

Kingdom Down #11 - A Prophetic Sermon About the Future

- Well howdy, my name is Pastor Mark Driscoll, really excited to be with you today, if you've got a Bible, find the Old Testament book of Daniel, chapter 11. In a day that is filled with bad news, you need some good news. And in a day that is filled with uncertainty, you need certainty that God knows and rules the future. Oftentimes, when crisis hits, it makes sense to stop what we are doing, but one thing we cannot stop is opening the word of God and learning from the God of the word. I'm super excited to teach God's word to you today. And in Daniel, chapter 11, to set up the context, it's about two and a half thousand years ago. And the church is closed. Their church was the temple and it was closed. This man, Daniel, couldn't be in the house of God with the people of God. He, in fact, was like we are today, isolated. And he was scared because he did not know the future. All of this is exactly what you and I are experiencing right now, in the present. And the reason that the word of God will speak to your circumstances, as it did Daniel's, is because of this simple fact. The Bible is not old, it's timeless. As a result, it is always timely. And as we get into Daniel 11, you will see five different rulers, you will see 150, maybe 160 years of human history predicted in advance by God, who knows in detail, specifically, everything that will happen in the future, including in our present day. In addition, here are a few things that commentators have said about this great chapter of the Bible. Charles Swindoll, a great Bible teacher, says Daniel 11, where we're at right now, is one of the most remarkable chapters in the entire Bible. Another commentator says this, in the first 35 verses of Daniel 11, there are at least 135 prophecies that have been literally fulfilled and can be corroborated by a study of this period in history. All of that to say Daniel 11 is exactly what we need today. We don't need pithy, what we do need is prophecy. We need to know that there is a God who knows and rules the future. And if our hope is in him then our hope is certain to come to pass according to his design and decree. I've got a lot to cover, I'm gonna talk really fast, if you're gonna try and take notes, good luck. You can go to markdriscoll.org and find my sermon notes, we've got 45 verses to cover preaching to an empty room on prophecy from a book that is two and a half thousand years old. What could possibly go wrong, this will be fun for all of us. Let me start in Daniel, chapter 11, he's gonna look at a succession of nations that God is revealing will rise up in the future from his day. The first is Persia, then Greece, then Israel. Persia, Daniel, chapter 11, verses one and two, "As for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede," so this cements us historically at exactly a date that a king that is confirmed outside of the Bible did rule and reign because the Bible, again, it is history, not just speculation, but it is in fact revelation from the God who rules the future telling us what will come to pass in exact detail, as it does. "I stood up," and this is a divine being here, possibly the angel Gabriel who has come to meet and minister with Daniel. "I stood up to confirm and strengthen him." "And now I will show you the truth." "Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia," now he's predicting the future. "And a fourth shall be far richer than them all." "And when he has become king through his riches, he shall stir up against all the kingdom of Greece." First thing we learn here is that political leaders and spiritual leaders, they get divine support, this divine being, Gabriel, shows up to Daniel, who is the spiritual leader, and speaks of also supporting Darius, the political leader. This is why we are to pray for those who are in government, those who are in authority, those who are making

decisions, even if they don't know the Lord, the Lord knows them. And the Lord can lead and guide them to make good decisions for us all. And he's talking here about a succession of four kings. The last one would be the most prominent and the most prosperous. We know historically that his name is Ahasuerus, also called Xerxes. If you're familiar with the Bible, there is a whole book of the Bible in which he plays a primary part. It is the book of Esther. What the angel is revealing here is the fourth coming of this king and kingdom. Ultimately, this king married Esther, Esther became a believer in God. And there's an entire book of the Bible explaining their relationship and what transpired, the whole point was to get the people of God from Persia to ultimately have freedom so they could get back, open their church, just like we all wanna get our churches open, so that they could worship God, so that Jesus could come. It's the same thing in our day, we wanna get our churches open so that we can worship Jesus and wait for his second coming. All of human history is always moving toward the unveiling of Jesus. And now, ultimately, it moves from Persia, because that's where God's people are, to Greece, and it's then gonna move to Israel. Why does God focus on these nations, because he's a father who loves his kids. And right now his kids aren't in their home in Israel. They're in Persia. And he's going to get them home, ultimately to the temple, where Jesus can be worshiped. So it moves from Persia and this succession of kings and the rule and reign of Esther to, ultimately, then the nation of Greece in versus three through 20. "Then a mighty king shall arise who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills." This is Alexander the Great. He is a famed person in the history of the world. Here we are seeing over 100 years into the future. Right now, almost everyone wishes they knew the future. We're trying to predict the future economically, geo-politically. We're trying to predict the future environmentally and personally. And we're all facing great uncertainty and anxiety because we don't know the future, let me tell you this, God knows the future. God knows the future, God rules the future. And you don't need to know the future, you need to know the one who does, and to trust him to get you through whatever future awaits you. And he is, here, telling us about the coming of Alexander the Great. This man is legendary. His father was the father of Macedon. He and his mother raised him to be a great warrior-king. He was to succeed his father on the throne. And his father's grand vision was to take the Greek Empire and to expand it by conquering Persia. In our day, we have fixed boundaries and nation states. In their day, if you conquered a nation, you inherited all of its people and plunder. And, as a result, there was constant war. And the borders of the nations were quite flexible. Well, it was his father's vision to take the Greek Empire, to conquer the Persian Empire, and to expand and enlarge the empire. Well, then something tragic happened and this is that Alexander the Great's mother and father were executed. They were assassinated and he was a young man when they died, in his 20s. He felt very committed, very impassioned, very emboldened, as the successor and warrior-king, to expand the empire of Greece and to fulfill his father's vision. And he wanted to conquer Persia and he wanted to go conquer Darius the Mede, who was ruling over the joint Medo-Persian Empire. Now, what happens next is recorded by an ancient historian named Josephus. He is Jewish and we writes, in the antiquity of the Jews, he tells the story of the Jewish people. And what he says is that, ultimately, Alexander the Great had a vision or a dream that God revealed to him the future. And that in that vision, he was visited by a man who was wearing purple. And that man told him that it was time to rise up and to move forward to fulfill his father's vision and to conquer the nation of

