

Wars and Rumors of Wars

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[0:00] Daniel chapter 11 and verse 1. And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.

! Now then, I tell you the truth, three more kings will appear in Persia and then a fourth who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

Then a mighty king will appear. Who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven.

It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised. Because his empire will be uprooted and given to others. The king of the south will become strong.

But one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the south will go to the king of the north to make an alliance.

[1:10] But she will not retain her power. And he and his power will not last. In those days, she will be handed over together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her.

One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the north and enter his fortress. He will fight against them and be victorious.

He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years, he will leave the king of the north alone.

Then the king of the north will invade the realm of the king of the south, but will retreat to his own country. His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress.

Then the king of the south will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the north, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. When the army is carried off, the king of the south will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands.

[2:25] Yet he will not remain triumphant, for the king of the north will muster another army larger than the first. And after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped.

In those times, many will rise against the king of the south. The violent men among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success.

Then the king of the north will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the south will be powerless to resist. Even their best troops will have not will not have the strength to stand.

The invader will do as he pleases. No one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the beautiful land and will have the power to destroy it.

He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the south. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom.

[3:29] But his plans will not succeed or help him. Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them. But a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him.

After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country, but will stumble and fall to be seen no more. His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor.

In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle. He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty.

He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure and he will seize it through intrigue. Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him.

Both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully. And with only a few people, he will rise to power.

[4:35] When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers.

He will plot the overthrow of fortresses. But only for a time. With a large army, he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the south.

The king of the south will wage war with a large and very powerful army. But he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. Those who eat from the king's provisions will try to destroy him.

His army will be swept away and many will fall in battle. The two kings with their hearts bent on evil will sit at the same table and lie to each other.

But to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. The king of the north will return to his own country with great wealth. But his heart will be set against the holy covenant.

[5:38] He will take action against it and then return to his own country. At the appointed time, he will invade the south again. But this time, the outcome will be different from what it was before.

Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

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.

With flattery, he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant. But the people who know their God will firmly resist him. Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered.

When they fall, they will receive a little help and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end.

[6:49] For it will still come at the appointed time. The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every God and will say unheard of things against the God of gods.

He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed. For what has been determined must take place. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women.

Nor will he regard any God, but will exalt himself above them all. Instead of them, he will honor a God of fortresses, a God unknown to his fathers.

He will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign God and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him.

He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price. At the time of the end, the king of the south will engage him in battle and the king of the north will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships.

[7:57] He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the beautiful land. Many countries will fall. But Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand.

He will extend his power over many countries. Egypt will not escape. He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt with the Libyans and Nubians in submission.

But reports from the east and the north will alarm him and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain.

Yet he will come to his end and no one will help him. Let's hear the preaching of God's word. If you're saying what in the world is all that about?

That's a good question. It's a good thing that we do verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book, exposition. Expositional preaching here because I don't think I would ever choose Daniel chapter 11 on my own.

[9:22] Not because it's boring. It's actually a very interesting chapter when you understand what it's saying. Not even because it's hard to understand. There are a few hard to understand places, especially at the end of the chapter.

But with a decent history book and a decent commentary, it's actually really quite easy to understand what is going on.

Why wouldn't I preach it on my own? The answer is simple because it's very hard to preach in an engaging way. It's hard to make it come across in a way that you can profit because it's a detailed account of historical events.

And most of these events happened in a time when they're not very familiar to us. They happened between Daniel, Daniel's life, and the Maccabean revolt in 160-ish B.C. in Israel.

And they're so detailed and so obscure to us that it takes so much work to explain them. It just makes it very hard to do in a very interesting way.

[10 : 34] So let me give you an example of what is kind of going on here in Daniel chapter 11. If you would look at verses 5 and 6, it says this.

The king of the south will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the south will go to the king of the north to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power. And he and his power will not last. In those days, she will be handed over together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her.

And initially, we probably have no idea what that is talking about. But here's the answer.

Remember, in the first four verses, it's talking about the history of the Persian Empire.

And so the Persian Empire grew strong. And then at the height of its power, it started to have a conflict with Greece. And out of that conflict later came Alexander the Great.

