

The End

Part of the God Over the Nations series

❖ Scripture – Daniel 10:1-12:13

❖ Prayer

❖ Introduction

- Well, what we began October 10, 2010, we'll finish February 20, 2011
 - Today we'll finish up the book of Daniel
 - My goodness, it has been good, but it has certainly been a challenge
 - It has stretched me as a student of the Bible and a preacher, and I pray that the same is true for you
 - Can I just say again why I love to preach through books of the Bible?
 1. In doing so, I affirm what Paul says in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*
 - I've not left a verse uncovered because everyone of them are important for making you and me more like Jesus
 2. Preaching through books of the Bible also keeps me from preaching about my pet peeves and pet doctrines
 - The text—God's Holy Spirit-inspired, inerrant, infallible, always relevant Word—has led me to what I've preached to you
 3. Preaching through books of the Bible keeps me from preaching to felt needs.
 - I've trusted that God would providentially oversee the preaching of His Word so that each message I've preached was the exact message that was needed
 - You and I really don't know what we need; I don't know what need, but God does, and I love to rest in the sovereignty and wisdom of God, even in my preaching to you
 4. Finally, preaching through books of the Bible forces me to me to preach hard and controversial texts.
 - That certainly describes Daniel
 - You see, if it's up to me to just choose what passages to preach, I would rarely choose to preach passages that are full of difficulty or

are pregnant with the possibility of controversy.

- Preaching through Bible books says, “They’re in God’s Word. Preach them anyway!”
 - Again, I pray that you have been well-fed and challenged
 - I pray that you’ve learned something
 - ◆ I know I’ve learned a ton
 - I pray you’ve enjoyed leaving no stone unturned here in the book of Daniel!

➤ But we do have a few more stones to uncover in the last three chapters of Daniel

- Here in chapters 10, 11, and 12, we get the biggest vision recorded in Daniel
 - For the most part, we really get no new scenarios
 - Much of the content is recapitulating and repackaging the previous visions concerning the nations
 - ◆ But we do get some further detail and insight and then chapter 12 bursts with lots of goodies for us
 - ◆ So, let’s get to it one last time

TRANSITION: Coming to our text, the first thing we see here is that...

❖ Daniel sees a startling vision

- v1 has our timestamp, *In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar; and the message was true and one of great conflict, but he understood the message and had an understanding of the vision.*
 - So this was around 536 BC
 - By this point, the first waves of Jews had already left to return back to the land of Israel
 - This was also very close to the same time that Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den
- In v2, we see that Daniel is mourning and doing a partial fast
 - Most likely he was interceding for his kinsmen who had returned to restore Jerusalem
 - As we talked about three weeks ago, the returning exiles encountered still opposition to their work
 - Daniel, I believe, was standing in the gap for God’s people

- He would have loved to have went back to Israel with them, but was just too old for the journey and the work (mid-80s at this point)
 - ◆ But dear ones, even though your body will undoubtedly fail you, as long as God blesses you with a mind for prayer, you will be a mighty minister for the church of God, even it's from your recliner at home
 - ◆ A saint of God who'll dedicated themselves to prayer will affect much spiritual good for the Kingdom of God
 - That's exactly what Daniel was doing
- And then it happened
 - You ever have one of those moments that the life is nearly scared out of you?
 - Well, that's basically what happens to Daniel
 - God answers Daniel's prayer with a bone-shaking vision
 - Daniel 10:5-6, *I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, there was a certain man dressed in linen, whose waist was girded with a belt of pure gold of Uphaz. ⁶ His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.*
 - Apparently, it was a terrifying angel from the Lord
 - Daniel was with others, but he was the only one who saw it, and though the others didn't see it, a great dread fell over them, causing them to run in fear, leaving Daniel alone
 - Daniel's strength and color left him, and then he passed out
 - ◆ The angel got him up and shared with him a dazzling account of angelic warfare
 - Did you know that there are angels among us and that they engage one another in battle?
 - Pretty sweet, huh?
 - Daniel 10:12-14, *Then he said to me, "Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to*

your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future."

- We see something here that is pretty interesting
 - Apparently there are angels (called princes here in these chapters) that are assigned to nations, sort of as guardian angels
 - ◆ Daniel 10:13 - prince of Persia
 - ◆ Daniel 10:21 – Michael is prince of Israel
 - ◆ Daniel 11:1 – the angel speaking to Daniel here is prince of Media; this angel had come to protect Darius the Mede—also known as Cyrus the Persian—when he had conquered Babylon

TRANSITION: So, at this point, it seems that Daniel is ready for the actual message from God through the angel...

