Jewish background. And there are many today who hold to that view. However, there was a phrase in all the Hebrew instances that when you wanted to refer to the God of Israel you would not say "Elohim of his fathers," you would say the "Jehovah of his fathers," which is used all through the Old Testament to make sure you identify that this is our God, the true God.

And so we have a problem. Is he of Jewish descent or is he a Gentile out of the Roman world coming out of those ten nations? That's a difficult thing to answer. And I can't answer it for you; you've got to make up your own mind. One thought to remember, however, is that if he's a Jew, then why does it say he comes out of the ten nations, the ten horns of Rome? There are a lot of

questions back and forth and so you're going to have to make up your mind: was he a Jew or is he a Roman or a Gentile.

Verse 37 goes on to show how godless he is by the fact that he says, "for the desire of women." "He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women." Now what does that mean? That's another controversial area; you're going to have to make up your own mind. I'm not going to force anything I'm thinking down your throat. Well, here's a thought: some people think that he's a homosexual; some people think he's a eunuch of that day, whatever. But the problem is that there's a phrase here, "a desire of women." In other words, for a Hebrew, the desire of all women was to be the mother of the Messiah. And some people take that to be an indirect reference to the Messiah. Not only will he reject the pagan gods, not only reject the true God, but he'll also reject the Messiah, the Christ, which makes him named by the New Testament alone, Antichrist. A godless, godless man; he'll not only be the law but he'll profess himself to be god.

I'm very grateful for the study of Daniel because I know that it's only for a time. God has decreed how long this guy will be in his miserable ways toward Israel. God has appointed the time and when it's over with, friend, it will be over with. God is in charge.

Now I know these messages sometimes, especially going through chapter 11, do not thrill our hearts, but I had somebody come to me and said, "Wayne, quit apologizing. Number 1, it can't make me want to go to the mission field, I'm already going to the mission field. Number 2, it can't make me want to sing in the choir, I'm already singing in the choir. What it does make me understand is that God is in control of my life." Is that coming through to you real loud and clear? There's an Antichrist coming. Why worry about it? God's already set it up, God's told you exactly what he's going to do and it's how long he's going to do it. But remember, Michael, the archangel, is going to stand up and defend Israel. They will be nourished for that time. Remember, we learned that in Revelation. So why worry. God is in charge.

And I think that's to me the application we've got to take home. God is in charge of our lives. I'm telling you folks, that'll bless your life. John McArthur, when he was in our church told me that day, "The doctrine that ministers to me more than any doctrine in Scripture is the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. He is in control."

I want to tell you something friend, wherever God guides, He provides. Daniel tells us He is in control. Everything is alright. God has always sovereignly met our needs. Now why am I saying all this? Because I just know people and I know how the mind works if it gets off the principle of the sovereignty of God. "Oh dear, how are we going to make it?" Two plus two equals four, oh no. A friend of mind shared a passage out of Zachariah and I thought, "Bless you." It says, "Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord." You know what the words might and power mean? It'll bless your socks off.

The word "might" means the might that comes from wealth. It doesn't matter how much we have in the budget, friend, that's never going to do a thing. The word for "power" is the word for lizard. As a matter of fact, when I came up with it, and a friend of mine was sharing with me, I thought he'd had a stroke or something had happened to him and he messed up. Lizard, there was a lizard over in that land at that time that was such a self-determined creature, they made a word to describe self-determination and they referred it to that lizard. So what did God say? Not by how much money you have in your coffer, it's not by your willingness to grit your teeth and see it happen regardless, it's by My Spirit, says the Lord. And, folks, if God is sovereign, then we know that God, wherever He guides, will provide. Remember that. Don't think humanistically. Think like God is saying.

The Christian life is not figuring out something and then seeing if you can twist God's arm. The Christian life is saying, "God, what are You showing us and how can we cooperate with You. And when You provide all glory will go back to Yourself." Daniel tells us God is in control, and remember when we honor His Word, He will honor us. For whatever reason I shared that it was on my heart so strong I felt like I needed to share it. I didn't plan it; I thank the Lord for bringing it back to my mind at this time fitting in the context of Daniel.

Daniel 11:36-45 A Vision of Conflict -3b

We continue to talk about a vision of great conflict. This is part 3, simply continued. Let me go back and catch you up to speed. A vision of great conflict, part 3 continued, and we'll be there for a while. What a terrible time it will be for Israel during the time known as the tribulation, when the Antichrist will be on this earth. And if it's anytime soon, friend, it might be that the Antichrist is alive even while I'm speaking right now. If all these things are happening as it appears to be happening, he could be alive somewhere in this world.

What an awful, awful time for Israel it will be when he comes into power. Daniel has been allowed to see all the way to the end, and chapter 10:1 says that he had a vision of "great conflict." Why the great conflict? Because we know it was going to take a great conflict to break Israel of their self-sufficiency. We saw that in 12:7. Daniel 10:1 speaks of the great conflict. Daniel 10:14 speaks of the fact that this great conflict concerns his people. Now it has nothing to do with the Christians; it concerns Israel and God's

breaking of Israel.

Now, part 1 of this vision of great conflict begins with verses 5-20 as we've already studied. It has to do with the battle between the kings of the north and the kings of the south; the Seleucid dynasty to the north and the Ptolemy dynasty of the south. These were two of the generals of Alexander the Great that actually became significant in the life of Israel. So we see then the kings of the north and the kings of the south, part 1 of a vision of great conflict.

You say, what does that have to do with Israel? Well, it was Syria to the north and it was Egypt to the south and every time they would war together, they would walk through the land of Palestine, the land of Israel, plundering them and just beating them back and forth like a whipping post.

Part 2 of the vision of great conflict begins in verse 21 and goes through verse 35. It has to do with the reign of terror by a man of the name of Antiochus Epiphanes. History already has documented that this portion of Daniel 11 has already taken place. He's a preview of the Antichrist and we saw that very clearly in our study.

Well, in part 3 of the vision of great conflict begins, I believe, in verse 36 and goes down through chapter 12, several verses into that chapter. Now how do we know that from verse 35 to verse 36 that we are catapulted into the latter times?

Well, we've already gone over this. It's very apparent and you'll see it again today that Antiochus Epiphanes was the king of the north. And it's going to talk about how the king of the north and the king of the south will come against this one spoken of in verses 36-45, so it couldn't be Antiochus Epiphanes. History actually stops after verse 35. There is no documented history about verses 36-45. It is prophetic history; it is yet to come about.

And so we see Part 1, the battle of the kings of the north and the kings of the south. Part 2, Antiochus Epiphanes; and Part 3 would be the Antichrist. Now we began to look at him last time we were together and we saw basically two things about his character. First of all he will be a lawless man. In other words, he will establish the law. He'll become the law. No one will tell this man what to do. But secondly, we saw that he'll be a godless man. That's in verses 36-37 of our text. Now today we want to take a step further and this really gets to be quite thrilling. As a matter of fact, I'm trying to contain myself before we get into it.

The military genius of the Antichrist

We're going to look today and the military genius of the Antichrist of latter day times. Look at verse 38 of chapter 11, "But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures." Now since he's a godless man, what is it that's going to fill that need in his life? Every man seeks after a god. What is it that is going to take the place of a god in his life? Well, it will be his love and his obsession for the military. He'll be a military man. He'll be a military genius.

Now note: he will spend great wealth on this god in his life. He will spend a lot of money building up his military machine. It says here in verse 38 that "he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures." War is costly and it will be the same way during that time of seven years. It will be a very expensive venture that he'll set out on. He'll spend a lot of money building up his armies. You see, just as many men spend money on a pagan god, he will spend a lot of money on his god which is his military machine.

Then verse 39 shows us how much confidence he'll have in his military power. It says, "And he will take actions against the strongest of fortresses." In other words he will battle with anybody at any time. It will not cause any fear to him whatsoever. He'll have such a mighty, military machine, he will be afraid of no one. It says, "with the help of a foreign god." Now be careful: the word "foreign" simply means strange god. What I believe he's saying here is, and there's been a lot of interpretation out of this verse, I think he's simply saying "with a strange god," which with his military machine he will attack anybody at any time. He's not afraid of anyone. He is a military genius; he has a mighty, military machine.

It goes on in verse 39, "he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him." And I believe he's speaking here of the people he conquers. When he conquers somebody, if they give ready obedience to him, then he'll take them in, put them in places of leadership. Even give them oversight over different people, places of honor. But not only that, he'll even give them the land that they're overseeing. So he's going to reward the people that will side with him, thus building a bigger and bigger and bigger military machine.

Now we understand then that his character is to be lawless and godless, we also are beginning to see that he's going to be a military obsessed man. He loves war, he wants to conquer, he likes power. But where is Israel in all of his? Now verses 40-45, as far as my own personal study, I believe he's beginning to show you when he breaks that covenant with Israel in the middle of the seven years.

Let's go back to chapter 9:27 so we'll not be confused. Now this is speaking of the tribulation period and so we see in verse 27 during the end times, speaking of those latter days, it says that the Antichrist "will make a firm covenant with the many for one week."

Now that's that one week; as far as we can see, and my own personal belief is that there's a gap between the 69th week spoken of in Daniel 9 and the 70th week. Why? Because in verse 24 there are six things there that have not yet taken place; they couldn't have already happened. There's no way. Nobody can document verse 24. So if that's the case, and it's 490 years decreed for Israel, or 70 weeks—actually that's 70 periods of seven—if that's the case, then there's got to be a parenthesis in there. There's got to be a gap between the 69th week and the 70th week of Daniel. If in fact that's true, we understand Romans 11 that the Gentiles, the church, right there. We're in that parenthesis right now and when the fullness of the Gentiles come then it will begin and initiate that last 70th week, that period of seven years.

At the beginning of that period of seven years, Antichrist will make a covenant with Israel. And in the middle of those seven years, the Antichrist, the one who is anti to everything Jesus represents, will break that covenant. Now verses 40-45 of chapter 11 appear to me to be talking about that time: the tribulation time, the time that the covenant is made, and the time that the covenant will be broken. The Antichrist, the military genius, will use that to turn his back on Israel and actually to turn against them during that time.

Look at verses 40, "And at the end time." Now we've discovered a pattern in Daniel, and the pattern is when you see the phrase the "end time," or the "appointed time" it appears always to refer to the tribulation period, the 70th week, the seven years period. Sometimes in Daniel it is more pointed toward the last part of that seven year period; in other words, the three and a half year period of time. But at any rate it's during the time of tribulation, the time of Jacob's distress, the time of that seven year period at the last of this age.

There will be a great battle fought against the Antichrist

So what's happening here then that will concern Israel? There are three things that I want us to look at this morning from verses 40-45. Here's a man on the scene during the last days, during the tribulation time, a man who is lawless, a man who is godless. How then is he going to affect Israel during this time? Well, first of all, let's watch the progression in the verses. First of all there will be a great battle fought against him. It's very clear there in verse 40. And this is the part, I tell you what, I just get so excited about it I can hardly stand behind this pulpit. Look at verse 40, "And at the end time," during that period of seven years, "at the end time the king of the south will collide with him." Now who is the king of the south? Well, we've studied chapter 11 and we realize the king of the south has to include Egypt. Now it doesn't have to be totally exclusive of any other country. We're talking about latter day times. But it must include Egypt, because that's the king of the south as we've already studied.

Now it could easily include other countries. It could easily be an Arab bloc of countries who would be specifically interested in the land of Palestine. All of them bonding together, allied with one another. We don't know that; it says the king of the south. We know it has to be Egypt, but we don't know all the ones that will be allied with Egypt at that time.

It says it "will collide." The word "collide" there means to butt like a goat. Have you ever watched two old goats out there just butting against each other? Reminds me of Baptists sometimes; they just haul off and bang together and they back off, eat some more grass and come back and butt again. Just hard-headed. He's going to butt against him, not just collide, but butt against. Now why would Egypt do that? Probably because of the expansionism of this particular military man: The more he conquers, the bigger he gets, the more powerful he becomes, and they want that land of Palestine so therefore they don't want him to go any further. So the king of the south will collide with him.

