

Lesson 26 – “Daniel’s Preview”

I want to begin by congratulating Lin on great job covering chapters 7-9. I’m not just saying this because she chose to needle me over my comments to her about the significance of this section of Scripture, but the reality is there is no way to do real justice to last week’s reading and this week’s reading in two 30 minute lectures. I would suspect many of you are feeling a little overwhelmed in today’s reading as there is **A LOT** going on – a glimpse into the spiritual realm with angels, fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecies, and how these prophecies line up with the Book of Revelation. Given there’s so much to cover, I’m going to jump right into Chapter 10.

The time is about 536 B.C., and the Medo-Persian Empire has overthrown the Babylonian Empire. Daniel is believed to be approximately 85 years old. Today’s reading – chapters 10-12 – speaks of one vision – Daniel’s last recorded vision given to him by God. Right at the beginning of today’s reading, we are given some additional insight into this great man of God. He is likely retired from his public office, but what is he doing? He’s mourning, fasting, and praying for three weeks – likely for the people of Israel. For those of you who think your time of usefulness decline as you get older and retire, please use Daniel as an example that until you breathe your final breath, you have great value and can offer great things to the Kingdom of God. Moreover, God can and will present more of Himself to you – if you want.

We don’t know for sure what he is mourning for, but Cyrus had given the clearance for the Jews to return to their homeland, but only an estimated 49,000 chose to return. The rest of the people have apparently become comfortable in the Babylonian ways. As for his fasting, it is interesting to note that instead of what we traditionally think of fasting as not eating anything, his fasting consists of denying

certain foods and drink. Jesus spoke of fasting many times, and fasting is something we should do periodically. However, it is meant to kill or starve us – the core purpose of fasting is to deny the flesh and maintain a consistent focus on seeking the Lord.

At the end of the three weeks, Daniel is standing on the banks of the Tigris River, and he sees a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. Compare this description to what the Apostle John recorded in Revelation 1:13-15, “someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.” The similarities are close enough to safely say Daniel is confronted with the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ.

We then get a glimpse into the quality of Daniel’s friends – they fled because of the terror that overwhelmed them at this sight. Sadly, this is more often than not the case for those who choose to walk closely with the Lord – those in our lives who aren’t following Christ get uncomfortable with our passion and devotion to Him – not really because of us but more likely because they know they’ll be found out for who they really are. This is why when people become born again, there is often a certain amount of changing out of friends.

Even a godly man like Daniel literally loses his strength, goes pale, becomes helpless, and faints at the sight of the Lord. A true encounter with God will do this – we come face to face with His majesty, His holiness, His goodness, His power, and His righteousness, and when we see our sinful and weak selves in contrast to His presence, we can’t help but to collapse before Him. Philippians 2:10-11 confirms this, “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and

under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” I get a chuckle when I hear what people say in all their arrogance and pride what they’re going to do when they see God. I know what they’re going to do – what we’re all going to do – we’re going to drop to our knees and immediately confess Jesus is the Lord. It will be impossible to deny this.

This may sound terrifying, but – just as God doesn’t leave us in our sinful and unforgiven ways when we confess Jesus as Lord – He begins the process of restoring our strength in Him. You can see this as Daniel is touched and spoken to him with words of encouragement, love, and assurance – what is believed by many Bible scholars to be a second being – likely an angel – some suspect it may be Gabriel. He helps Daniel stand up, tells him not to be afraid, and that he is highly esteemed. Don’t we all want to hear that from God or an angel? We do have that – remember what Jesus said about us to His Father in John 17:22-23? “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” We, as believers in Jesus Christ, are loved by God the Father in the same manner as God loves His Son, Jesus. We need to remind ourselves of this regularly as the enemy of our souls is relentlessly lying to us that this isn’t true.

The messenger tells Daniel that his prayers were heard the moment he started, but the answer was delayed. Here we get a sneak peak of the truth of the spiritual world. Apparently, the angelic world – both good and evil – is one of order and rank. On the evil side, some angels – now demons - are given assignments over entire nations. Here we learn of a prince of the Persian kingdom successfully resisted this messenger, and it wasn’t until the archangel Michael stepped in and allowed the messenger to get this message to Daniel. The fact that Michael was involved

emphasizes that this vision is for the Nation of Israel. It is clear that one of Michael's chief assignments is to oversee the Jews.

