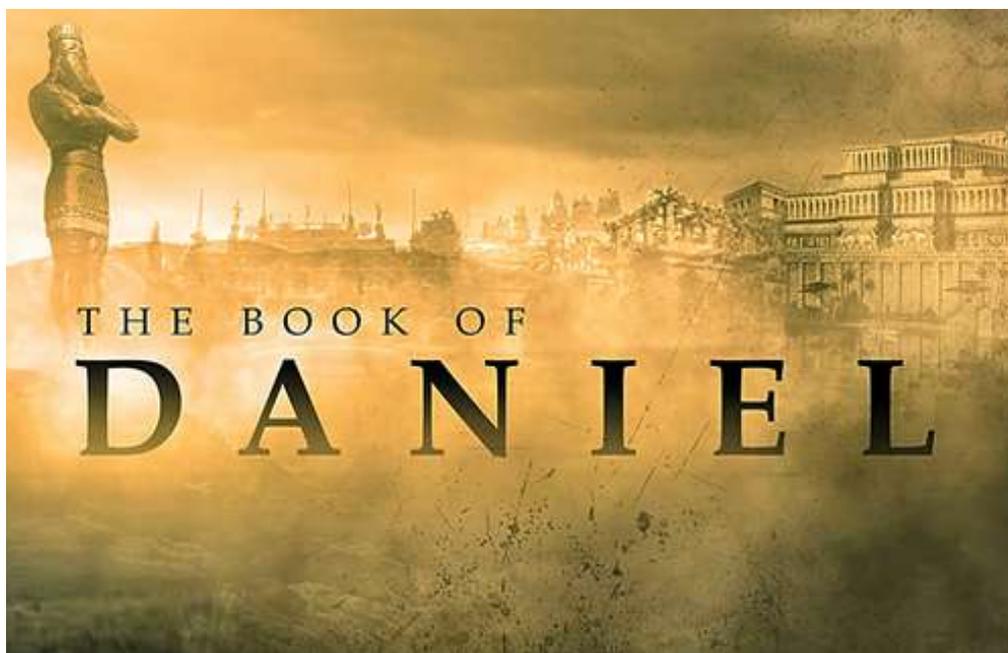


Let's Worship God

20th-25th December 2021

Daniel



THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Monday - Daniel 11:36-45 - The Antichrist: What Is He Like?

Suddenly Christ shifts the focus away from Antiochus Epiphanes and onto another figure who will follow after him. In many ways, Antiochus is like a forerunner of this mysterious figure, but the one who follows him will wreak havoc that goes even beyond the Seleucid king.

Who is this figure? He is surely the antichrist of 1st John and the “man of lawlessness” of 2nd Thessalonians. With some help from those passages’ teachings, let us consider what this antichrist is like.

Firstly, he “does as he wills” (v36). In other words, he exalts his word over and above the Word of God. Secondly, he puts himself in God’s place (v36). The antichrist will claim rights and privileges that belong to God and God alone. Thirdly, he uses worldly weapons: he trusts in “the god of fortresses” (v38) and in the influence his vast wealth is able to purchase (v38-39). This figure will use both the carrot and the stick in order to ensure he gets what he wants.

Fourthly, the antichrist will persecute the people of God. In context, “the glorious land” refers to believers in Jesus Christ (v41), while the enemies of God’s people (v42) can expect to remain relatively unmolested.

Finally, this figure will step into history “at the time of the end” (v35, 40). We need to realise that when the Bible speaks of the “end times” it refers to the period between the resurrection of Christ and his return on the last day (see Acts 2:17, 1 John 2:18). In other words, we shouldn’t think of the antichrist as some far off figure; he could arrive at any point...or he could be here already.

A scary prospect! Yet, not so fast. Just as he seems ready to destroy Christ’s people once and for all, his plans collapse around his feet. Like a balloon losing all of its air, “he shall come to his end, with none to help him.” The antichrist is doomed to failure because the real Christ is destined to win.

Questions

1. When you think of “the antichrist”, what comes into your head?
2. How does this passage change that picture?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for how the real Christ triumphs over this powerful enemy.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.” Daniel 9:19b

Praise: Psalm 64 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Tuesday - Daniel 11:36-45 - The Antichrist: Who Is He?