❖ **The angel foretells of major events to come regarding the nations around the land of Israel**

- There is a lot here, so we could easily get bogged down in detail
 - We'll save the detail for another time
 - I want you to see three things here
- 1. We see that Persia will fall to Greece there Daniel 11:2
 - We've been here before in the Daniel chapters 2, 7, and 8
- 2. We see that the great Greek leader will fall there in v11:4 and then have his kingdom divided up into four kingdom
 - We've already been here before as well in Daniel chapters 7 and 8
 - This is foretelling of Alexander the Great and his four generals who would receive his kingdom
- 3. We see that there would be great conflict between two of these four Greek divisions in Daniel 10:5-20
 - Here's where we get some new information
 - The two warring divisions
 - The southern kingdom of Ptolemy in Egypt
 - The northern kingdom of Seleucus in Syria
 - ◆ These are called northern and southern because the land of Israel was between them
 - Ptolemy in Egypt was to the south of Israel and Seleucus in Syria

was to the north of Israel

- So, the land of Israel is basically between a rock and hard place, sandwiched between these two warring factions
 - As they would go to and from battle with each other, they'd stop off and attack the Jews for whatever reason

TRANSITION: But then in v21, the angel shifts from kingdoms to a king. So, the next thing we see here in our text is that...

❖ **Antiochus IV Epiphanes is foretold, and the Antichrist is typified**

- Basically what we have here is the angel talking about two things at one time
 - He has two parallel prophetic horizons in mind
 - In v21-35, he focuses in on the lower horizon, which comes first in time,
 - This prophecy has most directly to do with our old friend Antiochus IV Epiphanes
 - We talked about him in back in chapter 8 of Daniel where he is symbolized by the “little horn”
 - Antiochus IV became the 8th ruler of the northern kingdom around 175 BC
 - He was a vicious and despicable man who had a vendetta against the Jews
 - ◆ Indeed, he committed the abomination of desolation spoken of there in Daniel 11:31 in 167 BC when he decreed that all regular ceremonial observances to Yahweh were forbidden, thus he put a stop to the daily sacrifices
 - To further advance his decree, he set up an altar to Zeus and maybe even a statue of Zeus, the Greek high God, and then sacrificed a pig to Zeus there on the temple altar
 - So, first in this passage, we are dealing with Antiochus IV Epiphanes
 - But Antiochus Epiphanes is pointing us to the end of the age toward the Antichrist
 - You see, Antiochus Epiphanes is a type of the Antichrist, or a foreshadow of the Antichrist
 - ◆ Therefore, what we learn about Antiochus Epiphanes in these verses, we can apply in some sense to the Antichrist who is still to come
 - But there Daniel 11:36-45, the angel seems to shift prophetic horizons

- He no longer seems to be talking primarily about the 2nd century BC and Antiochus Epiphanes
- Now he seems to be talking primarily about the end of the age and the Antichrist
 - The angel begins to describe things that Antiochus never did, but he's still using terms that make it seem like he's still talking about Antiochus Epiphanes
 - ◆ For instance, the angel continues to call the Antichrist "the king of the north" there in 40, which is a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes and his kingdom
 - ◆ Maybe a way of thinking about this is that you basically have the Antichrist all dressed up in Antiochus's clothes
 - But we know that we have jumped from the 2nd century BC prophetic horizon to the end of the age horizon because of Daniel 11:40, *At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through.*
- So, what do we learn about the Antichrist here in v21-45?
 - v21, he'll be despicable and seize authority by intrigue
 - v23, he'll practice deception and will gain power with a small force
 - v24, he'll become exceedingly wealthy
 - v27, his heart will be set on evil
 - v31, he will forbid us to worship Christ and will set himself up as a God to be worshipped
 - v33, he will attack God's people and put many to death
 - v36, he'll do as he pleases, make himself above God, and blaspheme God
 - v37, he'll disregard all traditional world religions
 - there's certainly more that we could say here from the text, but let me finish with this one
 - v45, he will have an end
 - *ie*, he'll be destroyed

TRANSITION: This, of course, brings us to the end of the end of the age when...

❖ **God's people will be ultimately victorious**

- Look at Daniel 12:1-3, *Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands*

guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ² Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

- The Antichrist will bring about a terrible time of distress called the Great Tribulation, but God's people—everyone of whose name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life—will be rescued
 - We find out in the New Testament that it's Jesus himself who comes to our rescue, and for all who have believed on Jesus, there will be a resurrection at this time to eternal life
 - But for those who have rejected Jesus, there will be a resurrection at this time to eternal disgrace and contempt
 - ◆ God's people will be overwhelmingly victorious in the end!

