

Unfortunately, future prophecies often confuse and divide the church. I know of a church down the road from us that split based on future prophecies, eschatology, end times.

These passages aren't meant to confuse and divide us. They're meant to encourage and prepare us.

For that to happen, we have to come at these chapters in the right way - a humble way. I'm a planner.

I like to figure it out, and the scripture gives notes ab those who are wise will understand. The problem comes when we whip out the current political map and try to dogmatically say this = that. Those sermons don't usually age well.

How have the prophecies treated you at this point?
Feel confused? maybe humbled is a better word? Feel humbled? Encouraged? If both are yes, you're probably in the right place.

Daniel's prophecies **ARE** confusing because there are levels.

He's speaking on two different levels

A play and a backstage - pulling back the curtain

He's speaking on an **earthly** level:

- Kings, nations, wars

But he's also speaking on a **spiritual** level:

- The angels are pulling back the curtain, letting us see the backstage glimpse at all that's happening (or will happen) behind the scenes. Here, we are getting a view of the angelic and demonic realms.
- The difficulty for us with these visions is that he's swapping back and forth fluidly

He's speaking on several different timelines:

- He's speaking about things future for him, but past for us - Chapter 8 - Alexander
- He's also speaking about things future for him AND future for us - Chapter 8 - Antichrist
- He often uses something past to reference and set up something future.

Mountains - near future and distant future

- Think ab The King of Tyre being thrown to the ground
- Think ab the Virgin birth -
- Think ab the destruction of the temple prophecy -
...all these have an immediate and an ultimate fulfillment.
- That's how he uses Antiochus Epiphanes - as a ramp to talk about the Spirit of the Antichrist... a lens through which to see the Spirit of the Antichrist - alive in a LOT of people, past and future, and the Antichrist himself, future for all.
- The difficulty for us is that he's swapping back and forth fluidly

What makes it really difficult, as you've seen, is that he's often swapping between both levels at the same time!! He seems to, in chapter 8, talk about earthly AND heavenly realms AND future earthly AND REALLY future earthly AND future heavenly AND REALLY future heavenly fulfillments, all in the same paragraph.

... it's ok to be confused.

David Helm compares reading an epistle, like Ephesians, to an archaeological dig. If we just keep digging and examining, we'll unearth the meaning. He compares passages like Daniel 8

to looking from a ship at sea down into the depths. There's a lot going on down there... but we can't really grasp it.

By now it should be evident to the reader that the key to understanding these last chapters is to see that the focus is mainly on two great crises that were going to come upon God's people. The first was the crisis brought about by Antiochus around 168 B.C. The second crisis will be the one brought about by the Antichrist sometime in the future. - Hughes

At this point, Daniel has prophesied that generations will be awash in wars.

In Chapter 11, Daniel has looked a period future to him, but past to us... he's been talking about the Persians, Alexander the great, and the kings that rise after him. He talked, as he did in chapter 8 and following, of Antiochus Epiphanes and the abomination - again, future for Daniel, but past for us.

...but then, mid-way through chapter 11, things seem to shift. Some things that are said after v. 36 make you think "He can't really be talking about Antiochus anymore, right"?

- Some commentators say that he's still on the Antiochus track (I don't believe it's possible)
- Some commentators say that he's swapping to Herod (maybe possible based on how you interpret a couple of key phrases)
- I believe he's raising his eyes to the far horizon, and is using Antiochus as a lens through which to look at the future Antichrist, manifested in a lot of folks, but ultimately in one.
- It's shifty, though... it's like those Deltas where the fresh water meets the salt... there's not always a clear dividing line. Those waters are brackish.

Now, that being said, we gotta hold all of this with an open hand. When we are talking ab anything future... we gotta say phrases like "seems like" and "maybe" a good bit. Remember how far off the predictions were ab the first coming of Christ?

One reason I believe we are shifting playing fields to the Antichrist in the end of 11 is because of the references to "the time of the end" in chapter 11, which is how chapter 12 begins:

Here's the thing> I **think** chapter 11 and 12 go **like this:**

- Kingdom of Antiochus
- Kingdom of Antichrist
- Ch. 12 - interlude of good news
- Kingdom of Antichrist
- Kingdom of Antiochus*

It's a chiasmic structure (a mirror) that the Bible uses SO SO often.

