

Daniel 06-05-07b

Let's resume our study now in Daniel chapter 11. In our first session this morning, we took a close look at the whole issue of Darius the Mede in Daniel 5.31 versus Darius the Great of history, who was one of the primary kings of the Persian Empire. They call him Darius the Great.

The reason we do this is not only to pay close attention to Scripture, when Scripture says he was made king instead of he became king, and another place in Daniel over in chapter 9, it says that he was, what's the term, received the kingship. He was made king in chapter 9 verse 1. He received the kingship in chapter 5 verse 31. And this type of thing has been documented by archaeology.

I mentioned the Behistun rock and so forth. Why is this important? The point I failed to really emphasize after we finished clearly distinguishing Darius the Mede from Darius the Great is this. The whole secularist, non-inspired Bible viewpoint of this is that the four great empires, everybody acknowledges that Daniel, the book of Daniel, teaches four great world empires.

If it was written in 165 BC, those four empires have to be Babylon, then Media all by itself, the Medes, then the Persians, and then the Greeks. Has to be that way. That's the only way you can squeeze four empires in, starting with Nebuchadnezzar.

So, where is the Median empire in this view that Daniel was written late? Well, it's Darius the Mede. And they want Darius the Mede to be Darius the Great because he is sort of of equal rank with these other three great empire kings like Nebuchadnezzar and like Alexander the Great and his successors in the Greek empire. Well, if Darius the Mede of Daniel 5.31 and Daniel 9.1 is this general, Gubaru, who was 62 years old and ruled for one year and then Cyrus came in and took the throne and later gave it to his son Cambyses, how can you get a 62 year old general ruling for one year to be the shoulders and arms of silver? To be the second great empire? Because that's the only Mede.

Cyrus is manifestly a Persian. And so they have to distort history and try to put a Median kingdom in early so that everything is finished by 165. Well, we have demonstrated to the satisfaction of any reasonable person that Darius the Mede cannot be Darius the Great.

Darius the Mede was a temporary guy who got demoted back down to governor. He continued to govern Palestine as governor after Cyrus returned, but he no longer held the title of king because Cyrus came in and had a big coronation, big ceremony and said, everybody look to me, I'm the big cheese now. And of course, he's the one that's going to put out a decree that's going to let the Jews return and so forth.

Cyrus has a big place in predictive prophecy. He's named well before he comes on the scene by God, but we don't really have time to concentrate on Cyrus in detail. Suffice it to say, if Darius the Mede is the 62 year old general that ruled for one year, that's the empire of the Medes for these people who think Daniel was written in 165.

That's all it can be. Because Darius the Great is Persian. He's the third king.

Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius the Great. That's squarely in the middle of the Persian empire. And that's ridiculous.

It's ridiculous to say that Darius the Mede is the shoulder and arms of silver. He's the second beast. He is of equal stature with Nebuchadnezzar and then the Persians and then the Greeks.

It's nuts. It can't work. It's the Medo-Persian empire.

That's the reason it has shoulders and arms. That's the reason it's the bear with one side raised up higher than the other because the Persian side was much greater than the Median side. But it's the Medo-Persian.

It's all one entity. And Darius the Mede works for the Persian king, Cyrus, who has a Persian son, Cambyses, who is superseded by the Persian Darius I, who is a cousin of Cyrus. Medo-Persian empire.

That's all it can possibly be. Nobody in their right mind can make Gubaru, ruling for a year, the Median empire. The only way they can do it is by distorting history.

And of course, now that the discoveries in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the discoveries in archaeology with the documentation of Nabonidus's son, Belshazzar, and so on, that scholarly speculation has been completely and utterly blown out of the water. However, it is still trotted out by those who are ignorant against Christians who are equally ignorant of developments in archaeology, developments in textual criticism, and who don't know that that argument has been utterly refuted. And you'll still, you know, people who go out and look on websites will say, oh, wow, boy, this Daniel 11, I just don't know.

