

Daniel

From North and South to the Beautiful Land

Lesson #12 for March 21, 2020

Scriptures: Daniel 11; 8:3-9,20-23; Isaiah 46:9-10; Matthew 27:33-50.

1. Daniel 11 is by far the most challenging chapter in the book of Daniel. Commentators have often jumped over it, making few, if any, comments. But, there are several things that we need to notice: (1) This chapter is covering a long history of battles between various forces and, therefore, must be somewhat parallel to what we have read in Daniel 2, 7, & 8-9, since it is covering the same history of the same world. (2) Down through the ages, various forces have oppressed God's people and have made life very difficult for them. Fortunately, Daniel 11 along with the other prophetic chapters tells us that when it is all finished, there will be a happy ending.
2. Daniel 11 can be divided into three basic sections: (1) Discussion of the Persian kings following the days of Daniel; (2) A long section dealing with battles and various efforts to compromise between the king of the North and the king of the South; and (3) Just as Daniel 2 ends with a stone cut out of the mountain which grinds the statute to chaff, (Daniel 2:44) in Daniel 11 a glorious holy mountain conquers the king of the North, thus eliminating God's last enemies.
3. After Cyrus in Persia, three successive kings dominated: (1) Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), (2) False Smerdis (522 B.C.), and (3) Darius I (522 to 486 B.C.). The fourth very wealthy king is known as Xerxes who was the Ahazuerus of the book of Esther. (In 486-465 B.C.; see Esther 1:1-7.) Xerxes felt that with all his might and power, he could invade Greece. But, a smaller force of valiant Greek soldiers repelled him. The Greeks never forgot that attack! Alexander paid them back!
4. **Daniel 11:3-4:** ³ "And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. ⁴ 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 besides them."—*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update.* * (1995). (Daniel 11:3–4). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.
5. After Alexander the Great's conquests, he died at a young age during a drunken stupor in Babylon, and his young son was killed. The kingdom was divided among his four generals: (1) Seleucus over Syria and Mesopotamia and including Babylon, (2) Ptolemy over Egypt, (3) Lysimachus over Thrace and portions of Asia Minor, and (4) Cassander over Macedonia and Greece.
6. It should be easy to identify Alexander as the prominent king of Greece mentioned in Daniel 11:2-4 by comparing Daniel 8:3-8,20-22. In Daniel 8, the names of the countries are given specifically, and we do not have to guess about what Daniel was talking about.
7. Daniel was writing this message around 539 B.C., the year that Cyrus conquered Babylon. He was predicting, precisely, events that happened more than 200 years later. Once again, we see that God's Word never fails. Do you think God is able to predict the future because He can somehow see events in advance? Or, does He control the future and make it come out the way He prophesied? Or both? Maybe both!

Daniel 11:5-14: ⁵ "The king of Egypt will be strong. One of his generals, however,

will be even stronger and rule a greater kingdom. ⁶After a number of years the king of Egypt will make an alliance with the king of Syria and give him his daughter in marriage. But the alliance will not last, and she, her husband, her child, and the servants who went with her will all be killed. ⁷Soon afterwards, one of her relatives will become king. He will attack the army of the king of Syria, enter their fortress, and defeat them. ⁸He will carry back to Egypt the images of their gods and the articles of gold and silver dedicated to those gods. After several years of peace ⁹the king of Syria will invade Egypt, but he will be forced to retreat.

¹⁰ “The sons of the king of Syria will prepare for war and gather a large army. One of them will sweep on like a flood and attack an enemy fortress. ¹¹In his anger the king of Egypt will go to war against the king of Syria and capture his huge army. ¹²He will be proud of his victory and of the many soldiers he has killed, but he will not continue to be victorious.

¹³ “The king of Syria will go back and gather a larger army than he had before. When the proper time comes, he will return with a large, well-equipped army. ¹⁴Then many people will rebel against the king of Egypt. And some of the violent from your nation, Daniel, will rebel because of a vision they have seen, but they will be defeated.”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Daniel 11:5–14). New York: American Bible Society.