Persia. He took that as a sign from God. And so he assembled his army and started marching from Greece to Persia to conquer Darius the Mede and the Persian Empire. Along the way, he conquered the nation of Israel. And, as a result, he would have had access to the temple, and when invading kings would overtake the temple, they would loot it and they would plunder it because it was filled with gold and other items that were designated to the worship of our king, Jesus. So when other kings would overtake, they would plunder our king, Jesus. As he was approaching the temple, Alexander the Great, the high priest who was leading the people of God, in that day, he decided that he would put purple on, that the people of God would wear white, and that they would go out to meet Alexander the Great and his army as they were marching in. He knew nothing of the dream or vision that Alexander had. As Alexander was approaching, they were welcoming him peaceably, hoping that he would spare them. As soon as he saw the high priest wearing purple, Alexander the great recognized that that was the man in his vision or dream, that the exact same man wearing the exact same color came out to speak with him. And he was absolutely dumbfounded and astounded because God revealed to him even a God he did not know knew him. And then what we are told is that, and this is just mind-boggling, that the high priest wearing purple that was seen by Alexander in his prophetic revelation then took him into the temple and opened up for him the book of Daniel that had been written over 100 years earlier. And he showed him where a great warrior-king, Alexander, was prophesied to rise up and would go conquer the Persian Empire. He showed him Daniel, chapter eight, he showed him Daniel, chapter 11. And then, ultimately, this was the fulfillment of prophecy. And, as a result, Alexander the Great then offered to sacrifice to the God of the temple, the Lord, Jesus Christ. He then guaranteed religious freedom, for the temple to be open, and the people of God to worship freely so that, ultimately, Jesus could come back. And then he went forward, marching in the prophecy, and fulfilling Daniel, conquering all of the Persian Empire. This is all historically recorded. It occurred in 334 BC. Liberal critics of the Bible will see so many specific prophecies fulfilled, particularly in Daniel 11. They will say it couldn't have been written in advance. It had to have been written after the fact. And that is impossible because the Bible was written, in Daniel, over 100 years before Alexander the Great even lived. And Alexander the Great read Daniel before he fulfilled Daniel. Moral of the story is that the word of God is true, it is written by God, and in Daniel 11, we find a chapter that is so bulletproof that even the most ardent critics of the Bible have no explanation for it. But we do, that is because this is the book that God wrote. All of this happened in 335 BC. Alexander the Great took 35,000 soldiers, he marched in to fight King Darius, and King Darius outnumbered him three to one. His soldiers defeated the Persian army. They killed 20,000 Persian soldiers, they only lost 100 Greek soldiers. And at this point he was in his early 30s, Alexander the Great was 32 or 33. And it is reported that he sat down and wept because there were no more lands to conquer. He was about the same age as the time that Jesus died. Beginning again in verse four, "And as soon as he had arisen, his kingdom shall be broken," so he would go up very fast and come down very fast. "And divided among the four winds," make note of that. Four is important. "But not his posterity," that would be his, his child, "nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these, then the king of the south will be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule." "And his authority shall be a great authority." Looking down the corridor of history, it is, here, telling us

that Alexander the Great would die at a young age after amassing a massive empire. This happened when he was in his early 30s. He was possibly poisoned and he died at a young age. He didn't have any heir and so he had four generals that ruled and reigned over his empire. And, in fulfillment of this prophecy of four, each of these generals took leadership over their region, taking the one united kingdom and turning it into four divided kingdoms. They then formed alliances in the north and in the south. And in the middle was God's people, Israel. So when it speaks of the north and the south, it's talking here about a war between the north and the south that would last for over 150 years. And in the middle would be God's people, imagine two nations at war, and you live in the middle. You are literally caught in the crossfire. And this all happened in 312 BC. All of this happened. It's all recorded historically. Chapter 11, verse six, "After some years," so time will pass, "they will make an alliance." "And the daughter of the king shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement." "But she shall not retain the strength of her arm." "And he and his arm shall not endure." "But she shall be given up and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported her in those times." "And from a branch from her roots, one shall arise in his place." So there's going to be a new king. "He shall come against an army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail, he shall also carry off, to Egypt, their gods, with their metal images, their precious vessels of silver and gold." "And for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north." What happens here is prophesied in advance and history records it. There's a king in the north, there's a king in the south, I'm not gonna get into all the names, you will forget them, and to be honest with you, I probably will mispronounce them. Nonetheless, king of the north, king of the south, it's prophesying war here. And it's prophesying that there would be some intrigue that would happen within the family. Well, one of the kings died. His son in there then inherited the throne because it was a dynasty. And then they were at war against the other king and kingdom. And so, in an effort to seek peace, they created something that was a marriage of convenience. In that day, if, if two groups were at war and they wanted to make peace and form an alliance, then the kings would intermarry or have their children intermarry, thereby linking the two kingdoms together, bringing peace and sort of a super empire. Well, so what happens, it's prophesied here that one king would go down, that his son would rise up, and that an alliance would be formed. The way this worked, the one king, who had a wife, and a son, who was the heir to the throne, that king divorced that woman and disowned that child. That divorced woman, her name is Laodice. And, ultimately, she was very, very angry because now the king who divorced her and disowned the heir, her son, he married the daughter of the other king. That gal's name is Berenice. Berenice got pregnant. And now there is a male son who will be an heir to take over the kingdom and rule as the king. The bitter ex-wife, this is crazy, this is "Days of our Hebrew Lives," that's exactly what we're into here. What happens then is the bitter ex-wife gets very frustrated so she has her ex-husband murdered, his new wife murdered, and their son murdered, so that her son could assume the throne and expand his empire. It all happened. That's how it all went down, as God intended and prophesied. What happens then is that this son becomes very, very powerful as the king. He builds a fortress. He goes and plunders, he enriches, and he and his mother rule and reign. If some of you already have a headache, we've only begun. The whole point is this, you and I have no idea how complicated it is to be God, how many details that God is working in and through. But know this, God is in the big storyline