[11 : 41] He's the mighty king that verse 3 is talking about. And remember, we've talked about him before in this book, that for 10 years, he was like a charging ram. And he ran across the country, flew across the world, smashing everything in sight.

And then he died. And his kingdom was broken up towards the four winds into four parts. And he didn't have a descendant.

So it was his generals that took over the kingdom and divided it amongst themselves. Now, one of those kings was a man named Ptolemy Soter. And he ruled in the south in Egypt.

And now Ptolemy Soter had a general named Seleucus. And Seleucus was a military genius. And he, on his own strength, he went to Babylon and conquered it and made it his own kingdom.

And so now, that's what verse 5 is talking about. You have this king of the south. He's Ptolemy Soter. And you have his commander who becomes strong and then takes his own kingdom. That's Seleucus.

[12 : 47] So it makes sense? So there's the king of the south, Ptolemies. The king of the north, the Seleucids. And 35 years after Seleucus' death, the king of the south and the king of the north decide to have a peace treaty.

And so what happens is Bernice, the daughter of a new Ptolemy, Ptolemy Philadelphus of the south, was sent up to the king of the north, Antiochus II.

And they had an alliance. They made an alliance. Now, the original plan was for Antiochus to put away his original, his first wife named Laodice, and to disinherit her sons.

So get rid of the old line of descent and make one new line of descent between these two kingdoms. Well, when Laodice found out about this plot, she was not at all happy.

And so she poisoned Antiochus. She poisoned Bernice. She poisoned their young son. So they died. And that same year, Ptolemy Philadelphus died in Egypt as well.

[13 : 55] And Bernice's brother took over. And that's what verse 7 is talking about. One from her family will arise to take her place. Now, that's just one example of what is going on in this chapter.

And you're probably like, okay, all those names are very unfamiliar and it's very confusing. And you're right. It's a detailed prophecy of these events that happen between these two kingdoms, the kingdom of the north and the kingdom of the south, as they go back and forth fighting with one another, sometimes trying to find peace, but most of the time at war.

And to be honest, when you dive down into it, it gets to be very confusing. As I'm reading the commentaries and I'm reading what's going on here, it's hard to keep track of.

There's Ptolemy this and Ptolemy that, and he has a son named this and that, and there's Antiochus the first and the second and the third and the fourth. And so they're just fighting back and forth against each other.

So instead of doing a verse-by-verse exposition of this chapter, we are going to just look at it under three big headings. It's the three phases of history that this chapter portrays.

[15 : 11] And the first is we're going to call wars and rumors of war. And the second is all about one king of the north named Antiochus Epiphanes.

And then the third section is going to be about someone greater than Antiochus. And then we're going to look at some practical application. So first, wars and rumors of war.

Now, the first phase of history that the angel explains to Daniel, it runs from verse 5 through verse 20. And it's all about this back-and-forth conflict between the kings of the north and the kings of the south.

It covers basically a 150-year period. And 13 of the 16 major rulers are referred to in one way or the other. And it's just this never-ending conflict that never reaches a conclusion.

It's basically the story of two superpowers who can neither overcome each other nor come to peace with one another. And so they try to find peace through marriage.

[16 : 13] They try to overcome each other by surprise invasions. But it's all Havel. And if you read, you see how many times their plans come to nothing.

They don't succeed. It's just this repeated failure to make any progress. They're chasing the wind. All their political strivings come to nothing.

It's vanity. But God's people just can't sit on the sideline and watch it happen. They are actually participating in it. They are the victims. They are the innocents who are invaded and who suffer for it.

If you look in verse 16, it says, The invader will do as he pleases. He will establish himself in the beautiful land. That's Israel. And so God's people suffer during this back-and-forth conflict between these two superpowers.

Now, what is the point of writing all of this down? Why did God reveal this to Daniel and to us?

Because it helped Daniel and his ancient readers and us to see that when we face political difficulties, political hardships, that when we are caught up in the cycle of wars and rumors of war, it's normal.

[17 : 36] It's not unusual. There's a tendency for all of us, for all men everywhere, to blow things up out of proportion and to think something like this has never been before.

