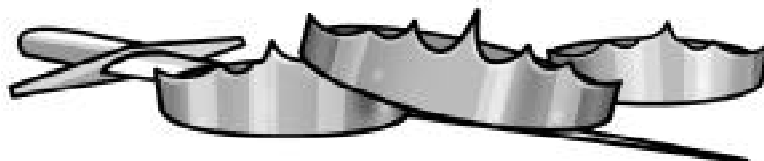


When Kings Go to War



SABBATH—DECEMBER 11

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Daniel 10 and 11.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then the Lord said, ‘Listen to my words. Suppose one of my prophets is among you. I make myself known to him in visions. I speak to him in dreams’ ” (Numbers 12:6, NIV).

DANIEL 10–12 FORM A UNIT WITH THREE PARTS. The first part is Daniel 10. The second part is the vision in Daniel 11:2–12:4. The third part is Daniel 12:5-13. The last vision Daniel received came two years after the Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. This vision covers the same history as Daniel 2, 7, and 8. This vision also shows Daniel scenes from the struggle between the armies of good and evil. Revelation 12:7-9 shows almost the same scenes: Michael (Jesus) and His angels fighting the prince of evil (Satan) and his angels. The ending in both Daniel and Revelation is the same. Michael, the great Prince, overcomes Satan and rescues His people “found written in the book” (Daniel 12:1).

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: What happens to Daniel in the beginning of Daniel 10? What does Daniel mean when he talks about “the latter days”? How is the great controversy (war) shown in these verses? How does Daniel 11 compare¹ with Daniel 2, 7, 8? What verses in Daniel 11 show the work of Rome. What is the “abomination² of desolation [destruction]”?

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, December 18.

¹compare—show how things are the same.

²abomination—a disgusting, hateful thing.

SUNDAY—DECEMBER 12

DANIEL IN VISION (Daniel 10:1-9).

Daniel 10:2, 3 says that Daniel had been mourning (sad) and fasting³ for three weeks. Why?

No clear reason is given for Daniel's sadness and fasting. But the historical situation in Palestine at the time may give us answers. It was the third year of Cyrus (535 B.C.) when the Samaritans⁴ decided to rebel against the Jews (read Ezra 4:1-5). Daniel must have heard about the Samaritans' rebellion. So he fasted and prayed for his people in Palestine.

What were the physical results of the vision on Daniel and his friends? Daniel 10:8, 9, 17.

The result of the vision on Daniel's friends was the same as when Jesus appeared to Saul on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3-7). The physical results on Daniel himself were almost the same as the physical results John experienced (Revelation 1:17). Daniel was in a trance (daze) like Peter (Acts 10:9-11) and Paul (2 Corinthians 12:1, 2). He was unaware of his present situation for as long as the vision lasted. He was so interested in what the vision was showing him, that he seemed to be taking part in them (Daniel 12:5-9).



Paul and his friends were shocked when Jesus appeared.

Compare Daniel's experience with Ellen G. White's experience: "Sometimes while I was in vision, my friends would come to me, and say, 'She does not breathe!' They would put a mirror under my nose, and they found no wetness⁵ on the glass. There was no sign of any breathing. But I kept talking of the things that were being given to me during the vision. These messages were given to me to support the faith of all people so that in these last days, we might believe in the Spirit of prophecy."⁶—Adapted from *Selected Messages*, volume 3, pp. 38, 39.

The fact that Ellen White did not breathe during her visions does not prove that her visions came from the

³fasting—not eating for religious reasons.

⁴Samaritans—people from Samaria. The Samaritans and Jews were enemies.

⁵wetness on the glass—when a person breathes on glass, wetness appears.

⁶Spirit of prophecy—read Revelation 19:10. The Spirit of prophecy is the gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-11, 28; Ephesians 4:11-13). God gave the gift of prophecy to Ellen G. White.

same source (place) as Daniel's. But it does prove that her visions came from God. "The testimonies⁷ show the seal of God or that of Satan. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit. A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit. By the fruit (results) of the testimonies you shall know where they come from."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, p. 98.

Suppose someone were to arise in our church today, having almost the same visions that Daniel, Ellen White, and other prophets had. How should we test this person to see if she or he is really a prophet of God?

MONDAY—DECEMBER 13

THE LATTER DAYS (Daniel 10:14).

What were the "latter days" for Daniel (Daniel 10:14)?

There are 12 Old Testament examples of the "latter days" outside of the book of Daniel. A study of these examples shows "latter days" can mean different time periods in history. In Genesis 49:1, where "latter days" appears for the first time, Jacob says to his sons: "Gather around me as I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come [latter days]" (NIRV). At the end of his life, Jacob looked into the future. With the Holy Spirit's leading, Jacob prophesies important events⁸ that will happen to his sons and their children.