of history. And he's in the little details along the way, verse nine, "Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but shall return to his own land." "His sons," so we're now talking generations of ruling and reigning, "shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress." "Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north." "And he shall raise a great multitude but it shall be given into his hand." "And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted." "And he shall be cast down tens of thousands but shall not prevail, for the king of the north shall rise against, shall again raise a multitude greater than the first." "And after some years, he shall come on with an army and abundant supplies, in those times, many shall rise against the king of the south." "And the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail, then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city." "And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand." "But he who comes against him shall do as he wills and none shall stand before him." "And he shall stand in the glorious land with destruction in his hand." Usually, when Daniel is preached, if it is preached, they stop at chapter six. From there, it is incredibly complicated. But here's the big idea. God knows the future, God rules the future, God controls the future, God is in the details, and what you and I don't need right now is just a pithy statement, we need a prophetic statement. We don't need to just hear, well, God is in charge, we need to know that we know that we know that the God of heaven rules over the details of mankind on the Earth. And we see that here with great specificity. Don't get lost in all the details. Maintain your perspective trusting that God is in and over and through all of human history, even the darkest, most frightful times when churches are closed. Again, that is the context of Daniel 11. Well, all of this was fulfilled. There was a king who invaded Egypt. And he lost. He was taken down. And he returned to his own land, that fulfilled Daniel 11:9. His three sons then took the throne after he was murdered, that fulfills verses 10 and 11. And then what happens is this king, he is pushed back to the southern border of Israel. There is a great conflict. A great multitude enters into battle, tens of thousands are lost. And then this man, who was defeated, he ultimately withdraws and retreats for a season to rebuild his army. And then he enlists the Jewish soldiers. They won a war, they established a fortified city. And they ruled over the beautiful land of Israel, all fulfilled. Now, here's why it's important. The centerpiece of history is Jesus Christ. And, ultimately, the Bible prophesized that Jesus will come to the temple in Jerusalem. That's why it was so important for the people of God to get back to Israel, to get the temple open, to worship God so that Jesus Christ could come. That's why all of human history is driving toward the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ, it's why there are plagues and wars and conflicts, both preceding the first coming and the second coming of Jesus Christ. The good news is that God rules and reigns and that God ultimately did bring Jesus the first time. And all of this was fulfilled. And he will, of course, send Jesus the second time. And we're awaiting that great, glorious, and grand fulfillment. And when it's talking here about the beautiful land, it's talking about the land of Israel. Some people have asked where is America in prophecy? I hate to tell ya, it's not. I love our nation, I'm glad for religious liberty and freedom. But at the end of the day, this is not, our nation is not the center of prophecy in history. The nation of Israel is. And you and I are not the center of history, Jesus Christ is. The Bible is for us