It's never been this bad. And it's never, every time, it's so crucial. And every year we, or every election, it's the same sort of thing. The candidates and the pundits, they make it seem like the world is going to end.

If this candidate's not elected or if this or that happens. But as we read Daniel chapter 11, what it does is it creates some ballast.

You know how a boat needs ballast to stay afloat? It puts some weight on it so it keeps the ship steady. And that's what Daniel 11 is doing for us. There's always going to be wars and rumors of war.

There's always going to be political conflict. And so when it comes upon us, when those things happen to us, we shouldn't be running around like a chicken with his head cut off, saying, the sky is falling, the sky is falling.

[18 : 47] God is in control. That's the point of Daniel 11. He's telling the end from the beginning. He's going to tell us exactly what's going to happen. And we're to realize that the sky isn't falling.

God is in control. Listen to what Jesus himself said in Matthew chapter 24. You will hear of wars and rumors of war, but see to it that you are not alarmed.

Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. So what did our Lord say? He said, see to it that you're not alarmed.

This is our responsibility. This is something that we are supposed to take upon ourselves. See to it. Make sure it doesn't happen to you because there's going to be this great temptation when terrible things are happening and wars and rumors of war are all around us.

It's going to be this great temptation for it to disturb you, to alarm you, to shake you, to shake your faith, and for it to get to you. But Jesus says, don't let it.

[19 : 55] Don't be alarmed at these things. They must happen. The end is still to come. There's an appointed end. And this is just part of the pains of birth.

So, brothers and sisters, we are the children of the King. We're children of the King. We're heirs of eternal life.

And so, should we be running around, squawking and trembling at every word of the pundits and the candidates? Should we let their words shape us and shake us and disturb us and alarm us

when our Lord says, don't be alarmed.

Don't be alarmed. Rumors of war, war themselves. They're going to happen. The end is still to come. And so, this, Daniel 11, is a call.

It's a call for your endurance, for your patient endurance. It's going to seem like the kingdoms of this world have all the power, that they are deciding what's going to happen.

[21:05] It's going to seem like they're setting the agenda, that the presidents and the congressmen and terrorists and dictators and all these people. It's going to seem like they're acting without restraint, but we have to keep in mind that the greatest thing that's happening in the world today is that Jesus is building his church.

And all these things, all these other things, can be distractions. They're just temporary. God is building the kingdom of his son. And so, the nations rage.

They rage against each other. They rage against God. And God laughs. And so, brothers and sisters, let's trust the Lord for his strength. Let's trust him for his strength.

A mighty fortress is our God. A bulwark, never failing. In the middle of war, doesn't fail. So be patient then. Prepare yourself so that you'll stand. Now the second phase, it gets worse.

It's a story of Antiochus Epiphanes, one king of the north. We've talked about him a little bit before in this series on Daniel.

[22:14] And his story begins in verse 21. So if you'll look there. He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty.

He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure and he will seize it through intrigue. Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him. Both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed.

And after coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully. And with only a few people, he will rise to power. So Antiochus Epiphanes, he only started off with limited support.

He wasn't a direct descendant. He wasn't in line for the throne. And yet he gained it. He didn't have the dignity of royalty. He gained the throne by intrigue and by deceit.

And those who resisted him were swept away. Now one of those people that resisted him was the high priest in Jerusalem whose name was Onias III. He's probably the prince of the covenant.

[23:21] The verse 22 is talking about. So Onias resisted Antiochus. And so Antiochus removed him and put in a puppet who would just do whatever he wanted.

And so this began the oppression of God's people. Antiochus' plan was to make the Jews just like the Greeks. To get rid of all the distinctives.

To get rid of their religion. They would worship the same gods. They would live the same way. The Jewish people would be no more. And that was his plan. But along with that plan is this desire to finally end this war.

to finally come to peace through victory against the southern kingdom. And so he invades Egypt again and again until the Romans set up in.

And maybe you remember the story. I've told it before in this series. Antiochus was on the beach with his army behind him. And they're getting ready to conquer the city of Alexandria and all of Egypt when a single Roman delegate landed on the beach.

[24:41] His name was Gaius Linnaeus. And he says, Gaius Linnaeus said, Rome wants you to back off. Time to move back.