I mean, that's so detailed, and it does seem like it was written after the fact, and maybe the Bible's, that's just blatant ignorance. If you keep up, then these arguments are just silly. It's water off your windshield.

And as I said, I could make an equally strong case against every secular argument against the Bible, not just Daniel, but against the documentary hypothesis for the books of Moses, against the documentary hypotheses and the nonsense that's been claimed about the Gospels and the Synoptics and John, about Pauline authorship, about Paul creating Christianity all by himself, which you will see on PBS documentaries and so on. Just be aware that this is evidence of the spirit that animates that image. The spirit that animates the secular power grab in human history, represented in those empires, is the spirit of Satan.

He is the spirit of Antichrist, and he has been at work since ancient times, and he's at work today. What does he want to do? He wants to destroy confidence in God's word. He wants to undermine the motivation and the encouragement and the guidance and the direction and the power of that sharp two-edged sword in the hands of Christians.

Wouldn't it be great if he could strike that sword out of your hand? If he could cause you to lose confidence in it so that you don't wield it? If he could get you to drop your shield of faith? Well, there's just too many arguments. There's too much confusion. Secular people like to argue that no two Christians can agree on what the Bible means, therefore it must not mean anything.

Let me just give you one example. What do they claim instead? What is truth? What is fact? Well, it's science. Science is what we can prove.

Science is documented and factual and reality, and it's not some invisible God with some invisible creation and invisible inspiration of a messed up Bible that contradicts itself and has all kinds of errors and we don't know who wrote it and so on. They go on and on about this. You take a look at science.

They like to say, well, we deal in reality. We don't deal with these fantasies and long ago miracles that nobody can prove. It's reality.

You can get copies of the articles in the major scientific journals or even the popular condensations and pre-digested versions of these things. If you go to Scientific American, if you go to Nature Online or Science Online or whatever, spend some time reading science. No two scientists can agree about how macroevolution ostensibly took place.

No two scientists can agree on how abiogenesis, life from the muck, life from non-life, how did it take place? Well, some of them think maybe it was protein bubbles that were formed in the pre-living soup of chemicals and then these protein, oh, it's proto, it was RNA world. There was RNA before there was DNA and it just kind of came together. Well, a meteor came from outer space and had some good carbon molecules on it.

No two of them can agree. When they find a fossil, I was reading last week, they keep finding new fossils and they have found dinosaurs that have feathers. They have found birds that seem to have dinosaur characteristics and so they say, well, the dinosaurs evolved from the birds.

No, no, the birds evolved from the dinosaurs. The birds started out being nurturing and the little baby birds were coming out of the egg. See, there's two different kinds of birds.

I learned this. There's two different kinds of birds. When an egg hatches, the bird is either all covered with feathers and has its eyes open and is ready to go out and start navigating around and being a little independent entity.

Birds like this include chickens and ducks. When ducklings come out, they can just pop right into the water and start swimming, right? But you look at a nest for other birds like robins or swallows and things. Remember how the little birds are? They don't hardly have any feathers.

They have little pin feathers and hairs sticking out of them and their eyes are shut and they get their beaks open and they're just, if their parents aren't around, they're done for. They get to poke worms down and they have to finish developing outside of the egg. Well, there's a

technical scientific name for this.

Two different kinds of birds. Some of them come out ready to roll like little baby alligators. Just turn them loose and they're independent and others require their parents.

Well, scientists can't figure out which one evolved from the other. Because just when they get a case all built up and they say, ah, well, the fully feathered eyes open kind, that started first because nurturing was a thing that evolved and as nurturing instincts evolved in the parents, then they could be born earlier and earlier. Then another group of scientists says, oh, no, no, no, no.

They started out all hairless and blind and with their mouths open and over time it evolved that the ones that were more survivable were the chicks that could start getting around on their own. They can't make up their mind. They can't figure out if dinosaurs evolved from birds or birds evolved from dinosaurs.