Most Bible students understand the wars between the king of the North and the king of the South prophesied in Daniel 11:5-14 as referring to the many battles involving these two dynasties. According to the prophecy, an attempt would be made to unite these two dynasties by marriage, but that alliance would be short-lived (*Dan. 11:6*). Historical sources inform us that Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.), grandson of Seleucus I, married Berenice, a daughter of the Egyptian king, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. [His former wife killed Berenice and her son when Ptolemy died.] However, that agreement did not last, and the conflict that directly involved the people of God soon resumed. Thus, Daniel 11 deals with some important events that will touch the lives of God’s people during the centuries after the prophet Daniel passes from the scene.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, March 16.^{†§}

8. From our perspective and time, we might wonder about the central part of Daniel 11. Why did God give us all this material? Because it affected His people at the time. **These two kingdoms battled back and forth through Palestine.**
9. Aren’t you thankful that a God who knows the future in advance and is loving, kind, and benevolent is our God and that we can know Him?

Isaiah 46:9-10: ⁹ “Remember what happened long ago;
acknowledge that I alone am God
and that there is no one else like me.

¹⁰ **From the beginning I predicted the outcome;
long ago I foretold what would happen.**

I said that my plans would never fail,

that I would do everything I intended to do.”—Good News Bible.*†

10. Read Daniel 11:16-28. How you understand these verses will depend very much on the understanding of the translators of the version you read. However, there are certain specific images that will stand out. For those who believe that God can predict the future and are willing to translate this passage from a historicist's perspective, Daniel 11:16 suggests a transition of power from the Hellenistic kings of Greece to pagan Rome. We recognize the *glorious land* as being Israel with its capital in Jerusalem. The new power that arose in the world in those days, of course, was Rome. (Compare Daniel 8:9.)

Daniel 11:20-21: ²⁰ “There shall arise in his place one **who imposes taxes** on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle. ²¹ And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.”—*The New King James Version*.* (1982). (Daniel 11:20–21). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.†

Some additional clues in the biblical text reinforce this perception. For example, the “one who imposes taxes” [oppressor or one forcing the payment of taxes] must refer to Caesar Augustus. It is during his reign that Jesus is born, as Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem for the census (*Dan. 11:20*). Also, according to the prophecy this ruler will be succeeded by a “vile person” (*Dan. 11:21*). As history shows, Augustus was succeeded by Tiberius, an adoptive son of Augustus. Tiberius is known to have been an eccentric and vile person.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, March 17.‡§

Tiberius reigned from 14 A.D. to 37 A.D. which would mean that he was emperor during most of the life of Jesus on this earth. He was the one who appointed Pilate to rule over Judea. All of this can be confirmed from extra-biblical sources which fit precisely with Daniel's prophecy.

Daniel 11:22: “With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also **the prince of the covenant**.”—*The New King James Version*.*†

11. The reference to *the Prince of the Covenant* should be clear to all Christians. In the midst of these massive battles and wars between empires, we note the crucifixion of “the prince of the covenant.” (Compare Daniel 9:25 and Matthew 27:33-50.)
12. Assuming that we are correct about the previous passage being a reference to the activities of pagan Rome—which seems quite clear,—what power arose after pagan Rome?

Daniel 11:36: “Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.”—*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*.*

13. It seems clear that these verses are referring to a new system of power or authority. It followed the pagan Roman Empire but manifested some of the same characteristics.

As we look further, we find that it acts as a religious power. It aims its attack mainly at God and His people. Let us look at some of the actions perpetrated by this king.

First, he will act “in rage against the holy covenant” (*Dan. 11:30, NKJV*). This must be a reference to God's covenant of salvation, which this king opposes.

Second, this king will produce forces that will “defile the sanctuary” and take away the “daily sacrifices” (*Dan. 11:31*). We noted in Daniel 8 that the little horn casts down the foundation of God’s “sanctuary” and takes away the “daily sacrifices” (*Dan. 8:11*). This must be understood as a spiritual attack against Christ’s ministration in the heavenly sanctuary.

Third, as a consequence of his attack on the sanctuary, this power places the “abomination of desolation” (*NKJV*) in God’s temple. The parallel expression “transgression of desolation” points to the acts of apostasy and rebellion by the little horn (*Dan. 8:13*).

Fourth, this power persecutes God’s people: “some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end” (*Dan. 11:35, NKJV*). This reminds us of the little horn, which cast down some of the host and some of the stars and trampled them (*Dan. 8:10; compare with Dan. 7:25*).

Fifth, this king will “exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods” (*Dan. 11:36, NKJV*). Unsurprisingly, the little horn also speaks “pompous words” (*Dan. 7:8, NKJV*), even against God (*Dan. 7:25*).

Other similarities could be mentioned, but, considering what we read in Daniel 7 and 8, who is this power, and why is it so important to us, despite social pressures, to stay firm in our identification of it?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, March 18.^{†§}

14. Is there any question in your mind but that this power refers to the papacy and the Roman Catholic system? This is not speaking anything against Catholics but against the Roman Catholic papal system.

