

DEEPER

Daily Bible Study

Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

From North and South to the Beautiful Land

Sabbath (March 14): From North and South to the Beautiful Land

Daniel 11 is a challenging chapter. Because its final verses have not yet been completely fulfilled, and because the Spirit of Prophecy does not provide a clear, explicit interpretation, it is best to avoid dogmatic positions on the exact interpretation of the last five verses especially. However, this does not mean that this chapter should not be studied. On the contrary, it contains deep truths that must be uncovered, understood, and lived out in the daily life. If we fail to do this, we will be among those carried away in the “whirlwind” predicted in Daniel 11:40.

Two of the very few direct statements about Daniel 11 found in the Spirit of Prophecy were written late in Ellen White’s life:

The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. {9T 14.2}

The judgments of God are in the land. The wars and rumors of wars, the destruction by fire and flood, say clearly that the time of trouble, which is to increase until the end, is very near at hand. We have no time to lose. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecies of the eleventh of Daniel have almost reached their final fulfillment.... {Mar 25.5; originally in RH November 24, 1904}

Obviously, little precise and definitive information is given in these passages about Daniel 11 other than the rather general statement that its prophecies are about to be completely fulfilled. We must, therefore, commit to a deeper study of Scripture in order to understand the hidden truths of this chapter.

Three aspects of the prophecy in Daniel 11 will receive our attention this week—the beautiful land, the covenant, and the abomination of desolation. We will largely ignore the identification of the King of the North and the King of the South. While these are both important elements of the prophecy, they are, in a sense, secondary to the chapter’s core message. Instead, we will suggest a personal and spiritual application of the prophecy—one that, we believe, neither contradicts nor precludes interpretations that focus more heavily on the two kings. We should also note that the titles of this week’s lessons differ from the titles given in the Bible Study Guide.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 11:2-3 and 12:1-2. How does this prophecy begin and how does it end? (It begins with a repetition of the same earthly kingdoms that has been explained in Daniel 2, 7, and 8. It ends with a description of Christ’s second coming, which is also how Daniel’s earlier lines of prophecy end.)
- In what ways is Daniel 11 similar to the earlier lines of prophecy in this book? (The basic contour of Daniel 11 is no different than that of Daniel 2, 7, and 8. As we have already seen in earlier lessons, the primary objective of this repetition seems to explain what happens just before Christ’s second coming. Indeed, Daniel 11:40-12:2 contains a detailed description of

events that occur during “the time of the end” beginning in the year 1798 and ending at Christ’s second coming.)

- In regards to what happens just before Christ’s second coming, what do Daniel 7, 8, and 11 add to the basic outline found in Daniel 2? (Daniel 7 shows that the judgment takes place after the little horn’s rule and before Christ returns. Daniel 8 reveals that the judgment involves a work of cleansing in the heavenly sanctuary. Daniel 11, as we will see this week, focuses on the practical result that Christ’s cleansing work must have in our life if we will escape the abomination of desolation.)

Sunday (March 15): Daniel 11:40-45 and Earth’s Final Events

In today’s lesson we will investigate several important parallels between Daniel 11:40-45 and the story of the exodus from Egypt.¹ This study will lay the foundation for our understanding of the beautiful land, the covenant, and the abomination of desolation later this week. Our study begins with Daniel 11:40, which performs three important functions:

1. It introduces the final conflict between the kings of the North and the South.
2. It reveals that this conflict takes place at the time of the end.
3. It summarizes the reaction of the king of the North in response to the attack from the king of the South.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Daniel 11:8,40,42. With what nation is the king of the South identified or associated with in Daniel 11? (Egypt.)
- Read Exodus 5:2 and 13:3. What characteristics define the land of Egypt? (It is a land of oppression that refuses to acknowledge God or His authority. For this reason many have identified Egypt and the king of the South in Daniel 11 with atheism, secularism, and materialism.)
- Read Daniel 11:29-39. What power found in other prophecies of Daniel and Revelation does the king of the North appear to point to? (The papacy most specifically, and those powers aligned with it, more generally.)
- Read Daniel 11:40-45. What characteristics and activities of the king of the North remind you of God’s actions toward Egypt during the Exodus? (Possible similarities between are given below.)
 1. God’s hand was against Egypt in the Exodus, and in Daniel 11 the king of the North fights against the land of Egypt.
 2. God used the Red Sea to destroy the Egyptian army, and the king of the North “overflows” the king of the South at the end of time.