They can't figure out if and when they flew. They can't figure out why the wings changed because one group says, well, here's what happened. See, there were these dinosaurs and their little arms as they were sitting on their big haunches with their little arms, their arms were getting kind of useless.

They started using them and as they sort of became more flap-like and more wing-like for some unknown reason, they used them for running. When they were running on their hind legs, they would stick their arms out and this would be like a spoiler and it would give them more traction on the soft ground. They would stick their arms out and the air pressure downward enabled them to run faster and get away.

These are the ones that survived. The ones with the better wings and more downward pressure, they could run faster and survive. These wings developed more and more.

The ones with the best wings lived the longest, had the most kids. Pretty soon you got these great wings with this downward pressure so they can run away from their predatory enemies. Well, that's all great, but when birds fly, the pressure is not down, it's up.

So how did this wing that pushes your feet down on the ground, what did they do, flip them over and suddenly they were flying? Hey, look, I can fly. I mean, the argument is, and so they can't make up their mind because other scientists say, that's just nuts. Why would downward pressure evolve into upward pressure? How could the ones that are surviving better by getting more traction suddenly have their wings reversed and start flying? It just doesn't make any sense.

And so they argue. So I say all of that to say this. For one, it's fun to read about science.

Don't be afraid to learn about science. Read all of the evolutionary stuff you can read. Because for one, it will give you a good chuckle.

Because when they throw rocks at you for your Christian faith and you're believing in things you can't see, read the scientists. They speculate, they imagine, they come up with, they dream up all this wild stuff without a shred of evidence and a shred of proof, and they treat it like fact. And you can say, well, it takes just as much faith for you to believe that muck turned into living things or that some magical property caused these things to get more complex and sight developed out of nowhere and sense of touch and sense of smell and sense of hearing all just developed on their own.

Just stir the components around and surprise, out comes something highly complex and designed and well-developed. Not only did you get a great eye, but you've got a linkage that goes to the brain so that you can interpret what you see. And wow, not only did you develop an ear mechanism with an anvil and a stirrup and the cilia and the liquids and all that, but the brain can interpret it.

And it all just kind of magically happened. Well, that takes a lot of faith. And so when somebody starts saying, well, you believe in a God that you can't see, and you believe in a Bible that you can't prove who wrote it.

And well, your average American walking around believes scientists that they've never met, writing stuff about experiments and finds that they've never seen. They're taking it on faith. They trust the scientists.

Why? Oh, well, you know, science is peer reviewed. Scientists check on each other and reproduce. Have you ever checked it? Have you gone down to it? Were you on the archaeological dig? Did you see where they dug up that dinosaur bone? Were you there when they dated it? Did you verify and vet the way that that bone was dated? I was reading a study and they were saying, oh, we found this fossil and it's umpteen hundred thousand years old.

And this proves a big point about evolution. I said, well, I wonder what are the details? So I got the original scholarly write-up on it. And I started reading through there.

How did they date this bone? Well, way down in the fine print on page 78 of this report, you know how they got the date for this major find that upsets all of the conventional wisdom and further establishes evolution and all that? You know how they got the date from a rock that they found a mile and a half away? Oh, well, this rock. See, they have to have something that is datable. Certain rocks are datable and certain rocks are not.

And so what they had to do, they said, well, we found this fossil in this strata and there was nothing nearby that we could date. But we found the same strata on a hill a mile and a half away and we were able to dig a rock out of that that we could date. And that rock says that this is umpteen hundred thousand years old.

Therefore, our fossil is umpteen. Well, that's not exactly confidence inspiring. Were you there when they did the dating? Were you there when they did the dig? Were you there when that

fossil was created? Your assumptions about how and why and when that fossil was created are built on a stack of assumptions.

It's faith. Well, back to Daniel chapter 11. My point is God is manifest in creation.

God is manifest in history and God is manifest in his word. And we should be enthusiastic and avid students of all of those. There's no reason for Christians to bury their head in the sand and pretend like fossils don't exist or that scientific investigations and evidence don't exist.