but it's about him. That's ultimately where all is driving. And so, for you and I, we need not just get caught up in our local or national political affairs, but we also need to keep an eye on what is happening spiritually around the world as we're awaiting the second coming of Jesus. Verse 17. The next event that is prophesied, upwards of a few hundred years in advance. And just think of it for a moment. Wouldn't it be awesome to know the future right now? We all wish we could know the future. God does. "He shall set his face to come with the strength of the whole kingdom." "He shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them." "He shall give the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom but it shall not stand or be to his advantage." What happens, they form another political alliance. One king, he ultimately is dishonest, and he wants to overtake the other king and have basically a massive empire. So what he decides is I'll give my daughter in marriage to that king. And then my daughter will be loyal to me, she will betray him, and then we will take the kingdom. You may have heard of this girl prophesied. Here, her name is Cleopatra. You've heard the story of Cleopatra. Her father fulfilled this prophecy, giving her in marriage for a political alliance. And the story is well-known that, ultimately, she loved her husband and was loyal to him, she refused to betray her father, and, as a result, she sided with her husband. Afterwards, verse 18, "He shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them." "But a commander shall put an end to his insolence, indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him." "Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall and shall not be found, then shall arise, in his place, one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom, but within a few days, he will be broken neither in anger nor in battle." Well, this king, Antiochus III, or Antiochus the Great, he marched west toward the coastlands, history records that verse 18 was fulfilled. He was defeated multiple times as was prophesied in verse 19. He was on his way home and he died en route. His son inherited a massive debt to the Roman Empire, so he sent tax collectors through Israel, the jewel of the kingdom. And he tried to plunder the temple, but God had him killed. He died mysteriously, possibly by poisoning. And it was prophesied that he would die early but not by anger or battle. No one knows why he died or how he died. Possibly poisoning. Here's what I'm telling you, God doesn't know just when you're gonna die, but how you are gonna die. God doesn't just know when you're gonna marry, but who you're gonna marry. God not only knows if you will get divorced, he knows who you will divorce. What I'm telling you here is that God has incredible specificity in prophecy, regarding history. And it doesn't mean that you and I are automatons, that we don't make decisions, or we're just puppets on strings. We are morally responsible for the decisions that we make, as they were. But, ultimately, God will bring everything to his purposes, I'll give you a simple analogy that a preacher used some years ago, imagine you're on a huge ship. And there are lots of people on this ship. And they get to make a lot of decisions within the limitations of the ship, what they eat, what they drink, what they do, how they behave, and they are morally responsible for all of their decisions. That is you and I, and that is these people in Daniel. But, ultimately, the captain of the ship will bring it to the intended port that he has chosen. And it doesn't matter what decisions are made on the ship. Ultimately, the captain of the ship determines where it is going. That is the picture of prophecy from human history. These people, and you and I, we make decisions and we are responsible for them, our lives and choices do matter. But, ultimately, God captains the ship of human history and of your personal destiny. And his goal is to get all of his people face-to-face with

Jesus Christ in the kingdom of God as the happy harbor, together forever. And that's where all of history is going. So he goes from Persia, where God's people are, to Greece, ultimately to Israel. Why does Greece matter? Because, ultimately, by the time that Jesus comes, the Roman Empire will be ruling and reigning. The nation of Israel, which we'll explore in a moment, will be under the rule of the Roman Empire. One thing the Roman Empire did, as the largest empire in its history of the world to that point, it created a road system and peace so that people, goods, and information could flow freely. What they adopted as the language of the Roman Empire was Greek language. It was the language of the Greeks. The reason why this is important, God got his people out of Persia. He got them the language of the Greeks and then he brought them home to Israel under the rule of the Roman Empire so that the Lord Jesus could come. And when Jesus lived and died and rose for our sin, then the language of the Greeks was available to God's people so that the maximum number of people could hear about Jesus. Your New Testament is written in Greek. It's in the language of the Greeks. And this message was sent forth on the roads of Rome. All of that to say that, though we see lots of complex details over it all, God's plan is to tell people about Jesus, getting the church open, and the people ready for him to come. What was true in their day is true in our day, the word of God needs to go out until the son of God shows up. That brings us to Israel, which is the people of God. Chapter 11, verse 21. And now it gets dark. "In his place shall arise a contemptible person," a horrible person, "to whom royal majesty has not been given." He has no right to be a king. "He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." "Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant." This person is historically known as Antiochus Epiphanes. Antiochus means god-man. What he decided is that he would be the god-man, now, we worship Jesus Christ as the god-man. He is God become a man. What this is, this is a man who was a demonic counterfeit, everything that God creates, Satan counterfeits. And, ultimately, this is the counterfeit Jesus. He is called, by many, the antichrist of the Old Testament. History records him as rising to power around 175 BC. As was prophesied, he was not in the bloodline of a royal family. He overthrew his nephew and stole the throne. And he, here, talks about the overthrowing of the prince of the covenant. And what that was, there was a godly priest in the temple in Rome, worshiping God, waiting for Jesus. His name was Onias. And, as a result of his devotion to God, Antiochus Epiphanes, and Epiphanes means madman. So he called himself the god-man, Antiochus. The people called him Epiphanes, the madman, he thinks he's the god-man, but he's the madman. He had the godly prince of the covenant discarded, removed as the high priest, and then a godless, demonic pagan high priest put in his place. History records that long after Daniel died, all of this came to pass exactly as God revealed. Verse 23. "And from that time an alliance is made with him, he shall act deceitfully." "And he shall become strong with a small people." "Without warning, he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his father's fathers have done." He comes from a bloodthirsty, horrific family line. And he is the worst of the worst. "Scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods," let me explain that in a moment. "He shall devise plans against strongholds but only for a time." "And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the kings of the south with a great army, and the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him." "Even those who eat his food shall break him," betrayal, "his army shall be swept away, and many