¹ Many of the ideas in Sunday’s study were taken from Angel Manuel Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation* (Biblical Research Institute, May 2015). This study can be found online at <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/prophecy/daniel-11-and-islam-interpretation>

3. The terms “chariots” and “horsemen” in Daniel 11:40 are associated with the exodus account (Exodus 14:9,17-18,23,etc.).
 4. Edom, Moab, and Ammon are mentioned in Israel’s wilderness travels yet remained unconquered, and neither does the king of the North conquer them.
 5. The Israelites took many treasures from the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35,36), and the king of the North appears to do the same thing.
 6. God led the Israelites to meet Him on Mt. Sinai, and the king of the North heads to the “holy mountain.”
 7. Israel was commanded to exterminate the inhabitants of Canaan for their sins (Deuteronomy 7:2), and the king of the North tries to exterminate God’s people.
- How might one summarize the basic conflict being described between the king of the North and the king of the South in Daniel 11:40-45. (Answers will vary. One possible interpretation that has been suggested goes something like this: After successfully fighting against God and God’s people during the middle ages [verses 29-39], the papacy is stalled in its conquest of world dominion by the rise of atheism and secularism, starting with the French Revolution in the 1790s [verse 40]. A great ideological and spiritual battle ensues between the atheistic worldview and the “Christian” religious worldview, with the “Christian” worldview eventually dominating.)

Monday (March 16): Daniel 11 and the Glorious Land

During the epic battle between the king of the North and the king of the South during the time of the end, the king of the North “enter[s] also into the glorious land” (Daniel 11:41). As a result, “Many...shall be overthrown.” The Hebrew verb here means literally to “stumble” or “stagger,” yet others “escape out of his hand.” While this part of the prophecy may very well point to literal, physical battles that take place on earth, there is also a personal, spiritual application that must not be missed. It is to this application of the prophecy that we now turn. We will begin by looking at four examples of a “glorious land” in the Bible, and the purpose that God had, or has, for each one.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Genesis 2:8. Where did God place Adam at his creation? (God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. This was the most glorious part of an incredibly beautiful world.) What was possible for Adam to do in the Garden of Eden? (“It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law” [*Steps to Christ*, 62].)
- Read Ezekiel 20:6. What did Ezekiel call the land of Canaan? (He called it “the glory of all lands,” or “the most beautiful of all lands” in the NIV.)
- Read Exodus 19:5,6. Why did God bring Israel out of the land of Egypt into Canaan? (So that they could be a “holy nation” and form righteous characters.)
- Read 1 Peter 2:9. What is God’s purpose for the church today? (To be a “holy nation” with righteous characters.)
- Read Revelation 22:4. What kind of character will the residents of the New Jerusalem have? (They will have the Father’s “name,” or character, written on their foreheads.)

- Read Romans 1:16,17. What reveals to us God’s power to place His righteousness into our lives? (The gospel. Wherever the everlasting gospel is preached, taught, and lived, that may be regarded as “the glorious land.”)

As we have seen, “the glorious land” in Daniel 11:41 may also represent a place where righteous characters can be formed, and the attack by the king of the North, including the abomination of desolation, may therefore point to Satan’s end-time attack against God’s everlasting gospel. Some people have suggested that the king of the North’s entry into “the glorious land” means that God’s remnant church has today been overtaken by the papacy and that it is time to “come out” and form a new organization. Such reasoning does not harmonize with Biblical typology. Babylon did indeed enter into the land of Judah, attacked, and overpowered Jerusalem in the Old Testament—and did so because of Israel’s sins, yet Israel remained God’s chosen people. The same would hold true today—even though the church and its message has come under attack, this does not mean that it is no longer God’s church.

Tuesday (March 17): Daniel 11 and the Glorious Land, Part 2

In yesterday’s lesson we saw that “the glorious land” in Daniel 11:41 may represent the place where righteous characters can be formed. Today, this “land” can represent Revelation’s remnant church, which has been entrusted with the everlasting gospel and Three Angels’ Messages (Revelation 14:6-12). These messages reveal “the power of God unto salvation... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith” (Romans 1:16,17). Today we will see that the entire book of Daniel, and especially its four parallel lines of prophecy, may very well focus in on the message of righteousness by faith, and its accompanying promise of victory over sin through Christ’s power.

To begin, let’s review the four parallel lines of prophecy in Daniel, with special attention paid to the “new” information found in each:

1. **Daniel 2.** An outline of world empires beginning with Babylon and ending with Christ’s second coming.
2. **Daniel 7.** A repetition of Daniel 2, with the judgment added after the fourth empire and before Christ’s second coming.
3. **Daniel 8 and 9.** A repetition of Daniel 2 and 7, with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary added as a further explanation of the judgment and how God deals with sin.
4. **Daniel 10-12.** A repetition of Daniel 2, 7, and 8-9, with a focus on “the glorious land” and its promise of forming a righteous character through faith in God’s covenant of salvation and Jesus Christ’s righteousness.

