DCF 190622 Dan 11:5-19 ***Warring Kings of North and South***

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The western empire of the 21st century is referred to as Babylon in Revelation. It is doomed to fall. It is portrayed as the harlot in Rev 17 and 18 – the fake bride. The British empire took the gospel around the world, so that countries were founded on the Word of God. But there has been a huge falling away. As we read Dan 11, we see how countries rise and fall. These changes always affect ordinary people like you and me. But what matters, is our stand and walk with God – especially when everything around us collapses. I suggested in the homework that you google and read the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees in the Apocrypha. They make interesting reading for this period between the Old and New Testaments. It is a reminder that until Jesus comes to reign on earth, we cannot have peace in the world.

Chapter 11 of Daniel contains an amazingly accurate prophecy which was fulfilled over nearly 400 years. What we need to grasp is that God knows the future exactly before it happens. The scoffers explain this by claiming that this chapter was written after it happened. They cannot accept that our God created even time. ***John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.***

After the 3 Persian kings came Xerxes the Great, who stirred up Greece. Now, both the Persian Empire through Haman, and the Greek Empire through Antiochus, tried to wipe out the Jewish race. Today Hamas in Palestine seeks to eradicate the Jewish nation. Satan was attacking the people of God then, just as he does today.

***Dan 11:5 “Also the king of the South (Ptolemy) shall become strong, as well as one of his princes (Seleucus); and he (Seleucus) shall gain power over him (Ptolemy) and have dominion. His (Seleucus) dominion shall be a great dominion. 6And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South (*Berenice (daughter of Ptolemy ll)) *shall go to the king of the North (*Antiochus II (of the Seleucids)) *to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.***

The marriage gave peace for a season until Ptolemy II died. Once Ptolemy II died, Antiochus II put away Berenice and took back his former wife, Laodice. But, Laodice didn’t trust her husband Antiochus II; so, she had him poisoned. After the murder of Antiochus II, Laodice had Berenice, her infant son, and her attendants killed. Then Laodice set her son Seleucus ll, as king of the Syrian dominion.

The king of the South was Ptolemy who was a general under Alexander and one of Alexander’s 4 successors. The dynasties of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, Syria and Egypt, fought for some 130 years. The stronger of the two always held dominion over the Holy Land, which was caught between the two and ravaged. These two forces were joined by marriage for a while, but it did not last.

This was the era between the Old and New Testaments. Daniel is given this prophecy to warn and prepare Israel for very difficult times to come. We too have been warned of very difficult times to come. The war in Ukraine revokes the thought that mankind is now civilized and has ceased from the savagery of war. The bride must get herself ready for the wedding. Our primary preparation is our walk with God. ***John 16:33 In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.***

Because our entertainment promotes thoughts of violence, we open the doors of our imagination and release hosts of demonic powers into the community. Hollywood has corrupted the imagination of society so that we have welcomed idolatry, violence and lust. 2 Peter 2:19 ***for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage.*** We must love God with all our heart, soul, MIND and strength. Mark 12:30. Arrogance allows us to still think we can control these demons. In our pride we have compromised and come to believe that “civilized” people can and will live at peace. After Jesus explains to the disciples in Matt 16:23 that He will suffer and be killed, Peter takes Him aside to rebuke Him. Jesus recognizes satan using one of His best friends and rebukes Peter and Satan. ***Get behind Me Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men..***

Despite the hard times, Israel is protected by God. The high-ranking Persian Haman, tried to wipe out the Jews in the book of Esther. Antiochus, the Greek king, also tried to exterminate the Jews, so that they would embrace the Greek gods. The anti-Christian army in Australia has media and politicians who are committed to silencing the Christians. They know Christian schools are a threat and want them neutralized. But they refuse to start their own schools, because they know it takes huge sacrifice and the community will probably not support them. They want sermons censored, as they are in China. They want no mention of hell and judgement. Charities that began as Christian have now failed to mention the name Jesus, when they ask for money, because it is politically incorrect.

