

Dr. Wendy L. Widder, Daniel, Session 16, Daniel 10-12, Daniel's Last Vision

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This is Dr. Wendy Widder in her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 16, Daniel 10-12, Daniel's Last Vision.

This lecture is on Daniel 10 through 12, which will bring our study of the book of Daniel to a conclusion.

Daniel 10 through 12 is the last vision that Daniel sees. It's a long unit, it's quite detailed, and the actual revelation is contained in chapter 11. Chapter 10 is all a lead up preparation for Daniel to hear the revelation.

Chapter 12 is a lot of epilogue and drawing things together, but we read and study the whole thing together because it is a literary unit. It's the final visionary experience that Daniel has. This book of Daniel goes out with a bang of difficulty, which should not surprise you by now.

There is a lot involved in sorting out this revelation, particularly that's found in chapter 11, that will involve remembering the basics of intertestamental history. Chapter 11 will bring in a lot of details that are not explicit on this, and I will refer you again to this best resource I know, readable resource on that time period. It just does a great job of taking you through the details.

So, it has that going for it or not going for it, and it also brings us back to the issue of ex-eventu prophecy, which we will talk about when we specifically get to the point in chapter 11 that it becomes a question. So, this final vision, which is Daniel's fourth vision, like chapter 9, is not a symbolic vision. So, Daniel isn't seeing mutant creatures.

He's not seeing things that need interpretation. He's really getting more of a revelation or an epiphany that's given to him by an angelic figure or a divine figure, depending on which view you're going to take on that. This is long.

It's got a lot of detail, and it takes Daniel a lot of effort and assistance to be able to take it in. And all of these things, I think, point to the significance of it. This is really the climax of the book.

This is a vision of Israel's future that's going to go beyond this period in time in which they will experience great suffering, and it's going to promise finally that reward for which the suffering people await, resurrection. So, reward for the faithful, and it's

going to assure the people that there will be judgment for the oppressors. So that's where this vision is headed.

This chapter has a lot of things that call to mind the visions in 7, 8, and 9, but it's really most directly linked to chapter 8. Amy Merrill Willis, I think it's her published dissertation, has written several chapters, at least in this book, on arguing that the vision in Daniel 8 is sort of the basic structure, and then this vision takes each of those details or each of those issues and just fleshes them out in greater detail. So, she calls it a more finely-grained historical account and the fully resolved ending that was absent from chapter 8. So, if you remember in chapter 8, I called it sort of a stingy comfort or a stingy encouragement. The encouragement was that God has a leash on evil.

Suffering is not going to last forever. It will end. That was the encouragement.

Well, this vision is going to say, yes, suffering will end, but there is a reward for the righteous. There is judgment for the oppressors. So, it takes it to its final resolution.

In terms of a really basic outline, I alluded to it already. So, chapter 10 is the introductory material, getting Daniel ready to see or hear and receive this revelation. All of chapter 11 and a couple verses in chapter 12 are the actual revelation, and then we shift to the other side of it, sort of this cleanup, a few final things that the messenger has to say to Daniel, and then we end with a baffling set of numbers.

So, hang on. All right, this text, because of its length, I'm going to read it piece by piece rather than trying to read through the whole thing at once. So, I'll read each section, tell you what it's about, and discuss the issues in it, and then we'll move on.

So, in verses 1 through 9 of chapter 10, Daniel has a vision of a heavenly messenger, and he starts in verse 1, and we get the space-time reference. So it says, and this first part is not by Daniel, it's a narrative introduction, setting up Daniel's account. So 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, we're set in the third year of Cyrus, just after the proclamation was issued that the Jews could return to their land. It's about 536, so we're about three years, two or three years after the vision in chapter 9. So, by this point, the temple foundation in Jerusalem had been laid, but then work had been abandoned because there was all kinds of opposition to it. So restoration has already reached its first obstacle.

Daniel's vision that he's about to see is going to show he probably knows that the restoration isn't fully underway yet back in the homeland, but his vision is going to show him that there is greater conflict ahead, that even on the other side of this

restoration, there is great conflict yet to come. In verses 2 through 3, Daniel starts speaking, and he introduces us to this vision. So, in those days, meaning the third year of Cyrus, I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks.

I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed. So we get more space-time references here. We know what Daniel's doing.

He's been mourning. He's probably quite hungry. He's quite weak, which actually probably contributes to part of the difficulty he has receiving this revelation.

Okay, I'm going to save that part. So, he's been mourning and fasting and praying. We aren't told why.

The narrator doesn't, or Daniel doesn't tell us why he's fasting. Maybe the fact that the restoration back home hasn't really taken off yet is a cause for mourning. Maybe he's trying to better understand what God's up to in this confusing time, why the promises haven't been filled.