Well, look at this strange alliance. It says "the king of the south will collide with him, and the king of the north will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen, and with many ships." Now who is the king of the north? Chapter 11 already shows us that it has to include Syria. Syria was the main area of the Seleucid dynasty in this particular time of Antiochus Epiphanes. But wait a minute: we're talking about the latter days. So we don't know who the king of the north might be allied with, we don't know what the power structure will be in the latter days. It must include Syria but not necessarily be exclusive of other countries.

Have you ever looked at the land of Israel? Have you ever looked directly north of the land of Israel? Have you just taken a map and gone straight north? You come to an interesting country. A mammoth country of our time called the USSR. Russia is right to the north. Now this begins to get exciting, folks, because there's a question you're going to have to ask, I'm already asking. You see, we forget something. When you study prophecy there are pieces that fit together. Daniel is talking here in Daniel, but remember, his contemporary is a man by the name of Ezekiel. There were three sieges of the city of Jerusalem. The first one was in 605 BC when Daniel was taken out with all the other young men. But there's a second one, and in the second one, Ezekiel and the 10,000 were also taken out. They were both in captivity at the same time. They were contemporaries with one another.

Now Ezekiel, in chapters 38-39, speaks of a great battle that's going to take place at the end times. It speaks of a great power from the north that is going to come down in the land of Palestine that God is going to supernaturally destroy. Now could it be that Daniel 11:40 with the kings of the south and the kings of the north, could it be that he's speaking of the same battle that Ezekiel is speaking of in chapters 38-39? Now we know that there's going to be a breaking of this covenant in the middle of the time, but remember the covenant itself that the Antichrist is going to make with Israel. The scene is so easily set up. You could read the newspaper every

day and figure this out.

If Israel covenants with the beast in the last days, remember there are ten nations behind it, the United States of Europe. This is a powerful beast led by the Antichrist. If Israel makes a covenant with them, do you realize that if there was an Arab bloc of countries that would immediately irritate them, especially in the fact that they are interested in getting that land for themselves? Would they not in fact call upon Russia to the north and say, "We need your help. They've made an alliance with this great beast and we need your help. We need to protect that land."

Oh, friend, it is as feasible as anything. Like I said, it's like reading the newspaper. That could happen tomorrow. If Israel ever sides with a nation like that, as powerful as it is, it would automatically infuriate the people to the south and the people to the north. Well, at any rate we don't know that. We don't know for sure that it's Russia. You cannot say for sure, for fact, that that's what he's talking about. But in Ezekiel 38 he speaks of Gog and Magog, and we know for a fact that that is Russia during that time.

As a matter of fact, let's look at that. Ezekiel 38:2-3. And some interesting things come out in this. If this happens, if this takes place, it's amazing the scene. Look at verse 2, "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog." Now it appears to me that Gog happens to be the leader here and the country Magog, it has already been documented, is Russia. Now wait a minute, not the USSR, you take all of those little countries out. Have you been watching the news lately? When you start taking away Lithuania and all those other little countries, you're going to be left with just one little country called Russia. Not the USSR, but one little country called Russia. It is that country that is Magog in the Word of God. It is incredible what is going on.

Now in verse 2 and verse 3 look what he says, "Son of man, set your face toward Gog of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him," all that is that area, "and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal."'" I read an article the other day that just sent chills right up my back. You realize you take the name Gorbachev, now I read this, you take the name and you put it into the original Russian language and it is not GORB as we see it, it is GOG. And then you take up the rest of the spelling. Isn't it amazing? Isn't it coincidence that in this particular time that we're living in there's a man who right now is over there in Russia who has the name Gog? I have no idea if it's him or whatever else. But I tell you what, it makes the blood get a little hotter as you're studying the book of Daniel.

Well, it had to be. If there's going to be a battle against Israel, it's going to have to be at a time of peace and security. Now remember, the first three and a half years of that last seven years, they're going to be in a peace treaty, in a covenant with the Antichrist, fearing nothing. Look in verse 8, "After many days you will be summoned; in the latter years you will come into the land that is restored from the sword, whose inhabitants have been gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel which had been a continual waste; but its people were brought out from the nations, and they are living securely, all of them." In other words it's a time of security, a time of peace.

Look at verse 11, "and you will say, 'I will go up against the land of unwallled villages. I will go against those who are at rest, that live securely, all of them living without walls, and having no bars or gates.'" So it's a time of peace. If this battle is to occur, and if it is in fact the battle that we're talking about in Ezekiel, it appears to me that it will be sometime during the first half of the seven years, because it's at a time when Israel is at peace. So the first thing that we see is a great battle against the Antichrist. But here's the important thing: we don't know if it's Russia, we don't know all these things. We do know this: we do know the Antichrist wins. He wins that battle, obviously with the help of God if it is the battle pictured in Ezekiel; God supernaturally takes care of Russia as he puts the hooks in their jaws and brings them down from the north. We know that for a fact.

The Antichrist breaks his peace treaty with Israel

But at any rate, he comes out on top. Now nobody can stop him. This could be the turning point, right in the middle of the seven year period of tribulation. You wonder when he'll break the covenant. You wonder why he'll break the covenant. The first three and a half years Israel's at peace. Now he's a military mighty man. Kings of the north, kings of the south, have been defeated. No one can stand in his way. So the second thing we see then is in verse 41. Once he is the winner it appears that now he breaks his treaty with Israel. You wonder where Israel fits into all this. At the first part of it he's at peace with them. But once the kings of the north and the kings of the south are dealt with, now he can make his move on Israel.

Now notice verse 41. It all depends on who you think this "he" is. Verse 41, "He will also enter the Beautiful Land." Now how do you know who the "he" is? Well, you just can't be that dogmatic. My personal belief is that that's the Antichrist right there in verse 41. He now enters the Beautiful Land, he now enters Palestine. Now when he enters there is says, "and many countries will fall." Notice the word "countries." If you have a New American Standard Bible, is your word there in italics? It should be. A translator has put that there thinking that that's what he's talking about. But I would like to take issue with that italicized word which is not verbally inspired. That's a translator's word that was put in there. That's why it's in italics.

I believe what he's talking about there, and certainly this is open to discussion, I don't believe he's talking about many countries will fall, but many Jews will fall. When he moves into Palestine, breaks his covenant with Israel, and that's when the persecution begins.

And many, many shall fall during that time. And this to me would be the beginning of the last three and a half years.

So the scene so far is that we've seen a progression. First of all we see that there's a great battle with the kings of the north and the kings of the south against the Antichrist, and he comes out on top. However he does that, he still does that. Secondly we see him, as far as I can tell, breaking his treaty with Israel in the middle of that seven week period of time.

Go back to 9:27 one more time. Let's just make sure we've got it down. "And he," the Antichrist, "will make a firm covenant with the many for one week," one period of seven years, "but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering." That's when he shuts it down; that's when he breaks his covenant. And I think that coincides with Daniel 11:41, how he enters the Beautiful Land and many will fall.

No one now stands in the way of the Antichrist

It's interesting now the third step of this progression. In verse 40 we see the battles of the kings of the north and the kings of the south. In verse 41 we see him breaking his peace treaty now with Israel? Why? Because there is no one to stand in his way. This is the third point: No one now stands in his way. As far as he's concerned he is the number one military power on this earth. Kings of the north been destroyed, kings of the south been destroyed and now he moves into Israel, breaks his covenant and he can rule as he wants. Nobody can stand in his way. What a fearful, awesome, terrible scene that we have pictured here of great conflict in Daniel 11.

Now look at the last part of verse 41, "but these will be rescued out of his hand; Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon." Now many times when you're studying through Scripture and you have a good Bible you can look at the back of it and you can see where these lands are. If you'll look sometime when you're studying through you'll find that they're to the side. The next verse tells us he's going to go down to Egypt not so much to conquer them, he's already conquered them, he goes down to occupy them and to plunder their land. But in doing so he goes southwest from where he is, from Palestine, and by doing that he completely doesn't even touch their territory. Somehow or another they're just not even in the picture. He just moves right on down.

Actually that land that is mentioned there in verse 41, Edom, Moab, and the foremost of the sons of Ammon, is modern day Jordan, and so they somehow are not even involved in this scenario that we see in verses 40-45. Well, verse 42, the first country that he goes to is Egypt. Having already conquered them, now he just goes and plunders and occupies. "Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape." Part of Egypt is Africa and certainly in those latter day times is a picture here of how Africa and Egypt are together as one power. And so he moves in there. That's the richest land in all of the world.

Verse 43, "But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt." You see, he's there to occupy and to plunder. He's a man seemingly, in his own mind, that cannot be stopped. And Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels. Now Ezekiel 38 alludes to the fact that both of these are aligned with Russia, so they've already been defeated. So basically what he's doing now is occupying and plundering the area which he has conquered. And so nobody, nobody, can stand in his way.

Look at verse 44, "But rumors from the east and from the north will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate man." Now, who are the ones from the east and to the north? We don't know. There are a lot of people who say that is China and the basic area of the Orient. Certainly Revelation 9:16 speaks of an army in the latter days of 200 million people. Where else could you find an army that big, and if that's what the context is talking about, where else could it be but China? But we just don't know that. The key is he goes and he destroys and defeats many. He still wins. Nobody can stand in his way. He absolutely seems to be invincible. He's on this earth, conquers everybody in his path, and now it says in verse 45, "And he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain."

Now what seas? Again if you'll look at your map you've got the huge Mediterranean Sea. If you'll go over a little bit you've got the Dead Sea. You've got Jerusalem right up here. Somewhere between Mt. Zion and I think those two seas, he camps out. I don't know where that is. I really don't know enough geographically to pinpoint a spot, but somewhere I believe that's where he's talking about. He sets up his camp. "Nobody, nobody can touch me." This is a fearsome, awesome person that's going to be on this earth, maybe even within a short time of when I'm preaching this message. He'll be here, folks, and when he comes, nobody can stop him. Why? Because Daniel 7 says he'll have power, but he'll have a power not of his own. Not only will he be allowed by God, for God raises up kings and establishes kingdoms, but he'll be empowered by Satan himself in that last three and a half year period of time.

When he breaks the covenant with Israel, that's when we studied in Revelation 12, that's when Satan is finally cast out of heaven, that's his final casting out. That's when it says "Rejoice O heavens." Why rejoice? Because you don't have to fool with the devil anymore. He's been thrown down finally and ultimately to the earth, and when he comes down the devil is going to persecute Israel, the woman mentioned in Revelation 12. Revelation 13 says he's going to incarnate the beast that is going to come up out of the sea. So it's going to be a man. And Revelation 17 says this beast who came up out of the sea will be backed by a ten-nation

confederation. What an awesome, evil power. It will be Satan's masterpiece on this earth. Nobody can conquer this man. He has a seemingly military genius that is unstoppable. The kings of the south, the kings of the north and to the east and also back to the north, nobody can stop him. He thinks he's on top.

But this is the part of Daniel I can preach and nail it down, folks. I don't know who these battles are, I don't know who the kings are, I don't know, I cannot say dogmatically, I just can't do it. Some people always come to me after the service who have read about 17 different books to inform me of what he's really talking about there. Friend, would you just not bother? Because that's somebody's opinion. We just don't know from the book of Daniel who he's talking about.

But we do know this: in that last day there are going to be fierce time of great conflict and we know that Israel, friend, is going to directly be involved. We do know that whoever the Antichrist is will break his covenant with them. We know that for a fact and we know there will be difficult days. And for a period of three and a half years it would appear nobody can touch this man. But look at verse 45. Watch this. It says, "And he will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holly Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him."

Friend, God doesn't need any help putting this fellow down. There's going to come a time at the end of that three and a half years, and we've already seen that in Daniel. The throne is going to be set up of judgment. Man, something's going on in the heavens, but something is going on down here on this earth. And God's going to say, "Okay, time's up, everybody out of the pool. Buddy, I'm moving in, I'm taking over. This is it." That's when His kingdom is set up on this earth.