⁷testimonies—the writings of Ellen G. White.

⁸events—things that happen.

Read about these events in Genesis 49:2-27.

In Deuteronomy 31:29, Moses prophesies that after his death, Israel would become bad and evil would happen to them in "the latter days." This prophecy was fulfilled in the time of the judges (Judges 2:11-16) and kings (Jeremiah 7:28-34). In Jeremiah 23:20 and Jeremiah 30:24, "the latter days" mean the time of the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.). Jeremiah says that the Jews clearly would understand that the bad happenings that had come upon them were God's punishment for their sins.

Jeremiah 48:47 and Jeremiah 49:39 show the time of the Jews' return to Israel from Persia. In other verses, the time of the Messiah's kingdom means "the latter days" (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Hosea 3:5).

In Daniel 10, "the latter days" means the future, which began at the time of Daniel and ends with Jesus' second coming. We know this, because many of the prophecies point to the end of this present world (Daniel 2; Daniel 7).

What does it mean to be living in "the latter days"? What danger is there of hearing about "the latter days" too much?

TUESDAY—DECEMBER 14

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY (WAR) (Daniel 10:12, 13, 20, 21).

What kind of battle does Daniel 10:13 describe? Where is this battle taking place? What armies are involved?

“Satan was trying hard to influence the highest leaders in the kingdom of Media-Persia to work against God’s people. But angels worked hard for the Jews in Persia. The controversy was the war in which all heaven was interested. Through the prophet Daniel, we see this mighty struggle between the army of good and the army of evil. For three weeks, Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness. He was trying to stop the bad influences at work on Cyrus’s mind. And before the struggle closed, Jesus Himself came to help Gabriel.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 571, 572.

Who is the “prince” of the kingdom of Persia (Daniel 10:13)? Read Ephesians 6:12. Describe the difference between the prince of the king of Persia and the Prince in Daniel 10:21. Who is the Prince in Daniel 10:21?

In Daniel 10, we see that Satan and Jesus were moving upon the mind of the Persian king. But no one could force the king. Free will⁹ is one of the greatest gifts God has given us. But the gift of free will came with a terrible price: Jesus’ death on the cross. If we did not have free will, we could not have sinned. And if we did not sin, there would have been no Cross. This is because there would have been no need for the Cross. In many ways, the Cross is the greatest example of both human free will and the results of our abuse of that free will.

⁹free will—the freedom we have to make our own choices, especially the freedom we have to choose God. God does not force us to love Him. He wants us to love Him, because we choose to love Him.

The bottom line is that we are all in the middle of the great controversy (war). Which side we are on and which “prince” we work for is our own choice.



Jesus wants us to love Him because we choose to love Him.

Imagine the battle for your soul that is going on right now. What can you do to always choose the winning side?

WEDNESDAY—DECEMBER 15

KINGS FROM THE NORTH AND THE SOUTH (Daniel 11:1-28).

Which kingdoms are named in Daniel 11:1-4?

Daniel 11 has brought out many different interpretations even within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most mod-

ern interpreters see in Daniel 11 the wars between the kings who followed Alexander the Great. There is certainly some of these wars in the verses right after Daniel 11:1-4. But we will discover that these wars cannot be the subject of all of Daniel 11.

Daniel 11:22 speaks of a king who shall break the “prince of the covenant.”¹⁰ Who is the “prince of the covenant”? What is the meaning of His being broken? Daniel 9:25-27.

In Daniel 9:25-27, Messiah the Prince confirms (makes good) the covenant that God established with Israel on Mount Sinai. Isaiah calls the Messiah “Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). And Daniel points to Michael as “the great prince” (Daniel 12:1). “The prince of the covenant” is the Messiah, Jesus. Daniel 11:21 hints about Jesus’ death at the cross. This helps us follow the time line in Daniel 11 and Daniel 12.



God established a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16-18).

The Messiah was broken when He was nailed to the cross under the Ro-

man Emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14–37). The “vile [dirty, evil] person” in Daniel 11:21 is probably Tiberius. This means that somewhere between Daniel 11:4 (which pictures the breakup of the Greek Empire after the death of Alexander the Great) and Daniel 11:21 (the death of Jesus), pagan¹¹ Rome enters the picture. Most Adventist interpreters see the change from the Greek kingdoms to Rome in Daniel 11:14 or Daniel 11:16.

But Daniel 11 gives us more proof that God is in full control over human events. In what ways have you seen powerful proof of God’s control in your life? What lessons can you learn from those experiences that could help you with future problems and troubles?

THURSDAY—DECEMBER 16

“THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION [DESTRUCTION]” (Daniel 11:31).