shall fall down, slain." Well, Antiochus Epiphanes, the antichrist of the Old Testament, he was a bloodthirsty, ruthless man. And what he would do, he would enter into a peace treaty with someone. And as soon as they let their guard down, he would attack and slaughter them. That's who he was. And it says here that he would continually just roll over people, he's like blitzkrieg of Nazi Germany, he is the Adolf Hitler of the Old Testament. He is rolling over nations and he is trying to eradicate Jewish people from the Earth. And he is trying to shut down the temple and stop the worship of God, he is a horrible, demonic man, he is filled with the power of Satan. And that, ultimately, as he rolls forward and destroys nations, it says that he did something that his fathers and his father's fathers could not do. And that was to gain the loyalty of the people, how did he do that? It says through plunder, so here's how we work. Think of it in this way, let me give you a modern corollary to Antiochus Epiphanes. He ruled and reigned like a drug cartel. Drug cartels are notoriously bloodthirsty, you cannot, in any regard, believe any alliance that is formed, everything is intrigue and betrayal, everyone is dangerous. But in countries where people are very poor and they've been subjugated to difficult conditions, the way that a cartel leader will work is as they amass their empire, they will take some of their wealth and they will give it to the people to thereby gain the allegiance and alliance of the people. That's exactly what Antiochus Epiphanes does. He's working with the same mentality as the head of a drug cartel. He's going to do evil things and kill people. And then those who are closest to him and need him will reap some of the reward of the plunder. And, as a result of this great cash hole, they will have a heart for him and protect him. That's exactly how this works. Imagine an entire government run by a drug cartel. That's Antiochus Epiphanes. It says it would grow stronger and we would march against the king of the south and win because the man he was fighting against would ultimately be betrayed. And that was the king of Egypt. Historically, he was betrayed, and, as a result, he lost a war that he should have won. Verse 27. "And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil." Not everybody's good, not everybody's got a good heart, not everybody is safe. Not everybody is loving, not everybody is trustworthy. There are some people who are evil. And these men are evil. "And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil." "They shall speak lies at the same table." They're gonna sit down to negotiate and they're gonna try and take advantage of each other and lie to one another. "But to no avail." They're never going to reach an agreement. "For the end is yet to be at the appointed time, and he shall return to his land with great wealth." "But his heart shall be set against the holy covenant." "And he shall, and he shall work his will and return to his own land." Now, historically, these two kings, they sat down, literally, at a table. I mean, just think of this, God says not only will these two guys sit down, they will sit down at a table. And they are both evil men trying to take advantage of each other. As a result, they will never strike a deal, and they will get up and they will move forward, marching forward with their armies. All of this happened historically. Antiochus Epiphanes is a well man, well-known man, I should say, historically, here's what I'm telling you. God even knows 100, 200 years in the future, two people sitting, and sitting at a table. I'm telling you that God knows in that kind of specificity and detail. Jesus tells us that God knows every hair on our head. He knows every detail of human history. And what happens, then, is Antiochus Epiphanes, he's very frustrated 'cause he can't get this deal. And, as a result, as he's marching home, guess what, he's gotta go past Israel. Again, the north and the south are constantly at war. Israel's in the middle, so you're from your kingdom to the other to

negotiate a deal. On your way home, you're passing by Israel. And he decides, you know what, I'm gonna go attack God's people. I hate them anyways. I hear their temple's filled with gold. I may as well have a profit on the way home. And this is recorded as one of the darkest moments in Jewish history. In three days, he slaughtered 80,000 Jewish civilians, God's people. The family line through whom Jesus Christ would come. He was seeking to eradicate the worship of God, the worship of Jesus, from the Earth. He wanted the worshipers of God killed. He wanted the temple of God shut down. He didn't want anyone to be hearing about the coming of Jesus and he would set himself up as the counterfeit Jesus. He slaughtered women, children, he slaughtered pregnant women. He overtook the temple. Instead of the worship of God, he had a false, pagan, demonic priest start to worship Zeus. And in the place where lambs were slain, showing Jesus, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, all of this was foreshadowing and preparing people for Jesus. He instead took a pig, which was an unclean animal, and had it sacrificed to the demon god, Zeus. This was called the abomination. Jesus calls this the abomination that causes desolation. As a demonic, fake, pagan Jesus takes over the temple, sets in a fake, demonic priest, and offers a pig as a sacrifice to a demon god, in essence saying your Jesus is a pig to me. It's desolation, the people of God flee. Verse 32. "He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant." So there will be believers who join him because it is expedient. "But the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action," let me tell you about these guys in a moment. "And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though, for some days, they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder," God's people are gonna lose for a while, and then they're gonna win. "When they stumble, they shall receive a little help, and many shall join themselves to them with flattery." "And some of the wise shall stumble so that they may be refined, purified, and made white until the time of the end, for it still awaits its appointed time." If the temple is closed, Jesus can't come. If the Jewish people are destroyed, Jesus can't come. All of this is to stop the coming of Jesus. Now what happens here is prophesied in advance and it is recorded in a book called Maccabees, there's two books, I and II Maccabees. In the Jewish Bible, the Old Testament is complete. The Christians have the same Jewish Old Testament. We put a few books together, like Ezra and Nehemiah, but the content of the Christian Bible is the same as the Jewish Bible. What happened with the Catholic Church, and I'm not hating on Catholics, but during the time of the Reformation, there was a conflict. The Catholic Church taught some things based upon tradition that you can't find in scripture. So they grabbed some books and threw them into the Bible. And those books of the Bible are not supposed to be books of the Bible, but many of them, if not most of them, are not bad books, they're just not Bible books. In our day, lots of people read C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and, and that's fine and good, and it's great, just don't put those books in the Bible. These were very popular books for God's people and two of these books are called I and II Maccabees. You could find them in the, you could find them online, you could also find them in the, in the Catholic version of the Bible. And what these are, these are history books, right, they're not divinely inspired word of God, but they're accurate history. And I and II Maccabees is telling us exactly what happened as was prophesied in Daniel 11. So here's the story. There was a country priest. Check his name. Matthias. Simple, humble country priest. Just like John the Baptizer's dad. He would be like that. He comes to the temple to worship God. That's his job. He's a pastor. The political leadership was Antiochus Epiphanes