There is a harmony between science and the Bible. And if something seems out of harmony, that's just a problem with our understanding. If there are ancient fossils that seem to be hundreds of thousands of years old and people have always thought, well, God created the earth 6,000 years ago and so there's a discrepancy between science and the Bible.

We'll figure it out. It doesn't mean the Bible is wrong. It doesn't mean that science is wrong.

It just means that our understanding isn't complete. How much time does the Bible spend on the time of creation, on when it happened? It doesn't spend hardly any time on it at all. It just says it happened.

Why? The time is not important. If it was important for us to know that, important for us to dwell on it, the Bible would make a big deal out of it. It just says, look, God did it.

God brought it all into being. Now what are you going to do? How are you going to live your life? What's going to happen in the future? Our Christianity looks forward, not backward. And if there's a problem with our reconciling of science and the Bible, it's not that there's a problem in either one.

The problem is with our understanding. Maybe we've interpreted something amiss. Maybe we've misinterpreted the evidence in the rocks.

Maybe we've misinterpreted the evidence in the text. But if the text only spends a few verses on the time of creation, why should we spend hours and days and months and years sweating over it? What about all the rest of the Bible that addresses itself not to creation, but to new creation? Who are you in Christ? What are you going to be at the resurrection? What place will you have in God's plan and purpose in the eternal future? That's the area of our focus. We can have confidence in the scriptures.

They are the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God. Our understanding may not be inerrant and infallible, but God's word is. Well, that's the point that we draw from our first investigation this morning.

Now, in Daniel chapter 11, we talked about how all of this history comes down all the way to verse 35 through the career of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He desecrated the temple. This was back in 163, I believe it is.

I'm digging through my notes here. He set up the abomination of desolation and so forth in the temple. 168.

He died in 163. Antiochus IV Epiphanes was the big king from 175 BC to 163 BC. That's why the critics of Daniel say the account had to have been written around 160 or 165 because it had to be at the close of Antiochus' career after he had already done these terrible things.

Well, he set up the abomination of desolation, sacrificed pigs and all the rest of it in 168 BC. Well, that gets us all the way down in Daniel chapter 11 to verse 35. He corrupts people who are doing wickedly against the covenant.

He corrupts them with flattery. But the people who know their God in verse 32 shall be strong and carry on, bear up under, endure. Great exploits you can see is not in the text.

People who understand shall instruct many. Yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame by captivity and plundering. This is where we left off last time.

Think about this now. Step back and think about that image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision. Antiochus Epiphanes is a part of that image, isn't he? He's in the belly and thighs of brass.

He's in that third section, the Greek Empire and its subsidiaries. Sorry, I had a momentary embolism in my brain there. He's part of the Seleucid Empire.

The Seleucids in Antiochus. The Ptolemies are down in Egypt. The Seleucids are up north.

He's one of the later kings of the north. And he comes down and he attacks the Egyptians and they attack him. And once again, it's all going through the Holy Land.

And then he takes an interest in Jerusalem itself. And he wants to subjugate the Jews. It's kind of like kicking the dog when you get defeated somewhere.

He's upset and he says, well, here's some people I can kick around. And so he focuses his attention on them. Why is this important? Why do we care about this? We've already talked about the importance to the integrity of the Word of God and arguments against it.

But we also want to emphasize that second point. These things are applicable to us because the spirit of Antichrist we know from the New Testament is already at work. It has been at work.

In our Revelation study, we saw the woman who rides the beast, Mystery Babylon, the scarlet harlot. That's what we saw in Revelation. And this taking the mark of the beast, this succumbing to the enticements and the machinations of the beast is not something that's restricted to the 70th week of Daniel in the Tribulation.

This has been going on throughout human history. Satan's machinations have been at work pitting human power and human developments and human circumstances and human

rulership and authority and power against the plan and program of God. Many of these empires have sought to wipe out the Jews.