Heading into Chapter 11, even though this is all one vision, I think it will be helpful to divide it into sections: 1) prophecies fulfilled – verses 1-35, and 2) prophecies unfulfilled verses 36-40 and into Chapter 12. The majority of the prophecies that are fulfilled deal with the time known as the “intertestamental period” or the time between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. Included in your homework was this diagram, which provides a lot of great detail of the key rulers during the period that Chapter 11 covers. Because our time is limited, I'm going to focus on just a few of these people to give you a general feel of the flow of what is going on.

The specifics of the prophecies outlined in Chapter 11 are so extraordinary – especially since they were perfectly fulfilled – that it has led many Bible critics to claim the actual writing of Daniel was done after the events predicted because it was impossible that the prophecies could be so accurate. They're right – with man it was not possible. However, with God all things are possible – including predicting with perfect accuracy future events and players. God is eternal, and He knows everything that is in the future because there is no time with God – everything in the past and everything in the future is visible to Him at the same time. We should draw comfort in this when we're freaking out about what's going to happen in our lives, our children's lives, or anything else in the future. God already knows what's going to happen, He is in control, and He has our best interests in His mind because He loves us.

We begin by learning of four more kings arising in Persia with the 4th who will be far richer than the others. These rulers turned out to be:

- Cambyses II – 530-522 B.C.
- Pseudo-Smerdis – 522-521 B.C.
- Darius Hystaspis – 521-486 B.C.
- Xerxes – 486-465 B.C.

Xerxes used his wealth to mount up an army of 2.5 million and would lead a charge against Greece in 480 B.C. Although he was victorious, the death toll on his army was so great, he could not sustain a continued conquering. Verse 3 speaks of a mighty king who will arise, will rule with great power, and do as he pleases. This mighty king is Alexander the Great who rose to power over the Graeco-Macedonian Empire – he would conquer the Medo-Persian Empire in 333 B.C. Alexander the Great didn't last long as he died, but, as verse 4 incredibly points out, his descendants won't be given the empire, but it will be parceled out to what would be four of his generals.

Again, for the purpose of moving through this in a timely manner, I'm only going to focus on two of the rulers as their kingdoms were the ones that bordered Israel. There were the Kings of the South (Egypt) – the Ptolemys and there were the Kings of the North (Syria) – known as the Seleucids. Beginning in verse 5 and going through verse 19 we go through a series of drama, conflict, and betrayal that would be the envy of any soap opera writer these days. In fact, for those of you who have been listening to me over the years know that I have been able to occasionally find never-seen before photos of certain people from the Bible. Well, I've outdone myself this time as, after great painstaking effort, I have discovered the very first slide show of these soap opera-like verses. The show back then was called "As the Ancient World Turns".

Our story begins with Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (the king of the South), being offered to Antiochus II Theos in an effort to form an alliance between the two kingdoms. There was one hitch – Ptolemy insisted that Antiochus divorce his wife, Laodice – who has a stunning resemblance to Elizabeth Taylor, in order to marry his daughter Berenice. Ptolemy and Berenice have a son, but after two years, Ptolemy died. So Antiochus takes back his former wife, Laodice. Laodice doesn't forget what Antiochus did to her so, she poisons Antiochus and kills Berenice. She doesn't stop there because when Ptolemy and Berenice had a son, it removed the children Laodice had with Antiochus from the line of his rule. So, Laodice kills the son of Antiochus and Berenice, so her son, Seleucus II Callinicus, can return to the line of the throne of Antiochus.

The story doesn't stop there! The new king of Egypt, Ptolemy III Euergetes was the brother of Berenice, and he was intent on defending his sister's honor and avenging her death. He attacked the northern power, won the victory, and accumulated a great amount of wealth. And that concludes our story of what happened in verses 5-7 in our story from *As the Ancient World Turns*.

