History = His Story Part 2

Daniel 11:11-20

Introduction

 This morning, we are continuing our study of the eleventh chapter of the book of Daniel. This chapter is filled with a lot of history that spans the time after the life of Daniel up through the next century. As we discussed last week this chapter is showing us that God is sovereign over all of history. Every man, woman and child who has lived, those in the present as well as those in the future are all under the authority of almighty God. Last week we discussed the first ten verses in the chapter, which took us from the time of Daniel up through the establishment of the four kingdoms that were created after the death of Alexander the Great. The kingdoms of the North and the South have been identified as the kingdoms of Syria and Egypt who were ruled by the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. These two kingdoms, as we have already seen, are doing quite a bit of feuding. As we reach verse 11, we see that this feud is going to continue for quite a while longer, which will eventually result in a king from the North who will be a foreshadowing of the future antichrist who will come at the end of time to deceive the world against Christ.

 Today’s passage provides for us two applications for our lives today: 1. When we place our trust only in earthly systems or rulers, we will be disappointed. Only God offers true and lasting peace and justice. 2. Kingdoms will rise and fall, but the purposes of God will never fail. He reveals the future to Daniel not to cause fear, but to encourage those who trust in Him to keep their faith. Let us keep in mind as we discuss these events together that those who remain faithful will be saved.

The Ongoing Cycle of War and Deceit (vv. 11-20)

**“And the king of the South will be enraged and go out and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be handed over to the former. When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be haughty, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail. (vv. 11-12)**

 So that we can understand who the Scripture is referring to, I will once again show you the chart on the screen that we used last week. In verse 11 the King of the North is Antiochus III, and the King of the South is Ptolemy III. The angel is telling Daniel that Syria (Kingdom of the North) will be defeated by the forces of the Kingdom of the South (Egypt). In 217 BC the Egyptians will defeat the Syrians at the Battle of Raphia after the Syrians had attempted to invade Egypt. With this defeat, the king of the North will stop his ambitions in taking over Egypt for about a decade. Let’s take a moment to understand the attitude of the King of the South (Antiochus). In verse 12 the NASB describes the king having a “haughty” attitude. In Hebrew this word is pronounced *room* which means to elevate oneself or to magnify oneself. What we see is that the King of the North had such an arrogant attitude that even when he knew he was losing the battle he would not give in to the victors. This attitude cost him thousands of his soldiers and therefore had a devastating impact on his army. This is the main reason why it took him over a decade to recover from this defeat before attacking the Egyptians again.

**“For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment. Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also raise themselves up to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down” (vv. 13-14).**

 The angel continues telling Daniel about the future. In verse 13 he says that Antiochus III will raise a greater army than he had at the battle of Raphia and then lead another invasion of Egypt. Because there were so many others taking up arms against the Egyptians they could not come to the aid of Jerusalem, so Antiochus invades Jerusalem in 202 BC. As is always the case, there were the zealots in Jerusalem who took up arms against Antiochus to defend it against him, but as verse 14 tells us they will not be successful. Also, when we read verse 14 carefully, we see that “the violent ones among your people will raise themselves up to fulfill the vision.” What this means is that there were some Jews who took up arms to fight with the Seleucids against the Egyptians. Even though they were not as powerful as they were before, they still defeated the Syrians and repelled their invasion.

**“Then the king of the North will come, pile up an assault ramp, and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. 16 But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to withstand him; he will also stay for a time in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand” (vv. 15-16).**

 As we mentioned earlier, the Egyptians were dealing with some struggles inside their kingdom, so they had been weakened. Antiochus will attack again, and we see in verse 15 he will capture a well-fortified city and then defeat the Egyptians. The angel says that they will be defeated and that not even their best troops will be able to withstand the forces of the Kingdom of the North. We are also told in verse 16 that Antiochus had defeated the Land of Israel and was in control of both the city of Jerusalem and the temple.

**“And he will set his mind on coming with the power of his entire kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand for him or be on his side” (v. 17).**

 The fighting that had been taking place between the two kingdoms was beginning to become a bore for Antiochus, so he decided that for him to be able to set his sights on other targets he would need to come up with a way to create a peaceful relationship with the Egyptians. Last week we talked about a marriage that had been proposed that would have connected these two kingdoms. But the Queen of Egypt would not allow it and therefore the daughter of the King of Syria was killed. That idea fell through. In verse 17 this is going to happen again, but this time even though the marriage will be completed it will not work out the way that the King of the North would like. So, Antiochus III gave his daughter Cleopatra, not the one who eventually married Marc Anthony of Rome because that was over 100 years later, to be the wife of Ptolemy IV. The hope was that linking these two kingdoms through marriage would establish peaceful relations and the king of Syria was hoping that he could use the marriage for his political advantage. Everything did seem to be going according to plan until the daughter of Antiochus chose to work together with the Egyptians against her father rather than stay loyal to him. In verse 17 the angel says that “she will not take a stand for him or be on his side.” Once again, the deception and the scheming of man has failed.