In Nebuchadnezzar's time, Ezekiel and Daniel are captive. And it was possible, if things had turned a different way, that Nebuchadnezzar could have had the Jews exterminated. But he didn't.

When you get to the Medo-Persian Empire and the times of Esther, there was this plot by Haman to exterminate the Jews. God thwarted that and foiled it. And Haman was hung on the cross that he had made for Mordecai.

When you get to the times of the Greeks, it would have been easy for Antiochus Epiphanes, had God allowed it, to come in and just wipe out the Jews that had returned to the land, to take away their national identity and their national hopes and aspirations. And he tried it. He tried to extinguish their worship of God by desecrating the temple, by passing laws that required a different kind of worship.

He tried to outlaw Judaism. He tried to outlaw sacrificing worship of God in the temple and to replace it with something else. To take away their heart and soul of obedience to God.

And it failed. The Roman Empire is going to come. And you remember the persecution of Christians under the Roman Empire, right? It goes all the way down to the days of Constantine before there is any kind of real tolerance and encouragement of Christianity.

This beast, composed of these four big parts, and culminating in the fifth part, the feet of iron and clay, has a goal. It has an objective. It is power, domination, and with that domination to extinguish and exterminate the people of God.

Now, are you people of God? Are we people of God? We are. Do you not think that that spirit of Antichrist is at work, trying to do the same thing? If it can't extinguish us and exterminate us, to take away our worship. To take away the temple that is in our soul.

That's why there are attacks that are so venomous and so aggressive against the word of God. If Satan, working through secular scholarship, working through criticism and so on, can't take away your motivation and your dedication to the things of God, he's basically sacrificed a pig on the altar in your soul and obliterated your worship. This is the spirit of Antichrist.

These things, look at this, those who do wickedly against the covenant, he shall corrupt with flattery. What's happening today? Why is so much of modern Christianity neutralized and ineffective? It's been flattered out of dedication to the plan and purpose of God. You go and assemble in a big, mega worship service and get lifted up on a wave of emotion.

You get catered to. You go to Sunday school classes that are all about your needs. Let's meet your needs.

Oh, you're single, or you're divorced, or you're a single parent, you're twice divorced, you're gay, you're addicted, you're this, you're that. Whatever your circumstance, we've got a class for you. We're going to meet your needs.

This is the class. Go down the hallway to room 7 and that's the room for recovered alcoholics who are single parents, twice divorced, trying to quit smoking. Go down there and we're going to meet your needs.

We are all about you. We care about you. Oh, the Bible is all about love.

Love one another. And it's a distortion and a twisting of truth by Satan. Satan doesn't abnegate the truth.

Satan doesn't erase the truth. Satan takes the truth and corrupts it. Yes, Christianity is about love, but it is love based on integrity of soul.

And integrity of soul comes from growth in the word of God, faith, and hope. If you take faith and hope out of the equation, your love is going to be shallow and it's going to be like the love of the world. It's going to be based on superficial things.

It's going to be shallow. It's going to be superficial. It is going to be temporary.

It's going to be ephemeral. It's going to be circumstance related. Circumstances change.

Oh, you've got to change your Sunday school class now. You're married. You can't be in the unmarried drug addicts trying to quit smoking.

You've got to go down to the married drug addicts trying to quit smoking. Oh, did you have a child? Well, you've got to go over here because we've got a place for you. We love you.

Nonsense. This is the spirit of Antichrist. What is it trying to do? Those who do wickedly against the covenant.

If you forget the covenant, what are we supposed to be doing? Forget those things which are behind. Set our sights on the mark of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. It is personal spiritual growth to which we dedicate ourselves and everything comes out of that.

Our fellowship is of great quality because it comes from a rehabilitated soul. Our marriages, our parenting, our activities as sons and daughters of our parents are of a high quality and reflect the glory of God because it comes from the power of God, from the power of God's word, from the power of God's spirit in the inner man. It isn't something that you go to a church assembly someplace and try to soak in from the outside.