We don't know. In verses 4 through 9, Daniel reports the appearance of a man or one like a man. So, on the 24th day of the first month, it's pretty specific, while I was by the bank of the great river, that is the Tigris, 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.

His body also was like beryl. His face had the appearance of lightning. His eyes were like flaming torches.

His arms and feet were like the gleam of polished bronze. And the sound of his words was like the sound of a tumult. Now I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, while the men who were with me did not see the vision.

Nevertheless, a great dread fell on them, and they ran away to hide themselves. So, I was left alone and saw this great vision, and yet no strength was left in me. My natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength.

But I heard the sound of his words, and as soon as I heard the sound of his words, I fell into a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground." So first, there's a continuation of the space-time reference. We're specifically told this is the 24th day of the first month, which is a curious detail. What it tells us, though, is that this actually, this period of mourning that Daniel's been in, overlaps with Jewish feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread.

Normally, those feasts would be a time of rejoicing. Passover was celebrating God's redemption from Egypt. So whatever Daniel's reason, whatever his motivation for fasting and prayer, it was important enough to him to forego this annual celebratory feast, these annual celebratory feasts.

Stephen Miller suggests that Daniel may have been fasting because he was thinking about Passover, which reminded him of God's deliverance of Egypt so long ago, and he's waiting and hoping for Israel's present deliverance, which is a viable explanation, very good explanation. It says he's by the Great River, and then it specifies it's the Tigris. The reason it specifies it is because, in the Bible, the Great River is usually the Euphrates.

But here, this is the Tigris, which is outside of Babylon. Again, we don't know why he's there. He doesn't tell us.

Is he just on a retreat, maybe? Is he there for official business and taking a side trip? We don't know. But in this vision, he actually does appear to be on location. He's not in a trance.

He's actually there. He sees a man dressed in linen, and he never names this man, and what follows, he doesn't name him. And a lot of commentators take the position that this is Gabriel.

That's probably the most popular choice. We've seen Gabriel before, twice in Daniel. But my question is, why isn't he given the name if we know Gabriel? In the last chapter, he said, Gabriel, who appeared to me previously.

So why not just say it's Gabriel? And my second question is, Daniel has a really strange response to Gabriel, if this is the third time he's seen him. He just loses color. He's terrified.

He passes out, basically, into a deep sleep. It seems like a pretty drastic response to an angelic being that he's seen before. And honestly, the description of this being, if you were to stop reading in the chapter right here, it sounds a lot like Ezekiel's visions of God in Ezekiel 1, where you have this face with the appearance of lightning, flaming torches for eyes, polished bronze, and the sound of a tumult in his voice.

This really sounds like a theophany. It sounds like an appearance of God. That's actually my view that this is either an appearance of God himself, or it could be a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

The major objections that authors or scholars tend to have with this is that what the angel, or this being, not an angel, in my view, it's not an angel. In my view, it's a

theophany. But what this being goes on to say doesn't sound like something God should say.

So, the angel will go on to explain why he's late. He should have been here before, but he'll say, the prince of Persia detained me. He was withstanding me for 70 days, and I had to wait for Michael to come help me.

And theologians say I can't be God. That doesn't sound like God. In fact, Trumper Longman, who I really respect as a commentator, he says that our first impulse is to say this is a theophany.

But then he expresses what he considers the primary opposition to it. He says, what power could resist God for 21 days, as the prince of the Persian kingdom apparently had done? Can we really imagine God being thwarted in his purposes so effectively, even if temporarily? Then, Stephen Miller adds on to that, saying that this language, the language of being thwarted, is inappropriate when applied to a deity. For example, no being could resist the power of God himself.

So, I can respect what they're saying, but I wonder how can we say so clearly what God's purposes might have been in such a struggle? Perhaps he had purposes we don't know. Secondly, given the little bit of information we actually have in the Bible about how the supernatural world functions, how can we possibly say what God does and doesn't allow in heavenly struggles, whatever they look like? I don't know what they look like. We don't see a lot of them in the Bible, but I don't know if I want to venture into saying what God might or might not allow.

And the third comment I would have to that is, if indeed this is a struggle between an appearance of God or God himself or the angel of the Lord if it's some kind of divine struggle to overcome, it wouldn't be the first one of its kind in the Bible. If you go all the way back to Genesis, Jacob has a wrestling match with the angel of the Lord, and it appears to be quite a struggle. And you wonder, well, at the end of the day, the angel touches Jacob's leg, and that's the end of it.

Well, why didn't he do it at the beginning? We don't understand God's purposes or what God might or might not allow to happen. So, I want to say it sounds like a theophany. I'm going to call it a theophany and let the mystery of what that might actually mean in terms of heavenly struggle stand as a mystery.