and the soldiers in temple said, "You will offer a pagan sacrifice to a demon god." And Matthias said, "There is no way I'm doing that." "I will not worship a false god in the house of God." He was a resolute and devout man. Another priest alongside of him stood and stepped forward and said, "Well, I'll offer the sacrifice." This man is willing to, to do what is evil in the sight of God to gain favor with an evil king. The moral of the story is that sometimes you've either gotta offend them or you gotta offend him. Matthias decided I will offend you, I will not offend him. This other unknown priest basically said I will offend him, I will not offend you. He has fear of man, we would say. As he steps forward, this other priest, to offer the sacrifice, Matthias stepped forward and killed him. Put him down, dead, in the temple. No false god will be worshiped in the house of God. And then this is recorded in I Maccabees, chapter two, verse 27. He said, and I quote, "Let everyone who is zealous for the law and who stands by the covenant follow me." He made himself the leader of the insurrection. The first five people to stand with him and fight alongside of him, his five sons. I, I started crying when I read this. Their names were John, Simon, Judah, Eleazar, and Jonathan. They said, "Dad, if you're gonna worship God and fight to keep the church open, we're gonna worship God and fight to keep the church open." This is a warrior ministry family. This is a warrior ministry family, I know for a fact my five kids would be the first to enlist. They would be the first to enlist. That was Matthias and his five sons. He had godly, strong, resilient, devoted sons. And the people nicknamed them the Maccabees. That's where we get I and II Maccabees. I'll give you a little guess, what do you think Maccabees means? It means the hammer. This dude and his sons, they are the hammer. And they're gonna go hammer Antiochus Epiphanes. A rural priest with five sons. He and his boys went out, the Maccabees did, and they recruited Jewish men to fight with them. They tore down idols. They killed idolaters. They declared war. And they demanded that the church, or the temple, of God be kept pure for the worship of God because they were waiting for Jesus. Ultimately, they killed the father, Matthias, but just prior to that, he appointed his son, Judah, to take his place. And he stepped right in. Well, at this point, Antiochus was getting embarrassed, because now this little group of religious people was defeating his army. So he sent in 60,000 elite soldiers, the best of the best. And his goal was to destroy the people of God and to take back the temple of God so that he could be worshiped as God. What happens then is unbelievable. Judah, succeeding his father, Matthias, recruited 7,000 men. So here's what you're looking at. Imagine 7,000 men are recruited from the churches in your area. And they're up against an invading army of 60,000 trained, armed soldiers. Guess who won. God's people won. And what's amazing is, before they went into battle, Maccabees records that the soldiers got together, led by the sons, and they prayed. God, we need your help today, we're going to war. But this is your fight, not ours, so be with us in the fight. And they won, 7,000 believers destroyed 60,000 demonic soldiers. It just goes to show it ain't the, the size of the men in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the men that counts. And these guys fought. And what they did, then, they, they purged the apostasy from Israel. Because, again, the book of Daniel, for 70 years, they were in Babylon, multiple generations are born there. And then they are allowed to return home but the problem is they still think and act in pagan ways. And, therefore, they're not ready to open the church, the temple, and to worship Jesus, and await his coming. And so these men use this opportunity to purify the church, so let me say this, crisis is an opportunity to purify the church. We're in a crisis and it's an opportunity to purify the church. Meaning that those who are lukewarm, they need to

warm up. Those who have not really given or served the cause of Christ but claim the salvation of Christ, it is time for them to practice what they preach and to preach what they practice. For those who have some sort of minor commitment to the Bible or believe that it is filled with air or think that God changed his mind, it is time to purify the church. They were getting ready for a great harvest through hardship. We're getting ready for a great harvest through hardship. They were waiting to get their church open but first the people needed to purify themselves. We are waiting to get our churches open, in the mean time, it's an opportunity for us all to purify ourselves. Well, ultimately, not only did the Maccabees, the hammer, hammer Antiochus Epiphanes, the madman who thought he was the god-man, God ultimately killed him. It was prophesied earlier in Daniel that he would be brought to death but not by human hands, history records he literally died of a punctured bowel. They have no explanation. Literally, his whole body got toxic and he died. Because, ultimately, he was taken down by the finger of God. Ultimately, he was taken down by the finger of God. As God's people went into the temple, they got to open their church again, our churches have been closed a while, we don't know how long until they're open. Their church had been closed for 70 years. And they finally were a purified people and now they're finally home. And now they can go worship God freely, and it's gonna be a great day when the churches open and we who are pastors get to see the people we love so dearly again. 'Til then, we thank God for technology. But when they gathered together after 70 years, they were so excited they created a holiday called Hanukah. May have heard of it. They created a holiday called Hanukah because the light was on in the temple. And that was the awaiting of Jesus Christ who is the light of the world. All of this is about Jesus, it's all about Jesus. It's always about Jesus. This ends and then there is a period of history that you and I are living in. Between this section of Daniel and the next section of Daniel is a few-thousand-year gap in human history. You and I live in that gap. Everything that God said would happen, happened. Just up 'til this point, 135 prophecies fulfilled in 35 verses. God can be trusted. What we're now going to study is the future, what is still coming. What is still coming. We live in the time between the times. And this is the antichrist. "And the king shall do as he wills." "He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god." The spirit of antichrist continues in every age. And, ultimately, in the end, the spirit of antichrist is going to seek to do the same thing that Antiochus Epiphanes did in the Old Testament, the same thing that Satan did in heaven, that is take down God and become the new God. "He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god." "And he shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods." "He shall prosper." This is gonna be lucrative business, "'til the indignation is accomplished, for what is decreed shall be done." "He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers." He creates his own new religion. Some of you have done that. You've created your own hodge-podge, crazy spirituality, and you just need to know it's the spirit of antichrist. "For what is decreed shall be done, he shall pay no attention to the God of his fathers or to the one beloved by women." "He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all." "He shall honor the god of fortress instead of these," he, he worships violence. He worships war. "A god whom his fathers did not know, he shall honor with gold, silver, precious stones, and costly gifts." He's satanic. "He shall deal with the strongest fortress with the help of a foreign god," I believe that's the power of Satan. "Those who acknowledge him, he shall load with honor." It is going to be, in the future, as we enter the end of days, more profitable to be evil. More profitable to be evil. That's