Who is this antichrist? One clue is found in v37 where we're told that "he shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers". That line is reminiscent of the way in which the one true God is sometimes described in Scripture and along with the New Testament's teaching on this figure, it surely points to someone who comes from INSIDE rather than outside the church.

It is the position of the Westminster Confession of Faith that the antichrist is none other than the Pope. While I believe we should be sensitive in how we state this position in order to avoid creating stumbling blocks to our Roman Catholic neighbours, I do not believe it is a position we need to be embarrassed about or shy away from.

Yesterday we saw that the antichrist exalts his word above God's. Surely we see that in the very notion of "papal infallibility" and in the way that tradition is practically elevated to be on the same level as Scripture itself? Surely we see it in the doctrines which cannot be found in the Bible, but which the papacy demands its followers accept? Surely we see it too in how Bible translators were burned at the stake for heresy in order to stop them from making God's Word readily available. The pope certainly fits the bill.

By calling himself Christ's representative on Earth, is the Pope not putting himself in God's place in the way Scripture tells us? By instituting inquisitions and crusades, has the Pope not got a track record of devotion to "the god of fortresses"?

Most of all, a history of the papacy is a history of faithful saints suffering under persecution. The Huguenots, the Genevan missionaries, and the forerunners of the Covenanters all suffered drastically as the Roman Catholic church attempted to retain its superiority.

It may not be the most popular view in the world, but when we piece together Daniel 7, 11, and the various New Testament passages, the Pope surely ticks the boxes.

Questions

1. If the Pope is the antichrist, can Roman Catholicism simply be a matter of a few slight differences in practice?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would deliver many from the empty religion of Roman Catholicism.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name." Daniel 9:19b

Praise: Psalm 65 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Wednesday - Daniel 12:9-13 - “Go your way”

Recently I read about a man who had watched a disturbing horror movie almost a year earlier and had been struggling ever since. He (barely) slept with the light on and even within his own house he was tormented by the notion of danger around every corner. Other than “don’t watch scary films”, I have little advice to give. Yet if ever there was a man who had a right to curl into a ball, it was probably Daniel. How can he keep functioning when he has seen and heard the things he has? How can he go back to everyday life when he has witnessed the horrors of things to come?

One of the reasons I find this final chapter so encouraging is because of the simple command that Christ gives his faithful servant. In both v9 and v13, the instruction is clear: “Go your way”.

Daniel is not to curl up into a ball – he is to “go his way”. He is, simply, to get on with it. Yet the command is also a liberating one; Daniel is not to fret about taking the battle to the antichrist or to anguish over how he can change the course of history. He is simply to get on with what he’s been doing for over 70 years – he’s to put one foot in front of the other in faith.

In some ways, this is an anticlimax. We might expect Daniel to conclude with a stirring call to arms or a command to live in a revolutionary way. But it doesn’t. Christ simply calls us to plod along in faithfulness to him.

As we’ll see over the next few days, Christ gives us reasons to keep on “going our way”. But for now, let us consider the challenge. Christ could say this to Daniel because Daniel had been living faithfully already. Am I doing the same? Do I need to simply keep “going my way” or do I need the Spirit’s help to change the direction of my life?

Questions

1. If I was to keep on “going my way”, where would my life end up?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for faithful believers who have been plodding along in faithfulness to Christ for many years.
2. Pray that God would help you to stick with this simple command.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.” Daniel 9:19b

Praise: Psalm 66 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Thursday - Daniel 12:1-2 - Go Your Way... because Christ Delivers His People

The Lord Jesus has just told Daniel about the powerful antichrist who attacks the followers of the one true God. It would be easy for Daniel to be overcome with despair as he considers the havoc that the church will have to endure.

Yet Daniel is to be absolutely confident that God delivers his people. In v1 he is told that Michael is the servant God commissions to do this task - that raises questions, but we won't go into those in this study. What really matters is this: whether it is through Michael, someone else, or directly by his own hand, God delivers his suffering people.

The last few chapters show us that God does not always deliver his people FROM suffering. Sometimes he does something better: he delivers them IN suffering.

Take Margaret Wilson, the 18 year old Covenanter who was tied to a stake in the sea because of her allegiance to Jesus Christ. If she was to have disavowed her faith she could have walked free, otherwise she was doomed to drown as the tide came in. Did God deliver her as he promises to do here? Some might instinctively say no; after all, he didn't swoop down to release her from her bonds. God allowed his faithful follower to suffer and die at a tragically tender age.