Boy, I love it; I get so excited about it every time that I can't figure something out. I do know I've got something figured out, and I know that God's got it locked up and He's going to do it the way He says He will. You know the one thing that's thrilling me in the study of Daniel, amongst others? One of the things that overwhelms me is the fact that God still loves Israel. You know, I have so many problems with people who have said that Israel is done away with at the cross. The people who say they're not even involved in the latter days, the people who say it's just the wheat and the tares, that God has nothing to do with the nation. Do you realize to take that out of the Bible is to take out one of the greatest mysteries of the unconditional love of God that is ever there? It's a picture there: God never quit on them because God is a covenant God, a faithful God, and He promised to Abraham not just a seed, as Galatians 3 says was Christ. Not just a land which we know now is Palestine, and in 1948 friend, people shook their heads, they couldn't believe that they'd come back and taken that land. But not only that but he promised a nation.

A nation that has rejected Him, the greatest transgression of Israel was that they rejected the very Messiah that God prophesied even through Daniel, that would be on this earth. But God is not finished with them. He still loves them. He still honors His covenant with them. He just doesn't give up. You know what that says to me? That says to me that if God's heart is in me and God's heart is in you, are you a believer this morning? Did you receive the Lord Jesus Christ when you were saved which is the condition Jesus said, "To as many as receive Me, to them gave you power to become Sons of God?" Do you realize the Holy Spirit of God now lives in you, and do you realize what He's there for? Galatians 5:22 says, "Is to produce in us love, a love the world has never known," and needs to know that a God unconditionally loves all of mankind. You and I, it's human to give up on somebody, but it's divine never to give up on anybody. And that's the key: He's not through with Israel. He still loves Israel. Go back and read Hosea. As a harlot she's gone away from him, but he's standing there waiting for her to come back to him one day, and at the end of that three and a half year period of time he will restore Israel, He will save Israel, one-third of all of Israel will come to know Him. That will be their day of atonement. That will be the day they'll cry out and say, "Oh, it was You whom we crucified." And they'll finally see the Messiah as their Messiah and they'll come in and inherit the kingdom of God.

Folks, if you're witnessing to somebody in your family, if you're burdened for somebody in your family and they have spit in your face, they have literally told you everything short of just going to hell itself, and you have the tendency just to give up, slam the door, may I share with you that the love of God in you will not let you do that? Don't you give up. God has not given up, don't you give up. All things are possible with Him. Man if we could just see what God is trying to tell us in Daniel. It's not for us to argue over who the kings of the North are and who the kings of the South are. We could argue endlessly until Jesus comes Himself. And He's going to have to come to straighten half of us out.

But what we need to be about is understanding the principle here. God's not through with His people, and God's not through with humanity. And evidently the fullness of the 10,000 has not been reached because He hasn't yet come. Something is going on. These people who believe, "Well, Wayne, there are certain ones that are predestined to be saved. And they're the only ones that God will save. He didn't save the rest of them." Oh me, if you want to camp out there, and I think you're off the wall, but if you want to camp out there, you still don't know who they are. And it still doesn't take away from the fact that God said you've got to go, go. You've got to tell, tell, tell. You don't know who they are.

To the person who believer "whosoever will," it's the same thing. We can live with one another. If you're a five-point Calvinist, that's all right. You've got your flower. The Armenians have their flower. It's a tulip: he loves me, loves me not. I don't know. But we still need to go together. We can't give up on a world; God hasn't given up on the world evidently because He's still around and we're

still around and all this hasn't taken place yet. We need to be fervent. Man, we've got a mission conference coming up this fall. We need to get this thing in gear. Get out of here, get all around the world. There are people who need to know, friend, when the fullness of the Gentile's come, bam, the door is shut and that's it. That is it, folks, and we need to understand the urgency of that.

Can I just share that with you? God hasn't given up. Why have you given up? Who is it in your past, who is it in your present that right now you just want to slam the door and just forget the whole thing. "There's just no use for this." Don't you give up, don't you dare give up. "I still love Them and I can do anything if you'll just trust Me. Just keep believing in Me." That's the message I think we need to hear this morning. The unconditional, absolutely faithful, long suffering of a God that loves us every bit as much as He loves Israel. You know those people who say, "Well, we're all chosen." Remember something: the election of God is very clear in Scripture and you'd better believe it. If you have any trouble with that, go back to the Word. You just have trouble with the Word. God chose us long before we ever chose Him, but you better also go back and check. The responsibility of man is also there.

You can take your little theology and take a plumb bob and on one side of it you can put the election of man. Don't you leave it alone, it's there. But on the other side you better put the responsibility of man. God has put a measure of faith in every man to be able to believe, all you've got to do is respond to it, it's there. But don't move that plumb bob. If you swing it this way or you swing it that way, you've just messed up. It's not as simple as some preachers try to make it. Just take your shoes off, take off your socks, and you're walking on holy ground. This is God's salvation, not yours. And if you can figure God out in every area, He's not much of a God. He's a whole lot more than what we can figure out. And God said, "I want all, I would will that no one should perish. None." That's what His purpose would be and we can cooperate with Him and see many wonderful things happen.

I just get so thrilled in Daniel. I don't know if I'm not just going to leave the place before the rapture comes. I may just be half way there when He shouts. But it's good. Let me ask you a question and I'm going to close. Are you ready to go? Do you realize how much time we spend griping and arguing and fussing and all this kind of junk and garbage when we have something so thrilling, friend, if you get hold of this book and get hold of this Savior, you haven't got time to worry about anybody else. Just get your own self straight. It's a purifying hope to realize the Son of God is coming. You got a problem this morning, take it to Jesus, get rid of that stupid thing and go on and be what God wants you to be. That's the message of Daniel: He's coming, folks. If 1992, the European Common Market is what we think it is, He's coming. And the Antichrist is alive and well somewhere on this earth right now and it's coming. Before that ever comes we're going out of here. Let's don't be ashamed.

Daniel 11:36-12:4 A Vision of Conflict - 4

Turn with me to Daniel 11 as we talk about a Vision of Great Conflict, Part 4. Now we've moved on another step. A vision of great conflict, Daniel, and we'll finish up chapter 11 just by looking at it and then move right on in to chapter 12:1-4. What a scene we have illustrated in verses 36-37 of the coming Antichrist. Now, we have seen that he will be the worst person that Israel has ever had to endure. Worse than Antiochus Epiphanes, he'll be worse than a Hitler, as we know very well in these days; he'll be the worst person on this earth that Israel has ever had to endure. We've seen his character will be two-fold. First of all he'll be lawless, but secondly he'll be godless. We've seen that his military genius will be unsurpassed and we saw that in verse 38 down through verse 45.

Now chapter 12, verses 1-4 shifts the focus. It shifts from the Antichrist to the people of Israel as they're going through this difficult time. It's during this reign of terror, this seven year period of tribulation, as a matter of fact, more specifically the last three and a half years, when it gets so bad on this earth. You see, the Antichrist at this point has broken his covenant. We saw that in Daniel 9:27. He establishes the covenant at the beginning of the seven years and in the middle of it he breaks that covenant and this is when Jacob's distress begins. This is when the great tribulation for the Jews begins.

Now remember, the angel that started giving this vision to Daniel started back in 10:20. Can you believe this? And it's been uninterrupted ever since he began. We forget that sometimes. Chapters 10, 11, 12, and there were no chapter divisions or verses, this was all one flow of thought and the angel starts way back in chapter 10 as we said and continues with no interruption. A vision of great conflict for God's people, Israel, Daniel's people, chapter 10:14 tells us that.

Now 12:1-4 answers a very specific question that many people have. Does Israel survive as a nation? God promised Abraham a seed, He promised to him a land, but He also promised a nation. Does God fulfill that promise? What is prophesied will happen to Israel in that day? Do they survive as a nation? Well, let's look at verse 1 of chapter 12. It starts right off and, as we have said, it points to the tribulation time, specifically the last three and a half years. It says, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise."

Now, at what time? Remember to go right back from the context that we just came from. And we realize in verses 40-45, this is the middle to the last part of the tribulation. That time would start right in the middle because the Antichrist has broken his covenant. That's the 1,260 days that you see so many times in Scripture. That's the "time, times, and half a time" that you see. That's the 42

months. It's put several ways in different, but it's all the same thing: The last three and a half years.

Now there are two things I want us to see tonight and I kind of feel like I did this morning. I get so excited in this. There are two things about Israel's survival that we must see, and let's just let the text speak for itself. First thing that is going to happen here is that he talks about a great scene as we see it in heaven. Michael, the angel assigned to Israel, stands up. Boy, I tell you what. Some of these scenes just grab me. I just start getting chills up and down my back. I don't know what that is, but I just start thinking about it. Michael, the angel assigned to Israel, stands up, simultaneous with a reign of terror that's about to start on this earth, in heaven something's going on. God knows about it, God knows exactly what's happening, and so Michael, the angel assigned to Israel, stands up. God wants to make sure that Israel is defended.

When Satan is cast out of heaven, Michael stands up

Now let's just look at Michael for a second. Go back to 10:13. We find that Michael is one of the chief princes. He must be some kind of awesome angel. This is the angel that has come to speak to Daniel and he tells him that Daniel's prayer has been delayed for about 21 days, but Michael, the angel, the chief prince, had to come and help him out. It says in verse 13, "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia." So he's a very important angel, he's one of the chief princes of all the angels.

Look in verse 21, it tells us something else. "However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. (Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.)" Here's the key right there. He's already told us and we'll see it again in chapter 12, "your prince." Now we see that Michael then, up in heaven, sees that Israel is about to be in turmoil and in trouble and so Michael stands up. He arises because he's going to defend Israel.

Now look with me for a second in Revelation 12, and some of these blanks begin to fill in. You see, it's so important to put Scripture here and there where we can fill in the spaces. Revelation 12:13-14. All of this is happening at the same time. Let's see if you can keep this in your mind. We'll say it over and over again. Verse 13, "And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth," now who's the dragon? The dragon is Satan, that's the first part of chapter 12. He's finally been cast out of heaven. It says, "he persecuted the woman." Remember who the woman was as we studied that chapter? The woman is Israel: "who gave birth to the male child." And guess who the male child is? That was the Lord Jesus Christ. Why would Satan want to persecute Israel? Because Jesus gave him a fit, friend, and Jesus is going to put him where he belongs for all of eternity.

And so he starts this fight. I've told this before but it just comes back to my mind and I'm going to tell it again. I love to tell illustrations over and over again. When I was growing up we had a cat, and my cat was named Alexander the Great. I've said this many times, but the only time the Lord ever said "Oops" was when he made a cat. I'm sorry for all of you cat lovers, but you're probably a little messed up in your mind anyway. I mean, these cats, what are they good for? Lay around, shed, that's the only thing they're good for and you sneeze your head off if you get within 100 feet of one of them. But we found this stray cat and he wouldn't go away. I guess not, we fed him. Boy, that's a mistake. And so he just hung around. And so I named him Alexander the Great. The laziest, the biggest coward you've ever seen in your entire life. Well, we had a big boxer bulldog next door that I always admired. I mean, this dog, friend, it was something. It would walk and just flex, kind of like going to a health spa. He just let everybody know that he was king of his yard. He wanted the whole neighborhood but hadn't worked his way up yet.

And every day that Alexander the Great would see that dog, he would just take off running. And that dog would just bark and give him a fit. But one day, just one day, it finally happened that the real Alexander the Great came out of my cat. I mean that cat wasn't as big a coward as I thought. I was sitting in the house, we didn't have air conditioning, and the breeze was blowing through the windows and I was just sitting there enjoying myself. And all of a sudden I heard the worst fight out on the front porch I've ever heard in my life. And I went out there and Fritz, the boxer bulldog next door, had cornered Alexander the Great right up there against our screen door on the porch. And, folks, it was almost all over but the shouting. And Alexander the Great backed up against the corner. I guess he just decided, "Well, this is now or never and if I go, I'm going to go out hurting something."

And he had jumped up on the dog's face, dug three of his paws into that dog, and the free one he was just beating the stew out of Fritz as hard as he could. Well, the boxer bulldog being much bigger, much stronger, couldn't shake the cat off, and so he was shaking like this and shaking it out and while he was doing that Alexander was beating him on his face, just getting him. Well, man, I stood at the screen door and said, "Come on, Alexander, go, go, go, go. Whip him, whip him." And sure enough he just whipped that dog.