It is something that God creates, transforming us by the renewing of our minds on the inside. And that is an individual priestly function for every believer. You don't have to be in a group to develop those things.

You can express them in a group, but they have been created by God and by the power of God's word and the power of God's spirit. The word of God pierces to the inside. It doesn't say, everybody grab your sword of the word of God and go use it like a shillelagh on all your fellow believers.

Let's have accountability. Let's have discipleship. Let's have group think.

Let's have small groups. Let's have flock meetings. Let's have this, that and the other.

Let's all mentor one another. God the Holy Spirit is our mentor. God the Holy Spirit is our teacher and our guide.

And it is after we are rehabilitated in the soul that we are ready to be a blessing to others and let them be a blessing to us. But Satan wants to twist that. Satan wants to distort it so that we end up violating our covenant, the covenant of grace if you will.

Not the one that the Calvinists talk about, but the promises of God in grace to those who will ask and seek and knock. Those who will try to walk that narrow way. Those who seek to live in the light as he is in the light.

There are things that God will do. But if we violate that, he will corrupt them with flattery, pleasing words. Well, this sounds good.

Oh, it's so loving. Everyone is so happy. I just can't get enough.

Those praise songs just lift me to the rafters. But there is no substance and Satan deflects and neutralizes believers today just like Antiochus sought to do in the 160s BC. Those of the people who understand shall instruct many.

What are we commanded to do? Speak the truth to one another in love. Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is. Come together, sing songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Appreciation for God and for the things of God. As they contrast with the ugliness and detritus of the world which we see all around us. Those of the people who understand shall instruct many.

Yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame. We don't always prevail in this life. I was horrified when I went to school and military academy and I thought I would excel and I'm a believer and I trust in the word of God and I'm squared away and I understand all the principles of divine establishment and family and nation and I come from a military family and this is going to be great.

I had a horrible time. I fell by sword and flame for my whole first year and I couldn't figure it out. And when you are expecting the crown and you ignore the fact that the path to the crown goes through the cross, you're going to be disappointed.

And there are those who are flattered who say, well here's the way that I prefer, this makes me feel good and instead we need to recognize that for many of us or at phases and points in our life, God is going to put us through a time of testing and it's going to be difficult. There's going to be a sword and there's going to be a flame and we should not be surprised. Peter tells the scattered Jews in the New Testament, he says, don't be surprised at the fiery trial that you're going through.

Paul says the same thing in Romans. We have a momentary light affliction. Jesus said the same thing, in this world you shall have tribulation.

But he said, cheer up, you're going to have tribulation in the world but I've overcome the world. And when this world finishes and we start the next one, everything's going to be different. But there's a purpose and there's a reason.

And God allowed some of the people who understand to fall by the sword and to fall by flame by captivity and plundering. This requires faith from us, doesn't it? If God was handing us blessing and unmitigated victory in every area of life and we were prevailing over all the ne'er-do-wells and the godless, pagan, heartless, characterless, savages around us and we were just promoted and advanced and recognized and feted and applauded all around, that's no test of faith. How would we develop the muscles in our soul that will carry us through the eternal future? God's not going to lock our volition down on positive.

We'll have just as much free choice in the eternal future as we have now. If we pass these tests now, if we persevere and choose God when the chips are down, then no lighter testing, no lighter challenge, no lighter temptation is ever going to turn us, flip us over like turtles later on in the eternal future. But we're stable, we're secure because we develop the strength and we develop the attitude under trial.

If you can be faithful when the chips are down and things are hardest, how easy will it be to be faithful when you're in perfect environment and God is rewarding and blessing? This is our vaccination. This is our insurance. This is our time to solidify and to strengthen and to secure our attitude about God and the things of God.

If this is the worst challenge we ever receive and we're faithful, we're never going to be turned. We'll be like the unfallen angels in heaven. We'll be like Michael and Gabriel.

Nothing is going to change our minds. Well, there is a purpose why people who understand are still going to fall by the sword and flame by captivity and plundering. This is what we're seeing in the first chapter of the book of Job, isn't it? Job was upright.

