

Two Ways to Live

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[0 : 00] We've got a lot of material to cover. Three chapters in all. And it's all precious and interesting and worthy of our attention. In particular, if you've got an outline in front of you, you'll see that I think the whole theme of these chapters, in a sense, is fear.

In chapter 10, as the angel who brings Daniel the vision is introduced, the key question I think we ought to ask each other, and I think I have to ask you, is, are you afraid of Jesus?

In chapter 11, the angel then takes Daniel through a short history of the world. For Daniel, it was still in the future, of course, but for us it's now in the history books. It's all come to pass. Daniel's taken through a short history of the world, leading up to Antiochus Epiphanes IV, as we've seen in previous weeks.

The key question to ask in chapter 11 is, are you afraid of Antiochus? Or of the other leaders in our world today who are like him? Then finally in chapter 12, we skid ahead to look at the end of the world, and the key question in chapter 12, as Daniel reaches the end of his life, and of course he was in his 80s by this time.

The key question to ask ourselves is, are we afraid of death? So it's all part and parcel of the same package, the same vision. That's why we wanted to cover it all this morning in one go.

[1 : 43] But the plan is to work through it in those three parts. We'll have three Bible readings and three little talks as we go through. So make sure you keep your Bibles open and your minds engaged.

There's a lot of hard work to do this morning. Lockie is going to be reading each of the Bible readings for us as we come to them. So we'll start with the vision of the man in chapter 10, the awesome man.

Thanks, Lockie. Thanks, Lockie. Okay, so the year is 537 BC now, or perhaps 536.

It's the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. The important thing is that that means that the first wave of exiles have now returned from Babylon to Jerusalem.

And when they arrived home, they began rebuilding the temple before almost immediately stopping due to strong opposition from the local inhabitants. They managed to rebuild the altar, and they started offering sacrifices.

[2 : 44] They managed to lay the foundation of the temple. But listen to Ezra 3, verse 11. Ezra says, All the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house was laid.

But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept. And then in Ezra chapter 4, The people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus, king of Persia.

In other words, what happened when Israel went home seemed to be a case of God over-promising and under-delivering. The prophet Ezekiel foretold a far more glorious, extraordinary temple would be built after the exile to replace the old one, far greater than the old temple Solomon had built.

Isaiah foretold a whole new creation, a new heavens, and a new earth, a glorious new Jerusalem at the center of a new world. But when the people of Israel got home, what they got was disappointing. What they got was nothing like what they had been hoping for. And so that explains, I think, Daniel's mood in these opening verses. In verse 2, Daniel says, In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks.

[4 : 06] I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all for the full three weeks. In other words, the Daniel diet was usually meat and wine, and he normally, you know, put on deodorant and washed himself.

But for three weeks he was mourning. He fasted from these delicacies. And given that verse 4 tells us this all happened during the first month of the year, that means that Daniel would have been fasting during the time of the Passover feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

It's kind of like fasting at Christmas and New Year's. Remember, Daniel has been looking forward to the new Exodus. This is the kind of language that the prophets had used, that Israel would return from exile by the power of signs and wonders.

They were to celebrate the Passover every year at the beginning of the year, both as a way of looking back to what God had done for them when he brought them out of Egypt, and as a way of looking forward to a new and better redemption to come.

But this year for Daniel, Christmas was cancelled. He had no strength or joy or hope to celebrate the Passover. Daniel must have been in a profound state of discouragement.

[5 : 21] So it was into that context that a word came to Daniel. It's described as a word of truth and a word of great conflict. And it was delivered to Daniel by this awesome man, described in verses 5 and 6.

This man was dazzling, strong, commanding, majestic. It's hard to put into words, really. I'm slightly concerned that the word awesome has lost all of its meaning.

This man wasn't just awesome. You know, he was truly awe-inspiring. He was overwhelmingly majestic and beautiful and powerful. So much so, in fact, that some people take this very straightforwardly to be a vision of Christ before his incarnation.

They say this man cannot be just another angel. This must be the pre-incarnate second person of the Trinity. And so they say this is reinforced by the first chapter in the book of Revelation.