Daniel alone sees this. His companions can't see it. They're terrified.

They leave him all alone with it. And when the man, the man, that's what he calls him, starts to speak, Daniel collapses into a deep sleep. And then, in verses 10 through 15, the being, the man, gives him an enabling touch and an encouraging word as he prepares him to receive the revelation.

So, behold, a hand, or hine, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said to me, oh, Daniel, a man of high esteem, understand the words that I'm about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you. When he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling.

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. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for 21 days. Then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia.

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. When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. So, this is intense, it is severe, and Daniel is going to require several acts of strengthening to be able to receive this revelation.

First, a hand touches him, lifts him up to his hands and knees. Then a voice tells him to stand upright. The voice tells him don't be afraid and assures him that he is there in response to Daniel's prayer.

And then he assures him that this delay, his lateness, was not because he was inattentive, not because God was inattentive to Daniel, but there was a reason for it. The reason is that the prince of Persia had delayed him, and he needed Michael to come help. As I already said, this leaves us lots of questions about divine beings and spiritual warfare that I am not going to try to answer.

The Bible itself offers very few definitive answers, so I'm going to leave my hands off that topic. Although I will say that the idea of divine beings ruling over nations is widely known in the ancient Near East and even in the Bible. So several lectures ago when we were talking about the divine council, we talked about the head god or in the case of the Israelites, Yahweh.

In the case of other ancient Near Eastern divine councils, El assigned territories to another tier of divine being and those territories they were in charge of, managing, and governing. They were accountable for them, but they were responsible in charge of them also. Michael, the prince of Daniel's people and one of the chief princes.

So, Michael, in Second Temple literature, Michael is identified as an archangel. He's the one with authority among the divine beings. In the Old Testament, this is the only place he appears by name.

In the New Testament, he comes up in Jude in an interesting text and in the book of Revelation. So, Gabriel and Michael are the only two angels in the Bible who are named. So, Daniel's told the purpose of this message and that is what would happen in a time yet to come for his people.

This expression, a time yet to come, we find that other places in the Old Testament where it doesn't have any hint of eschatological overtones, though it can have them at times. In terms of what's happening here, this seems, what the angel will say in his revelation, seems to point to a turning point in Israel's history and what would happen at the time of the end. So, two separate times of the end.

And Daniel hits the turf again at this word. In verses 16 and 17, he gets a second enabling touch. So, behold, one who resembled a human being was touching my lips.

Then I opened my mouth and spoke and said to him who was standing before me, oh my Lord, as a result of the vision, anguish has come upon me. I have retained no strength. For how can such a servant of my Lord talk with such as my Lord? As for me, there remains just now no strength in me, nor has any breath been left in me.

So, Daniel reports that one like a human touches his lips. You might call to mind Isaiah 6, where Isaiah had his lips touched. There it was for purification.

Jeremiah's lips are touched so that he can speak. In this case, Daniel does not necessarily need to speak. This is sort of a strengthening thing to receive a revelation.

Or maybe he receives just enough strength to say his strength is gone, which is what happens here. In verses 18 and 19, he gets a third enabling touch. So, verse 18, then this one with a human appearance, touched me again and strengthened me.

He said, oh man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you. Take courage and be courageous.

Now, as soon as he had spoken to me, I received strength and said, may my Lord speak for you have strengthened me. So, this human creature human-like creature touches him again and strengthens him. One, like a human, speaks to him and says, don't be afraid.

Now, finally, Daniel is ready to speak. I will say that there's a little disagreement or confusion about how many beings are speaking in this passage. If I were to read it all together, there would be a lot of references to he and he, and you're not quite sure how many figures are in this scene.

What happens to Daniel is still pretty clear and the message itself is fairly clear, but how many beings there are present, we're not quite sure. All right, and then the, what I consider to be a theophany offers him an explanation for why he was delayed. So, then he said, and why he's come.

Then he said, do you understand why I came? I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia. So, I'm going forth and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of, in the writing of truth.

Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael, your prince. In the first year of Darius the Mede, I rose to be an encouragement and a protection for him. Okay, so there's lots of different thoughts going on here.

Sometimes, it's difficult to pull them into a cohesive unit, but clearly, this message is urgent. This man says, do you know why I've come? I'm going to give you this message even though I really need to get back there. I'm here to give you this message. So, this is an important message.

He's in a hurry to get back, and that shows the significance of what he's going to say, that he was called away from such an important struggle to bring a message to Daniel. The mention of Michael is a little bit of an aside. So, he said, there's no one who stands with me against these forces except Michael, your prince.