Daniel 11:40-45: ⁴⁰ “At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. ⁴¹ 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. ⁴² Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ 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. ⁴⁴ 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. ⁴⁵ 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.”—*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*.^{*†}

15. In these verses we have come to what Daniel referred to as *the time of the end*. Is that the same as *the end time*? It is interesting to notice that this expression occurs only in the book of Daniel. (Daniel 8:17; 11:35,40; 12:4,9) Carefully comparing these verses indicates that the time of the end began with the fall of the papacy in 1798 and extends to the second coming of Jesus; (Daniel 12:2) or, possibly even to the third coming of Jesus.
16. For those of us who live in the time of the end, an important question must be: Who are the king of the North and the king of the South in our day? Syria and Egypt are no longer

battling each other. **These names must be referring to something more contemporary.**

King of the North: This name first geographically designates the Seleucid dynasty, but then it refers to pagan and finally papal Rome. As such, it does not describe a geographical location but **the spiritual enemy of God's people**. In addition, we also should note that **the king of the North represents a counterfeit of the true God**, who in the Bible is symbolically associated with the North (*Isa. 14:13*).

King of the South: This name at first designates the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt, south of the Holy Land. But as the prophecy unfolds, it acquires a theological dimension, and is **associated by some scholars with atheism**.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, March 19.^{†§}

“The great city” in whose streets the witnesses are slain, and where their dead bodies lie, is “spiritually” Egypt. **Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God and resisted His commands.** No monarch ever ventured upon more open and highhanded rebellion against the authority of Heaven than did the king of Egypt. When the message was brought him by Moses, in the name of the Lord, Pharaoh proudly answered: “Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.” Exodus 5:2, A.R.V. **This is atheism, and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance.** “The great city” is also compared, “spiritually,” to Sodom. [Revelation 11:8] **The corruption of Sodom in breaking the law of God was especially manifested in licentiousness. And this sin was also to be a pre-eminent characteristic of the nation that should fulfill the specifications of this scripture.**

According to the words of the prophet, then, a little before the year 1798 some power of satanic origin and character would rise to make war upon the Bible. And in the land where the testimony of God's two witnesses [the Old Testament and the New Testament] should thus be silenced, there would be manifest **the atheism of the Pharaoh and the licentiousness of Sodom.**

This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France. During the Revolution, in 1793, “the world for the first time heard an assembly of men, [270] born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity.”--Sir Walter Scott, *Life of Napoleon*, vol. 1, ch. 17. **France is the only nation in the world concerning which the authentic record survives, that as a nation she lifted her hand in open rebellion against the Author of the universe. Plenty of blasphemers, plenty of infidels, there have been, and still continue to be, in England, Germany, Spain, and elsewhere; but France stands apart in the world's history as the single state which, by the decree of her Legislative Assembly, pronounced that there was no God, and of which the entire population of the capital, and a vast majority**

elsewhere, women as well as men, danced and sang with joy in accepting the announcement.”—*Blackwood’s Magazine*, November, 1870.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy 269.2-270.0.†‡§**

17. Daniel 11 ends with a mention of *the glorious holy mountain* or *the beautiful holy mountain*. In Old Testament biblical times, this was a clear reference to Mount Zion in Jerusalem as the capital of the Holy Land.
18. But, following the life and death of Jesus, God’s people are not defined geographically. In that case, *the holy mountain* must be symbolic for all of God’s people everywhere.
19. One possible interpretation of the final section of Daniel 11 is as follows:
 - (1) The king of the South attacks the king of the North: the French Revolution attempted to eradicate religion and defeat the papacy but failed. (2) The king of the North attacks and defeats the king of the South: the forces of religion headed by the papacy and its allies will eventually overcome the forces of atheism and will form a coalition with the defeated enemy. (3) Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon will escape: some of those not counted among God’s true people will join the fold in the last hour. (4) The king of the North prepares to attack the holy mountain but comes to his end: the forces of evil are destroyed, and God’s kingdom is established.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, March 19.
20. Can you think of any atheistic force or forces at work in our world today?
21. We know historically that the Roman Catholic Church reached out to every part of the world that they could control and tried to force everyone to worship it. Martin Luther himself the leader of the Protestant Reformation interpreted Daniel 11:29-39 as referring to the leadership of the papacy with its doctrines and practices. This fits with our interpretation of Daniel 7&8 for the same period.