Well you won't believe what happened. The next day you knew that he had whipped that dog. Fritz would not walk in our yard. Son, he would walk over to the edge of our yard and square it off. It was the funniest thing I've ever seen. And Alexander the Great was just parading out there in the front yard. "Come on, big boy, you want some more, come on."

It's funny that it comes to my mind because I kind of feel like Satan knows that he only has a short time. We've studied that

Scripture; it says it exactly that way. And when he is finally thrown out of heaven, friend, he's like my cat—backed up against the door and he is going to do some damage to the woman who bore the male child. And of course chapter 13 of Revelation tells us that he incarnates the Antichrist, and behind all of that is a ten-nation confederation, you're talking about a lot of power and he moves in to persecute Israel.

Well, the next verse there, look at verse 14, "And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman [Israel] in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time," that the three and a half year period of time, "from the presence of the serpent." And you know what I see here is as Michael stands up, he stands up to nourish Israel during this very severe time in her history.

You know, my wife has some plants hanging on the front porch of our house. I like plants if they're fake. I don't like the real kind because you have to water them all the time and fool with them, but she likes ferns and she likes those things that hang down, and they're not bad, as long as she's taking care of them. One day we found that there were some little baby birds in those plants and the mama bird sat over in the tree. We didn't know the mama bird was anywhere around. And we found those little rascals had hatched out and my wife is so afraid of birds it is incredible, but she was running around saying, "There's birds in the plant." And I went out there trying to pull through that thing to see if there were any birds in there and, I mean, this little mama bird saw me from her perch and buddy, she moved to protect her own. And she liked to have got me several times, like a B29 buzzing me on my front porch, buddy. She was letting me know, "These are mine. Hands off. I'm protecting my own."

I got that picture as I was thinking about how Michael the archangel stands up, like that mama, of God, and he just wants to mother his chicks and he sees them, buddy, they're going to be persecuted by this serpent that has now been cast out of heaven and he moves quickly and so Michael takes his stand. Well, verse 1, going back to our text, tells us something. It tells us a little bit about how it will be.

Back in Daniel 12:1, it says, "Now at that Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time" now watch this, a very difficult time, "of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time." That never, never, never has occurred. As we said earlier, worse than Antiochus Epiphanes, worse than Hitler. When that day comes for Israel, it will be the worst time they have ever experienced on the face of this earth. So when the Antichrist stands up, Michael stands up. Isn't that a gorgeous picture? I don't know if you get into this thing like I do.

I just think it's incredible what goes on behind the scene, folks. I just think the spiritual war and the spiritual world and all the things that God is doing is just incredible. We forget that. We're down here trying to figure it all out. God had it figured out for a long time and He's got it totally under control. When the Antichrist stands up, Michael stands up. This is the scene we have pictured for us in chapter 12 as he shifts from the Antichrist to the people and how God will protect His people.

Now we learned something else in Revelation 12. We learned that Michael was the one who throws Satan out of heaven. Remember that? So not only does he stand up and throw Satan out, but he stands up now and defends his people because he knows exactly what Satan is going to do. So that's the first thing that we need to see tonight about the survival of Israel: don't you worry, don't you even think any more about it. Michael the archangel will arrive in that time, when Satan is cast down, Michael will stand up.

As a result of Michael standing, Israel as a nation will survive

But the second thing I want you to see tonight is as a result of Michael standing, Israel as a nation, will survive. Now that's what you need to see here and he tells you so clearly: Israel will survive. Now he says there in verse 1 of chapter 12, after he tells how bad the time will be, the very last part of it, he says, "and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Daniel's people; 'your people.'"

Now there's going to be a salvation time coming to Israel. Look at Zechariah 13:8-9. Now here we find how many of Israel survive during this three and a half year period of time, the last three and a half years of this age. Notice what he says, "'And it will come about in all the land,' declares the Lord, 'That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it. And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.''"

Boy, doesn't that sound great? That is prophecy about Israel. They're going to come a day and God is going to say, "They are My people." And they're going to say, "He is our God." They will bow down, Israel is not finished, folks. As a nation God will salvage one-third of them at the end of that three and a half year period of time.

Now look in Daniel 7:27. Now we want to know that these saints that survive, this one-third, talked to us in Zachariah, are also called the "saints of the highest one." Verse 27, "Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of all the kingdoms," now this is after the destruction of the Antichrist, "under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One." Who were these people? That one-third that are saved out of Israel in the last part of those days.

Now, who were these people that make up that one-third? Does he tell us anything about them? Well, let's go back. He does. He tells us quite a bit about it. In chapter 12:1, who were the people that were saved? We know it's one-third of Israel, but who makes up that one-third? Well, it tells us. He said, "every one who is found written in the book." Now another place in Daniel we've seen "books" plural. But here it is the "book." What book is he talking about? It has to be the Lamb's Book of Life. Look way back in Exodus 32:32. This has been talked about so many times in Scripture. There's more than one book, but the book he refers to right here is the Lamb's Book of Life. Can I ask you a question? Is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life? Friend, if it's not, come immediately tonight and receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Only the ones whose name is written in the Book shall inherit eternal life.

But Exodus 32:32, and Moses is crying out for his people who have once again sinned against God. But he makes allusions to this book. He says, "But now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Thy book which Thou hast written!" This is a book we've never seen. This is a book that God has written and He puts in it all of those who have justified and will be allowed into heaven for eternal life.

Now look with me in Luke 10:20. We find Jesus mentioning it. They had been sent out by two's, got all excited about the fact that the demons and everybody else was subject to them. And Jesus said, "Hey, get your mind off of that. That's not the important thing. Here's the important thing: "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subjected to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." This is what our rejoicing ought to always be: rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven. And we know that they're in a book and the book is called the Lamb's Book of Life.

Look in Revelation 20:12. We see that term come up again: the Lamb's Book of Life. These are the ones that will make up that third of Israel that will be saved. What a scenario he shows here. "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books [plural] were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds." So we see this book of life, we see the Lamb's Book of Life. Who are the people that make up the one-third of all of Israel that will be saved after the three and a half year period of time? They were the ones whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

You see, during that three and a half year period of time there is going to be preaching. There are going to be witnesses that are going to preach the gospel message. Look in Revelation 11. Boy when we get to Revelation we're just liable to flip right out of here. Revelation 11:3-13. He talks about these two witnesses that will proclaim the message during that three and a half year period of time. He says, "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. And if any one desires to harm them, fire proceeds out of their mouth," maybe we'll be watching this, I don't know, "and devours their enemies; and if any one would desire to harm them, in this manner he must be killed. These have the power to shut up the sky, in order that rain may not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they desire. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them."

Well, what a scene, "and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. And those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations," now watch this, watch the mentality of the people on the earth, "will look at their dead bodies for three days and a half, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were beholding them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven."

So there will be two witnesses on this earth proclaiming a message during that three and a half years. So, many of these that make up the one-third of Israel will come to respond to that message during that period of time. But there will be also many of them that will respond at the very end, right before the Lord comes back. That's when they will come to know and receive the message. As a matter of fact, if you go back to Daniel, in chapter 12, it tells us something in verse 3. Not only will there be the two witnesses, but there'll be others who understand what's going on, and they will lead many during that period of time. Daniel 12:3, "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven," in other words, those who understand what's going on, "and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever."

So there will be many during that time and there will be others that will come at the very end of that time. But one-third of all of Israel will come. As a matter of fact Revelation tells us that he has sealed a number of Jews that will come during that time. What is that number? 144,000. Look with me in Revelation 7:1-8. I'm telling you, some of these Scriptures just so fire me up.

"After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind should blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.' And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed." Now watch this. There are those today out of cults that tell us that this is all that's ever going to be saved. Are you kidding? It tells you where they're from, "from every tribe of the sons of Israel: from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed."

Now where are they going to come from? That's going to come out of Israel: 144,000. Look in Revelation 14:1-5: "And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth. These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they are celibates. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless."

And so we see the 144,000 pictured in Revelation and that's the one-third of all Israel that will be saved. So, though it's much smaller, Israel as a nation will survive. God promised Abraham a seed, He promised him a land, and He promised him a nation. We know the land is Palestine, we know the Seed is Christ, and one day we're going to see the fulfillment of Israel as a nation being saved through this great time of tribulation.

Now let's go back to Daniel 12. One of the questions that must come up to people's minds that he answers for you, it's almost as if he anticipates it and goes ahead and answers it. If everybody who is alive at the end of the tribulation, at the three and a half years are saved, what about the people who are martyred, what about the people who received Him and received the message, but were killed during that time? And I love verse 2: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt."

Immediately before the beginning of the 1,000 years, there is going to be a resurrection of all those people during the tribulation who received the message but were martyred or they were killed during that time. Their bodies will resurrect and they'll be changed to live during the 1,000-year millennium on this earth. But it says the others to everlasting contempt. Now be careful here. He doesn't get into much theology in that particular passage; that's not his point. But we must remember there are two resurrections. As a matter of fact, there are three. Let me see if I can describe them for you.

Look in Revelation 20. Now when we talk about resurrections we're talking about the body. And what does he say? He says the bodies of those dead that have received the message will arise. When? At the end of the tribulation? When? At the beginning of the 1,000 years. Well, Revelation 20 tells us very clearly, verses 4-6. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image," now who would that have to be? The beast and his image: that's during the tribulation time. That has to be those, that one-third, that 144,000. It says, "the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." This has got to take place before the 1,000 years at the end of the tribulation.

"The rest of these dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection," pointing back to the ones who were already resurrected. "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years." Best I can tell, I know that 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians 15, tells us there is going to be a resurrection of the dead.

Look in 1 Thessalonians 4:13. Now here's the believer. Now Daniel's not talking about the believer, and I haven't been talking about the believer as far as the church goes tonight. We've been talking about Jews, Israel, receiving Jesus. That's what we've been talking about. But let me not confuse you tonight. Let me show you how this progression takes place. Verse 13, he's talking to believers, the church, the Gentile church. Look what he says, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep," that means dead. Isn't that a beautiful picture? What do you do when you get tired? You lay down. What do you do after you've rested awhile? You get up. Every time the word "sleep" is mentioned, there's a picture of the resurrection of the body all the way through the whole New Testament. We know the spirit is with the Lord Jesus. Is that not correct? Paul said to be absent from

the body is to be present with the Lord. Okay, now watch what he says. He says, "I don't want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep." Before the rapture comes, before we'll be taken up, the dead bodies of the righteous saints will all be taken up. He says in verse 16, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

So we see then for the church, for the Gentile or for the Jew that has come to know the Lord Jesus, a part of the body of Christ. If they have died, my mother, my father, their bodies will raise up. When Jesus comes for us they'll go first, then we'll be changed and taken up to be with Him. That's the rapture of the church. Then begins the seven year period of time that we've been talking about tonight. At the end of that seven year period of time there'll be many who were martyred for the faith during that last three and a half years. There will be another resurrection. They will be raised up and they will reign with Him for 1,000 years, but at the end of the 1,000 years, all of the unrighteous dead, from this day and that day will all be raised up and that's the Great White Throne Judgment. That's when hell comes into being.

Right now hell is a place reserved for Satan and his angels. The devil is not in hell. He walks to and fro on this earth. He goes before the Lord and accuses us day and night, but one day, friend, he will be there forever.

Now I have said a mouthful. Are you with me? I've said many times, "I'm preaching, you're listening. Raise your hand if you finish before I do." I'm trying to stay up with you. As far as I can tell, that's the best way I can see that it's laid out.

So what does he say is going to happen during that period of tribulation? He changes from the person of the tribulation, to the people. And look what he says; he says when it starts, that great wrath, Michael will arise. Buddy, he's going to kick Satan out of heaven and when he does that he's going to defend God's people. They will be nourished for a time, for three and a half years. That doesn't mean they won't be martyred for the faith, but they will have the ones to preach the message. They'll have the two witnesses for those three and a half years. At the end of that time, when He just closes it all down, destroys the Antichrist, then there'll be another resurrection of all those righteous ones that have received the message during that time. And then for 1,000 years we'll all reign together with Him.