You know, when John has a vision of the Lord Jesus in Revelation chapter 1, he says, Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, that's a reference to Daniel 7, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

[6 : 42] The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

In his right hand he held seven stars. From his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun, shining in full strength.

So I think I understand why people want to identify this figure in Daniel with the Lord Jesus himself. But for what it's worth, just to clarify, I actually don't think that's what's happening.

For one, some of the descriptions are actually quite different. When you look at them, the verbal parallels are sometimes overplayed. When you look closely, the clothing is different.

The golden sash is in a different place. The voice is described differently. The face is described differently. So it's sort of similar, but not quite the same. And I wonder if that's more to the point, that John is picking up the language of Daniel and transposing it to another level.

[7 : 44] So take the face in Daniel chapter 10. It's described as having the appearance of lightning. But in Revelation chapter 1, Jesus' face is described as shining like the sun in full strength.

And I think he's taken it up a notch. So what I think is happening here in Daniel chapter 10 is that Daniel is seeing the glory and majesty of God mediated, it's terrifying stuff, mediated through an angel.

Some kind of spectacular angel, for sure. Perhaps the angel of the Lord who appeared to Abraham and Jacob. Somehow God, you know in the Old Testament quite often, God is, well not that often, but anyway, God is able to manifest his presence and his glory through angels such that on occasion, people say that they have seen God face to face.

Remember when Jacob wrestled the angel, he said he had seen God face to face. Or when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, we're told that that was an angel. So I think that's, again, what's happening here.

God is mediating his presence and glory through this spectacular angel. And yet, of course, this all points forward to a much fuller revelation of God's glory and majesty in his very own son.

[9 : 10] So I think this is not a pre-incarnate vision of the Lord Jesus exactly, but it paves the way for his arrival and points the way to his arrival. God, for centuries and centuries, sent angels to communicate with his people, to mediate his presence to them.

But in the end, spectacularly, God did something that he had never done before. He sent his very own son. So with that sort of caveat in mind, that's why I still want to ask you the question in this first chapter, are you afraid of Jesus?

I don't think the man is Jesus. But if you look at Daniel's response to this awesome man that he saw in Daniel chapter 10, how much more should we be afraid of the man that John saw in Revelation chapter 1?

In verse 7, I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them and they fled to hide themselves. Again, it reminds me a little bit of the New Testament, Saul's vision on the road to Damascus of the Lord Jesus, doesn't it?

Then in verse 8, I was left alone and saw this great vision and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed and I retained no strength.

[10:29] And I heard the sound of his words and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground. In other words, Daniel passed out. Daniel was absolutely terrified of this awesome man.

But are you terrified of Jesus as you ought to be? When John saw his vision of Jesus, he says, when I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

But if Daniel passed out, then John died. So terrifying was the sight of Jesus in all his radiant glory. And this is good fear, brothers and sisters.

Remember, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. When the people of Israel gathered at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19, Moses says, on the morning of the third day, there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast so that all the people in the camp trembled.

Picking up on this, the author of Hebrews says, indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear. Now we often think that perhaps this is what Old Testament religion was like, that God was big and scary, but now he's all cuddly and lovely.

[11:41] Of course, that could not be further from the truth. If anything, the author of Hebrews goes on, we are in a far more frightening position than they were whenever we come to church. He says, see that you do not refuse him who is speaking, for if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven, let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Brothers, are you afraid of fire as you ought to be? You see, we mustn't water this down. Fear is the right response to God.

It is the wise response to the God who holds our lives and our destinies in his hands. In fact, again, we've already been prepared for this in the book of Daniel.

We've already been told this a few weeks ago when Daniel emerged from the lion's den unscathed. King Darius wrote to all the people's nations and languages that dwell in all the earth, peace be multiplied to you.

I make my decree that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God enduring forever. His kingdom shall never be destroyed and his dominion shall be to the end.

[13:00] He delivers and rescues. He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth. He who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions. No need to be afraid of lions, but we should be afraid of God.

Or again, Isaiah 66, Thus says the Lord, Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What is the house that you would build for me? And what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord.

But this is the one to whom I will look. He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. Friends, I know that I'm laboring this point, but I want to stress it for a little while because it's so underdone in contemporary Christianity, isn't it?