No church within the limits of Romish jurisdiction was long left undisturbed in the enjoyment of freedom of conscience. No sooner had the papacy obtained power than she stretched out her arms to crush all that refused to acknowledge her sway, and one after another the churches submitted to her dominion.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 62.1.
22. Read Daniel 11:33. This verse makes two things very clear: (1) Those who clearly understand God’s plan will instruct many; (2) Many of them “shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering.” (*NKJV**) There are no specific time limits set on this prophecy. But, we should not be so naive as to think that these things could not happen again in the future.
23. Read Daniel 11:36; and compare Isaiah 14:12-17 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. Reading these passages should remind us of Revelation 12-14. There is a close working relationship among Satan himself and his two earthly associates, the papacy and—in the latter days—apostate Protestantism.
24. As we look over the broad sweep of Daniel 11 and compare it with Daniel 2, 7, & 8-9, we are reminded of the many ways in which God’s people have suffered and been persecuted down through the generations.
25. As we now approach the end of the book of Daniel, we can put together a chart covering all of the major entities; this chart is modified from the table in the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 159-160.

Power	Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8&9	Daniel 11
Babylon	Gold	Lion	Not Mentioned	Not Mentioned
Persia	Silver	Bear	Ram	Persia (Daniel 11:3)
Greece	Bronze	Leopard	Goat	Greece (Daniel 11:2-4)
Pagan Rome	Iron	Dreadful Beast	Little Horn Death of the Messiah (<i>nagid</i> , Daniel 9:25-26)	King of the North Death of the Messiah (<i>nagid</i> , Daniel 11:22)
Papal Rome	Iron	Little Horn Heavenly judgment (Ancient of Days / Son of Man, Daniel 7:9- 14)	Little Horn The daily is taken away (<i>tamid</i> , Daniel 8:13) Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary / "Time of the End" (<i>'et qets</i> , Daniel 8:17)	King of the North Death of the Messiah (<i>nagid</i> , Daniel 11:31) Time of the End (<i>'et qets</i> , Daniel 11:40)
Kingdom of God	Stone	Kingdom given to the saints of the Most High (Daniel 7:27)	Demise of the Little Horn (Daniel 8:25)	King of the North defeated at the Glorious Mountain (Daniel 11:45)

26. So, let us try to conclude. **Throughout the Old Testament, the greatest dangers for the children of Israel arose out of the north.** Babylon was particularly noteworthy. **Thus, the king of the North down through history which opposed God's people might be called Babylon.** (Jeremiah 1:14; 4:5-7; 6:1; 10:22; 13:20; 16:15; 20:4; 23:8; 25:9,12) But, when we turn to the New Testament, we discover that even the **New Testament writers referred to Rome as Babylon.** (1 Peter 5:13)
27. Applying these broad principles to our interpretation of Daniel 11, we are reminded that the one nation that openly defied God through its pharaoh was Egypt. Egypt as a nation is no longer a world power. **Today, Egypt must represent forces that mimic ancient Egypt, namely atheism and secularism.**
28. It is important for us to recognize that as Protestants are moving back closer and closer to the Roman Catholic Church and, thus, strengthening Rome and its position as the king of the North, many opposing forces, even in nations like the United States are very strongly enforcing evolutionary ideas and doing their best to reduce the influence of Protestant Christianity and, thus, are, in effect, **promoting atheism.**
29. We cannot speak with certainty about the meaning of *Edom*, *Moab*, and *Ammon*, in this passage. However, considering our reinterpretation of other entities, it is quite likely that people from different faiths and different philosophical traditions will leave their backgrounds and join the remnant people in the final days of this world's history.
30. These final verses in Daniel 11 make it very clear that the king of the North will do

everything it can to conquer the world. It will try to force everyone to join its side. But, the glorious or beautiful holy mountain, representing God's people under the Lordship of Christ, shall prevail over him; and no one will help the king of the North. (Daniel 11:45)

31. Following the example of many who tried, and in some case succeeded, in conquering Jerusalem, he will pitch his tent between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain. Roman Catholicism will do its best to appear as close to true Christianity as it can.
32. We must remind ourselves, once again, of this famous passage from Ellen White:

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings** 499.4-500.0.†

Daniel 11:33: “Those who have insight among the people will **give understanding to the many**; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days.”—*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. *†

33. Are we doing our part to give understanding to the many? This chapter has been very difficult. Some commentators have just avoided saying much about it. Others have speculated wildly. We have tried to take a middle-of-the-road approach, focusing on those things which seem to be fairly clear. May God continue to bless us as we study the book of Daniel.

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