At the end of that 1,000 years, all of the unrighteous dead will rise for the Great White Throne Judgment. That's when we see the New Heaven and the New Earth, but we don't have time to get into that and that's not what Daniel is talking about. But do we have a better understanding of that time and the people and the person of the tribulation? It's going to be an awful time and the people that are going through it, don't worry, God's not finished with them.

I tell you what, just pray that I'll stay in the spirit. Somebody walks up to me and tells me that God's through with Israel, pray that I will just not knock his teeth completely out. I just get mad. I get angry. God's not through with them. He made an everlasting covenant with Abraham, and God's not an Indian giver, buddy. If He said it's everlasting, it's everlasting. And Israel will survive as a nation, thus fulfilling the prophecy and the promise of God.

Well, isn't it wonderful, again, to know that God's unconditional love continues to reach out to Israel. I say this again: it's been on my heart all day long. I believe that's the message, one of the applications we can take home. Put a handle on it, folks, go home with it. How do you love the people around you? Conditionally? I tell you, to me that's the worst sin of the flesh is loving somebody by how you measure them, not by how God sees them.

I want to tell you, there are kids that have grown up in families that are scared to death to be even around their mother and daddy, scared they're going to mess up with them, scared they're not going to be approved of by their parents, all because of that old conditional love. God so loved the world, with a different kind of love. That love is seen in Israel and that love can be seen in our lives. When we truly are filled with the Spirit of God, it's not what tongue I can speak in, it's whether or not unconditional love flows out of my life like a river bearing evidence of the fact that God is God in my life. That's the mark of a believer walking with God.

Daniel 12:4-9 Final Instructions for the Last Days - 1

We're going to be finishing the book of Daniel today. I cannot believe it. Daniel 12, we've been studying together now for six months in this marvelous Old Testament book of prophecy. The message is entitled this morning and tonight—there will be two parts to it—is basically, "Final Instructions for the Last Days." You know, as we're finishing Daniel, what excites me is the fact that we're going to be studying Revelation. There used to be a day in my life that I was afraid to get into anything of the prophetic books and Scripture. As a matter of fact I've made this statement before: it's not important to know; just live today. That's all we have; just live today. Well, that's partially right, partially wrong. Since I've gotten into Daniel I realize now what the New Testament writers call the study of

prophecy. It's a purifying hope. Is that not correct? It's a purifying hope. It's something that measures everything you do.

My son said something to me the other day. He said, "Daddy, when I come back from the mission trip, will you have me a little Bible study method fixed up?" And I thought, "Well, okay, I'll do that. Why, son?" He said, "You know, Dad, if Jesus is coming soon, and I really believe He is, I just am not satisfied with the way I'm living. Daddy, I want to be ready when Jesus comes for the church."

You start studying prophecy friend, pretty soon, if you believe it, you're going to have to get your act straight. You're going to have to start watching what you're saying about other people. You're going to have to start watching how you're living around other people. Jesus is watching and Jesus is coming. That's what prophecy will do for you. That's certainly what it's done for me. I hope he's done that for you as we've been studying the book of Daniel.

Well, enough of that. Chapters 10-12 is a unit. It starts in chapter 10:20 and goes all the way through chapter 12:3. And what we've been studying this last several chapters, for the last several weeks really, has been a vision of great conflict. Daniel has had a pretty tough time. Daniel in chapter 9 was fasting and praying for his people, confesses their sin as his own sin 32 different times. Then he gets into chapter 10, he's fasting and praying again. What is he praying for? He's praying that God would turn away His wrath from His people. He looks around him and sees that they've not done any better; they're still just as rebellious as they've ever been, and Daniel is just pleading with God to show His mercy and take away His wrath from His people.

Well, God has to answer him and the answer is not what Daniel would have expected or would have wanted, but God has to show Daniel it's not as easy as Daniel thinks. Daniel does not understand the extent of the rebellion of his own people, Israel. And so the vision of great conflict. And obviously it's been so difficult for Daniel he passes out in the middle of it. It gets so difficult. And it goes all the way to the last days. It goes all the way to the end of the age.

Well, in chapter 12:4 we pick up today and from chapter 12:4 to verse 13 of that chapter, the final verse, there are six instructions that Daniel gets for the final days. Things that God wants him to be informed about, things that He wants him to do up until the time of the prophecy that he's had during the time that we've been studying. There are six of them. I want to look at three this morning, and when we come back tonight we'll look at the other three.

Daniel is to preserve his book for the people of the last days

Alright, let's pick up in verse 4 and let's see the first one. The first instruction that Daniel gets is to preserve his book for the people of the last days. Daniel, preserve what you have written for the people of the last days. Notice verse 4, "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase." Now let's make sure. You see, Daniel has written this down, and when he mentions the book, "conceal the book" here, the word literally means "lengthy writing." He couldn't be talking about just the vision of chapter 10:20-12:3. He has to be referring to everything that Daniel has put down that we now call the book of Daniel. "Daniel, you take everything you've written down, the visions of pagan kings, the visions that you have had; you take it all and you conceal it and you preserve it."

Now let's take the phrases one at a time. The word there, "conceal these words," means basically "preserve them." In other words, Daniel, you make sure they're not destroyed. You make sure they're taken care of. These are going to be very important. Then he says, "seal up the book." A custom that they would have would be that when something was complete in writing they would fold it up and seal it with a stamp that was a stamp of authentication. In other words, it was authentic, and from that point on it was not to be added to, taken away from, and it was to be protected just like it was.

And so he says to Daniel, "Seal up the book. Make sure it is preserved." There is a reason behind this. Now how long is it to be sealed up? He says "until the end." Have you noticed that as we've studied Daniel, that's the phrase that we've seen over and over again? And the words "until the end" mean "until the days of the tribulation." That's something that has been a pattern all the way through our study of the book of Daniel. "Daniel, there are going to be people during the time of the tribulation that are going to cling to this book, that are going to need the words of this book."

Now you can't be dogmatic and say that's the only time this book is going to be needed. As a matter of fact, there are times in the last days, the last days begins, Hebrews tells us, when Jesus came to this earth. So for all the people of the last days, but specifically for those going through the tribulation, "Daniel, preserve the book; seal it. They're going to need what this book has to tell them during that time."

It goes on in the verse and says, "many will go back and forth." Now that's a tough phrase to understand. What he's talking about here is physically go back and forth. In other words, go here, go there, go over here. What are they looking for? Well, staying in the context of what he's talking about here, they're looking for knowledge about what is going to take place in the end times. What an incredible thing he's telling him. "Daniel, you seal this up. This has not been a wasted experience. You haven't had these visions for nothing. You weren't told to write them down for nothing. They're going to be useable some day. Daniel, seal them up, preserve them, all the way to the end times. To the last days, but particularly the end times, because people are going to want to know.

They're going to go here, they're going to go there, they're going to look over everywhere trying to find out what's going to take place in the end times. Daniel, you have a piece of the puzzle. You preserve it, you take care of it; they're going to need it in that day."

Then it goes on to say in verse 4, "and knowledge will increase." Because of this book that Daniel has written; because of the visions and all that is in here of prophecy, Daniel, he's telling him, people will increase in their knowledge in those days. They will understand. Remember when Antiochus Epiphanes was on the scene and many understood and many stood firm, and he said it will be the same way when the Antichrist comes. There will be people during that last three and a half years, those days of Jacob's distress, the days when Satan incarnates the Antichrist and he persecutes the woman Israel, for three and a half years, there will be people who will cling to this book. Isn't that incredible? They're going to hand on to Daniel and they're going to understand and they're going to lead many to come back to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so it says, "Daniel, you preserve this book. Many will go to and fro; they'll seek knowledge in those days. This book will be part of their ransom. I couldn't help but think as I was studying this, we're part of that. Do you realize that? You know I didn't know much about prophecy. I'd read a lot of books which doesn't mean I knew a lot about it. All I knew was that a lot of people who have written books don't agree with one another. That's about all I knew. But boy, when I got into the study of the book of Daniel, what it has done to shed light in areas where I had a quest for knowledge. And that's exactly what he's saying to Daniel. "Daniel, this book is important."

Boy, that's an incredible thing. I really can't ever get it out like it gets in. I was so overwhelmed by that. You've got to realize now who Daniel was. He wasn't some super saint. He didn't float out of the clouds and write Daniel and go back. He was a man just like you and me. He was a person, he had fears, he had doubts, he lived just like we live, but God used him in such a miraculous way because he made up his mind that he would not defile himself or dishonor his God. As a result of that he's now telling him, in the final closing words of this book, "Daniel, your book, that you have written, will be there for all time. And one day during that tribulation time, your own people will learn from this book, from what you're writing right now. They'll understand it and they'll turn back towards God."

Daniel is told the tribulation is necessary so that Israel might be saved

Well, first thing, Daniel, preserve the book; final instructions for the last days. Daniel, preserve the book. They're going to need it in the last days. But then secondly, I think what I see in this, and Daniel doesn't say a word from verse 5 all the way through verse 8, but he eavesdrops into a conversation; a conversation between two angels and a heavenly visitor. And their conversation, it appears to me, that what they're talking about Daniel needs to know. You've got to understand, being a man as he was, he must have wondered many times, "God, why would You put my people through such tribulation?" He had such an overwhelming vision of great conflict that he even fainted at one time. He got weak in the knees, he couldn't speak. "God, why, why would You do this to my people? Why can't You just speak and they'd be alright?"

Have you ever wondered that in your life? Do you ever wonder that about your children, and said, "Oh, God, why don't You answer my prayer? Why don't You just do something in his life? Just zap them and make them spiritual." God has to let Daniel understand how difficult it is many times to win the human heart and how they're going to have to go through a time of brokenness that never has been known before, but it will be for their good.

Now let's get into the scene and understand the conversation. Verse 5, "Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river." Now what river? Look back in chapter 10:4, remember when all this got started? It says in verse 4 of chapter 10, "And on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, while I was by the bank of the great river," and that really means great river. That was a great big wide river, "that is, the Tigris." So we see the river that he's talking about. He's been hearing this vision. Now look what happens. He says he "looked and two others were standing," probably two angels, "one on this bank of the river, and the other on that bank of the river."

Now you're talking about a great big river. Daniel's standing there, here's an angel on one bank, and here's an angel on the other bank. Now they're in conversation with another heavenly being, and this really brings up a discussion as to who this being is. Look in verse 6, "And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river," now that's interesting. One angel on one bank, one angel on another bank, but here's this heavenly being suspended above the waters in the middle of the river. And there's a conversation going between the two angels and this heavenly being that is suspended there above the waters.

Now who is he? Well, it says a man dressed in linen. Go back to chapter 10, look in verse 5. If we follow the pattern of what we've already seen, I believe it has to be this same person. Verse 5, "I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen," same thing that our verse tells us in chapter 12, "whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult." In other words, that deep, guttural sound. Well,

now who do you think that is? That's the same person as right here in this particular text we're looking at in 12:5-6.

You know who I think it is? I think it's the Lord Jesus. I think there was a different person talking to him from verse 10 of chapter 10 as we've already discussed, on through, and now it reverts back to the Lord Jesus who is suspended there over the waters. And isn't it a precious picture here, if that's who it is? Some people say, "No, it's been the Lord all the way through." Well, that's okay. Let's don't break fellowship over it. But whoever it is is much higher than these two angels standing on the ground. And you can see that in just the way it's put down. Two of them on the ground. Here's evidently a grand, heavenly visitor. If it's the Lord, how precious. But if it's not, it's still one of His messengers, standing there and a conversation is going on.

Now what's going on in the conversation? There's a question being asked. It says in verse 6, "And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, 'How long will it be until the end of these wonders?'" Now the first time that you look at that question you may not know what it's in reference to. The next verse will tell you. When he talks about the end of these wonders, the word for "wonders" simply means things that are unique unto themselves. As certain as the days of the tribulation, the days particularly of the last part of the tribulation, are things unique unto themselves. And what they're saying there is, "How long will that tribulation last? How long will that awful persecution last to the people of Israel?"