We've talked about the Kingdom of Antiochus, and the Kingdom of Antichrist (seems like)...

Let's get to the Good news:

...well, the good news started in chapter 11 - no great fanfare... this evil king comes to an end in v. 45, with no one to help him.

“At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

At that time, at the time of the end, the time of this ruler in chapter 11 - terrible things are happening to God's people.

There is a pattern that has happened in Daniel's visions. A ruler (mostly future for Daniel, past for us) will arise, grow strong and be broken. During the time these rulers are in place, terrible things happen to God's people.

- But here, we are talking about a different time.
 - We are talking about the time of the end... the time of the second coming, I believe.
 This is a time of deliverance, of books being opened.

- See, this time, trouble will grow, a ruler (Prince Michael) will arise, grow strong and **deliver** the people... those whose names are written in the book.

2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

1 Thess. 4:15-16 - "For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16** For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."

This is the time of the end. Michael's voice rings out, the trumpet rings out, and the dead, those who sleep in the dust will awake - some to eternal life, some to eternal death.

Resurrection! This trial will not be the end... the final word won't be had by the horn, the goat, but the Lamb.

4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

Daniel is told to seal up this document - to preserve and authenticate it. It's finished, but not closed. We can learn from it still. What do we learn today? No persecution can ultimately destroy those written in the book. There is hope.
 In the end, as things are revealed, knowledge shall increase past what's possible right now.

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. 6 And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?"

Jesus? Who's the guy standing above the waters? Don't miss that. He's presiding over the chaos.

Here's the question posed (by an angel it seems): How long till all this happens, or till all this concludes?

Now, in response to this question, the angel SEEMS to address the **Kingdom of the Antichrist** again:

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

Oh man, here's where some folks get out the calendar and speculate wildly. Books have been written, speculating ab the future...

The timeline is certain, but obscure to us. Many have speculated when time, times and half a time will start, or even what time, times and half a time mean...

Deut. 29:29 - "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

What's revealed? The timeline is certain

What's secret? The actual timeline.

What's the purpose? Faithfulness. Obedience.

We do know, though, that the power of the holy people will be shattered - it will seem bleak and dark towards the end. ...but some will remain obedient.

8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"

I don't know about y'all, but I'm SO glad this question is in here! Daniel asks, "So, what's gonna happen?" That's comforting.

He's asking though, because it seems like things get bleak for God's people.

9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

Daniel, that's all you get for the future. Go, and be faithful.

It's not a rebuke - it's hopeful. We'll see more on that in a few.

10 Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

Here's a little answer to Daniel's question, more of a reiteration of the same - some will be pure, some will be wicked. The hope, though is that the pure are MANY and WISE.

Finally, here, we SEEM to be going back to the **Kingdom of Antiochus** again (but the waters may be a brackish mix of Antiochus and Antichrist), really, this comes in response to the "outcome" question:

**11 And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.
12 Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.**

Is this back to Antiochus, or the Antichrist? I don't know. Maybe both.

Is the man clothed in linen pulling back the curtain for us to see beyond the physical to the spiritual? Is he speaking with both the immediate and ultimate future in view?

Daniel is presented with this stuff and says "I'm confused"... that's ok. That's appropriate.

What about the numbers??

The numbers may be confusing to us... but they'll make sense one day.

Think about these mind-blowing words of Jesus. In Matthew 24, the disciples ask Jesus to tell them about when he's coming back. He tells them about wars, and future tribulation for God's people, and false prophets rising up, and the Gospel being proclaimed to all people. Then he says this:

Matt. 24:15-17 - "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), **16** then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Did you catch it? Jesus is quoting our chapter!!

See, when Jesus is talking, the Antiochus IV Epiphanes situation has been over for a couple hundred years. Epiphanes desecrated the temple long ago.

Jesus is telling the disciples that Daniel is referring to a FUTURE event AS WELL AS A PAST event. Jesus used the abomination that makes desolate *in reference to the Antichrist...*

Was there an immediate fulfillment with Epiphanes? Yeah, probably. That does happen, remember? - King of Tyre being thrown to the ground, Virgin Birth - both had an immediate and an ultimate fulfillment.