Alexander died at 32, and because he was shown this prophecy in Daniel, he did no harm to Jerusalem, instead he spared Jerusalem and granted it religious toleration. We must pray for Christian support from our politicians. There is a lie that has been perpetrated to silence the church, that religion and politics do not mix. Anyone who has read the Bible, and has seen the lives of people like Moses, Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon, Daniel, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul will see that Christians MUST pray and speak out in politics.

Ptolemy I, had a prince named Seleucus, who rose to power and took dominion over the region of Syria. He became more powerful than his former Egyptian ruler. The Seleucids are identified with the Kings of the North, and the Ptolemies were the Kings of the South.

God has outlined to Daniel the huge wickedness that will come by wars around Israel. We are approaching a time when the fear of war and hardship is not decreasing. China is a concern. Russia’s war with Ukraine is involving many countries. Covid is global. 1 out of every 50 people on the planet are starving. We live in a bubble that could burst at any time. Rev 6:8 tells us that the 4th Seal releases death on ¼ of the earth, to kill by sword, hunger, death and by the beasts. The populations of just Africa and India add to about 2.77 billion, making about 35% of the Earth. The word for beasts is *therion,* which is the same word used for the men who are world rulers and described as beasts in Rev 13:1 ,11.

So, what is our priority? Food? Safety? Shelter? Or ‘Thy Kingdom come’. Salvation must be on our minds. God has positioned you next to people who need the gospel.

Dan 11:7 ***But from a branch of her (Berenice) roots one shall arise in his (brother of Berenice = Ptolemy lll) place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king (Seleucids) of the North, and deal with them and prevail. 8And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North. 9“Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.***

The angel told Daniel that a branch of her roots would come from the Ptolemies and prevail over the kings of the North, the Seleucids. So, the brother of Berenice who was Ptolemy lll, avenges the murder of his sister, invades Syria and humbles Seleucus ll. Ptolemy lll outlives Seleucus ll by 4 years.

1 in 7 Christians suffer extreme persecution and hardship. We are given batterings ***to perfect, establish, strengthen and settle us.*** ***1 Peter 5:10.*** We all find it hard. We may feel that in these troubled times that God has forsaken us. But we must live the prayer “Thy kingdom come”.

Dan 11:10 ***10However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife.***

The sons of Antiochus fought with the Ptolemies so that the Holy Land caught between them became a battle ground. This would have been very difficult times for Israel. And it would have been a time when they longed for the coming of the Messiah. For hundreds of years, they knew He was coming, but many gave up. Our world is presently in a mess, with Christians being mangled. We too have waited for the return of Jesus. We must stand strong.

In a ferocious war, Antiochus III reclaimed the Holy Land from the control of the Ptolemies.

Dan 11:11 ***11“And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy. 12When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail. 13For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.***

Numbers don’t necessarily mean victory, this is very clear in the Apocrypha. The North had the numbers, but lost to the South. But then the South raises a huge army and equipment for more war. Antiochus lll lost the battle at Raphia and consequently, surrendered dominion of Israel to Ptolemy lV. Then the North retakes the Holy Land.

War is the result of greed and covetousness. It has a complete disregard for the value of human life. God wants us to enjoy His presence for eternity.

***Dan 11:14 “Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision,(*The Jews resented the rule of Egypt, having been in bondage to them for 400 years. So, they helped Antiochus lll, against the Ptolemies.)  *but they shall fall. ( Antiochus lll was totally unappreciative of the help from the Jews, and sought to destroy them.)  15So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. (Antiochus lll invades Egypt and conquers Ptolemy V) Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist. 16But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land (Israel) with destruction in his power. (So, Antiochus lll takes over Israel, and seeks to destroy it).***

Our loyalty cannot be to a person or political party or club or church. Our primary loyalty is to God. In saying that, the Bible encourages us to maintain our responsibility to support our family, our church, fellow believers, and the poor, usually in that order. The Jews here backed the Antiochus political party, and lost.

***Dan 11:17 “He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him. 18After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. 19Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.***

Antiochus lll gave his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V of Egypt, to gain control in Egypt. However, the plan failed and Cleopatra, who was not the famous Cleopatra in Julius Caesar’s time, was unfaithful to her husband. So, Antiochus lll turns his attention to the coastlands in the west, these being Asia Minor and Greece. He was aided by the famous general of Carthage, Hannibal, but they were defeated by the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Scipio in Greece. Antiochus lll planned to humiliate Greece, but instead lost everything. In desperate need for funds, he decided to pillage a Babylonian temple, but was killed by enraged local citizens.