Verse 7, "And I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time." Now, how many times have we seen that? Chapter 7:25 tells us that it is the time the Antichrist, the little horn coming out of Rome, will have that power granted to him. It's given by Satan himself, but God permits it for time, times, half a time. Three and a half years; twelve hundred and sixty days, as we've seen in other places; 42 months, as we've seen in other references. So when he asks the question, he says, "How long will the things that are unique to themselves during that three and a half year period of time, how long will it be?" And he says, "Three and a half years: a time, times, and half a time."

But that's not the key here. Daniel already knows that. Daniel has already seen that in his own vision. These two angels are talking to this heavenly visitor. In his answer in verse 7, he also gives the reason why the tribulation has to be there to begin with. He gives Daniel an answer that Daniel really hasn't even asked about. Look what he says, he says, "a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed." You see, Israel's power, Israel's self-sufficiency, has got to be broken. Here is Daniel in chapter 10, way back, praying that God would turn away His wrath from His people. And God says, "Son, it's not that easy. You don't know how deep the root goes. You don't even realize, Daniel, that the transgression of Israel will be to reject Jesus as their rightful King." And if this is Jesus speaking to Daniel, then He's telling him, "They're going to have to receive Me and it's going to take all this persecution, it's going to take this tribulation to break them down. And once they're humiliated, then they'll look up and then they'll realize that I am their King. And therefore then they will bow down and receive Me as their Messiah. So Daniel, why is going to be allowed? Because of the hard-heartedness of Israel. Because they are stubborn and they're rebellious, I must break it down so that they then can be saved."

I wonder how many of us today do not have chastisement in our vocabulary as Christians. We don't like that. You know, the book of Hebrews tells the precious Jewish believers of that time, he said, "You've forgotten the chastening of our Lord. You have forgotten that when you are rebellious, He's like a father to you and He will bring you into difficult times so that you'll be broken of that self-sufficiency and so that you can turn back unto Him." I know when many times when I was growing up I hated to be disciplined. You hate to be disciplined? But after I was disciplined I became a different creature. Then I had children of my own, and I remember many times they would just get belligerent. And, boy, you just have to do something. You don't want to do it, but because you love them you do it. And I found the little puffy part of their body that just was perfect to fit my hand and I'd warm that thing up and it wasn't long before they came back and I had a different child in the house, a different manner altogether. Wanted to please, absolutely thanking us for the discipline without actually saying the words.

You see, we need that in our lives. And God simply says to Daniel, "Daniel, Israel, My children, the ones I raised up, the ones that were My idea, they had disobeyed Me and I will bring this difficult time upon them, but it will be for their good. It will be for their good. It will result in their salvation." You know, a lot of people don't think that. When we get into the millennium, and it is coming, you know people say, "Brother Wayne, we're in the millennium now." Now come on, get off that case. If you believe that, I love you in Jesus, but I just think you're flat wrong. But when we get to the millennium, when we get there I want you to find a Jew who is there with you. I want you to ask him, "How tough was it during the tribulation?" "Oh, you don't know how bad it was. We were martyred, we were killed, all these things happened." "Was it worth it?" You ask them. I am going to ask them too. Buddy, you're going to see the sweetest smile come on their face. "What do you mean, was it worth it? We're here, aren't we? It is worth every minute of it." Because all that brokenness resulted in their being able to reign and rule with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Back when I was first beginning to grow as a Christian—and I'm certainly not there, I still wonder if I've even gotten started sometimes—one of the things I used to pray, "God, break me." If you're here and you've ever prayed that, would you raise your hand, sheepishly? All of those who continue to pray that, would you raise your hand? Not me, buddy. You don't want to be broken,

don't you ask. God's going to do it anyway, whether you ask Him or not. Man, you don't get to choose the tools that He uses to bring you to the foot of the cross.

And basically what I see in this is he's telling Daniel, even though Daniel has not really said a word, he's letting Daniel understand something by his eavesdropping of this conversation of the angelic visitors. He simply saying, "Listen, I want you to understand the tribulation is going to be necessary. Daniel, you can't grasp it all right now, but it's for their good, so preserve the book, they're going to need it, and secondly, understand this tribulation is going to be necessary so that Israel might be saved."

Daniel is to stop asking questions that don't concern him

Well the third thing, finally, that I see as instructions—he doesn't say, "There are six instructions here," this is my way of putting a handle on these verses; I hope you understand that—the third thing that I see and the last thing we'll talk about this morning is this: "Daniel, preserve the book; Daniel, understand would you that what I'm doing is right, it's going to need this; but Daniel, thirdly, stop asking questions that don't concern you."

Oh me, I don't know if you'll get hold of this one or not. We live in America so everything has to be understood or it must not be of God. See, we don't want by faith; we want by sight. We've got to figure everything out. Everything has got to be a little box. Wouldn't God be mighty little if we could figure Him out and everything? Matter of fact, who would need Him to begin with? And Daniel here picks up something in that conversation and he doesn't understand it. He says in verse 8, "As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?"

Now he doesn't mean how long will it be. He knows that; three and a half years. He doesn't mean who will it be that will persecute the people. He knows that it's the little horn, the Antichrist. He doesn't mean why are you doing it. He already heard that; he understands it, because of the hard-heartedness of Israel. But he's asking a different question. What will be the outcome? In other words, what he's asking here and the phrase is so clear, the outcome means what will be the last few events of that three and a half year period of time that will cause Israel to be delivered from the Antichrist.

That's one thing that was very vague in all of his visions. That was one thing that wasn't answered that clearly. We do know the Antichrist will be destroyed and not by any man but God will destroy him. We know that. But he wanted to know what will be the final events of that three and a half year period of time that will cause Israel to be saved. He understands now that Israel is going to be alright, but how are they going to be alright.

Now if anybody would deserve an answer, certainly Daniel would deserve it. I mean, look what he's been through. All the visions, all the praying, all the different things; "God, just give me one little clue. What are going to be those last few events?" And since God is a respecter of persons, I'm being facetious, look at verse 9: "And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.'" You know what that phrase "go your way" means? It doesn't mean walk away from here. What it means is, "you go on and stop asking those stupid questions." Not stupid, that's my personal interjection there. "You stop asking these silly questions. The answer that you're looking for you're not going to get. It doesn't concern you, so just cool it. And just trust me."

Boy, doesn't that gripe you? Last chapter of the book, one of the most thrilling things that Daniel could have possibly asked, and God said through His messenger, "I know your curiosity is great, but Daniel, what good is it going to do for Me to tell you? It doesn't even concern you. Go your way. It's concealed. It will take place in its due time, at the appointed time all these things will be understood. You don't need to understand what I'm saying."

I'll be honest with you; I try to make a lot of applications in Scripture. If I have a gift anywhere, I like to get it off the top shelf and get the cookies on the bottom shelf so we can all eat them. Sometimes I leave them up there and I can't quite get them off the top shelf. I'm sure somebody sitting here, particularly those who haven't been with us for the last six months thinking, "What is he talking about? I mean, this really thrills me." Daniel, preserve the book, well, what's that mean to me? I haven't even studied Daniel. What book? And then somebody is probably asking the question, "Well, what does it mean to understand why the Jews are going to go through the last three and a half years. I'm not even a Jew; I just came to church today to hear something that would minister to my heart."

Well, I found a principal in there that you can latch on to and go home with today. And that's that last one. And it just deepened into my heart. I believe that probably there are people here this morning that are struggling in this same area. You see, there are many times in our lives that we ask God to give us a clear understanding of what He's about to do. And God refuses to answer us, only with the understanding that in its appointed time it will take place. In the meantime you just trust Me.

How many of you right now could be in a circumstance this morning, I know somebody's here because it's so strong on my heart; how many of you here this morning that you're going through something and if God would just open up the heavens it would be really nice. If He would put it on a letter and send it to you it would even be better. If He would personally walk in your living room

and tell you what's going on, you would love Him to death for it. How many of you are going through something like that right now? A lot of us.

Well, I want you to know the thing that comforted me in this is that I don't have to know all the answers. When there is no apparent answer, it doesn't mean that God doesn't have one, it just means that right now, for where you are and where I am, He is the answer. Just trust Him. In the appointed time you'll understand if you need to, but right now you don't need to know.

Several months ago I prayed and asked many of you to pray with me that I could sell my house. Evidently you did, because I sold it. Well, we had a place picked out. I've never really randomly done things like that. I always had a place I had zeroed it and I was going to move to if I sold the one I was in. And the one that I had prayed about and thought was going to be mine was still available when we sold ours. But would you believe it, it sold out from under us before we could get it. So here I am, back at square one. "Where are you going to live, Wayne?" I don't know. The reason we sold it was to take care of my mother and father-in-law. My father-in-law is disabled and we've had such a burden on our hearts to just take care of him in all the latter years that he has left. We want him to live with us; we just love them to death. But now what are we going to do?

And I've been before the Lord. Have you ever done this and you grab the Scriptures. You're looking for a word, "God, speak a word to me." Trying to find a word, "God, would you speak to me." The next thing you do is pick up the phone and call all your friends. "Now what would you think I ought to do?" "And what would you think I ought to do." And by the time you've talked to all of your friends, they told you two different things and now you're more confused than you've ever been. Anybody going through that right now? Because boy, I am.

Listen, let's have a meeting and encourage one another for what we don't know about what God's doing. "I got to do something." No, you see, when you get to that point, what God spoke to my heart was, "When you need to know, you'll know. But right now just understand something, I've got it all planned out. You just trust Me and don't you dare get involved in trying to figure this thing out." That to me would be the handle somebody needs to take home with them today.

We don't deserve to have an answer to anything. Anything less than hell is grace. We don't deserve anything. When we ask we ask as beggars and when God answers, He answers in His own time and in His own way. In the meantime, don't you fuss because you don't have an answer. Let Jesus be your answer. Just trust Him. Just trust Him. And at the appointed time, when you need to understand, you will understand.

As a matter of fact, look what it says in verse 13 and we'll quit. "But as for you," we'll talk about this tonight more fully, "go your way to the end." In other words, you keep right on going now, stay away from what you just asked awhile ago. You just stay right on, you be faithful, Daniel, to the end, "then you will enter into rest," you'll die and your soul will go into that special place for the Old Testament saints, "and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Do you realize what He told him? "Daniel, you just keep right on trucking, just like you've been trucking, keep your eyes on Me. You're going to die." "Am I going to die?" "Yes, you're going to die. And don't worry, got that covered, and one day I'm going to raise your body back up and you are going to be rewarded, not for trusting what people said, not for trusting what you came up with in your own figuring, but for trusting Me, there's a reward at the other end."

So folks, if you can't get moved by Daniel, preserve the book. If you can't get moved by why the Jews will go through the tribulation, then understand there are some things in your life that you're asking God about and God says, "Cool it, you don't need to know right now, and I am not going to tell you. But at the appointed time I'll let you know if you need to know. In the meantime, do what you need to be doing and trust Me. I'll reward you for your faithfulness."

Daniel 12:10-13 Final Instructions for the Last Days - 2

Daniel 12, our last message together in this wonderful book. We've been in it now for six months. I can hardly believe it: our last time together. We're going to be looking now tonight in verses 10-13 as we continue our thought that we started this morning: Final Instructions for the Last Days, Part 2.

Now let's go back just for a second. Now, don't look now, let's just go back. See how well you can remember what went on in the book of Daniel. You know you think sometimes that you can't do this. If you've been studying very faithfully along with us, it's doing something in your mind that you don't realize. Many people think that you study the Word of God just to have facts about God. No, that's not right. You study the Word of God so that you can be changed by the Word. You know God through the study of His Word.

And I remember when I was over behind the Iron Curtain several years ago and I had a fever one night. I laid there and there was nothing else I could do. I said, "Lord, help me to remember the Scriptures that we have studied over the years." And I laid there on

my bed with fever and I began to think of the book of John. John 1, 2, 3, 4, and I went through every single chapter of John and could remember what was in those chapters and what God had spoken to my heart. Then I went to 1 Peter, then 2 Peter and all the different books that God had put on our hearts to study. You don't realize, we're not just here going through a book so that you can put up a file folder full of information. This is how we know God. This is how we not only know about Him, but we know Him. And as we get into the Word, the Word gets into us and the transformation begins to take place.