Could this be not about Epiphanes at all, and just about future events? Yeah, maybe, but there is a lot of specificity around kings and nations back when. I think it's both/and - an immediate and an ultimate fulfillment. How do we know? We are told that There are a lot of "AntiChrists" that will raise up -

1 Jn. 2:18 - "Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour."

If God's people read their Bibles, they should have thought of the little horn when Antiochus defiled the temple. They should've thought of it when Nero came - When Jesus, the suffering servant showed up, their eyebrows should've raised if they'd studied Isaiah. When a baby was born in Bethlehem, their interest should have piqued.

Bible prophecy will be fulfilled. It is more sure than the sun rising.

And one day, that future day that the man in linen foretells - the full fulfillment is coming. Paul describes these future events:

1 Thess. 2:1-8 - “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, **2** not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3** Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and **the man of lawlessness** is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. **5** Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **6** And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. **7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. **8** And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming”

One day another will arise, and be killed as suddenly as King Belshazzar at the drunken feast in Daniel 5, as suddenly as Antiochus died - the lawless one in the future will be killed by the breath of the Lord Jesus' mouth and brought to nothing by just he appearance of Jesus. Jesus is THAT GREAT.

This prophecy in Daniel 12 is about the future. Jesus makes that clear. It's probably a dual fulfillment, but even that you have to hold with an open hand.

Why is Jesus telling us these things that haven't happened yet?

John 16:1-4 - “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. **2** They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. **3** And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. **4** But I have said these things to you, that when their hour comes you may remember that I told them to you.”

Jesus is talking to his disciples ab persecution to come. He has just told them - The world hates me, they'll hate you. The reason, he says, that He is telling them this is to keep them from falling away... to keep them FAITHFUL. They'll remember one day that this was promised.

You know what else Jesus prophesies?

Matt. 24:24-27 - For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. **25** See, I have told you beforehand. **26** So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. **27** For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Man. That same SON OF MAN that was introduced in Daniel 7 - riding on the clouds, with all authority - is going to come back - kill the antichrist, and rule and reign.

Exactly like Daniel prophesied. Some is clear to us because it's past for us, but future for Daniel...but there is a lot in this vision that's still cloudy - because it's about the future for us.

HERE'S HOPE:

Visions about the future are always confusing until they come to pass. Then, they're clear in retrospect.

- Think about Nebuchadnezzar's dreams - cloudy for the Babylonians, clear for us who have seen these nations rise and fall.

- Think about Jeremiah's prophecy about the seas of Babylon being dried up and the nation being crushed - cloudy then, clear now that we've seen Cyrus re-route the Euphrates.
- Think about **Isaiah 53:2-6** - "For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Cloudy to the original hearers, but we who know the crucifixion are BLOWN AWAY by the specificity and authority of the prophecy.
- Consider all the prophecies of the coming of Christ, as summed up in

1 Peter 1:10-12 - "Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look."

The guys who prophesied these things were sick, like Daniel - wondering: WHO? WHEN?

OUR minds are blown because we KNOW JESUS - the fulfillment of the ancient words. We got to open that gift of prophecy fulfilled.

What am I getting at?

- These prophecies in Dan. 12 are still cloudy to us... but they're going to blow the minds of future saints that watch these days happen. They're going to floor **us** - on earth or in heaven - as we see ancient Daniel's words come to pass with pinpoint accuracy. We, with the future saints, will get to open that gift of prophecy fulfilled.

Right now, though:

Hold firm to what is clear - gently hold what isn't. BUT, we can hold fast to these truths:

1. **Israel was, and we are, still in exile.** Daniel saw in the visions - it's going to be a long, hard road before the end. We need to understand the same - it's going to be a long, hard road before we reach home.

2. WE NEED TO EMULATE DANIEL - He Rose and went his way. He was faithful today. We need to do the same. Are we confused about the visions? Somewhat. Yes. So was Daniel. But today, **rise and Go your way faithfully to the end.**

3. Daniel was able to hold the unreconciled mystery while still being FAITHFUL because he TRUSTED GOD. - There is specificity... but that curtain hasn't been lifted yet.
...but a lot HAS BEEN REVEALED.

