

“Wars and Rumors of Wars – Part 1”  
Daniel 11  
(Preached at Trinity, October 5, 2014)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As I stated last time, **Chapters 10-12** form a unit that closes out the Book of Daniel. **Chapter 10** serves as a preface to provide the context—Daniel is reminded that the conflict upon the earth is in reality only a reflection of the great spiritual conflict that is continually raging. **Chapter 12** serves as a concluding passage. The heart of the passage is found in **Chapter 11**. It is much longer than the other two chapters.
2. **Verse 1** actually belongs with **Chapter 10**. The Speaker has told Daniel how He has previously warred alongside the angel Michael (the “him” points to Michael, not Belshazzar.) During the great conflict as Babylon is defeated and Medo-Persia rises to power the Speaker furnished Michael the support he needed. Thus, again we see the mystery of the spiritual world—that the overthrow of Babylon was ultimately accomplished by the Lord working through His archangel.
3. Beginning in **Verse 2** Daniel is given a vision that, on one hand is veiled and mysterious, and on the other hand is so clear that some have refused to believe that it was written during the days of Daniel but rather several hundred years later.
4. The flow of **Chapter 11** covers the period already covered in **Chapter 8**—a terrible leader would rise up from the divided Greek Empire. I’ve pointed out that the “little horns” of **Chapter 7** & **Chapter 8** are different, and yet both are typical of the conflict that plagues God’s people until the end of time.
  - A. In this way, it is difficult sometimes to distinguish between the conflict during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the great conflict at the end of the age.
  - B. Sinclair Ferguson – “It is not always easy for us to determine where the vision of an intermediate conflict merges into a vision of the last and greatest conflict.
  - C. This is where great caution must be exercised as we interpret this passage lest we fall into one of the two extremes.
    - a. One danger is to relegate this completely to the end of time. To do this is to ignore the amazing accuracy of this prophecy as it was fulfilled with the rise of the Greek Empire with Alexander the Great and then the rampage of Antiochus Epiphanes.
    - b. The other danger is to relegate it *only* to the historical character of Antiochus. This misses the words of our Lord equating the events of 70 AD with this prophecy.  
**Matthew 24:15-16 NAU** - "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup> then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."  
It also misses the importance of this passage for the church facing a world of opposition that will only increase in intensity.

5. This passage seems amazingly clear as we view the events of history, and yet there is still an element of mystery as we consider the conflict as ongoing.  
 In the Olivet Discourse Jesus stated:  
**Matthew 24:6-8 NAU** - "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but *that* is not yet the end. <sup>7</sup> "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. <sup>8</sup> "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs."  
 A. As we see from Daniel's prophecy these conflicts have been going on a long time.  
 B. But from the words of our Lord, they will continue until the end of time and they will increase in intensity.  
 "But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs."
6. In **Chapter 10** we saw that Daniel had been praying for three weeks when he received a visit from a heavenly visitor. He was informed of the great conflict with the "prince of Persia." The conflict would continue thereafter with the prince of Greece.  
**Verses 2-4** describe this conflict in greater detail.
7. The remainder of this chapter describes the fiery conflict that would be a part of Israel's future. But these things are only foreshadows—prototypes of what is to come.
8. It is always important to remember the words of Paul in **2 Tim. 2:15**  
**2 Timothy 3:16-17 NAU** - "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."  
 Not all Scripture is equally clear, nor is every passage of equal strength in applying it to our lives, but all Scripture is profitable for equipping us for every good work.  
 We need to examine this chapter in light of what it has to teach us today. What is God's purpose for including it in our Bible?
- I. First, we must not overlook the literal fulfillment – God's amazing rule over all the earth
- A. The prediction of Greece succeeding Persia as a world power  
**Daniel 11:2 NAU** - "And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all *of them*; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole *empire* against the realm of Greece."  
 1. Daniel is told of three successive kings in Persia after Cyrus Cambyses, Darius the Great, and Xerxes  
 2. Out of this conflict Alexander the Great would rise supreme  
**Daniel 11:3 NAU** - "And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases."  
 3. Alexander seemed unstoppable – "and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases."  
 The nations trembled before him. But God sees differently. **Daniel 8:22** describes him simply as "the broken horn." He is but a footnote in history. We should always pray that we might see things through the eyes of God.  
 4. **Verse 4** describes the premature death of Alexander and his kingdom being divided into four parts, assumed by four of Alexander's generals. The four sections were Macedonia, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.