why, right now, churches are closed, abortion clinics are open. I'll just say it. "Those who acknowledge him, he shall load with honor." "He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price." "At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen and with many ships," we're talking here about a great battle at the end of time. "And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through." "He shall come into the glorious land," Israel. "And tens of thousands shall fall." Bloodshed and war. "But these shall be delivered out of his hand, Edom and Moab," the main parts of the Ammonites, it's geographic locals. "He shall stretch out his hand against the countries and the land of Egypt shall not escape." "He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and silver and of all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train." So the point is that, at the end, as we get closer to the end, the same thing that has been happening continues to happen. The Bible is not just about what happened but what always happens. The Bible tells us that it were, behind the kings and the kingdoms and the nations and the rulers, are demonic powers, principalities, and spirits. That these demonic forces are trying in every generation to set up a counterfeit kingdom of God. A king other than Jesus, some form of worship other than worship according to the scriptures. And all of this is driven by a demonic spirit in place of the Holy Spirit. Everything that God creates, Satan counterfeits. And this is true continually and is the culmination of history. "But news from the east and the north shall alarm him." "And he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction." A great battle. "And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain," that is in Israel. "Yet he shall come to his end with none to help him." This is the antichrist. At work, through all of human history, is the spirit of antichrist. I John says that many antichrists have come. Anti means to oppose and replace. That's what Satan is always trying to do. He's always trying to oppose Jesus and replace Jesus. That's what he's always trying to do. Always trying to do. I'll give you a very practical example. It is controversial but we have nothing else to do this morning. And so I'll just, I'll just say it. I got a call, not long ago, from a family that we know and love. And they have a child who is around five or six years of age, in kindergarten. And came home from school with an entire curriculum on human sexuality and gender spectrum and gender identity. And was being told to explore their sexuality and, and to determine their own gender. Well, the believing parents, of course, were very mortified because, let me just say this. No five or six-year-old child is sexual unless something abusive has happened. Our goal is not to make five and six-year-olds sexual or sexually aware or sexually curious. That's evil. The parents called the school and said, "We are Christians, we believe the word of God and our authority is, you know, the Lord." "And, you know, we wanna be reasonable, but, our, we can't have our child being taught this." "We can't agree with that." "It conflicts with our beliefs, it conflicts with our convictions." And they were told by the school, well, actually, this is a curriculum that now goes from kindergarten to graduation. So what, or, they didn't say it this way, but we're working on 13 years of brainwashing your child. We're working on 13 years of brainwashing your child. And if they want to graduate and go to the next grade, this is a class that they have to pass. That is the spirit of antichrist. That is the spirit of antichrist. It's saying that in the life of this child and this family, there is an authority that has exalted itself, and is using all the power at its disposal to be against God and to replace God. Ultimately, the spirit of antichrist is constantly at work. There is an antichrist, a literal