Prophecies already fulfilled show us that - our takeaway is that - God is sovereign over the little bitty parts of history, and we should look forward to that sovereignty reigning over what seems to be chaos. Gen 1 - order out of darkness and chaos.

Christ will win. You will meet him in the clouds. You will see him as he is and be like him, because of the blood of Christ and the sure solid rock solid word of prophecy.

As David Helm says, "The final word is not had by the ram, or the goat, but by the Lamb." - We don't know who the little horn (future) is. Maybe we've identified a past one. We don't know who the antichrist is... we can identify a lot who have come in the spirit of antichrist. but thank God - we know the LAMB. If **he** was obscured, all hope would be lost - but he has revealed himself.

The future is cloudy - but not the most important part.

- Let future enemies be obscure - the hero is in focus.

- We don't know exactly who the antichrist is? That's ok - we know JESUS.

- We'll forget the antichrist's name anyway - while forever we sing Worthy is the Lamb who was slain.

Rev. 5:8-13 - "And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

Blessed is the one who perseveres to the end v 12.

13 But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."

This last piece is for Daniel... but in a way for us as well.

Your duty, Daniel, is clear. Your future is secure. Go and be faithful.

For some that will mean go and be faithful through suffering.

You, Christian, have an allotted place - reserved for you, at the end.

As Venture closes out this study of the book of Daniel, it's good to think back on a life well lived. Daniel is one of those rare Bible characters that finishes well.

It's crazy what Daniel lived through. Captured, castrated, renamed, re-educated, elevated... Persecuted >>> FAITHFUL. That's our takeaway. He's faithful through trials.

- The book of Daniel is, in part, a manual on how God's people deal with suffering and adversity. He's a living example of what the people of God should be in the envisioned trials to come.

Think about what Daniel has seen!

He's been reading Jeremiah and Isaiah, which have foretold Cyrus the Persian's destruction of Babylon (dried up their seas)! Daniel got to see that one happen!

Daniel saw the desecration of the temple in a vision before the people are even restored to the temple!

You think these visions and dreams are messing with your head?

How MUCH did the visions mess with Daniel's mind? Yeah he's sick about it at one point. oh it's so SO SO muddy for Daniel.

- When you read prophecy,
 - It's easy to throw up your hands and be like "man, nobody knows"
 - It's easy to get derailed and think of nothing else but prophecy.
 - It's HARD to remain obedient - being patiently FAITHFUL, even when you don't have answers to some pretty dang big questions.

- These are almost all future visions for Daniel. When Daniel is penning this, he's in the kingdom of Darius the Mede

Daniel didn't get to see the fulfillment of all these visions.

But he has all he needs for today's faithfulness. Your place is secure. Go and be faithful.

How do we remain faithful? Don't fix your eyes on Antiochus, the Antichrist, the dates - they're important, but they're not defined by the angels bc they aren't the FOCUS. How do we stay FAITHFUL? fix your eyes on the Son of Man! The HERO! The promises.

Bryan Chappell "*The Lord is careful not to allow his people to abandon the duties of today by focusing on the predictions of the future but rather to strengthen them for today by seeing his promises fulfilled as their trials are endured.*" (cut shorter)

We know what will happen on THAT day.. but not the days until that. That's ok. You don't know with certainty what's going to happen tomorrow, really.

- Let's be ok with not understanding the infinite, the almighty, the future...
- But let's do focus where the book of Daniel focuses - the Son of Man is coming, and we who know Him will be resurrected with Him.

Venture -

The end has been written, but today, today there is still a chance to repent - to follow the Lord. The resurrection hasn't happened yet. The books haven't been opened yet. The wicked and the pure have not been separated yet.

Jesus' own purity is offered to you today.

The pure are pure because of Jesus' work... his righteousness, not ours. Put your trust in Him and receive forgiveness and His purity!

And now, ***we that have*** received his righteousness, we are to go our way, being faithful.

- If God is for us, who can be against us?
- We know the end of all things - how can we not confidently and boldly GO with the Gospel - fighting sin through Jesus' conquest - knowing explicitly through something more sure than a dream - we have the WORD of God himself - explained by the Spirit of God himself.
- Now we can Live life backwards - Keeping the end in mind. Passages like this help to shape us, empower us, and motivate us to FAITHFULNESS in the here and now.