And Antiochus said, well, let me think about it. And so in response, Gaius picked up a stick, drew a circle around the king, and he said, you can leave the circle when you've made up your mind.

And I think that's where we get the phrase drawing a line in the sand. You have to decide sometimes. And you see what Antiochus' response was in verse 30.

You'll see that in verse 30. Ships of the western coastland will oppose him. That's talking about the Romans. And he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. So Rome opposed Antiochus. He said, no more.

[25:48] This is the end of your imperial dreams. You're going home. And Antiochus was angry. He's furious. And so Rome opposes Antiochus and the Jews suffer for it.

And so God's people are attacked. And they're persecuted. And anyone who resisted was killed. And the whole time, we have to understand that the whole time, Antiochus was offering a palm branch.

You can have peace with me. You can have peace if you forsake God. All you have to do is turn your back on God and the holy covenant. And there's favor. Political favor. Success. Money. And we've seen this repeatedly in the book of Daniel, haven't we? Satan and his minions have two major tactics. Persecution. Persuasion. Terror. And temptation. It's one or the other. You either give in or you suffer.

[26:51] And so God's people suffer. Antiochus desecrates the temple. See that in verse 31? He sets up an abomination that causes desolation.

It's probably an idol. We know he sacrificed pigs on the altar and therefore desecrating the whole temple and it became unclean. Now things were bad.

God's people were suffering. Some were being faithful and dying for their faith. And some were giving in and going along with Antiochus.

Things were bad but the worst is still to come. And that's where Daniel 11 ends up. This is when Daniel 11 starts to warp and change.

It starts to grow out of what we can trace in history. All these kings of the north and the kings of the south and the Ptolemies and the Seleucids and Antiochus. And it starts to grow out of that history that we know.

[27:55] And it starts stretching out to the end. And it starts growing towards that. So beginning in verse 36 Antiochus that king of the north is still in view and yet at the same time hovering in the background and starting to take over starting to swallow him up is this one greater than Antiochus.

And so this is our third phase. Our third point. There's coming one greater than Antiochus. Worse than him.

We've seen him before in Daniel. Daniel 7 talks about a little horn and he speaks boastfully. He makes great claims for himself.

And when the son of man comes he overthrows that little horn. We've seen him in Daniel 7. And that little horn is this one that's greater than Antiochus and yet he's sort of like him.

They're of the same kind. Paul calls him the man of sin. He's the Antichrist. And so Daniel talks about Antiochus and the Antichrist together because the first Antiochus is a type of the second.

[29:15] When you've kind of seen him you kind of know what the Antichrist is going to be about. They hate God's people. They use force and authority to get their way.

And above all they're deceitful. They use flattery. You wouldn't expect them to be doing these things and yet they are. But the most important thing for us to know is they both had and have an appointed time.

They both have an appointed time. Repeatedly in this section you hear the language of the appointed time. in verse 27 because an end will still come at the appointed time.

Verse 29 at the appointed time he will invade the south. In verse 35 the time of the end for it will still come at the appointed time. Antiochus was given great power and he did great and horrible and terrible things with his power and the Antichrist will be given great power as well.

But it's only for a short brief time. Daniel says it's a time times and half a time. Three and a half years.

[30:35] 1,335 days. The point however it says it the point is it's just a limited time. It's not seven years.

It's not seven times. It's just half that. It seems like it's going to last forever but then all of a sudden it's cut in half and it's over. It's not forever and ever but it's just long enough for him to establish himself and then to be destroyed.

So the Antichrist he will have power but for just a brief time just long enough for him to establish himself for him to seem like he's invincible and then he's destroyed. And that's what happened.

Antiochus he seems to have all this power but all of a sudden he died almost unexplainably on the backside of the desert. He's gone. His great power came to nothing.

And then the Antichrist is the same way at the height of his career. At the end of Daniel chapter 11 he's annihilating armies and he's taken his place in the middle of the beautiful land after he's destroyed all these armies.

[31:45] Look at verse 45. Yet he will come to his end and no one will help him. No one will help him.

Listen to how Paul put it in 2 Thessalonians. And see if you can hear the similarities between Daniel and Paul's words. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way.