Which is particularly worrying, I think, because paradoxically, the fear of the Lord is actually the key to living without fear. And what do I mean by that?

I mean, you see how in Daniel chapter 10, although Daniel begins, as it were, passed out on the floor, rightly so, he's rightly afraid of this revelation of God that has appeared to him.

[14:11] Although Daniel chapter 10 begins that way, it doesn't end there. In fact, almost immediately, although it takes, you know, a few times, this awesome man begins to comfort Daniel and lift him to his feet and strengthen him.

In verse 10, a hand touched me. I take it it's the same man, it might not be, but either way, God is picking Daniel up. He touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. Daniel is slowly but surely getting up. Verse 11, and he said to me, O Daniel, man greatly loved, understand the words that I speak to you and stand upright, for now I have been sent to you. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, fear not, Daniel. You know, and so on and so forth. As this chapter proceeds, Daniel begins on his, you know, lying down on his face, but he moves up to his hands and his knees and then he moves up to his feet.

Daniel begins mute but then is unable to speak in verse 16. He's terrified by the man's appearance but then comforted by the man's voice. And it's always the same across the scriptures.

[15:17] The fear of God is the gateway to a right relationship with God where actually we're liberated from all our fears. And we're liberated from all our other fears.

I brought a couple of books up here this morning because I really like them and I want to recommend them to you. The first one is this one called Rejoice and Tremble by Michael Reeves. The subtitle is The Surprising Good News of the Fear of the Lord.

I just want to read you a quote from it. I can't remember if I put it up on the screen. I might have. This is page 24. In a culture awash with fear and anxiety fear is increasingly seen as a wholly negative thing in society and Christians have been swept along in that greater tide of opinion adopting society's negative assessment of all fear.

Small wonder then that we shy away from talking about the fear of God despite its prominence in scripture and in Christian thought historically. It is completely understandable but it is tragic. The loss of the fear of God is what ushered in our modern age of anxiety but the fear of God is the very antidote to our fretfulness.

I couldn't agree more and again I just have this other one which is sort of taking a more medical approach. Ed Welch is a counsellor and he's talking about peer pressure codependency anxiety those kinds of things.

[16:46] I just like the title of this book to be honest when people are big and God is small that is the big problem when people are big and God is small. Are you afraid as you ought to be of God and of his son our Lord Jesus Christ the far greater man who even eclipsed this man this awesome man who appeared to Daniel.

But that brings us almost to chapter 11 and to the awful man just one more thing notice that the end of chapter 10 in verse 20 and 21 the angel begins to describe his fights with the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece and in chapter 11 verse 1 he talks about how he confirmed and strengthened Darius in his first year.

The point seems to be that in the spiritual realms there are evil forces and hostile powers associated with each nation engaged in a kind of warfare against God and his people as they lead their own people astray and that God and his he has his agents engaging on behalf of his people and doing his bidding in these realms as well.

So the rise of Persia was not just a political or earthly reality but a spiritual and heavenly one too. And the proclamation of Cyrus or Darius in the first in his first year where he sent the people of Israel home was a work of God through this awesome man who strengthened him.

Notice also in verse 21 how the angel talks about a book of truth and then in chapter 11 verse 2 we'll see he says to Daniel and now I will show you the truth. The point here seems to be that God has a plan for the history of the world even the future history of the world already written down as it were recorded in a book laid out and he is about to reveal that plan to Daniel so that Daniel can know and so that we can know that in spite of appearances however chaotic the world may seem as kingdoms rise and fall no this is all part of God's plan.

[18:55] It was all written down long before we were born. So again Lockie's going to read chapter 11 for us. Thanks Lockie. Okay now this bit probably needs no explanation just kidding there's obviously a lot of material to cover here so we're not going to go through all of it but I just want to give you the basic rundown okay the quick guide the whistle stop tour in verse 2 after Cyrus the angel says there'll be three more Persian kings plus a fourth one who will be far richer than them all.