Job was blameless. Job didn't do anything wrong. Did Job suffer by plundering, by sword and flame? He certainly did.

But there was a purpose in it. We can see that purpose looking at the book. Job couldn't see it at the beginning, but he saw it at the end.

And how did Job end up? Doubly blessed. Doubly secure in his confidence in God. Which Job do you think was more mature and more dedicated to God? The Job before Job chapter 1 or the Job after Job 42? Who do you think was the better man? Who do you think had greater appreciation for God and his wisdom and his purpose? The untested Job or the tested Job? It's the Job that came through that refining fire, isn't it? Hands down.

No question. Did Job lose anything from that trial? Not permanently. Will he have all 20 of his children in the resurrection? Every last one of them.

Jesus told the disciples, anything you lose, for my sake, you're going to have a hundredfold in the kingdom. But it takes faith to believe that and to act on that knowledge. Well, that's what this chapter calls us to.

Now, as I said, Antiochus Epiphanes, this whole history in the first half of this chapter, is a specific instance of a general truth. These rulers, these power struggles, these back and forth conflicts in the political and military realm, they take place in miniature all around us, don't they? People in companies have little power struggles, little one-upsmanship games, little undermining games. People trying to get ahead, people trying to get promoted, people trying to climb over you with their cleats so that they can get something that they want.

In social life, in student life, wherever it may be, we find this same kind of warfare, this same kind of exercise of human ingenuity and ungodly effort and energy and power to try to prevail. What is the lesson we learn from Daniel 11? These people can strut and fret their hour on the stage, but they're all going to die and they're all going to be judged by God and only the gold and silver and precious stones is going to survive. And you and I have the opportunity to stack up treasure in heaven because we know what's going on.

This is a momentary light affliction that is working for us, Romans 8, an eternal weight of glory. These ne'er-do-wells, you think Antiochus has anything by way of an eternal weight of glory? Or Seleucus or any of these other Ptolemies and so forth? They're dust, their time is gone, and there's nothing but judgment awaiting them. You and I are unknown to history, and yet we have the opportunity to shine like lights in the kingdom of the Father, something these people never had.

It's tough to maintain that perspective, but that's what God calls us to. Now, once we get to verse 35, things change. And this is another argument against this goofy idea that somebody in 165 B.C. wrote the book of Daniel.

Because beginning in verse 35, everything up to verse 34, you can match up real closely with the history in the ancient Near East and all the way up through Antiochus IV Epiphanes, or Epiphanes if you prefer. Antiochus the crazy man, Epiphanes. But beginning in verse 35, what does it say? Some of those understandings shall fall to refine them, purify them, and make them white.

That's what's happening today. The spirit of Antichrist is at work. These struggles continue.

Satan is alive and well on planet Earth. Remember old Huzitz wrote that book, Late Great Planet Earth, Hal Lindsey. And then his second follow-up book was Satan is Alive and Well.

And he is. And he's doing the same thing, just on a smaller scale. Those with understanding shall fall, why? To refine them, purify them, and make them white.

Do you want to not go through any refining? Be spared the pain and the fire and the sword? And not be purified? Or do you want to be purified and remain purified for all eternity? It's kind of like saying, do you want that cavity in your tooth? Or do you want to get drilled on it and have it fixed? It shouldn't be a hard choice for us, but it often is. But then look at the end of verse 35. It says, until the time of the end, because it is still for the appointed time.

And this is sort of a break. This is a little marker in the text. Because this is where the history of the first 69 weeks breaks.

There's a gap here. And beginning in verse 36, Then the king shall do according to his own will. And we have jumped forward to the time of the end, to the 70th week.

Now we're looking directly at Antichrist. The king shall do according to his own will. He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god.

Shall speak blasphemies against the god of gods. And shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished. For what has been determined shall be done.

You notice even the language changes here. It talks about the appointed time, the time of the end. What has been appointed shall be done.