In our study of Daniel 7 and 8, we saw that the order of worldly powers was taken over by “Christian” Rome. In yesterday’s lesson, we saw that political Rome was in power when the “prince of the covenant [Jesus]” was “broken.” This description of Jesus’ death gives us a powerful historical guide to help us follow the flow of historical events in Daniel 11.

What examples do we find in the second half of Daniel 11 to show that

¹⁰covenant—agreement; promise.

¹¹pagan—idol worshiping; not believing in God.

“Christian” Rome follows the order of the political powers? Daniel 11:31, 36.

The quick change of events in Daniel 11 may seem confusing. But certain sentences in Daniel 11:31 and 36 connect us to Daniel 7 and Daniel 8. These sentences help us to recognize the main power in the second half of Daniel 11. These sentences are:

1. “Forces [armies] shall be mustered [gathered] by him [the king of the north], and they [the forces] shall defile [pollute] the sanctuary fortress” (Daniel 11:31, NKJV). In Daniel 8:11, the little horn casts down (pollutes) God’s sanctuary.

2. “They [the forces] shall take away the daily sacrifices” (Daniel 11:31, NKJV). In Daniel 8:11, the little horn takes away the daily sacrifices.

3. “He [the little horn] shall exalt [honor] and magnify [glorify] himself above every god” (Daniel 11:36, NKJV). In Daniel 8:11, the little horn exalts himself as high as the “Prince of the host.”

4. “He [the little horn] shall . . . speak blasphemies¹² against the God of gods” (Daniel 11:36, NKJV). In Daniel 7:25, the little horn speaks pompous (boastful) words against the Most High.

The verses mentioned in 1–4 above show that the main power in the second half of Daniel 11 is the little horn. What is the meaning of the “abomination of desolation,” which the little horn puts in place of the “daily”? Daniel 11:31.

Daniel 12:11 again points to the taking away of the “daily” and the setting up of “the abomination of desolation.” In Daniel 8, the taking away of the “daily” meant that the little horn tried to cover up the importance of Jesus’ work in heaven as High Priest. In Daniel 11:31 and Daniel 12:11, the “daily,” Jesus’ ministry (priestly work) in heaven, is “replaced” with a false system of worship. This false system is “the abomination of desolation.”

FRIDAY—DECEMBER 17

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White’s, “Daniel’s Prayers,” in *The Sanctified Life*, pp. 46–52.

“In the annals (books) of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear to depend on human will and ability. World events seem to be controlled by human power, ambition, or plans. But the Bible pulls the curtain aside, and we see that God is always in full control of human events. He is patiently working out His own will.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 173.

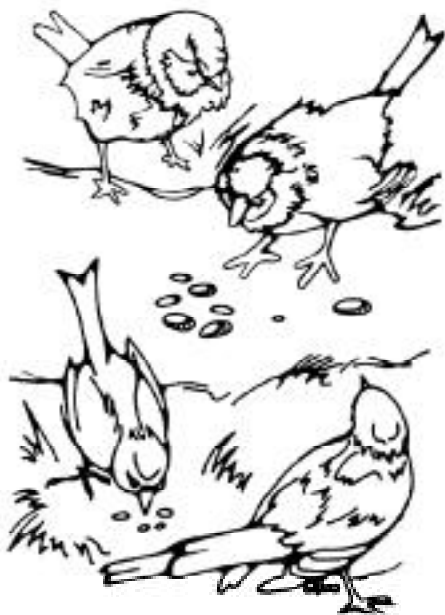
In Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, Jesus points to the “abomination of desolation [destruction]” spoken by “Daniel the prophet.” In both Matthew 24 and Mark 13, Jesus places this “abomination of desolation” in the future. This should tell us that this “abomination of desolation” is not some event before Jesus’ time (such as during the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes). Instead,

¹²blasphemies—words that say we are equal to God; words that show disrespect to God.

“the abomination” happens later than even Jesus’ time. This fact helps us understand what “the abomination” is.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Three times the angel told Daniel that he was greatly beloved in heaven (Daniel 9:23; Daniel 10:11, 19). Few of us ever have an angel tell us directly that we are greatly beloved in heaven. How do we know that we are greatly beloved in heaven? What other ways does God use to let us know how much He loves us?



If God feeds the birds, how much more will He love us (Matthew 6:26)?

2. Daniel 11 and 12 have been the subject of endless and wild interpretations. What about the book of Daniel itself can keep us from making wrong interpretations of Daniel 11 and Daniel 12? How can this Bible study guide help us understand Daniel 11 and Daniel 12 correctly?

SUMMARY: In Daniel 10, God gave Daniel an opportunity to see the spiritual battle between Jesus and Satan. God promised Daniel that He loved him. He showed Daniel that heavenly armies are working hard to control earthly governments for the sake of God’s people. In Daniel 11, Daniel receives prophecies with details about the history of nations from the Persian Empire until the end of time.