There were several wealthy Persian kings after Cyrus it is possible that four kings could be a symbolic number the number four is often used to describe universal things right the four points of the compass or the four corners of the earth and that kind of thing but if there is any one specific man being targeted in verse 2 then most likely it is Xerxes the first who literally was the fourth king

after Cyrus and he was famously the Persian king who led his forces into Greece and fought the Spartans at the battle of Thermopylae the 300 in 480 BC although there were 7,000 but anyway in verse 3 details details in verse 3 a mighty king from Greece shall arise and Alexander the Great was born about 150 years after Xerxes and he conquered the world from Greece to India so quickly it was like a goat speeding across the land without touching the ground but just as quickly as he arose

Alexander died in the prime of his life at the age of 32 and just as Daniel was told in verse 4 his kingdom was broken up and divided among his generals not among his posterity this paves the way for the introduction of the king of the south in verse 5 and then the king of the north in verse 6 and their various conflicts and politicking marriage alliances and so on the last for the next 100-200 years or so now in fact the king of the south is not one man but is a generic term for several kings who ruled over the Ptolemaic Empire in modern day Egypt and likewise the king of the north is not one man but is a generic term referring to the kings of the Seleucid Empire in modern day Syria Iraq and Iran I think the point is that these men all had different faces and different names but really they're all the embodiment of one and the same spirit so just to get our bearings here's a map of the region in about 300 BC of course it kept changing year by year as the different powers fought over territory but you can see roughly where the

Seleucids were in purple and the Ptolemies in green and of course why this is so significant for Daniel is because whenever these two empires clash squeezed between them as it were on the front lines of their squabbles was the little unimportant nation of Israel God's people historians have identified 13 particular kings lining up with the different incidents and descriptions in this section so again we won't go through all the details but you can see the Ptolemies there on the left the kings of the south and the Seleucids there on the right the kings of the north with their years and the verse references in Daniel and of course Daniel is told these things in so much detail and so accurately that many scholars just cannot believe that he was told all of this in advance and they suggest that Daniel must have been written much later than the book suggests you know if you want to google Daniel 11 history it's riveting stuff slightly dangerous towards the end which we'll come to if people get some weird and wacky ideas but you know all of this stuff is amazingly detailed as Daniel is told what's going to happen in the next hundreds of years and there's really no need for such skepticism in fact the whole purpose of the book of Daniel has been to show us that God is the ruler of the world who appoints kings and kingdoms as he sees fit of course he can foretell the future in as much detail as he likes because he is the God in control of the future he is the God who's going to bring it about what God's people need to know is that in the midst of the chaos and confusion of this world there is a God who still rules who has not forgotten about us who will one day conquer and put an end to it all and in fact who is working through it all to bring about his ultimate purposes so as one commentator puts it the Hellenistic period was one of secularization materialism economic activity exploitation and militarization hardly a happy list for God's people and sounds very much like the forces at work in our own day doesn't it the people of God live squeezed between kingdoms rising and falling and vying for power alliances marriages wars espionage politics flattery false religions these are all the different ways that rulers try to hold on to or seize power always looking for that elusive final victory that will ensure their dynasty lasts forever but it never does sometimes it looks as if they are unstoppable and like they finally won you know undefeatable like Alexander perhaps but then in a moment even sometimes mysteriously everything just collapses the whole deck of cards comes tumbling down so again the lesson for God's people the lesson of history is not to be fooled or intimidated by the world's wealth and power whether the rich Persians or the strong

[25 : 02] Greeks you see we are not living in the days of King Solomon now when Israel was at its height and very wealthy and powerful herself brothers and sisters we are living in that time of ongoing exile where the exile is sort of over and sort of isn't and where the expectation is that we will live squeezed between the great powers of this world trampled underfoot by the heavy weights of this world who hardly even notice as they march through us but the purpose of Daniel is to give us courage to be righteous in the face of evil kings and difficult days now the last northern king is introduced for us in verse 21 we've seen him before in previous weeks Antiochus the fourth epiphanies in verse 21 he is described as a contemptible person he was not really a very important person in a sense hardly like Alexander the Great or someone like that but he gets so much air time in this chapter because of how outrageously he would treat God's people and profane