Yet, while her head was still just above the water, Margaret Wilson resolved not to betray her Saviour in order to keep herself from a watery grave. Instead she quoted Scripture and professed her confidence in Jesus Christ.

What is that if it is not God's deliverance? He enabled her to stand firm and not give up. He delivered her from the temptation to betray him. Christ kept his word in a glorious way. You may never find yourself in Margaret Wilson's position, yet you will find yourself in trial and tempted to give up on your faith. Whether we pass through sickness, loneliness, depression or unemployment, we can "go our way" because Christ delivers us IN trial.

Questions

1. Looking back on your life, can you see times when Christ has delivered you from giving up in trial?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for a fellow Christian who is currently going through hardship. Pray that Christ would deliver them from the temptation to turn away.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name." Daniel 9:19b

Praise: Psalm 67 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Friday - Daniel 12:3-7 - Go Your Way... because Christ Vindicates His People

Some readers will have seen a famous photograph from Germany in 1936. On the day it was taken, Adolf Hitler and some senior Nazis visited a shipyard for an afternoon of speeches about the glories of the Third Reich. The photo shows a sea of raised right arms as the workers (who were very much a captive audience) gave the obligatory Hitler salute in honour of the dictator. Yet what really makes the photo iconic is the one man, right in the middle, who stood with his arms crossed and refused to add his endorsement to such a despicable regime.

The identity of the man in the photo is not entirely clear, but there is reason to believe that he was motivated by his Christian faith. What is certain is that his “foolishness” would have been pointed out on a regular basis. By defying the Führer he put himself at grave risk of a prison camp or death. Yet today no-one considers this man to have been foolish; instead they marvel at his integrity and courage. History has vindicated him completely.

Today’s encouragement to keep going follows that vein - as followers of Christ, we will be vindicated. When v3 speaks of the wise, it is a callback to 11:33, a verse that describes the desperate suffering that those who remained loyal to the one true God would have to face under Antiochus Epiphanes. No doubt many considered these men to be foolish – would it not be better to compromise and hope to live a quiet life instead?

Yet, v3 speaks of our vindication in a touching way. Followers of Christ (who really are “the wise”), “will shine like the brightness of the heavens”. It is true that we may be unloved by others. We may have our motives unfairly questioned. We may be written off as arrogant, intolerant fools for Christ’s sake...but our vindication lasts for ever and ever. What an encouragement to join Daniel in “going our way” in faith.

Questions

1. Which of the world’s accusations against Christians do you find hardest to bear?
2. How does knowing we will be eternally vindicated help you to bear that accusation?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to live with an eye on your future vindication.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.” Daniel 9:19b

Praise: Psalm 68 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Saturday - Daniel 12:2, 8-13 - Go Your Way... because the Finish Line Is in Sight

The single most important lesson of the book of Daniel is surely that Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and that he is in sovereign control. It is apt that as we bring our journey through this book to an end today, we bear this lesson in mind.

As Christ sets out what the future holds for his church, one burning question comes to the forefront. "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?" (v6) There is more than one element to the answer, but today let us consider Christ's answer in v11 and 12.

What are we to make of the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days? Are they literal or symbolic numbers or are they both? That is not something we have space to go into in these devotional studies. Instead, let me make one very simple point – this time is measured precisely. It would have been easy for Christ to have said "around three and a half years", but he did not. Surely he wants us to see how precisely he has measured this time. Surely he wants us to know that he is like a brain surgeon, overseeing this operation, carefully making sure that no cut goes even a millimetre too far. How long? Not a second more nor a second less than is necessary. Then it's the finish line.

What happens when we get there? v2 tells us that we will all be raised from the grave. Those who have rejected Christ will be raised to contempt and punishment that never, ever ends. What a frightful proposition! Yet for those of us who are followers of Christ, life and glory with our Saviour awaits us. How sweet that will be! No persecutor and no antichrist can ever snatch that from us. Let us leave these studies with Christ's words ringing in our ears: "Go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of days."

Questions

1. What has been the most important lesson you have learned from the book of Daniel?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit would enable you to persevere until you reach the finish line.
2. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
3. Use prayer points from your congregation.
4. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name." Daniel 9:19b

Praise: Psalm 69 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

If you have any queries please contact - rpchurchscotland@gmail.com