For that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed. The man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped.

So that he sets himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God. That's almost taken right out of Daniel chapter 11.

Paul goes on. And then the lawless one will be revealed. He'll be uncovered. And the Lord Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of his mouth and with the splendor of his coming.

[32 : 55] History will not come to its conclusion until this man is revealed. He's a real historical man until this one greater than Antiochus yet in some ways like him comes and it will be the worst of times for God's people.

And yet, it's only for a limited time the appointed end will come. So our king will return.

And the glory of his coming will be so great that this man of lawlessness, this Antichrist, will be destroyed and all of his opposition will be totally destroyed.

And brothers and sisters, there's much here that can make us afraid. The point is not to make us afraid. The point is for us to look to Jesus who is greater and who is stronger than this one.

It's not a fair fight. It's not a close match. It's not going to come down to the wire. As soon as Jesus enters the field, the game's over.

[34 : 01] The splendor of his coming will destroy the worst, the greatest man of all. So I hope you understand a little bit of what Daniel 11 is talking about.

These three phases. There's wars and there's rumors of war. It's going on all the time. There was Antiochus. There's these Antichrists that appear.

But they're all leading up to this one. This one final one. And he will be destroyed at the end. Now, if you want to know more about Daniel 11 and if you want to get all the historical details, I would recommend Stuart Olliot's commentary on Daniel called Dare to Stand Alone.

He goes verse by verse. It's very easy to read. He explains what each thing is. And you could do that on your own time. It's a very good commentary on this chapter.

But now I want to go into some practical application. What should we, what are we supposed to, what is this chapter supposed to do for us? What are we supposed to walk out here, walk out of here thinking about and thinking, I need to do this.

[35 : 13] I need to put this into practice. Well, I think that one of the major lessons that we're supposed to learn is that we, that this chapter is giving us wisdom to know how to live.

remember I talked about a long time ago when we started Daniel, that Daniel is a wisdom book. It's about the wise and how the wise live. And so it's meant to give us a divine perspective, a transcendent perspective of all these difficult trials and these political difficulties, these powerful forces that we face.

And it helps put our lives into God's perspective. So at the beginning of chapter 10, if you remember that far back, Daniel was greatly troubled.

He's greatly troubled about what Israel is facing back in Judah and what they're going through and this opposition that they're facing. And this is the Lord's response to that, to Daniel's concern and his alarm and his worry.

The Lord's response was, Daniel, what your people are facing now, it's not unusual. This is the way it's going to be. Let me tell you what it's going to be like until the end.

[36 : 30] And we need those kind of reality checks sometimes, don't we? We get the, we too easily get this false notion of things should be easy.

I shouldn't be confronting these things or this is so extraordinary, I don't know what to do with it. We have a tendency to think that we're the special case, that we're the exception.

But God is saying, no, this is the way it's going to be. This is the way it's going to be. Don't be surprised when these things happen. Don't be alarmed. And so, this chapter gives us a reality check.

So when we're listening to the radio and watching the news, when we're seeing terrible things and we're hearing rumors of war and wars, these things are normal.

God is in control. These things are going to happen. The end is not yet. But besides that reality check, there's four imperatives, four commands that we can take from Daniel 11.

[37:35] God calls us to action. He just doesn't call us to think. He doesn't just call us to go out there and put our hands in our pockets while we wait for the end. He gives us four imperatives and the first is to believe.

Look at verse 32. It says, the people who know their God will firmly resist. What is it going to take to overcome to the end?

What is it going to take to make it to the end through all these trials and tribulations? Well, brothers and sisters, it's going to be knowing God. And that's not talking about head knowledge.

You know that. That's talking about faith. The people who know their God, who can firmly rely upon Him, will firmly resist. So what is Daniel 11 calling us to do?

It's calling for us to believe in a God who is sovereign. He's going into all this detail so that we can know that He's in control all the way along the line.

[38:33] He's telling us what's going to happen because He's planned for it to happen and when it gets there, He is still ruling over all and so we can trust Him. He's orchestrating all these events and so what should our response be?