In today’s world we have extreme evil in politics. Adultery and murder are prevalent today as they have been throughout history. Jesus says in ***John 15:4 “Abide in me, and I in You”.*** To change our abode, we have to leave one place and enter another. We have to step out of the influence of the culture and into the company of Jesus. We have to close doors and open a new door. We have to deliberately, cancel thoughts and replace them with prayer and praise. We have to move past neutrality, to being active for Christ. We have to silence the enemy and speak out for God. We have to spend prayer time LISTENING to God, not just talking, and obeying His commands.

The question is what do we learn from the passage?

So many Christians live in a time of persecution and war. God can see the suffering and hears the prayers, but the suffering continues. I have no doubt that there are believers in Ukraine and North Korea, China, and Somalia crying out to God. But it would seem that their pain does not stop. This is the hardest part of “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done.” Jesus lives His teaching, when He prays “***O My Father, If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” Matt 26:39***

How strong is our faith? Some of us, in our lives will have gone through huge grief. People in war have lost their houses, their possessions, their wealth, their limbs, their friends and their family. In the depths of grief, all other matters seen so trivial. You don’t care about the weather, or sickness, or the car going wrong, or losing $100,000, or if Perth is bombed.

Daniel 11 shows us that God knows the path of the future of mankind. We are warned several times in the Bible that we will suffer. But the paramount important advice is for us is to be ready. And readiness refers to relationship. ***The Bride has made herself ready. Rev 19:7***

The most difficult thing about being a pastor is listening to God. Living what I teach, is so hard. So, I have tried to walk with Him more, to thank Him more, to repent more, to serve Him more – not for any other reason except that I know He wants it.

In both my times as a pastor. there has been huge spiritual warfare. When I served at Chidlow Community Church in 2009, our daughter Jess, got leukaemia. After losing our first daughter Leathy in 1977, the wound was still there. The fear was never eradicated. Even when our next daughter Chara, approached 3 years of age in 1989, I feared and prayed she would make it to 3. Then after coming to DCF, Sue’s heath has been attacked. You need to pray for Callan and Izzy and their family. Pray for protection over their health, their finances, their family, their safety, their relationships. Pray against discouragement and cover them with love.

Last song: Such Love.

HW: The ancient historian Josephus records the interesting arrival of Alexander the Great to Jerusalem, and how he was shown the Book of Daniel by the high priest (whom Alexander had previously seen in a vision). Alexander was so impressed that he spared Jerusalem and granted it religious toleration.

 Josephus, **Antiquities of the Jews**, book XI, chapter 8:

**Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his forgoing disobedience. He therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifices to God, whom he besought to protect that nation, and to deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent. Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced; and declared to all the warning he had received from God. According to which dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king.**

**And when he understood that he was not far from the city, he went out in procession, with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations…. [The approaching army] thought they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high priest to death, which the king’s displeasure fairly promised them, the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen, and the high-priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head having the golden plate on which the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high-priest.**

**The Jews also did all together, with one voice, salute Alexander, and encompass him about: whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass, that when all others adored him, he should adore the high-priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, “I did not adore him, but that God who hath honored him with that high-priesthood, for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios, in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.”**

**And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high-priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high-priest’s direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favors they pleased of him: whereupon the high-priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired: and when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired.**

HW: Google the 2 books 1 and 2 Maccabees from the Apocrypha to read some of the history between the testaments.

On the other hand, the Hellenists -- the Greek lovers -- became more and more influential in the politics of the land. They formed the party that was known in New Testament days as the Sadducees, the liberals. They turned away from the strict interpretation of the law and became the rationalists of their day, ceasing to believe in the supernatural in any way. We are told in the New Testament that they came again and again to the Lord with questions about the supernatural, like "What will happen to a woman who has been married to seven different men? In the resurrection, whose wife will she be?" (Matthew 22:23-33) They did not believe in a resurrection, but in these questions they were trying to put Jesus on the spot.