Through the next several verses we see the battle going on back and forth between the north and the south with poor Israel stuck in the middle getting badly beaten with literally thousands getting killed in the conflicts. In verse 17, we're at about 198-195 B.C., and we learn of another attempt to build an alliance through arranging a marriage between the two kingdoms – like the first time worked out so well! Antiochus the Great makes a treaty with Egypt and gave his daughter, Cleopatra to Ptolemy V Epiphanes in marriage. Now this was pretty creepy because at the time Cleopatra is offered to Ptolemy V Epiphanes, he is 7 years old!

Antiochus the Great's motivations for this alliance, in reality, weren't very pure as his hope was Cleopatra would be able to undermine Epiphanes and give favor to her father, so he could take over. Well, just as the last attempted alliance through

marriage failed, so would this one as Cleopatra would come to love Ptolemy Epiphanes and did not support her father. At verse 18, her father then turned his attention to the Greek isles to vent his frustrations, but he would be defeated by the emerging Roman army.

We arrive at verse 21 and are introduced to a terrible character known as Antiochus Epiphanes – this is about 175 B.C. Lin covered this character very well last week, so I won't spend a lot of time on his exploits. Verse 21 tells us he did not inherit his kingdom – he got his by treachery. In the next couple of verses we learn of his mastery over Egypt partly by force and partly by cunning deceit. Ptolemy IV, the son of Cleopatra was defeated by his subjects in verse 26. In verse 27, Antiochus and Ptolemy vied with each other in treachery. Returning from Egypt, Antiochus attacked Jerusalem, killed 80,000, took 40,000, and sold 40,000 into slavery. In verse 29, Antiochus again invaded Egypt, but the Roman army compelled him to withdraw. In verses 30-31, he vented his anger over his failure on Jerusalem and desecrated the temple.

One of the key points we learn about this “contemptible person” Antiochus Epiphanes is that he is a foreshadowing of the antichrist. We read in verse 31 “His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.” What this meant was Antiochus went to the temple, killed a pig on the altar, smeared the blood on the walls of the temple, and demanded the remainder be drunk by the Jewish priests. He then erected a statue – some say of Zeus and some say of himself – and demanded that it be worshipped.

This account is almost identical to what Daniel describes in verse 27 of chapter 9, “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up

an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. As you may remember from last week, Daniel spoke of the 70 sevens – which accounted for 490 years which would mark the prophetic timeline for the Nation of Israel to finish their transgression – to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, and to bring an everlasting righteousness. Verse 25 of chapter 9 tells us the start of the 490 years was to begin with the order to rebuild Jerusalem. This was order was decreed by Artaxerxes in Nehemiah.

The seven sevens and sixty-two sevens amounted to 483 years and, when you do the math in the number of days based on the Jewish calendar, which is based on 360 days, the end of that 483 years was on April 2, 32 B.C. Now what happened on that day? Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem – receiving for the first time in His public ministry worship as the Messiah – the Anointed One. This is one of the most extraordinary fulfilled prophecies in all of Scripture. Jesus Himself confirmed the truth that the Scriptures foretold the exact date of His arrival in Luke 19:42 “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.”

Daniel, though, tells us that the Anointed One will be put to death and have nothing. This marks a pause in the 490 years. Daniel 9:26b-27 then reveals the details of the final 7 years, “The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.” The antichrist – exactly as Antiochus Ephiphanes, will – midway into the Tribulation will enter the rebuilt temple and demand to be worshipped. This is the event that will kick off the final 3 ½ years known as the Great Tribulation – it will be literally hell on Earth.

Getting back to Chapter 11, verses 2 through 34 chronicles roughly 470 consecutive years of Jewish history – to the tee. When we get to verse 35, we jump to the final seven of Daniel’s 70 sevens. We then get some descriptions of the antichrist, and we can quickly understand the “anti” before the “christ” when comparing descriptions of him vs. descriptions of the real Christ – the Lord Jesus.