God's temple in verse 29 we're told at the time appointed he shall return and come into the south but it shall not be this time as it was before for ships of Kittim shall come against him and he shall be afraid and withdraw and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant he shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant now the ships of Kittim is referring to the Romans in 168 BC Antiochus invaded Egypt again another occasion when the kings of the north tried to invade the kings of the south but the Romans who were a kind of emerging power from the far west the Romans sent their man Gaius Papillius Laenus to confront Antiochus and prevent the war famously about four miles outside of Alexandria Laenus handed over to Antiochus a letter from the

Roman Senate demanding that he cease his war with the Ptolemies immediately Antiochus wanted to consult with his advisors for a little while before answering but Laenus drew a line in the sand a circle all around him which is where we get the phrase from and he ordered him not to move out of that circle until he had given a firm answer Antiochus yielded and returned home afraid and enraged as Daniel chapter 11 puts it and so of course on his way back to Syria passing through the little backwater of Judea he vented his frustration on the local inhabitants in verse 31 forces forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress and shall take away the regular burnt offering and they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate he shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant but the people who know their

God shall stand firm and take action put their armor on and the wise among the people shall make many understand that for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame by captivity and plunder when they stumble they shall receive a little help and many shall join themselves to them with flattering and some of the wise shall stumble so that they may be refined purified and made white until the time of the!

for it still awaits the appointed time these verses are some of the most important in the chapter again we won't go through all the details but the important thing to notice is that God's people have a choice here between wisdom and folly or wisdom and being seduced by flattery do you want to be on the right side of history as they say in the midst of all the chaos and confusion sometimes it might look like the wise thing to do is to sell out on the covenant and side with the rich and powerful and that's certainly the way to avoid suffering in these difficult days isn't it it might even be a way to great rewards in verse 39 those who acknowledge him he shall load with honour he shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price do you want to avoid the sword the flame the captivity the being plundered in verse 33 perhaps gain for yourself great riches and honour verse 39 then don't stand against the rich and powerful of this world the

[29 : 42] Antiochus Epiphanes or whoever they may be because that will only get you misery in verse 40 particularly the historical parallels between Antiochus Epiphanes and the king of the north begin to evaporate and no clearly identifiable king after Antiochus seems to fit the bill this leads people in all sorts of weird and wonderful directions but for what it's worth I think what's happening again is actually quite common in the Old Testament prophets that Daniel's vision of the near future is kind of skidding towards the eschatological horizon and it's being blended with the end of all things so one scholar Robert Alta describes it like this what I would like to suggest about the effect of the language of poetry in this he's talking about Isaiah in this and most other biblical prophecies is that it tends to lift the utterances to a second power of signification aligning statements that are addressed to a concrete historical situation with an archetypal horizon does that make sense or a little bit later on he says processes unleashed in history begin to skid forward precipitously toward the brink of the abyss or alternately march on implacably as the narrative development of poetic parallelism is given full play okay that's a bit difficult to understand isn't it he's talking about in the context of

Isaiah he talks about the way the Assyrian army is described as never sleeping never stopping so that historically of course they did but because of the way the poetry works to exaggerate and describe it in these terms they become an eschatological army kind of like an army of demons hostile powers or something like that so the poetry forces you to start thinking of this army in bigger and more grand ways does that make sense okay so in our context the abomination that causes desolation that was a historical moment you know as we considered last week when Antiochus Epiphanes the fourth did this terrible thing to the temple in Jerusalem but it points forward the vivid description of it keeps pointing forward to an even greater much worse moment that's coming and as I said last week it's pointing forward primarily to the cross when God himself was murdered the

true temple and in a sense the entire history of this last days which will be characterized by the persecution of God's people the apple of his eye likewise

Antiochus Epiphanes the fourth was an antichrist for sure you know a type of Pontius Pilate but not the only antichrist by any means in the book of 1 John many antichrists have come into the world and the spirit of the antichrist will wear a thousand faces in these last days and at times will look unconquerable the people of God will look weak we will be flattered and seduced it will be tempting to give in to be seduced by flattering lies and the prospect of a more comfortable life but the wise person will endure again in verse 32 notice it's about knowledge the people who are wise the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action in verse 33 the wise among the people shall make many understand though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame by captivity and plunder there is an expectation in this time of persecution but also of gospel growth right what the new testament would call witnessing the wise among the people will stand up and testify to the truth in the face of opposition winning many to their side right making many wise but also suffering for their faithfulness a lot like