This is happening in the time of the end. This is the Antichrist. This now has moved past the Roman Empire to the revived Roman Empire.

And this is the Antichrist, the beast. He shall regard neither the god of his fathers, nor the desire of women. Nor regard any god.

For he shall exalt himself above them all. Some people have looked at verse 37 and tried to claim that the Antichrist is going to be Jewish. Because he doesn't regard the god of his fathers.

But, when you look at Revelation and it says the beast rises out of the sea. The sea represents the unwashed Gentile nations. And I think this just means the god of his fathers.

There's going to be a religious background that the Antichrist comes out of that he is going to disregard. That's the god of his fathers. He doesn't say the god of your fathers.

If this had been your fathers talking to Daniel, then we would know that the Antichrist is Jewish. But, it doesn't seem to be the case. He shall regard neither the god of his fathers, nor the desire

of women.

Nor regard any god. For he shall exalt himself above them all. In their place he shall honor a god of fortresses.

And a god which his fathers did not know, he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. This is sometimes referred back to Antiochus. He made a big deal out of the god Jupiter.

But, this transcends anything that Antiochus ever did. He shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god which he shall acknowledge and advance its glory. And he shall cause them to rule over many and divide the land for gain.

And this really never happened in the time of Antiochus. People have tried to stretch it to make it fit, but it really doesn't. Because we've gone beyond that.

We're looking at the Antichrist. At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him. And even in the end times, you still have this remnant of the king of the south.

The Ptolemies down there. The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind with chariots, horsemen, and many ships. He shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

He shall also enter the glorious land. Many countries shall be overthrown, but these shall escape from his hand. Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. This didn't happen. Antiochus never defeated Egypt.

He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, over all the precious things of Egypt. The Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. But news from the east and the north shall trouble him.

He shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain. That's between the Mediterranean Sea and Jerusalem.

Antiochus never did this. Yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him. Antiochus did not die between the sea and the glorious holy mountain.

Antiochus died way up in Persia, about 2,000 miles away from here. He died in Elimais, which is in the province of Tabae in Persia. He was raiding a temple.

He was trying to get some goodies out of a temple, and he was slain up there. He was nowhere near Palestine when he died. This is talking about a completely different individual.

And that's why you can see in chapter 12, verse 1, At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince, and there shall be a time of trouble. Because we are clearly now in the time of the end. We know probably more about the Antichrist than almost any other secular individual in the Bible.

There is an almost endless list in Pentecost's book here of characteristics that we know about the Antichrist. There are about 29 points in that list. I'll give you just a few of them.

He's going to come in the latter days. Daniel 8.23 He is not going to appear until the day of the Lord. We know this from 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Remember Paul says that day will not come? His manifestation is hindered.

His spirit is at work, but he's not going to show himself until that which hinders is taken out of the way. That's also 2 Thessalonians 2. It is going to be preceded by the great apostasy, the standing away, which is the rapture of the church. 2 Thessalonians 2. He is going to spring from the sea.

Revelation 17.15 This implies that he's from the sea of Gentile nations. But again, you have this idea in Daniel 11 that if the God of his fathers is in fact the God of Israel, maybe he's got some Jewish blood as well. He might be like Herod and be sort of straddling the two so that he can pose as the Messiah.

He will be the head of that final great empire. Daniel 9.26 Revelation 13.1 Revelation 17.12 The seven heads and ten horns are going to be under his authority. He's going to rule all nations.

Revelation 13.8 He's going to do this by way of covenants and alliances. Daniel 8.24 Revelation 17.12 What's the point? This is the same mechanism that has ever been used in human history. That's what the Antichrist is going to use.

It is at work today. It's at work against you and against me. We are in our own little tribulation period.

We are tempted to take the mark of the beast even now. It's incumbent on us to apply these truths, to maintain our faith, despite the sword, despite the fire, and await the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ so that we can stand on that day of judgment. Well, we'll pick up here at the end of Daniel 11 next time.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word.