Daniel 11:36a: “The king will do as he pleases.” Just like Lucifer who said, “I will be like God,” which caused him to be cast from heaven and become Satan in Isaiah 14:14, antichrist, who is filled with Satan does according to his own will. Compare this to what Jesus says in Luke 22:42, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

Moving onto Daniel 11:36b, “He will exalt and magnify himself above every god”. Compare this to Jesus as described by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:7,8, “rather He made Himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself”. You can see the stark contrast, can’t you? What an amazing Savior we have!

Verse 37 provides some more insight to this person – the antichrist, “He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all.” The first segment of this verse has led many Bible scholars to believe the antichrist will have a Jewish heritage. The next segment indicates one of two things – “the one desired by women” could be referencing the antichrist’s disdain for the Messiah as it was the desire of most Jewish women in those days to be the mother of the Messiah. An alternative interpretation to this segment is that the antichrist may be a homosexual.

Regarding the last segment of verse 37, which says “nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all”, I love what Jon Courson says about this trait of the antichrist, “Antichrist will be his own god. Like antichrist, people who are atheists worship the dumbest god of them all: themselves. ‘I will worship only that

I can understand and comprehend,' they say. And in so saying, they worship their own intellects.”

Verse 40 tells us that the Egyptians will begin to wage war against the antichrist in the middle of the Tribulation period. Now the king of the North is no longer referring to all the Syrian Seleucids leaders but, in the Tribulation, the king of the North is alluding to Russia. Verse 41 speaks of a Beautiful Land – the same as described in Daniel 8:9 - this is Israel. For those of you who have not yet been to Israel, if you can, please go – it is an incredibly beautiful place and the people are largely a beautiful people. It is interesting that Edom, Moab, and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from the Russian invasion – this area is today believed to be Jordan. The reason this is interesting is that the remaining Jews in Revelation are ordered to run to the desert – to the rock city known as Petra – for protection from the Battle of Armageddon.

Verses 44-45 provide us a glimpse who will be there for the Battle of Armageddon. Antichrist will be troubled because he will hear of impending attacks from the east – this is from the Orient – quite possibly China. Revelation 9:16 tells us 200 million men will be coming. The antichrist will set out to defeat Russia and China in the Battle of Armageddon, but our glorious King and Conqueror, Jesus Christ, will put an end to all of this in His second coming.

Chapter 12 continues the story of the Great Tribulation with the archangel, Michael, will come on the scene to protect the people of Israel – one of his primary assignments. Michael stands up, and Revelation 12 gives us some insight as to what happens next. “Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud

voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”

So what Michael the archangel stood up for was to cast Satan out of heaven. Now this may seem strange as most of us think Satan lives in hell. Unfortunately, this is not yet the case. From Job 1, we know that Satan has access to heaven, and he is relentlessly accusing us. Fortunately, we have an Advocate – Jesus Christ – who stands before us before the Father and tells His Father that we are not guilty because we are covered by His righteous blood.

A little further into Revelation 12 beginning at verse 12 we read, “Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.” The woman noted here is the Nation of Israel, and the male child is Jesus Christ.

We then jump to verse 17 of Revelation 12 and learn, “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.” When Michael kicks Satan out of heaven, he will come to earth and take out his anger on Israel and the Tribulation believers. For those of us who know people who are not yet saved because they aren’t ready, they need to know that it’s going to be a whole lot easier to receive Christ today than it will be at this time in the future – it’s going to be hell on earth. That’s why Daniel describes this time in the second half of verse 1 of Chapter 12 as being “a time of distress such has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.”

Verse 2 tells us, “Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.” Again, jumping back to Revelation – this time in chapter 20 – we learn of two resurrections. The first is for those who don’t take the mark of the beast but received the Lord and submitted to His Word – these are those who are saved during the Tribulation period. Their testimonies will be costly, though, as they will be beheaded. However, at the end of the Tribulation period – right before the 1,000 years of peace, those killed in the Tribulation will be resurrected – this is the first resurrection.

At the end of the 1,000 years of peace – known as the Millennium – there will be a second resurrection where the unrighteous will be resurrected. They will be brought to the great white throne judgment, and their entire lives will be up for review – everything they’ve done, not done, and said will be revealed and judged. I don’t know about you, but I praise the Lord this will not be the case for me. For every believer in Jesus, we will participate in a different kind of judgment – at the Bema seat where we will be rewarded for our works and faith.