He's left things in Michael's hands while he's hustled here to deliver this message. This reference to the writing of truth or the book of truth, we've encountered several books in the grounds for judgment in chapter 7. Daniel reads the books or the scrolls of Jeremiah. I forget which other books there are, but this is a different book.

This book seems to contain the course of history for the nations and for God's people. It's similar to what's known in Babylonian mythology as the tablets of destiny, which chart the course, at least for the Babylonians, of the upcoming year. But this particular book seems to have the course of history that he's come to make known.

The fact that he makes another aside is that he helped Michael in the first year of Darius. Here's Darius the Mede again. What happened in Darius the Mede's first year that might have required additional angelic strengthening? Daniel doesn't spell it out.

The angel doesn't spell it out. We could speculate. We're back down here in 539.

Why might Darius and the heavenly forces that perhaps represented Darius have been fighting? What struggle might have been going on that could have been

especially intense? Well, perhaps the heavenly princes were fighting to keep Israel from being restored to their land. I don't know. It's a possibility.

There's something going on in this first year of Darius that's important enough that Michael requires some help. Then we get to the revelation from the book of truth, or the writing of truth. This is a long section.

This is basically all of chapter 11, except for the first verse and the first four verses of chapter 12. I'm going to give this its own little introduction before we actually get to the text. We'll approach it in much smaller chunks.

As the angel makes this revelation, there are basically five areas of prophetic concern, or five specific eras that he's going to work through. He's going to talk about Persia. He's going to talk about Greece, who he will refer to as the strong king, or a strong king.

He's going to talk about Egypt and Syria, more specifically for words that we might recognize here. That's the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. He's going to talk about Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who will just be called the despicable person, or one version calls him the contemptible person.

Then there's a section that's very much debated and discussed about the king who exalts himself. When we get to that section, it begins at 11:36. It becomes particularly difficult because we've been tracking historical events up to this point, and then it shifts, and suddenly, we can't find references that apply to history.

There are two ways to approach it. Either the prophet got it wrong, or we've transitioned from talking about just Antiochus Epiphanes to launching into the talking about a future Antichrist. I want to, before we get into this section, revisit the issue of ex-eventu prophecy, because that will become an issue when we get to verse 36.

We talked about this much earlier in the course, but I fear I perhaps confused you more than clarified anything. It's been so long ago that you've undoubtedly forgotten it anyway. Let me try again.

Ex-eventu prophecy, or after-the-event prophecy, is known in the genre of apocalyptic literature. I don't think anybody necessarily denies that. The question for a lot of evangelical scholars is whether that genre, or that element of apocalyptic literature, is at play in the book of Daniel.

People have different reasons for thinking it's not, but I'll try not to go into all of that. Here's how this works. I'm going to speak about it in terms of the book of Daniel.

I'm going to assume the position of those who have the view of ex-eventu prophecy so that I can best explain it. Ex-eventu prophecy in the book of Daniel, the claim is that there is a second century anonymous Jew who lives in Palestine during this persecution of Antiochus. The specific date that they'll give to the writing of this prophecy is 167.

167 is when the persecution by Antiochus IV Epiphanes really picks up. This is when the temple is desecrated, and things just go downhill from there. We will put this prophet, who we're naming Daniel, even though, in this view, he is an anonymous second-century Jew who's adopted the name of Daniel.

You say, well, why would he do that? Well, here's how the genre works. So, he's in the middle of a really tumultuous time. His people are being oppressed, and part of the purpose of what he wants to write is to encourage his people that God has control over the course of human history. If you can be reminded of that, you can be assured that he has control over the course of future history as well.

So, the aim is to show God's control over this determined history. He's got it all in his hands. That's part of what they're trying to accomplish with this.

So, what he does is go back and pick this highly respected, venerable character from the time of the exile. The real Daniel. The historical Daniel.

And that historical Daniel becomes his mouth, or he's going to be the mouthpiece using Daniel's name. So, this prophecy is spoken in the name of Daniel but it's being spoken by the synonymous Jew down here in the second century. And what this prophecy that Daniel gives is he recounts the history of time up until, for sure, up until this point.

So, he's going to talk about the Persian Empire. He's going to talk about the Greek Empire. He's going to talk about these Seleucids and Ptolemies as they rise to the scene.

And he's going to get all of these prophecies spot on. Why? Well, because for this guy actually writing it, it's history, right? But he's writing it as if he's Daniel living down here foretelling it. So, it's Daniel, the real Daniel, supposedly speaking, but the real voice is this guy.

So, he gets everything right and in this prophecy in chapter 11, we have remarkable detail. I mean, when we go through it, it's like a fill in the blank. You can put historical names in this prophecy and it's like you're reading a history book.

That is really unlike anything else we have in biblical prophecy. It's just weird. Now, it's not weird in terms of apocalyptic literature and that genre, but it's weird in the Bible.