It should be to believe, to trust in God, to walk humbly with Him. If we don't stand firm in our faith, we won't stand at all. That's what Daniel is saying.

The second imperative is resist. Resist. People who know their God will firmly resist. We're not called to give way.

We're called to resist, to stand firm, to fight the good fight, to not be overcome by evil, but to be faithful even to death. God's people died in that time for their faithfulness.

And when terrible things happen and when Antichrist come and when the Antichrist comes, there is going to be great temptation to just give in.

[39:39] Safety will be so inviting. money, success will be so inviting. But if you don't stand firm to the end, you will not be saved.

So Daniel is saying, if you don't resist the lies, the flattery, the deceit, even to the point of death, you're not worthy of the Lord who called you.

You're not worthy of the Lord who died for you and who stood firm for you. And so his love, his death, his faithfulness, it beckons to ours.

It says, I've loved you. I was faithful to you to the point of dying. Now be faithful to me. Love me like that. Resist for me.

And so can we give in when our Lord Jesus resisted to the point of death? He's bought us. We're his. We have to resist. The third imperative is teach.

[40:45] Teach. Verse 33, those who are wise will instruct many. We're not only called to believe and resist, our response is to be bigger than that.

We're not to go into hiding, but instead we are to instruct those around us. Our mouths are not to be shut if we are wise. And that means we understand where all this is going.

We understand what God is doing. Then God says, now teach others. There's a note of compassion here. People are lost. They're so easily, they're like lost sheep.

They're going around and they have no idea what they're doing. God says, now teach them. Many of our friends and family have no idea what this life is about.

they have no idea where it's going. There's no thought of heaven. There's no thought of hell. Well, who else is going to share with them reality? Who else is going to tell them the truth?

[41:47] Who's in a better position to speak the truth to them? God has made us wise. He's made us wise in his word. And so he calls us to now turn out and to teach many.

God says, you are wise, now teach. The fourth imperative is pray. to pray. The victory in this conflict that this chapter portrays, it doesn't come until the next chapter.

And it comes not by man's power, but by God's power. It doesn't come by voting or demonstrating or anything like that.

the victory comes when the heavenly hosts, led by Michael, comes and overthrows God's enemies and he delivers the saints. That's what we're going to see.

So when the Lord of hosts, God himself, arises, and when the Lord Jesus comes, the rider on the white horse with the sword coming out of his mouth, slaying his enemies, that's when our victory is going to happen.

[42:54] And so the victory doesn't come by political intrigue. We've seen that. This chapter is all about political intrigue and people planning and plotting and scheming and it all goes nowhere.

There's no peace. Nothing happens from it. It doesn't come from the voting booth. It comes in prayer. Prayer is this revolutionary power that we shake the heavens when we pray. It's when we take our stand. It's how we take our stand in this cosmic battle that is raging all around us. And brothers and sisters, we can pray confidently. We can pray confidently because all bad things must come to an end.

God has appointed the end. It's not a matter of if, it's just a matter of when. And so we pray confidently. Our Lord Jesus has already won the decisive victory.

We're in the mop-up stage now. He's already won on the cross. And so we can pray, we can resist because we know that our Savior, our King, our Lord Jesus who gave up His life for us has won.

[43:57] He rules over all and He's in us by His Spirit to give us new life, to live a different way. And in the end, He will not leave us as orphans, but He will come to us and He'll gather us up into His family.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for this word from Your Scripture to us that teaches us that You are in control of all things, that You've planned all these things out.

I know there was a lot in this chapter that could be very confusing. I pray that the main lessons of Your sovereignty and of Your care and our responsibility to believe and to resist, to pray, and to teach.

We would take those things and Your Spirit would work them into our heart so that tomorrow we will see the world in a different way. This is a world with devils filling it, with liars and flatterers, with all sorts of deceitful things.

Will You help us to see through the lies and to believe and lay a hold of the truth. Help us to live relying on our Lord Jesus who was our strength, who was our fortress.

[45:18] Pray that we would have great confidence as we go forth, no matter what we face, no matter what we suffer, to do it knowing that our Lord Jesus suffered for us and that He is bringing us home to Himself.

Help us to be faithful to the end. In Jesus' name, Amen.