

12. From North and South to the Beautiful Land (1Q 2020—Daniel)

Biblical Material: Daniel 11; Dan. 8:3–8, 20–22; Isa. 46:9, 10; Dan. 8:9, 23; Matt. 27:33–50.

Quotes

- Daniel 11 begins with a reference to kings, kingdoms, and politics in literal language. Persia is not a bear or a ram as in previous visions but is described as a kingdom with kings. Initially, the kings of the north represent the Seleucids and the kings of the south the Ptolemaic rulers. But later the king of the north and the king of the south become symbolic entities, as do Edom, Moab, and Ammon. This is not unusual, since a mixture of literal and symbolic descriptions is also found in other parts of Scripture (e.g., the seven churches in Revelation). Since the Seleucids and the Ptolemies vanished in history, the appearance of the king of the south and the king of the north in the time of the end must be understood symbolically, at a time when a global widening of the vision develops and a narrow geographical frame is being abandoned. *Ekkehardt Mueller*
- Daniel 11 identifies or associates the king of the South with Egypt (v. 8). In the Bible the symbolism of Egypt is ambivalent, but predominantly negative... The nature of the king of the North in Daniel—a power mimicking God—is now ascribed to the three powers that constitute the end-time Babylon. *Angel Manuel Rodriguez*
- As Christians, we must understand that there is no word so meaningless as the word “god” until it is defined. No word has been used to reach absolutely opposite concepts as much as the word “god”. Consequently, let us not be confused. There is much “spirituality” about us today that would relate itself to the word god or to the idea god; but this is not what we are talking about. Biblical truth and spirituality is not a relationship to the word god, or to the idea god. It is a relationship to the one who is there, which is an entirely different concept. *Francis A. Schaeffer*

Questions

What’s most important here—knowing the identities of the King of the North/South? If not, why is it in the Bible? How do we treat matters we don’t clearly understand? What is the larger picture here? Was God condescending in showing to Daniel what would happen? In the light of Daniel’s prayer, what does prayer do? What kind of God is at work here?

Bible Summary

Daniel 11 describes the battles between the kings of North and South. Daniel 8 (previously studied) refers to the ram and the goat, identified with Medo-Persia and Greece. God is the one in control (Isa. 46:9, 10). Matt. 27:33–50 describes the crucifixion of Jesus.

Comment

There’s much in this chapter to indulge the fanciful speculation of a fertile mind. But is that what this is really for? What is the real point in providing all this information?

The significance is not so much in all the detail, but in the revelation that God does know, that he is highly active in the affairs of humanity. If he is willing to battle for the mind of an ancient (even “pagan”) kind, it is reasonable to conclude that he has not given up on any of us. The battle for our minds—who we believe, who we trust, who we love and admire—continues, and what we see in this ancient account is some of the evidence. For that is what we

have to go on—not our feelings and impressions, but the actual facts as they work out, causes and effects, actions and consequences. Only as we see and agree with God that his way is the only one that makes sense can God truly be vindicated. This is not a struggle for power on God’s part, but simply for what is absolutely and fundamentally true. He will not force the mind to believe, though the Devil will often try to employ such tactics.

The conclusion—even from what may seem a rather obscure Biblical passage—is that God is winning the conflict over who is right and who is wrong, and who is the Being in the universe most worthy of our unreserved trust, love, and admiration.

Interestingly Ellen White never refers once to the “King of the North” or “King of the South” in any of her writings. Of far more importance to her was the nature and character of God, and how this played out in the wider setting of the great controversy.

So let’s think along such lines. In the words of John Milton from *Paradise Lost*: [Satan and his angels] resolve/ To wage by force or guile eternal war, / Irreconcilable, to our grand foe, / Who now triumphs, and, in the excess of joy /Sole reigning, holds the tyranny of heaven.”

Truly this is a war, as exemplified here in Daniel 11, but not between two kings, between the Devil and God. What did Lucifer want? To make himself like the Most High God. How vain! How ridiculous! How impossible! But to that end he began and even now continues his program of celestial rumours. “Rumour is a pipe, Blown by surmises, jealousies, conjectures,” wrote Shakespeare. Satan’s rumours are based on his intense jealousy of God, thinking himself wrongly treated and maligned. Rumours designed to do the most damage, accusing God of the Devil’s evil.

Rumours against God. Rumours like: “God is not fit to rule. He is a terrible tyrant. He enforces obedience with threats of execution. In fact, he is the most selfish person in the Universe. He is the author of evil.”

Remember the Serpent’s words to Eve, encouraging her to distrust God by eating the fruit, convincing her to believe the rumours he was spreading: “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:4 NIV). “Go ahead Eve. Believe *me*. God is just being selfish by denying you this fruit. He wants to keep you in submission, for he knows if you do eat it, you’ll be like him!”

The Devil’s greatest tool in his rebellion against God is to defame him. The Devil’s highest ambition is to be like God. He even had the gall to demand worship of God himself, when God came as Christ to this world: “The devil took him [Jesus] to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ‘All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you will bow down and worship me.’” (Matthew 4:8, 9 NIV.)

As Goethe wrote in *Faust*, “The devil is an egotist.” He is completely wrapped up in himself and his selfish ambitions to such an extent he will falsify every truth in order to gain his objective. He is the Father of Lies, the Murderer of Truth from the beginning.

Ellen White Comments

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 two armies will stand distinct and separate, and this distinction will be so marked that many who shall be convinced of the truth will come on the side of God’s commandment-keeping people. When this grand work is to take place in the battle, prior to the last closing conflict, many will be imprisoned, many will flee for their lives from cities and towns, and many will be martyrs for Christ’s sake in standing in defense of the truth... {3SM 397.4}