So that means we're not quite sure what to do with it. So, when he gets to this part in history, all the details. I mean, he knows this history really well.

All the details are there. This view will say that this whole genre is actually the reason for this mysterious person, Darius the Mede. This is a side note.

This has nothing to do with chapter 11, per se. So, what this view will say is because this is ex-eventu prophecy, this real author is talking about ancient history to him and he got it a little confused. So, instead of Cyrus, he said Darius.

So, he switched those guys because he really didn't know his history that well, which I think is actually really bad. I mean, even if I held this view, if I don't hold this view, that's just really a rotten view of this man's view of history. I think we can give the biblical authors a little more credit than that to make that big of an error and to make it four times.

He calls him Darius the Mede four times. Anyway, that's beside the point. I get sidetracked.

Okay, so he gets this spot on all the way to right about here, and this is 11:36. It's right about where we end, and then he keeps talking about Antiochus, this king who exalts himself, and he starts saying things that we can't find in the historical record. So, he makes predictions about Antiochus, where Antiochus will die, but then the historical record seems to not match up.

So, the theory says, well, yeah, because from this point on, he's actually making predictions. Here, he's just recounting history. Of course, he got it spot on.

Here, he's actually making predictions. In some of them, he gets right, and in others, he gets wrong. So, they allow him error because he's actually making predictions.

Okay, so that's the gist of how ex-eventu works. And some scholars will say, well, then the question becomes, if you're an evangelical or Christian scholar and you hold this view, then you have to account for how this is got it wrong, how that can be in scripture. How do we get it wrong? How do we have a prediction that's wrong? Which takes it back to your views of the Bible and what the authority of scripture means, what inspiration means, and how the use of genres factors into all of that.

So, it's a little, it gets pretty complicated. It takes just some pretty fundamental questions. But aside from all of that, that's how this view works.

So, whether or not this kind of genre would be appropriate for the Bible is a question I'm going to leave you to think through for yourself. Some people have very strong opinions. It's not the kind of genre God would use.

Other people say, well, it's a genre. God can choose to use whatever aspect of literature or kinds of writing that he wants to use. He can do that.

So that's the issue. That's ex-eventu prophecy. Now, back to the prophecy.

Verse 11, the kings of Persia. And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia.

Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them. As soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece. The fact that there are four kings here, there's a lot of disagreement about how to number the Persian kings.

It seems like the best explanation is to say this is a number of completion. There are three plus one more, which is actually a Hebrew idiom. There's actually more like a dozen kings here, but all of them.

So, this is the kings of Persia. And then, in verses three and four, we move on to someone he calls the strong king, which is a Greek king. So, a mighty, and I'll just say Greek to fill in the blank for you, a mighty Greek king will arise and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.

But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants nor according to his authority, which he wielded. For his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others beside them. Everyone agrees this strong king, this mighty king is Alexander the Great, came to power in 336 and carried out unprecedented military campaigns to the east.

Within 10 years, he had marched from Turkey to India, and he had established the largest empire to that point. He defeated Darius III in 330, and he took over the Persian empire. But then, at the peak of his power, he died and left no heir.

So, his empire is parceled out. This is history we've been over several times. The only ones we're going to care about and the only ones this revelation is going to care about are Seleucus and Ptolemy, who the prophecy calls the king of the north, that's Seleucus, and the king of the south, that's Ptolemy.

So, the kings of the north and the south. Now, this section that I'm launching into here recounts a couple hundred years of history between the Seleucus and the Ptolemies. If I were to stop and give you all the details, I promise you, you'd be glassy-eyed very quickly.

You might get that way anyway with what I do give you. So, I'm going to give you a very limited retelling. But if you pick up any decent commentary, you can get all the history details here.

I will do some fill-in-the-blanks along the way to just help you sort of keep track. So, verse 5, then the king of the south, so that's Ptolemies, will grow strong along with one of his princes, that's actually going to be Seleucus, who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion. His domain will be a great dominion indeed.

After some years, they will form an alliance. And the daughter of the king of the south, so Ptolemies, this is actually Berenice, will come to the king of the north, that time it's Antiochus II, to carry out a peaceful arrangement. But she, Berenice, Ptolemy, will not retain her position of power, nor will he, Antiochus II, remain with his power.

But she, Berenice, will be given up along with those who brought her, so probably her attendants, and the one who sired her, that would be her father, as well as he who supported her in those times. But one of the descendants of her, her line, so Berenice's line, will arise in his place, so in her father's place. And he, this is going to be Ptolemy III, will come against their army, so against the Seleucids, and enter the fortress of the king of the north, Seleucids, and he will deal with them and display great strength.