Daniel then sees the Lord once again above the river and an angel asks the Lord how long it will be before these astonishing things are fulfilled. The Lord says it will be for a time, times, and half a time. A time is equal to one year; times is equal to two years; and half a time is equal to 6 months. Therefore, from the time the antichrist performs his abomination of desolation, it will be 3 ½ years left until Jesus returns in His second coming.

As I said earlier, the Jewish calendar is based on 30 days/month, so 3 ½ years, or 42 months equals 1,260 days. Now verse 11 tells us there will be 1,290 days, so is this a contradiction to what the Lord says? I don’t believe so – it could be that it will take another 30 days after Jesus’ second coming for all the people to gather from the places they were scattered to under antichrist’s persecution. Then verse 12

mentions that those who wait for and reach the end of 1,335 days will be blessed. What is the next 45 days for? It's unclear, but it could be the time necessary for the Lord to clean and restore the temple, all the judgments are through, the image of the beast is gone, and Christ's kingdom is established. Those who make it to this point will be blessed.

Daniel is informed that the words are to be sealed up until the time of the end. Daniel had no clue of what he was writing, so he's told not to worry about it as, in time, there will be knowledge and understanding of what this all means. And that's a question many of you are asking now, "Why do we need to know all this?" You've heard me mention this before – fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest testimonies to the inerrancy of God's Word. No other religion's book dares to make so many predictions of future events as the Bible – and have the perfect accuracy the Bible has. It proves God is true to His Word.

For those of you who have children, grandchildren, or even beloved pets, would you let anyone watch over them? Would you put an ad in Craig's List and simply entrust your loved one's safety you've never met before? Of course not. What do you do? You get to know these people enough to the point that you can be comfortable that they will take good care of your loved ones. This takes time, asking questions, and seeing if they are worthy to be trusted.

Why do we need to study prophecy? It helps us come to believe that God is trustworthy – that we can believe He means what He says and does what He says He's going to do. This study should be helping us to come to know God, and in these perilous times, this is the most important thing any person can do. We learned in today's reading there is a spirit world, and a portion of it is relentlessly feeding us lies. If we're not careful, we'll begin to believe the lies – the Bible speaks of a falling away of the saints in the last days – this will almost certainly be

due to weaker and less informed people being duped into lies about God and His Word. WE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH!

Daniel 11:32b sums up my point “but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.” If we know God, we know the Truth. If we know the Truth, we’ll come to recognize the lies and be able to resist them with the Truth – with the Word of God. That is why we need to be doing this study.

One final point. While this reference paper has helpful information for our study, it’s complex and pretty hard to follow. As I get older and come to understand more about God, the more convinced I make things too complicated – too difficult. Maybe it’s my gender – men like to keep things simple, right ladies? After all this reading, all this studying, all this effort, everything can be summed up in one image. The Cross of Christ presents us the greatest example of Who God is to every human being. It acknowledges the seriousness of sin and the need for judgment in the eyes of God. At the same time, though, it proves God’s compassion on His creation – you and me – that while we were sinners, His only begotten Son died for our sins. His Word said this would happen, and it did happen. He’s alive, and His Word said He would rise again. And He did. When we ready of unfulfilled prophecy, we can rely on the fulfilled prophecy – God’s Word – that it will happen just as assuredly as the fulfilled prophecy happened.

Today’s reading is both exciting and terrifying. We need to praise God for His provision for us that we will not have to go through these terrible times, but we also need to honor God and give Him glory by telling those whom we know that don’t yet know Him that time is rapidly drawing to a close where receiving Him is going to be a whole lot more difficult once the Tribulation period begins. Tell people about the love of God, but, more importantly, show people the love of God by forgiving people for every offense – just as Christ forgave us for all of our offenses – all of our sins. We are to be the Light of Christ in an ever-darkening

world. Let's join together in prayer for God to give us the strength and the love to love others as He loves us.