So let's go back to chapter 1 and see what we remember. Remember in chapter 1 Nebuchadnezzar moves in on the city of Jerusalem and the first siege takes place in 605 BC. The first thing he does is take all the young, good looking, sharp young people. Looking around I know none of us would have made the group. And so he takes them all out. In chapter 1:8 we see Daniel in the first dilemma of his young life, a teenager about 15 years old, faced with the fact that the king wanted him and the other young people to eat of their choice food and their choice wine. But he knew to do that would violate the Levitical commands that he had, so therefore he says in chapter 1:8 that "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." What a key verse to the whole book of Daniel. A young fellow who before he ever packed his bags made up his mind he wouldn't defile himself; he would honor his God. Do you realize we have the rest of the book of Daniel because of that?

Chapter 2 we find the first dream that Nebuchadnezzar, the pagan king of Babylon, had. And God begins to move in his life. God wants to make sure that these pagan nations understand that the only reason they're in power is because God raised them up. And in chapter 2, after Daniel had interpreted that dream, remember Daniel praised the Lord and said it's God who determines the kings and kingdoms, it's God who determines the epoch of man. But we see in that dream of Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 2 a statue and the statue was of four kingdoms. Remember that? The head was Babylon, the upper torso was Medo-Persia, the belly and the thighs was Greece, and the leg was Rome. But he wasn't really interested just in Rome or ancient Rome. He goes on to the feet of baked clay and iron and then he talks about in verse 42 the toes of the feet.

How many toes do you have? Ten toes; something about Rome in the latter days. It would be ten loosely divided yet united kingdom. A United States of Europe, could it be, that would come together in the latter days. And then it talks about a stone in chapter 2 and that stone would be one made without hands and he would crush the statue at the feet and then his kingdom would fill the whole earth. That's chapter 2.

Chapter 3 we see three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They will not bow. I love that. I love that song by PID, a Christian rap group, and it's called "Preachers in the Sky," and it's a good name. You'd never guess. But in the song it talks about "don't bow" and it talks about basically chapter 3 of Daniel. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego won't bow to that statue that Nebuchadnezzar makes of himself, 90 feet tall, 9 feet wide. They will not bow down to that statue in the plains of Durham. So as a result of that the three of them are cast into the burning fire. Remember the people who cast them in the fire were burned up? But what happened to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Not one thing. As a matter of fact the Scripture says not a hair on their head was singed and they were not burned. They didn't even have the smell of smoke on them. The only thing that burned off of them was the things that bound them. And they met the Lord Jesus like never before because Nebuchadnezzar said, "Wait a minute. Didn't we throw three men bound, falling? Didn't we throw them in?" They said, "Yes sir." "But I see four men and they're loose and they're walking and the fourth is like a son of the God." And of course I believe that's a theophany, that's the Lord Jesus Christ appearing right there with His people, walking through the fire with them.

You know, you wonder why does Daniel have those stories in it. Do we not understand that this book is going to be very helpful to the people who are going to be in the last days? Didn't we see this this morning? And he told Daniel to seal it up, it's for those days. And can you imagine going through those days of tribulation, some of those Jews who understand will get a hold of the book of Daniel and they'll be persecuted, but they'll look in there and they'll look in the fires that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had to go through and they'll gain strength from that. Why, if you look back on it, it makes all the sense in the world.

Chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar still won't bow. Nebuchadnezzar is proud of himself and so God has another dream to come into his life. And this time he dreams about a tree which is his kingdom and how everybody is being nourished by that tree. But remember the dream? The angel came and interrupted the dream and told him to cut down the tree, leave the stump. Leave the roots in the ground, put a fence around it, and the man, it refers to Nebuchadnezzar, is going to be put out to pasture basically. He's going to have the appetites of an animal, he's going to wake up in the morning with dew all over him, he's going to be eating grass for his meals for seven years. Daniel interprets the dream and that's exactly what happens to Nebuchadnezzar. And the key verse in chapter 4 is verse 37 which says, "God is able to humble those who walk in pride." Don't ever think for one second you're doing anything on your own. God is in charge of your life.

Well, chapter 5, what happens? Well, Belshazzar, who is sort of a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, he will not listen at all. As a matter of fact, he takes the sacred vessels that his father had captured when he raided Jerusalem and he takes them out of the temple and he has a drunken orgy and as a result of that there's a ghostly, bodiless hand that appears on the wall and says, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. Thou hast been weighed in the balances and thou art found wanting," or lacking. And that night the Medo-Persian

Empire came into the city and Belshazzar died and we have the rise of the second kingdom that we saw in chapter 2. That's chapter 5.

Chapter 6, old Darius, who is the Medes king, gets talked into and tricked into making a law, and the law of the Medo-Persians could never be changed. And the law was that no man in the kingdom could worship any god but him for 30 days. Well, you know Daniel is not going to bow. Daniel has been worshipping his God for a long time. He's an old man now. He's not about to pay attention to what they're saying. He's going to worship his God morning, noon, and night with the windows open, as the Scripture tells us, as he's faced toward Jerusalem. As a result he's thrown in the lion's den. Poor old Darius, he was more worried about Daniel than Daniel was worried about Daniel. He came through and said, "Don't worry about it, I've been trying to get you out of this but I can't get you out of this, but your God is going to deliver you." I love that. And sure enough he comes back the next morning and all the lions are just sitting there very passively. Daniel, you see, hadn't been looking at the lions. Daniel had been looking at the Lord. That's chapter 6 of Daniel.

Well, in chapter 7 we find that Daniel begins to have his vision. Here's where the chronological sequence stops. It jumps back and forth now. But his visions are all in sequence. And in chapter 7 we see his vision of the four beasts that come up out of the sea. And of course this correlate with the statue of chapter 2. He sees first of all Babylon being the two-winged lion. Then he sees Medo-Persia being the bear with one side raised up because one of the kingdoms was always more powerful than the other. Then he sees the leopard, Greece, with the four wings and how Alexander the Great with the four heads on that leopard comes in and his kingdom, and obviously he dies, and his kingdom is divided among four generals. All that's in chapter 7, remember?

And then we saw the fourth beast. Now the fourth beast was an ugly looking dude. It had ten horns. That's what really caught the attention of Daniel. It was Rome, but it wasn't Rome of ancient Rome, it was Rome of the latter days. And Daniel really wanted to know about that beast with the ten horns, those ten horns being ten kingdoms. But in chapter 7 is where we find the beginning of the teaching of the Antichrist. The little horn that comes up among those ten horns out of Rome; and what he's going to be doing in the latter days, and how long he will persecute Israel, which will be for time, times, and half a time, which is three and a half years.

Chapter 8 we saw another vision that Daniel had. This time it's only of the second two kingdoms, those middle two kingdoms: Medo-Persia and Greece. Now why in the world did that even appear in the book of Daniel? Well, I think it's because God said it's going to happen and it has happened and history has documented it. It's the Medo-Persian Empire as the ram with the two horns, one longer than the other. And then we see it defeated by the shaggy goat, and the goat has a conspicuous horn between its eyes. That's the nation of Greece. And how Greece moves in and how when Greece has moved in, how the kingdoms are split up, but there's one man that comes out in chapter 8 that we need to know about. That's Antiochus Epiphanes, the preview of the Antichrist that has been mentioned in chapter 7.

Then we come to chapter 9. Daniel has been studying Jeremiah in his quiet time and he finds out it's about time for all these people to go home and so he begins to pray for his people. He's so burdened; he looks around and he sees that Israel is just as hard-hearted as they've ever been and as he sees them going back into their homeland, he realized they haven't learned their lesson. And he begins to pray for them. Thirty-two times he confesses their sin as his sin, but as a result of it all, God has to give a vision to him. And the vision is of the 70 weeks. As we've studied that, remember those 70 weeks were divided into three sections. Seven periods of seven, which are actually years, 49 years, 62 periods of seven which were 434 years, and then one period of seven which is that 70th week. For the 70 weeks to have been completed there are six things that have to happen, and those six things have not yet happened, which gives us the only conclusion that you can come to: there's got to be a division between the 69 weeks and the 70th week. There has to be and that makes us understand Romans 11 which says that Israel has a partial hardening until the fullness of the Gentiles come it. That's where your church is, right there. And then we know that that 70th week is yet to come. It will be in that 70th week, Daniel tells us, that the little horn, the Antichrist, will move in on God's people. And in the middle of the week he will break a covenant with them and that's when Satan incarnates him and that's when the great Jacob's distress takes place: the great tribulation.

Then we came to chapter 10 and that's what we've been dealing with now for the last several messages: The vision of great conflict. Here, finally, it's almost summarized for Daniel. It starts in chapter 10:20, goes all the way through 12:3. Chapter 10:14 says it concerns his people and it's a terrible, terrible, terrible vision. He sees how difficult it's going to be for God to break the self-sufficiency of his people. But there's hope in it because God has not forgotten His people. He's still remembering them, He covenants with Abraham, He promised him a Seed, which was Christ, He promised him a land which is Israel, and He promised him a nation and they're still there and He has not forgotten about them.

Well, isn't it fun to go back over it? We have spent six months studying those chapters and this is the last message. I almost want to stay another hour just to talk some more about it. I don't want to get out of Daniel. The only thing that makes me excited is we're getting into Revelation. Crank it up; it's going to be a good time.

Alright, now today we see some final instructions concerning the last days. We've seen three already in the first part or beginning of

verse 4 of chapter 12. First of all we saw in verse 4 that Daniel is to preserve the book. Why? Because they're going to need it in the last days. Preserve it, Daniel; seal it, Daniel; and make sure it's not destroyed, Daniel. What you have written down is going to be used from all times. Secondly we saw in verses 5 on down through verse 7 that Daniel needed to understand why the tribulation was necessary. And verse 7 tells us "to finish shattering the power of the holy people." In other words, it's going to take the worst period of all history in Israel's life for their self-sufficiency to finally be broken, for them to be humiliated and finally receive Jesus as their rightful King. It will take all of that difficulty to bring them to the cross.

Thirdly we saw that Daniel was to stop asking questions that didn't concern him. Daniel wanted to know more, and then verse 8, after all the visions now, he understood the years, he understood the Antichrist, he understood why, but he wants to know more. What are going to be the sequence of events at the last part of that three and a half years and the angel said, "Now, Daniel, cool it. This is not for you to know. Just relax; it's for them at that time. You don't need to know. You'll not gain a thing by understanding this. You just have to learn that God is in control."

Daniel is not to worry about Israel

Well, in verses 10-13 we find the final three and our concluding message in the book of Daniel. What's the fourth thing that Daniel needs to know, information, instruction for the last days. Well, the fourth thing is, Daniel, don't worry about Israel. Now look at verse 10. He says, "Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days." Well, I went a verse too far. "Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand."

Now you've got to tie that end back to verses 8-9. Remember, he wants to know, I think his heartbeat is, "Are you sure, are you sure Israel is going to be saved? Are you sure they're going to come out of this alright." He's seen the terrible things that will take place. Are you sure that Israel will be alright. And basically what he says is, "Don't you worry about Israel." "Many will be purged, purified and refined." Now the word "purged" there means cleansed. And the word "purified" means to be made white. And of course the word "refined" explains itself. And what he's talking about is salvation. There's going to be a salvation time for many of the Jews during that time.

Look over in Zechariah 13. We've read this many times, but really fitting into its context it really makes a point here. He promises Daniel that Israel will be saved. "Don't worry about Israel; they're going to be okay. I'm going to spare Israel." Verse 8, "And it will come about in all the land," declares the Lord, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it." There will be a third of all Israel to be saved. And verse 9 says, "And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

And so we see that there are going to be those of Israel that will be saved. They'll be purged, they'll be purified, and they will be refined. Now if you go back to chapter 12 and verse 3, these are the same ones He's speaking of. It says, "And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." They'll be included in that bunch. "So, Daniel, don't worry about Israel. I know the vision has been difficult, I know it's been a great conflict, but Daniel, God is faithful to do as He promised. He will not let Israel fade away."