demonically-possessed person who will rise up at the end, that will set up some sort of one world empire, geo-political, religious, spiritual, economic, all combined. But along the way, there are lots of antichrists, and the spirit of antichrist is constantly at work. Trying to get God's people to submit or surrender or be subdued by some spirit that is not the spirit of God. It's teaching, it is commitments, it is profitability that is against and seeking to replace Jesus Christ as Lord. And you need to know that this has been the case since heaven. There was a war in heaven where Satan, the spirit of antichrist, wanted to be against and take down and replace Jesus. He did the same thing in the garden with our first parents, trying to take down and replace God as their highest authority. He is at work throughout all of human history and it will culminate at the end of days. And how will he come to an end? None will help him. That, ultimately, God is going to take care of this person, this being, and this problem. Let me quote Jesus. Matthew 24, some of you will read all of this and say, "I'm not sure about Daniel, I'm not sure about prophecy, I'm not sure about the last days and the antichrist and the, the war behind the war, the, the unseen realm and all that is happening that only God sees, I'm not sure." Trust Jesus. The most trustworthy person in the history of the world is Jesus Christ. The most selfless person in the history of the world is Jesus Christ, the most generous person in the history of the world is Jesus Christ. Here's what he said. Matthew 24, "When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet, Daniel..." Jesus is, here, prophesying the future. He said what happened in the days prophesied by Daniel will happen in the last days. "Standing in the holy place," that, ultimately, the antichrist is going to want to take down Jesus as Lord and replace the worship of Jesus with the worship of himself. Let me just say this. The spirit of antichrist always exists where people worship themselves. The reason that antichrist and the spirit of antichrist wants people to worship him as God is because he worships himself as God. If you think you're an individual that is totally autonomous, that you only give an account for yourself, and that your highest calling is to be true to yourself, you have the spirit of antichrist. You were made by God, you were made for God, you will be judged by God, and you will spend eternity sentenced by God. The center of history is not you, it is the Lord, Jesus Christ. The ultimate authority is not you, it is the Lord, Jesus Christ. And if you wake up every morning, look in the mirror, and greet your God, you have the spirit of antichrist. Jesus says, "Then will appear, in heaven, the sign of the son of man." That's a title that he gives himself from Daniel 7. It's his favorite title, he refers to himself by that title, if memory serves me correct, more than 70 times. "And then all the tribes of the Earth will mourn and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Here's what I'm telling you. Everything that God prophesied came true. We're now in the time between the times. And just as Daniel got to peer into the future prophetically, you can I get to peer into the future prophetically, and here's what Jesus says. Things will get worse. The spirit of antichrist will rise up. Life for believers will get harder, the days will get darker. When all hope seems lost, you will see Jesus Christ riding into human history as king of kings and lord of lords with an angelic army riding on the clouds of heaven, and he ultimately will destroy all evil and all evil doers. He will bless and he will love and he will serve and he will protect and he will heal all of God's children, together forever. You and I need to live in light of that future, I don't know what the short-term holds, but I know what the eternal hope is. That, ultimately, for those who fear death, we have this privileged opportunity to peer through the grave into eternity, worse-case scenario, we're with Jesus forever. Worst-case

scenario, we're with Jesus forever. Couple of things in closing. Number one, this is the last hour. The next thing to happen is the rise of the antichrist and the second coming of Jesus. Let me say this. Number two. This is not the end of the world. It could feel like it. But this is not the end of the world. How do we know? Well, because the abomination that causes desolation has not occurred, there is not the worship of a demonic false god at the temple in Jerusalem, the temple doesn't even exist today, it was destroyed in 70 AD. So at some point, if all of this is to come to pass as I am reading it, then that means the temple needs to be rebuilt, a false leader needs to rise up. False worship needs to occur. Persecution of believers needs to happen, here's what I'm telling you. That's not happening right now. That could happen in the future. That could happen in the near or far future, at some point, the Bible prophesized that's what's coming next, but that's not happening today. So guess what, friends. I love ya, I know it's hard, I know we're all a little freaked out, and I know you're all sitting on your couch, but this ain't the end of the world. Until we see, ultimately, the end of days and the second coming of Jesus, there are still prophecies to be fulfilled. Number three, the Bible is for us, but it's not mainly about us. Many of you have been taught to pick up the Bible and to just to treat as a self-help manual of pithy statements of encouragement. It is about Jesus, it is for you, but it is about Jesus. You need more than that which is just pithy, you need that which is prophecy. You need to know that 25% of the Bible, when it was written, was prophetic in nature, revealing the future that God rules over. In addition, God is in the big picture and the small details of history. You need to know that and trust that. In addition, kings and kingdoms, politicians and nations come and go, but the word of God endures forever. We just looked at a succession of 150, 160 years of kings and kingdoms that come and go, and guess what. The word of God endures, remains, abides forever. Put your hope in this. Put your heart in this. Put your mind in this, get a word from God so that you can live your life in relationship with God. In addition, if your hope is in this world, your hope is in vain. If you're thinking, oh, you know what, as soon as things change, everything will get better. I'm just telling you that there is no such thing as heaven on Earth until Jesus brings heaven with him. For the believer, this is as close to hell as we will ever be. For the unbeliever, this is as close to heaven as you will ever be. So here's the big idea. You need Jesus, we all need Jesus. You need Jesus, we all need Jesus, he is the only king and the only kingdom that is ultimately going to save. He lived without sin, he died for sin, he rose, conquering sin in death. He's coming again to raise us from the dead and to give us eternal life. In closing, all that was happening in Daniel, all of the economic, political, global upheaval, was for one thing, to get the church open so that the people of God could be purified when Jesus came. Everything that is happening now, we need our focus to be the same. We need to purify ourselves. We need to prepare to open our churches. And then we need to preach the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I love ya. I'm praying for ya. Would encourage ya, if you're with your family, to take some time and pray together. Maybe ask the question that we ask around the dining room table on Sunday night at our house, what was your takeaway, what did God teach you? How can we pray for you? Father, God, we thank you for the Lord, Jesus. Lord God, in the day filled with bad news, we're thankful for good news. In a day when all the kingdoms and the Earth are shaking and shaken, we thank you that King Jesus rules over a kingdom that will never be shaken. We thank you, Lord, that, though there is much that we see, there is much that we don't see, and that is you at work behind the scenes. And so, Lord God, I

pray for the people, that they would purify themselves. That they would prepare to open their churches and that then they would preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. And, ultimately, Lord God, I thank you for technology, that we can gather digitally. And, God, it makes no sense to open a two-and-a-half-thousand-year-old book, preach 45 verses on political history, but, God, your word is timeless, as a result, it is timely. And so we thank you for it and we trust you for the future that is yet to come, until we see Jesus face-to-face, coming on the clouds, in whose name we pray, amen.