Daniel and his friends in the first half of the book the two halves of Daniel are supposed to go together and interpret one another facing persecution we must trust in the Lord and not compromise our obedience to him clearly being wiser than the wise men and even causing kings like Nebuchadnezzar to glorify the God who saves and in verse 35 all the while the purpose of their suffering the purpose of our suffering is to make us more like Christ or more like God even think about the description in verse 35 I take it we're meant to be reminded of the angel the angelic messenger in the previous chapter throughout this time the people of God are going to be refined purified and made white which is to say they will resemble more and more their God listen to 2 Peter chapter 1 his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire and that's us if you can believe it partaking more and more of the divine nature being called along by his promises to share in his own glory and excellence refined made white purified which brings us finally to chapter 12 okay so as the book wraps up the real hope is highlighted for Daniel in verses 2 and 3 it's the hope of resurrection many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt now don't let the word many there confuse you in Hebrew very often many doesn't mean many as opposed to all but many as opposed to few right so Daniel is being told about the great day of the resurrection that will come at the end of the world the judgment day when all mankind multitudes and multitudes of people many people will rise up from their graves and face the judgment of God and we will all be separated forever and ever into two groups some will enjoy everlasting life and some will suffer shame and everlasting contempt and of course this is why the wise person is willing to endure suffering now because they know about the glory later the suffering now is short term but the suffering later will be forever the glory now is fading and weak but the glory later will be spectacular and substantial and I love verse three 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 our purification will be complete the refining fire will have done its work and finally we shall be like God even in all his glory and brothers and sisters as we follow Daniel's trajectory into the

[37 : 10] New Testament and then on to ourselves what we find of course is that a man has already risen from the dead how did that happen and we through union with him have already been made alive and begun to shine like stars and yet of course we are still awaiting the final fulfillment of these things Jesus is the first fruits of the harvest but we are yet to see the whole crop come in the first fruits of the spirit dwell within us but we are still awaiting the redemption of our bodies we live at the end of the world the end of the world has already begun in our hearts and so as we wait we have a choice again don't we of two ways to live this time in the book of Daniel it's put in terms of being wise or being foolish will you live for comfort now or eternal glory later again if you've been following along in your outlines you might have noticed under each heading there's a question and I want to wrap up with these just try to summarize where we've come from in chapter 10 the question is the question I think we should be asking ourselves is are you afraid of Jesus are you afraid of God as you ought to be because God is the great and almighty one glorious in his holiness terrifying in his pure and righteous wrath and in chapter 11 if you're not sufficiently afraid of God then inevitably you will be afraid of men men like

Antiochus Epiphanes the fourth when people are big and God is small we are so easily intimidated by the apparently rich and powerful you know knocked around by the chaos and confusion of clashing kingdoms when the great ones march to and fro across the world squashing God's people in their wake we ought to remember that there is a far more rich and powerful ruler above them and of course a ruler to whom they will one day have to give an account a ruler who hears our prayers a ruler who greatly loves us so finally in chapter 12 the wonderful good news for God's people is that there will be a judgment day and the question is are you afraid of death you see how in the end Daniel is given this word of great assurance in the face of death after a long life of perseverance trusting God Daniel is an old man in his 80s didn't go home with the rest of the exiles he's been looking forward to the end of the exile pretty much that entire time only to face this severe disappointment at the end but the Lord says to him in verse 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 in other words Daniel you shall die but in the end you shall stand and shine like one of the stars forever and ever brothers and sisters you may die before our

Lord Jesus returns but there's no need to be afraid of death because in the end you will stand death has been swallowed up in victory let's pray loving father God we thank you that you are the the lord of all history help us in our hearts to fear you above all others to be liberated from our fears by that true and good fear help us to trust you in the face of the chaotic rulers of this world the wicked men who trample your people help us to trust you in the face of death to look forward to our resurrection and keep our eyes fixed on that that hope to come and we pray father that all the more as we see the day approaching that you'd help us to encourage one another and serve one another as as we bring gospel truths to each other in these times and that we'd be a source of strength and peace and encouragement to each other we ask these things in Jesus name amen