Then he adds something there in verse 10 that's hard for Daniel, I'm sure, to accept. He says in verse 10 not only will "many be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand." You know, that's a hard message. What it's basically telling Daniel is, "Daniel, you can't do a thing about it. But I'm going to give a promise to you: many of Israel will be saved. They will be purged and purified and refined, but Daniel, understand this, all of them will not be saved. There will be many who are wicked who refuse to obey. They'll pick up your book one day and they will not understand because they will not receive Jesus as their rightful King in their life. So Daniel, don't worry about Israel, they will be saved. But, Daniel, understand something: all of Israel will not be saved. There will be many who are, but there will be many who will not be saved."

You know, I thought about that thing, and I thought you know, that's just so true in life, isn't it? I wish I could somehow get out into my neighborhood and make everybody receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Wouldn't you like to do that? Think of somebody that you know, that you work with, or somebody in your family. Wouldn't you like to just grab hold of them and jerk a knot in their head and say, "Would you listen to me," and get them saved so that they'll respond and obey the Lord? But it's an individual choice, friend, and a person has got to make that decision on their own. This blows covenant theology, for instance, out the door. There are those who teach that because the mom and dad are saved, automatically the children are allowed into that covenant. No sir, buddy. Some of those children may and some of those children may not. They've got to make up their own mind. They've got to come to a point with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to decide whether or not to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Many will, but many will not. But he's trying to tell Daniel, I think, "Daniel, don't worry. Israel will be saved, not all of them, but many will turn, many will be purified,

purged and refined." So the first thing then, is don't worry about Israel. Don't worry; God's got all of that in check. Many won't but many will.

Everything God told Daniel has a timetable to it

Secondly is this: Daniel, understand something. Know that everything God has told you has a timetable to it. Now, how many times have we come to that in our study of the book of Daniel? Everything God has told you has a timetable to it. Look in verse 11. I'm telling you, verses 11-12 just intrigue me. Now watch what he does. He says in verse 11, "And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."

Now what does he mean "the regular sacrifice is abolished, and the "abomination of desolation is set up?" Well, I think we get a clue back in 9:27. He's beginning in the mid-part of that tribulation week, that last seven years. First part of the tribulation, the Antichrist makes a peace treaty with Israel, possibly that's when the temple is rebuilt, I don't know. But in the middle part of that seven year period, watch what happens. It says in verse 27, "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week," that's three and a half years into that seven years, "he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of the abominations will come one who makes desolate." And so at the beginning of that last three and a half years, what does he say? At the beginning of that and until the end there will be 1,290 days. Now does that throw any confusion into anybody's mind? Does anybody have any problem with that?

Haven't we already seen that it's going to be 1,260 days until the Lord comes and establishes His kingdom? How do we know? The end of the tribulation will finish when the Antichrist is defeated and it is 1,260 days: time, times, and half a time. Forty-two months. But wait a minute. He says 1,290 days. Now, what in the world does that have to do with what we've studied? Well, at this particular point I'm going to thrill you with my answer: I don't know. But I have a guess and I want you to chew on it and if we disagree on it, that's alright. You can be wrong. But let me tell you what I think.

The judgment of the nations is going to take place when Jesus comes back to this earth. I think what he's saying is after 1,260 days, that's when the man, the Antichrist, will be destroyed; not by his own hand but God will do it Himself. He won't need any help to do it. But from that point, 1,260 days to the 1,290 days, will be the time in which on this earth will be the judgment of the nations and all that takes place in Matthew 25 covers a lot of that. That will be taking place in those 30 days. So we see 1,260 days ending the three and a half year period, the awful great Jacob's distress. Then we see 30 more days up through the time that the judgment of the nations takes place.

Well look at verse 12. You think that will confuse you. He says, "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" Oh, no, not another 45 days. Now wait a minute: 1,260 days, that's the end of three and a half years. Okay, 30 more I can buy that; that will be the time on this earth, actual days, time, that it will take to judge the nations. Then 45 more days: what would that be? Again, I don't know but I'm going to guess at it. Do you know what I think it is? I think that's the time it will take for Him to set up His kingdom, put everybody where He wants to put them to get ready to start the 1,000-year period of reign on this earth.

Now, you can say, "Wayne, that's crazy." And it just might be, but you'll have to come and tell me what you think it is, because he doesn't describe it, doesn't tell us what it is. I think if it's those two things, it just thrills my heart because now he's completed the last two parts of the puzzle; now he's finished the picture. Now we know the seven years, we know that 70th week. We know that in the middle of it, there are three and a half years, 1,260 days, and we even know what happens at the end: 30 more days for the judgment of the nations, 45 more days for God to set up His kingdom and the beginning of the 1,000-year reign here on this earth.

Well, I think the real key here, we can argue until Jesus comes as to what this is all about, and when He comes I'm going to say, "See, I told you." No, we can argue about it, but the thing that really thrills me is that God has it already fixed up on His own timetable. Friend, you're not going to mess with it, I'm not going to mess with it. It's coming and we know that God knows exactly how long it's going to take and He's given a vision to Daniel and isn't it a comforting thing: God's got it all worked out. Man, do you realize Israel picks this thing up in the middle of the tribulation saying, "Man, how are we going to make it?" And somebody figures out 1,260 days. Wait a minute, 1,260 days and they start putting two and two together and they start realizing that "Hey, it's been 1,200 days, how long? Sixty more, sixty more, come one man, stay in there. Stay in there." Because he said, "Daniel, they're going to need this during that time. They're going to need your book."

Boy, it gets down to 1,259 days and somebody picks it up and says, "Hey, look at this: 1,290 days something else is coming." And he says, "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" As the kingdom now has been set up on the earth. The main thing to remember is that, Daniel, understand something: don't worry about Israel and secondly, remember, God has it all of His time table. Everything He's prophesied in this book, that Daniel has written down, that Daniel is to preserve, has a timetable to it and God has it all under control.

Daniel was told to stay faithful to the end and he will be rewarded

Finally the sixth thing is this: this really blesses me and I think this is a great verse to leave Daniel on. Verse 13. Finally, Daniel, stay faithful to the end and you will have a reward coming to you. "Daniel, you stay faithful to me just like you've been," God says, "to the end, and you will have a reward coming to you." Look at verse 13, "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Now I want to show you something in this. Brother Spiros Zodhiates and I were studying the other day and it really caught my attention. Notice this verse very carefully. He says, "But as," and what's the next two words in your translation? For who, "for you." Now God said this to Daniel, right? He didn't say this to Jeremiah; He didn't say this to somebody else. This is His specific individual message to Daniel. Do you realize how individual the Christian life is, folks? Now we need one another, to encourage one another. But do you realize that you've got your lap to run, I've got my lap to run, Daniel has his lap to run, and at the end of that lap I'm not going to get your reward, I'm going to get my reward. That's the key. "Daniel, I have something for you when you finish. You will go to your rest, but you'll rise for your allotted portion. There's a reward for your faithfulness."

Look with me in 2 Timothy just for a second. Brother Spiros and I have been studying that for about 10 years and I think we may finish it after the Lord comes. But it's been so wonderful. Second Timothy 4:8. Now notice the same thing, same thing he says to Timothy. Verse 7, Paul says, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for" you, Timothy? Is that what he says? Is laid up for you, Cephas. Is that what he says? There is laid up for you, somebody else? No, he says, "there is laid up for me." You think that is an egotistical statement? Oh, no, friend. That's just a man who understands the righteous character of our God and he knows that because of his being faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, he wasn't running for a prize in the sense that he just wanted the prize: he loved Jesus. But he knew that individually he would be rewarded according to what he had done on this earth.

I've got my lap to run, you've got your lap to run, Paul had his lap to run, and Daniel had his lap to run. I want to tell you something, folks. If you stop and start worrying about how somebody else is running their lap, do you realize that you're going to pay for it when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ? One of the things I have noticed over all the years that I've been in the ministry; something that just grabbed at me and is heavy on my heart. The people who cause divisions usually are the people who are condemning everybody else for how they're running their race when in reality they're not running theirs the way they ought to run. You mark that down, mark that down.

These are the pseudo-spiritual people who all of a sudden are more spiritual than everybody else. "Nobody can run like we are running." As a matter of fact I can think back in the years, particularly when I was in one church and I can think of a young person telling me one day, just so clearly, he looked at me and he said, "Wayne, the problem is we are just not experiencing all that God wants us to experience." Would you like for me to interpret that situation, what he just said? He didn't mean "we." What did he mean? He meant "you." Mark it down. If you're judgmental about everybody else's race, friend, and you're not running your own race, you're going to stand before God one day and you're going to answer for it. I'm going to answer for it. When I find other people that disappoint me, friend, I can't stop running because they disappointed me. I can pray for them, I can do whatever I can do to encourage them, but, friend, I've got a race to run and I can't stop to find out how they're running it. I've got to run my own race.

Years ago my wife and I decided something in our life. We're not going to let life work against us anymore. We're going to start letting it work for us. We've got a race to run. You can't stop and check out just because somebody disappoints you. Friends, you're riding down the highway out here and a policeman stops you and he doesn't have any kind of character whatsoever, and he pulls you over, you can hate that policeman the rest of your life, but friend, you're still going to pay that ticket. Quit looking at other Christians and start looking at Christ. Run your own race.

You know the way you encourage me to run my race is by running yours like you ought to run it. That's the way you do it. You don't stop and kick everybody and beat them down and judge them and say, "Hey, you're not spiritual; you're not up with me." What he's telling Daniel is, "Daniel, there's a lot of wicked around Israel, but you stay faithful to me, you follow me all the way to the end and when you get there, there will be a reward for you, Daniel. I'm not promising anything to anybody else. I'm promising it to you." That's the key. Run your race and quit condemning others because they don't run like you. Run your own race. The way to encourage them is to run your race like you ought to run it. Folks, there's so much condemnation in the body of Christ. Sometimes it's hard to handle.

Well, there are six things, Daniel. What do you need to know for the final days? Preserve the book. Aren't you glad Daniel did what he told him to do? Hey, we just studied it, six months we've spent in it. Has it done anything to increase your knowledge? It sure has done a whole lot to increase mine. Daniel, secondly, understand why the tribulation. God's not a mean God. God's a righteous God and God will not look upon sin and Israel has sinned and God has to deal with them and roughly, but to bring them back to Himself. Understand that, Daniel. And thirdly, stop asking questions that don't concern you. You can't figure it all out; this is not for you, it's for them. Just relax.

Fourthly, don't worry about Israel. God will spare it; God's faithful. Not all of them, but many of them. Fifthly, know that God has predetermined on a timetable what will take place in the end event. You don't have to know what they are, you just need to know that God's in charge of it. And finally, sixthly, Daniel, stay faithful. You stay faithful and one day you will rise again. I think that's talking about the bodily resurrection, and the only thing I can figure out is that has got to be with the saints in Christ because these people look forward to the coming of the Messiah, accounted to them as righteousness and so therefore when our bodies are resurrected if we die before the Lord comes, their bodies will be resurrected. Their spirits have gone on. When Jesus led captivity captive and took them on to be with Him. One day their bodies will rise and after they rise, what will come? The judgment, and there's going to be a reward, Daniel, if you will follow me.

Oh, boy. The thing that sticks with me through all of Daniel, I can wipe the sweat off my brow: God's in control. God is in control. And I'd best be faithful because He's not going to change, He's going to remain the same. And one day I want the reward that God has for me.

Well, are you running your race tonight? Or are you too busy worrying about everybody else who's not running theirs? Go on and run your own race. Hey, folks, this church will never be the ideal church. If you're looking for the ideal church, don't join it, you're going to mess it up. We're people in this church. We're going to have some people running the race; we're going to have some people who aren't even on the team. We're going to have some people who haven't figured out to get off the bench yet. All different levels. What's that supposed to do to you? Nothing more than keep you running just like you ought to run. That's the encouragement to the rest of this body. You run it the way you're supposed to run it and God will bless you for it.