Also, their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he, on his part, will refrain from attacking the king of the north for some years. But then the latter, so the king of the north, by this time this is Seleucid II, will enter the realm of the king of the south, but will return to his land. A couple hundred years there.

Then we get some detailed explanation or prophecy, the exploits of the king of the north, and these are explicitly exploits that are going to be of Antiochus III, who is considered the greatest Seleucid king. All right, so his sons, first of all, this is the sons of Seleucus II, will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces, and one of them, that's Antiochus III, will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his very fortress. The king of the south, Ptolemy, will be enraged and go forth to fight with the king of the north, Antiochus III.

Then the latter, Antiochus III, will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be given into the hand of the former, Ptolemy III. When the multitude is carried away,

his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall, yet he will not prevail. For the king of the north, Antiochus III will again raise a greater multitude than Ptolemy, the former, and after an interval of some years, he will press on with a great army and much equipment.

Now, in those times, many will rise up against the king of the south, Ptolemy. The violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down. Then the king of the north, Antiochus III, will come, cast up a siege ramp, and capture a well-fortified city, and the forces of the south, Ptolemy's forces, will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand.

I'll just make a side note that similar language, not able to stand against, sounds like the ram and the goat and the little horn. But he, Antiochus III, who comes against him, and we're not sure who him is, some Ptolemaic general, possibly Scopus. So when Antiochus the Great comes against him, he will do as he pleases and no one will be able to withstand him.

He will also stay for a time in the beautiful land with destruction in his hand. He, Antiochus III, will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace, which he will put into effect. He will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it, but she will not take a stand for him or be on his side.

Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many, but a commander, a Roman commander, will put a stop to his scorn against him. Moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. So, he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but will stumble and fall and be found no more.

So, the bottom line where we're at right now, Antiochus III was assassinated in 187 when he was attempting to sack the temple of Belle to get tribute money for Rome. All right, now we're moving out of Antiochus III and we're going just about to move into the place of Antiochus IV. Antiochus IV is not the son of Antiochus III.

We've got a Seleucus in the middle there. They kind of alternate names. So then in his place, so, in place of Antiochus III, one will arise, and this is Seleucus IV, who will send an oppressor through the jewel of his kingdom.

That's a reference to Israel. Yet within a few days, he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle. In his place, here's the awaited for a moment.

In his place, a despicable person, that's Antiochus IV, will arise on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred. In other words, he sort of weaseled his way into the throne. But he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue.

The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant, which might be a reference to the Jewish high priest. There's debate about who the prince of the covenant is. After an alliance is made with him, he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people.

In a time of tranquility, he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors. He will distribute plunder, booty, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time. He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the south, Ptolemy, with a large army.

So, the king of the south will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war, but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. As for both kings, Ptolemy and Antiochus, their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table.

So, they sat to make an alliance, but they were both trying to trick each other, but it would not succeed, for the end would still come at the appointed time. Then he, Antiochus IV, will return to his land with much plunder, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he will take action and then return to his own land. At the appointed time, he will return and come into the south, but this last time, it will not turn out as it did before, for ships of Kittim, which is Rome, will come against him, and therefore, he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant.

So, we've just arrived at 167 BC. He'll become enraged at the holy covenant and take action, so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice, and they will set up the abomination of desolation.

By smooth words, he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many, yet they will fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. Now, when they fall, they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy.

Some of those who have insight will fall in order to refine, purge, and make them pure until the end because it is still to come at the appointed time. All right, that brings us to the end of the section that everybody agrees on despite all the difficulties in there. So, we are right at about 167, everybody agrees.

Let me fill in a few blanks. So, two years after, well I think we're still a little, sorry we're still here. Two years after in 167, Antiochus invades Egypt again, but he fails entirely.

The Kittim, or the Romans, come to Alexandria at Ptolemy's request to help him, and Antiochus is intimidated and humbled by the Roman envoy, and he withdraws in a rage. At about the same time, in the land of Palestine, we have a group of Jews under a leader named Jason, and they revolted against the high priest, who at the time was named Menelaus, and his cronies, the Toboids, and he revolted because he heard that Antiochus had been killed. So Jason and his crew comes in to kill the high priest and all the guys with him, because they think Antiochus is dead, this is the time to revolt, we can finally be free.

However, Antiochus was very much alive, and he used this revolt as a pretext for his own attack and restoration of control as he returned from Egypt in 167. So, he vented his anger on the Jews by sending an envoy to Jerusalem under the guise of peace, but instead of bringing peace, they attacked the Jews on the Sabbath, and they plundered the city. This is recounted in the books of Maccabees, the apocryphal books of Maccabees.