With this outline in place, let’s proceed to our study for today.

Discussion Questions:

- Read John 16:1-3. What is Jesus talking about here? (He is talking about the actions of the world, especially in opposition to God and God’s people.) Is Jesus describing any work of God in this chapter, or is it only those of the world? (It is only those of the world. In this way, John 16:1-3 may be compared to the dream in Daniel 2, in which the actions of the world are prophesied, leading up to Christ’s second coming.)

- Read John 16:7-11. Whose work is being described here? (The work of the Holy Spirit.) What three aspects of the Holy Spirit's work are mentioned? (He reproves the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.) Which chapter in Daniel mentions God's judgment? (Daniel 7.) Which chapter in Daniel reveals how God deals with sin in the heavenly sanctuary? (Daniel 8.) If John 16:1-11 can indeed be considered in this relation to the book of Daniel, what work of the Holy Spirit remains that must be emphasized in Daniel 10-12? (Righteousness. Yesterday we saw that the "glorious land" may point to the message and experience through which God creates a righteous character in people. Here, Jesus reveals that the Holy Spirit is involved in this work.)
- Read John 16:13. What else will the Holy Spirit guide us into? ("All truth.")
- Read Daniel 10:1,21; 11:2. What is the recurring emphasis about Daniel's last vision? (The recurring emphasis in Daniel's last vision is to understand truth.)
- Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. If we don't believe truth, what is the guaranteed outcome? (We will "have pleasure in unrighteousness.") What kind of "truth" is so important to believe today, at the time of the end? ("All truth," including prophetic truth and the truth of the everlasting gospel and its promise of victory over sin in this life through the power of Jesus Christ.)

Wednesday (March 18): The Prince of the Covenant

The word "covenant" occurs seven times in six verses in the book of Daniel, and Daniel 11 contains five of those appearances (see Daniel 11:22, 28, 30, and 32). The covenant is first mentioned in Daniel 9—first, as Daniel prays to God Who "keep[s] the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments (Daniel 9:4), and second in Daniel 9:27 in reference to the Messiah Who "confirm[s] the covenant." A correct understanding of the covenant is essential in our study of the book of Daniel, and in today's lesson we will take a closer look at God's everlasting covenant and its relationship to God's gospel promise of victory over sin.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Romans 11:27 and Matthew 1:21. What is God's covenant to humanity? (God's covenant, effected through Jesus Christ, is to take away our sins and save us from our sins.)
- Read Matthew 26:26-28. What two symbols connected with Himself did Jesus use to refer to God's covenant to take away our sins? (He referred to His body and His blood.)
- Read Hebrews 9:8-14; 10:1. In addition to providing forgiveness of sins, what can Christ's blood do for us today? (It can cleanse our conscience, and free our mind from the power of sin and place it under the power of God [compare Romans 6:12-14].)
- Read Ephesians 5:25-27. In addition to the forgiveness of sins provided through Christ's sufferings and death, what does Christ's body represent for us today? (It represents a church purified from sin, without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish.)
- Read Romans 1:16,17 and 8:1-4. What does the gospel reveal about the end purpose and goal of Christ's sufferings and death? (He endured this for our sakes so that, through faith, we can live with God's power and righteousness in our lives.)

- Read this statement from the book *Christ's Object Lessons* and discuss what is possible for us through the power of Christ:

God is love. He has shown that love in the gift of Christ...He gave all heaven, from which we may draw strength and efficiency, that we be not repulsed or overcome by our great adversary. But the love of God does not lead Him to excuse sin. He did not excuse it in Satan; He did not excuse it in Adam or in Cain; nor will He excuse it in any other of the children of men. He will not connive at our sins or overlook our defects of character. He expects us to overcome in His name. {COL 316}

Thursday (March 19): The Abomination of Desolation, Part 1

The “abomination of desolation” is mentioned in Daniel 11 and 12, and was referred to by Jesus in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 in His discourse on end-time events and signs of His second coming. In 70 AD, Daniel’s and Christ’s prophecies about the abomination of desolation received a literal fulfillment in Jerusalem’s destruction by the Roman army. Consider this statement from the book *The Great Controversy*:

Jesus declared to the listening disciples the judgments that were to fall upon apostate Israel, and especially the retributive vengeance that would come upon them for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. Unmistakable signs would precede the awful climax. The dreaded hour would come suddenly and swiftly. And the Saviour warned His followers: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.” Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21. When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay. Throughout the land of Judea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, the signal for flight must be immediately obeyed. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down into his house, even to save his most valued treasures. Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day. They must not hesitate a moment, lest they be involved in the general destruction. {GC 25.4}

Discussion Questions:

- Read Matthew 23:37,38. What had preceded Jerusalem’s literal destruction? (Before its literal destruction, Jerusalem had committed a type of spiritual abomination by rejecting God’s prophets and their message.) What was the result of this as Jesus stated it in verse 38? (Their “house [was] left unto [them] desolate.)
- Read the passage below from the book *The Great Controversy* and discuss what sin or sins, in particular, seem to have led to the “abomination of desolation” and Jerusalem’s destruction. (Corruption and self-righteousness were the prevailing sins.)

