

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 05.12.2024

GOD'S PLAN FOR HIS PEOPLE - DANIEL 11:1-45

PART 1: Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel tells us: "at the beginning of our study last week, chapters 10,11, and 12 of Daniel all go together and form a single unit. Last week, we looked at the tenth chapter, which serves as a prologue to the vision. The eleventh chapter, which we'll cover today, deals with the vision itself. And the twelfth chapter functions as an epilogue to the vision. I want to warn you, the chapter we're about to study is RICH. While much of the book deals with prophecy, the amount of detail Daniel gets into here goes to another level. There are 135 unique prophecies in this one chapter. Since we don't have time to do an in-depth study of every little prophecy, I'm going to hopscotch my way through the chapter and highlight a few things along the way and then focus on the last ten verses." Let's get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel's sermon?
2. Have you ever wished God would clearly explain His plan for your life? Explain.
3. Do you think it would be easier to be obedient knowing what was to come? Why or why not?

When he asked God for the meaning of the vision, the Lord sent an angel to explain it to Daniel. When the angel showed up, he told Daniel, *'Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future...'* That sentence gives the interpretive key for everything we're about to study. All these prophecies deal with the future of Daniel's people (the Jewish people). Verses 2-35 deal with events that were future at the time but are history for us, and verses 36-45 deal with the last days as well as the rise of someone the Bible calls the anti-christ.

PART 2: Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 11:1-4

1. What details was Daniel given about the rulers of Persia?
2. What would be the result of the fourth king's reign?
3. Pastor Daniel mentioned one positive impact that Alexander the Great had on culture and that was the influence of the Greek language that became the common language of the New Testament. How did this impact the spread of the Gospel during the 1st century?

Daniel 11 provides one of the most detailed prophecies in Scripture. As the centerpiece of the prophecy can be found in Daniel 10-12, this chapter contains the bulk of the prophecy itself. With 11:1 belonging to the previous chapter, the details of the vision began in 11:2. The angel informed Daniel that three more kings would arise in the Persian Empire, and then a fourth, Xerxes I, who would be richer and more powerful than the others, and that would lead to conflict with Greece. The "mighty king" was likely Alexander the Great, marking the rise of the Greek Empire. Following his death, the empire was split into four regions, each ruled—not by his descendants—but by his military successors.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 11:5-12

1. What do these verses tell us about the sinfulness of humans?
2. What themes continued to arise throughout the prophecy? Where else have these themes arisen throughout the Book of Daniel?

Though Gabriel specified that the Greek Empire was split into four regions, he focused only on two (North and South), because Israel was located between them. In the days to come, Israel would experience many conflicts between the two regions. The “king of the South” referred to Ptolemy, the ruler of the southern region, Egypt. Conflict ensued between the Ptolemies (Egypt) and the Seleucids (Syria) until a later successor made a pact by giving the daughter of the Southern king to Antiochus, of the Northern kingdom, in marriage. The peace did not last: conflict continued between the two regions, through many successors, with Israel caught in the middle. Eventually, the Seleucids would gain control over Palestine. We see again and again the emphasis on various rulers rising to power, but ultimately not maintaining it. Though it is easy to get lost in the historical nature of these passages, we are reminded of the futility and fleeting glory of human power. Pride and ambition continue to be the downfall of those who seek their own achievements over God’s glory.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 11:21-35

1. Have you ever had to stand firm in your faith against opposition? Share what happened.
2. What was required of the faithful remnant of God’s people? What significance does that have for us as believers?

All of chapter 11 leads up to these verses. The detailed account of the rulers, conflicts, and successions set the scene for the “contemptible person” described here. The Seleucid, Antiochus Epiphanes, seized power and became one of the greatest threats to the Jewish people, killing and enslaving thousands. He manipulated his way to power and gained favor through bribery and flattery. He would succeed—but only for a time. His grandiose plans of military prowess and political intrigue would ultimately be no match for the God of Israel.

Antiochus defeated the Egyptian king, and again set his heart and strength against the Jewish people. Despite being thwarted by the Romans, the cruel ruler again and again besieged God’s people, seeking to destroy those who opposed him. He drew to his aid those who had forsaken the covenant. Yet, even in the midst of great trial and persecution, true believers stood firm. Those who were wise—who were loyal to God’s covenant—were to instruct others in the truth and encourage them also to remain faithful. One thing was clear: persecution would continue, but not forever. God had a purpose for allowing His covenant people to endure such hardship—to call them back to faithfulness to Him alone.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DANIEL 11:36-45

1. Where else in Scripture do we get glimpses into the final days? What does Scripture tell us?
2. What hope do these verses bring for God’s people?
3. In your opinion regarding the antichrist, what do you think vs 37 means where it states “*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.*” (See Enduring Word Comm. <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/daniel-11/>)

Specifically, these verses describe an individual the Bible calls, ‘the antichrist.’ We’ve already talked about him at several points in our studies throughout the book, but in this section, the picture of him gets filled in with even greater detail. He will step onto the world stage in a time of great uncertainty and usher in a season of peace and prosperity. At the same time, he will ‘magnify himself above every god’ while speaking blasphemous words about the God of heaven. In many ways, the antichrist will be the antithesis of Jesus. Unlike Jesus, who ‘humbled Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant,’ the antichrist will exalt himself above every god and demand that others worship him.

There will be wars, as well as a series of plagues and supernatural judgements that get poured out on the earth. Speaking of this time, Jesus said, ‘For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.’ Things will be so bad that if ‘those days weren’t shortened, no flesh would survive.’

PART 3: Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel stated “When is all of this going to happen? We don’t know, but you must admit that the stage appears to be set for something like this to unfold. It’s also important to remember that its only within the last 75 years that any of this was even possible. That’s because prior to 1948, there was no such thing as Israel. For nearly 2,000 years, Israel didn’t exist, but then, out of the ashes of World War 2, God regathered His people and reestablished the nation. Since that time, there has been upheaval and wars within the region. The whole world is crying out for a solution to the Israeli problem. One day soon, a suave political figure will step onto the world stage with a compelling vision of what’s possible. That’s what will usher the world into this final seven-year period.”

1. How does knowing that God knows the future and has a plan for it encourage you today?
2. God’s sovereign timing will not be thwarted. What do you need to trust God with in this season?
3. Knowing that God has given us insight into the last days, what do we do with this information? How do we effectively share the gospel with those around us?

PRAYER: Take time praise God for the gift of prophecy in His Word. Thank Him for the reminders of His sovereignty and omniscience over all things, both seen and unseen. Praise Him as the Author of history and Sustainer of all creation. Ask the Lord to search your heart for ways that you have strayed from His Word, failed to be faithful, or doubted His plan. Confess those to Him and seek what is true. Pray for an ever-deepening trust in Him and in the plan He has for you. Pray for a sure and steady hope in what is to come, and for the faith to be obedient on the journey.

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” (Matt. 24:15-16)