TRANSITION: The final thing I want you to see in the book of Daniel is that...

❖ **Daniel is encouraged to endure**

- Daniel 12:4 brings this angelic prophecy to an end, *But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.*
- As the angel finishes, Daniel listens in on an angelic conversation
 - Two lesser angels appear along with this awesome angel who's been sent to Daniel, and one of them asks in Daniel 12:6, *And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?"*
 - The answer given in v7 is a time, times, and a half time
 - We've already ran into the figure of speech in Daniel 7
 - It refers to 3 ½ years
 - ◆ I'll show you how we know that in a moment
 - ◆ But nevertheless, the Great Tribulation will be 3 ½ years
- Daniel is curious and bold by this point and jumps in there to ask for more insight, but the angel responds there in Daniel 12:9-13, *He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.*

¹⁰ Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. ¹¹ From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. ¹² How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! ¹³ But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

- Basically, the angel basically tells Daniel to not worry about it because these things have to do with the end of time
- But the angel does throw out some numbers to help Daniel and us understand what he's talking about
 - From the time that the Antichrist forbids the worship of Jesus and sets himself up as a God to be worshipped, there will be 1,290 days, which is basically 3 ½ years
 - ◆ So that's how we know that a time, times, and a half time equals 3 ½ years
 - But then the angel adds 45 more days says that those who are blessed will persevere to 1,335 days
 - ◆ Many people have speculated about what this second number means
 - ◆ I think it simply the angel's way of saying, "You must be prepared to persevere a long time and then a little bit longer, and then a little bit longer"
 - *ie*, don't ever give up on God
 - God will come through; you can count on it
 - And look what's in store for Daniel and for all who persevere there in v13, a rest and a resurrection to our allotted portion at the end of the age

TRANSITION: So what is God trying to say to us here in these last three chapters of Daniel. Really, our BIG IDEA for these three chapters could serve as the BIG IDEA for the entire book of Daniel, so let me leave you with this parting exhortation...

❖ **BIG IDEA: Be strong, be courageous, and be ready to be refined because God is sovereign over the world**

➤ Be strong

- In these final chapters and in the entire book of Daniel, we numerous

examples of people having their faith tested

- Men like
 - ◆ Daniel himself
 - ◆ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego
- But we also have numerous prophecies saying that your faith is going to be tested with increasing intensity as the end of the age draws nearer
 - ◆ Therefore, be strong
 - Even in the face of that satanic Antichrist, cling to the hope of Christ and don't ever let go

➤ Be courageous

- People who really know God just live differently
 - It causes them to take chances for God that others would dare do
 - I pray that your faith in God would cause you to courageous
 - I pray that the same mentality would well up in you that welled up in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego when Nebuchadnezzar threatened to throw them in the furnace if they didn't worship his idol
 - ◆ Daniel 3:16-18, *Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. ¹⁷ "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."*
- Friends, that takes courage!
- Oh that God would be glorified in your life through courageous acts that declare to the world that God is greater than everything else, even my life

➤ Be ready to be refined

- God desires to make you ready for Heaven, dear one
- Therefore, He will pass us through the refiner's fire
 - Again, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego experienced it
 - Nebuchadnezzar experienced it
- You can be that you and I will experience it too
 - Through beasts and terrifying horns we must pass
 - I sort of skipped over it, but twice in our text today, the angel sent from God told us that God had the purpose of refining us through these tribulations

- ◆ Daniel 11:35, *Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.*
- ◆ Daniel 12:9-10, *[the angel] said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. ¹⁰ Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.*

- These are not out of God's control
- Quite the opposite; they are precisely part of God's plan
- Therefore, take Peter's instruction in 1 Peter 4:12-14, *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴ If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

- Friend, you are not being defeated; you are being refined
 - Finally, you can be strong and courageous and ready to be refined

- Because God is sovereign over the world
 - If there's one thing that you take away from this series of message on the book of Daniel, surely it will be that nothing on earth or in the universe happens outside of God's sovereign control
 - He is the God over the nations
 - The nightly newcasters and Glenn Beck and Bill O'Reilly should not scare you
 - ◆ No matter how bad the stories they report and comment on seem to be
 - Christian, God's got your back
 - ◆ But He doesn't just have your back; he's got your front, your sides, overhead and underneath
 - God has totally hemmed you in and will protect so that you will safely arrive in home with the Father in glory
 - He has the world in His hands, and you are in good hands
 - You are in the hands of the God over the nations
 - Victory is your in Christ

❖ **Conclusion**

- May endure and rejoice in your great God!