Jews were massacred, and Jewish traders were rewarded for supporting the Hellenization policies of Antiochus. Later, in 167, Antiochus decreed the forced Hellenization, so he wanted to make Jerusalem into a Greek polis, a Greek city. He decrees that that must happen, and in order for that to happen, he outlaws Jewish religious practices.

So, circumcision, possessing the scriptures, Sabbath practice, celebrating different feasts, morning and evening sacrifice, all of those are outlawed, and anybody who rebels is threatened with death. And then, the temple was paganized with the institution of imperial cult worship, worship of the king, and the erection of an altar or an idol dedicated to Zeus in the temple. That's the abomination that causes desolation, most likely.

It made the temple impure, unfit for worship, it can't be used. So, within three years, the temple's overgrown with weeds, and it's been abandoned like a vacant lot. Meanwhile, pagan altars have also been set up throughout Judah.

Pigs and other unclean animals were offered, and this entire desecration prefigures another abomination to be later erected in the Jerusalem temple that Jesus predicts in the Olivet Discourse. That takes us way far afield, and we don't have time to go there. All of these events surrounding Antiochus and his attack of Jerusalem divide the Jews into two camps.

So, we have, in what I just read, that lengthy passage, we had those who violated the covenant, those are those who were corrupted by Antiochus's sweet talk. They're persuaded that his way is better, and they forsake the covenant. And then there are those who firmly resist Antiochus because the text says they know their God.

They persist in obedience to the law, and many of them are martyred because of it. They're threatened and persecuted, not only by the Seleucids who occupied Judah and Jerusalem but by their own countrymen who were on Antiochus's side. So, they're getting it from all around.

The wise people referred to in the prophecy are Jews who are persecuted on Antiochus's second return from his failure in Egypt. They're the ones who remain faithful to the covenant. They also teach and instruct other people during the persecution.

And the text said that those who follow them will also find suffering and even martyrdom. The statement that they would receive a little help might be almost like a tongue-in-cheek. Yeah, they got a little help from the Maccabean Revolt, but that didn't really help much because it wasn't long-lived. There's a little debate over what exactly that expression means.

Then it says that many will join the wise in hypocrisy, which could refer to a bunch of people who just kind of came along for the ride but really didn't hold the same view of obedience to God. This persecution purified and refined them, or the nation, again depending on one's view. And then we get to verse 36.

And like I said, up to this point in the text, there's general agreement about what's going on. Then we reach a really difficult section at which we have this question of whether it is a real prophecy. Is this something that has yet to happen in the future? Is it a genre that we can have in sacred scripture? What do we do with this? Because the events that are described can't be aligned with Antiochus's historical record for Antiochus IV. Tremper Longman does a nice job with this section, I think.

And he says you have to keep a couple of issues in mind. You have to say who's the king that this is talking about, because it no longer says the king of the south and the king of the north. It just suddenly we have the king.

Which king is that? And he also said, whose mind are we referring to? Is this a human author or a divine author? So does this prophet actually know that he's speaking far into the future, or is this a telescoping that he can't see? There are two major ways that people can take the text from here. The first is critical scholarship, which is going to hold to this ex-eventu idea. And their argument is that there's no indication in the text that we suddenly have a new king or a new person.

Everywhere else in the text, it was pretty clear that we've got a new character on the scene. There isn't one here. So, we have to assume that we're still talking about Antiochus IV.

And it's an imaginative looking forward to his downfall. So, the problems with that view, of course, is that it has to depend on this ex-eventu prophecy and the prophet getting things wrong. Conservative interpreters, traditional interpreters, will say, no, what's happening in 11:36 into 37 is we are now shifting from this historical figure of Antiochus IV to an eschatological figure.

We now have eschatological significance in verses 36 through 45. And since the time of Jerome, which is about 400, Christian interpreters have seen an Antichrist figure in this passage. Not all Christian interpreters see that, but Christian interpreters have seen that.

And they cite the tendency in prophecy to telescope future events. So, we wouldn't necessarily have a clear indication that there's been a significant change in time, that we're far into the future. Things kind of get merged together.

Longman suggests that in this section, we should see references to Antiochus epiphanies, but they're taking on larger-than-life characteristics, which we, living in the light of the New Testament, might describe as anticipating a figure called the Antichrist. And the kind of evidence that Longman sees here is he talks about this bigger-than-life cosmic language. It doesn't seem anymore to just be this historical reference that we can find.

Talk about the time of the end. The fact that verses 40 through 45 especially simply don't work when you try to apply it to Antiochus. And that the king, just the label of the king, was never used to refer to Antiochus before that.

He's always called the king of the north, so it's a different referent. And, of course, the talk of resurrection when we get to chapter 12. Baldwin, Joyce Baldwin, whose commentary I held up before, summarizes and says that although Daniel 11 finds its fulfillment in Antiochus IV, the matter doesn't stop there.