5. As the chapter continues we find predictions that were fulfilled in an astonishing way. **Chapter 11** refers in a historically identifiably way 13 of the 16 rulers of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires between 322 & 163 B.C.
- B. In **Verses 11-20** Daniel is told of Northern and Southern aggression
1. Two of the four divisions of Alexander's empire would have greater prominence.
  2. They are described as the kings of the North and South.  
We know them as the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms, better known to us as Egypt and Syria.
- C. The rise of Antiochus
1. Antiochus rises from the Seleucid Syrian Empire and ruled from 175-164 B.C.  
In **Verses 20-21** Daniel describes the untimely end of Seleucus IV and the rise of Antiochus.
  2. **Verses 21-25** describe the conflicts between Antiochus and Egypt as well as his hostilities towards Israel.
- D. The amazing fulfillment of **Verses 29-35**
1. The hostilities of Antiochus against Israel would happen during more than one Egyptian conflict. In 168 he set out to invade Egypt but was disheartened by delegates from Rome arriving on ships from Kittim or Cyprus. When Antiochus marched on Egypt the aged ambassador Gaius from Rome demanded immediate withdrawal or he could consider himself at war with the Roman Republic. Antiochus said he would discuss the matter with his council. Gaius drew a circle in the sand around him and said if he stepped outside before giving an answer he could consider himself at war. Humiliated, he agreed to withdraw. He then vented his anger against Jerusalem. (**Dan. 11:29-30**).
  2. Antiochus would take military control of Jerusalem, and especially the temple: "Forces from him shall arise ..." (**v. 31a**).
  3. He would cause the sacrifices to cease: "Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and "do away with the regular sacrifice." (**v. 31**).
  4. He would "set up the abomination of desolation" (**v. 31b**). This signified the desecration of the temple by the offering up of swine and setting up an image of Zeus.
  5. Antiochus would prefer and protect those who "violate the covenant" (**v. 32a**). We know that many of the Hellenized Jews followed Antiochus.
  6. Antiochus and his followers would meet resistance (**vv. 32b-33**).
  7. The righteous would suffer intense persecution  
"they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days." (**v. 33**).
  8. There would be imposters among the righteous (**v. 34**).
  9. These events would result in a purification of the people of God (**v. 35**).  
"in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time"

- E. The suffering of Israel under Antiochus was unprecedented  
— 2 Maccabees 5:11–14

Raging like a wild animal, he set out from Egypt and took Jerusalem by storm. He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants. In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery.

II. What does this passage have to teach the church today?

- A. There is a danger of compromise in every generation

1. Antiochus could not have made such inroads into Jerusalem without the cooperation of some of the Jews. Many of the Hellenized Jews became willing accomplices.

**Daniel 11:30 NAU** - "he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant."

**Daniel 11:32 NAU** - ""By smooth *words* he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action."

2. Sinclair Ferguson – “Evil cannot gain a foothold in the city of God unless it finds a spirit of cooperation among the visible people of God. This is at three levels of our lives: doctrinal, moral, and spiritual. Where there is compromise in any of these areas, weakness and failure will follow.”
3. Too often today there is a glad willingness to forsake the good of the Kingdom for personal pursuits. There is a willingness to soften Biblical doctrine to be more appealing to the masses. There is a willingness to weaken moral principles to conform to the standards of this world. Too many are willing to abandon a spiritual focus in their life and focus upon the allurements of this present age.
4. The time will come when multitudes will fall away rather than continue under the demands of discipleship  
**2 Timothy 4:3-4 NAU** - " For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."  
**2 Thessalonians 2:3 NAU** - "Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction"
5. In an evil world God’s people must always be prepared to walk with God without compromise.  
“but the people who know their God will display strength and take action."

- B. When things are good we tend to shut our eyes to the great spiritual war going on in the invisible realm around us.
1. When life is easy our prayers tend to be weak and we seldom consider the issue of spiritual conflict.
  2. Iain Duguid writes: “If we have a pleasant situation in life with a comfortable house, attractive spouse, beautiful children, a fulfilling career, and a generous retirement package, we are unlikely to cry out, “How Long, O Lord? When life is good we forget to pray. We forget that we are wrestling with powers that are far more than merely human adversaries, powers that we can never conquer in our own strength” (Commentary, p.130)
- C. As we’ve seen over and over in the Book of Daniel, while it appears that the kingdoms of the world are in constant chaos and turmoil God reigns supreme.
1. We often don’t understand why God allows evil to exist. Why does He allow evil kings to bring such devastation? Why is God allowing the spiritual war to go forth with such destruction?  
We don’t always understand but we know God’s power is over it all. All evil will be ultimately be crushed. God sees the beginning and the end with equal clarity.
  2. God was able to give Daniel this amazing prophecy 300 years before it happened is He ordained every step.  
**Proverbs 21:1-2 NAU** - "The king's heart is *like* channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. <sup>2</sup> Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts."  
**Proverbs 16:9 NAU** - "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps."
  3. We are living in a world under God’s absolute sovereign direction. We can live with confidence in spite of the wars and rumors of wars.
  4. And we must remember that this present age will never be made righteous. While we should always stand for righteousness, we must never pretend that our social involvement will somehow usher in the Kingdom more quickly.

#### Conclusion:

1. There is one more important lesson for us to learn from Daniel. The history of the earth has been a display of one human ruler or empire after another seeking dominance over the others by force or cunning wrangling. The power may change for a moment but never does it last.
2. The same is true of individuals. Sinful humanity has an insatiable lust for ambition—seeking to rise above others, seeking advancement for personal gain. Even pastors fall into this trap as they seek larger churches, all with little regard for the very purpose of their existence—caring for Christ’s sheep.  
In the end it is all for nothing.
3. Our life has but one purpose—glorifying God, seeking the advancement of His glory and His Kingdom. Only those willing to be the least can accomplish this. God always resists those who seek self-advancement. The words of John the Baptist say it best, "He must increase, but I must decrease."