The Lord had declared by the prophet Micah: “Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us.” Micah 3:9-11. {GC 26.2}

These words [Micah 3:9-11] faithfully described the corrupt and self-righteous inhabitants of Jerusalem. While claiming to observe rigidly the precepts of God’s law, they were transgressing all its principles. They hated Christ because His purity and holiness revealed their iniquity; and they accused Him of being the cause of all the troubles which had come upon them in consequence of their sins. Though they knew Him to be sinless, they had declared that His death was necessary to their safety as a nation. “If we let Him thus alone,” said the Jewish leaders, “all men will believe on Him: and the

Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” John 11:48. If Christ were sacrificed, they might once more become a strong, united people. Thus they reasoned, and they concurred in the decision of their high priest, that it would be better for one man to die than for the whole nation to perish. {GC 27.1}

- Read 2 Chronicles 36:14-17. What caused Jerusalem’s first destruction by the Babylonians? (It, too, was caused by apostasy and rebellion.)
- Read Ezekiel 8. What kinds of abominations was God showing Ezekiel? Were they brought on by external powers, or by God’s own people? (They were “internal” abominations caused by apostasy and rebellion.) What was the setting for Ezekiel’s vision, and what, really, was being “desolated”? (The sanctuary, or temple.)
- Read Leviticus 16:29,30. What was the “ultimate purpose” of the sanctuary and its services? (To forgive and cleanse God’s people of sin so that they could stand in His presence.) What would an “abomination of desolation” in the sanctuary do to its effectiveness in cleansing people from sin? (It would destroy its effectiveness, and people would remain in their sins.) What would then happen to God’s covenant to take away our sins? (It would be ineffective.)

Friday (March 20): The Abomination of Desolation, Part 2

We are told in the book *The Great Controversy* that “Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign. . . . “Without delay they fled to a place of safety—the city of Pella, in the land of Perea, beyond Jordan” (page 30). In this lesson we will take a closer look at Jesus’s words of warning about the abomination of desolation, and see how they can apply spiritually to us today.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Matthew 24:11,12. What does Jesus warn about here? (False prophets who will deceive many people.) What results due to their false teachings? (Iniquity prevails, and the love of many grows cold.)
- Read Matthew 24:13,14. What will be preached to counter the false teachings? (The true gospel will be preached.) Then what will happen? (The end will come.)
- Read Matthew 24:15. In the context of verses 11-14, around what issue might we expect the abomination of desolation to play out? (The issue of the true gospel versus a false gospel.) What might the “holy place” refer to? (In the New Covenant, the “holy place” (or Most Holy Place) is the mind, where God’s law is written [Hebrews 8:16].) So what kind of battle is the abomination of desolation at the end of time? (It is primarily a mental and spiritual battle between truth and deception.)
- Read Matthew 24:16. Where did Jesus tell His disciples to flee when this battle takes place? (Into the mountains.) In Psalm 48:1. What does the mountain represent? (God’s holiness [see also Psalm 15].) What might Jesus have meant here, then? (When the battle of the true gospel of salvation from sin, and the false gospel of salvation in sin, takes place, run immediately to Jesus Christ and claim His righteousness!)
- Read Matthew 24:17,18. What might Jesus have meant in these verses? (There is absolutely nothing we can take to God from ourselves that will make us righteous. Everything must come from Jesus Christ. Do not present your own standard of righteousness, either “less than” or “more than” God requires. Either error is treason against God.)

If you would gather together everything that is good and holy and noble and lovely in man and then present the subject to the angels of God as acting a part in the salvation of the human soul or in merit, the proposition would be rejected as treason. Standing in the presence of their Creator and looking upon the unsurpassed glory which enshrouds His person, they are looking upon the Lamb of God given from the foundation of the world to a life of humiliation, to be rejected of sinful men, to be despised, to be crucified. Who can measure the infinity of the sacrifice! {FW 24.1}

- Read 1 John 4:17. What is God's standard of righteousness in this world? (The righteousness of Christ, perfect obedience to God's law.)

The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been,—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents,—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized. {SC 62.1}