So, whether or not they have an immediate referent that we just don't understand or know about, we're missing some details. She says it seems that the divine intervention in this section might be broader. Some other evidence that might lead people to go beyond Antiochus the Fourth in this section to hold a more traditional view is some interpretational issues from other chapters.

So, when you go back to chapter 7, and you have the little horn, and then in chapter 8 you have another little horn, and then you have the ruler who will come, and you have New Testament teaching on the man of lawlessness, and on the Antichrist, and

then in Revelation you have the beast, and on the story goes. So, some of those issues outside the actual chapter might help you lean toward a more conservative interpretation or the traditional interpretation, or it might not. All right, we are in almost the last section of this prophecy.

Then the king will do as he pleases, this is verse 36, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the god of gods. This is kind of that cosmic language that Tremper Longman's talking about. He will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god, for he will magnify himself above them all. Instead, he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know. He will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures.

He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god. He will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many and will parcel out land for a price. At the end time, the king of the south, Ptolemy, will collide with him, and the king of the north will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen, with many ships, and he will enter countries, overflow them, and pass through.

He will also enter the beautiful land, and many countries will fall, but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab, and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape, but he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt, and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels. But rumors from the east and from the north will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.

He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain, yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him. And then we have the time of distress and this starts chapter 12. 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. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but those others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 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.

All right, there's a lot here that we simply don't have time to talk about. This promise is a great promise for the persecuted people, that there is hope of resurrection and

reward and resurrection and even punishment. The nature of this resurrection is discussed and debated but I think most people agree that this is a pretty clear picture in the Old Testament of actual bodily resurrection.

It's not metaphoric, it's actually referring to bodily resurrection. And it's really the only place in the Old Testament we find that. The concept of resurrection is pretty shadowy.

It takes until the New Testament for that to be clarified. The exact nature of who's being resurrected and how many and whether it's a universal or whether it's just related to those who suffered during this time period. There are all kinds of issues and lots of discussion on it.

I want to leave you with the promise and the comfort that this would have been for Daniel's original audience and for the comfort that it continues to be for people who follow God and yet will suffer for it. You may not see that reward until the resurrection. There are martyrs in this chapter.

There are people who suffer and die for their faith, and there are still people who suffer and die for their faith. But at the end, at the time of the end, there is ultimately reward, and there is ultimately judgment and punishment. We could spend time if we had it talking about the shining stars and the brightness of the heavens.

Probably some more figurative language. I don't think the author of Daniel means that when we die, we become angels or stars. I think we have figurative language going on.

Let's finish this up in verse 4. 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. And then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river.

And one said to the man dressed in linen who is above the waters of the river, how long will it be? There's that how-long language again. How long will it be until the end of these wonders? I heard the man dressed in linen above the waters of the river as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time. And as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

As for me, I heard, but I could not understand. So, I said, my Lord, what will be the outcome of these events? He said, go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purified, purged, and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly.

None of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. And here we go with the bank. From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days? 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 time.

Commentators have puzzled long and hard over the significance of those two numbers. I probably couldn't even talk you through the options. Some commentators throw up their hands and say that's part of the mystery.

Other commentators try to make sense of it, but the best proposal that I've read that I'm only going to refer you to because I'm not sure I could put it together in explanation is Carol Newsome. She talks through the numbers, and she finds patterns that connect with the other time periods in the book of Daniel. And her conclusion is that it is a significant number.

They're not just random. It's meaningful. And what I'll say is that even though we may not exactly know what those numbers mean, it's an interpretation that fits with other symbolism in the book, as well as the man's final word to Daniel, that you're going to have to wait for God to keep his word.

You just have to go and wait; there will be a delay; wait for God. It will come to pass. This is a challenging vision at the end of a challenging book.

And we've only scratched the surface. There's a complex history that we barely know. There are quite possibly genres that we can't begin to quite get our heads around.

But I want to leave you with the reminder that these prophecies and these visions transcend the historical setting. Whatever reference they might have or not have, nonetheless, this book transcends its historical setting. It's not always clear how it does that.

Our job is to do everything we can to understand it. And it's always helpful when you've done that to remember that even Daniel himself couldn't quite grasp it. And he had an angel to interpret it.

And that actually seemed to be okay. It was okay for Daniel, and his heavenly visitors didn't seem to get upset with him. Go your way, Daniel.

So that brings us to the end of the book. I hope that you've had your appetite whetted for more study in Daniel and go dig up some more resources and brush up on your history. Thanks.

This is Dr. Wendy Widder in her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 16, Daniel 10-12, Daniel's Last Vision.