**“Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his taunting against him; moreover, he will repay him for his taunting” (v. 18).**

 Antiochus will now decide to invade another country so that he can continue to expand his kingdom. This time he will invade Greece. If you look at the map with me, you will see that this is a rather daring attempt. To invade Greece, you must take your army all the way around the Mediterranean Sea or attack from the water. In verse 18 we are told that “a commander will put a stop” to this invasion. It is the Romans who are going to stop this invasion. When Antiochus was defeated by the Romans he had to withdraw. In addition to losing, he also became a subject of Rome, meaning that he was now under their authority. If a kingdom became the subject of another they would have to pay tribute to the victors every year and if they refused or were unable to do so their king would be stripped of the crown and replaced with someone else that the conquering nation would choose. This puts Antiochus III into a very serious situation. He must be able to pay tribute to the Romans, but he has just been defeated by them as well.

**“So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and not be found” (v. 19).**

 As we just mentioned, Antiochus III was badly in need of money to pay tribute to Rome, so on his way back home he attempted to rob the temple in Elymais which is in Persia. While he was attempted to get these funds, he was killed in the fight. This is why the angel says that “he will stumble and fall and not be found.” The king was in a desperate situation and therefore was taking actions that made him become reckless and then it cost him his life.

**“Then in his place one will arise who will allow an oppressor to pass through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be broken, though not in anger nor in battle” (v. 20).**

 Once again, I am going to ask you to look at the chart on the screen with me. As you will see after Antiochus III is killed in his campaign to gain money for tribute his brother Seleucus IV will become the King of the North, but he will only be in the position for 8 years. This king had inherited the bad situation from his father, so he still needed to raise tribute to pay the Romans. Since his father had died in Persia, Seleucus IV decided rather to use the temple in Jerusalem to fund his need for money. Therefore, he sent his chancellor to Jerusalem to collect funds. An interesting historical fact makes itself known here. The man that the king sent to collect the money was named Heliodorus, who would later be the man who would assassinate him. As we continue to see as we study this passage, no one is trustworthy when it comes to political power. There always seems to be someone lurking in the shadows willing to do anything necessary to gain power.

 It is at this point in the passage that we are going to end our study today. When we begin looking at the events next week, we will see that it will usher in the rule of Antiochus IV who will be the man of evil that will do some mighty shameful things. When looking at the entirety of Scripture and how God’s Word predicts the future, we will see that this king will share many characteristics with the antichrist who will come near the end of the age. Next week we will discuss those similarities, and it will provide us with knowledge we can use if those days take place during our lives.

**Applications**

1. **When we place our trust only in earthly systems or rulers, we will be disappointed. Only God offers true and lasting peace and justice.**

God’s Word instructs us that we are not to place our hope or trust in any man, woman or human leader. The only hope that can live up to the promise is God alone. **In Psalm 118:8-9 we read these words “It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in people. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in noblemen.”** Why is it not appropriate to place our hope in man? What we have seen in the passage today is that mankind has the problem of being motivated by selfish desires of greed, lust and power. We have seen how men will use deceit, scheming and murder to accomplish their ambitions. The problem we run in to when we place our trust in man is that he is going to let us down. Not only does this happen in the secular world, but we have seen this infiltrate the church as well. We have seen several preachers who have been caught in sexual abuse scandals and those who have used their position to take advantage of others. When we elevate humans to a position of honor and begin treating them as if they can do no wrong, that is when they fail us. I am aware that in the church there has been an understanding that there is a difference between the clergy and the lay people. I have always felt a bit awkward when that is mentioned because I do not feel that there is any difference in position between me as a pastor and you as members of the church. All of us are sinners that have been sanctified by the blood of Christ. I am not any more special or in a position of honor because Scripture tells us that God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). Those who serve as ministers of the Word are entrusted with sharing the truth of God’s Word with others. Therefore, clergy are not more powerful or connected with God at a higher level. I will say though that Scripture is clear that anyone holding an office of elder or teacher in the church is held to a higher standard by God and will be held accountable for every word they speak. We should honor God the Father, Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit higher than we do any person on this earth who have been made in His image. If we remember that man is fallible and will make mistakes, then we will not be so shocked when they do so. God alone is holy and worthy of our praise!

1. **Kingdoms will rise and fall, but the purposes of God will never fail.**

As we have been making our way through this book, we have been learning that everything on this earth is finite, meaning that it will only exist for a specific period. The reason why God is sharing this vision of the future with Daniel is because He is showing His omnipotence in the fact that He knows all things and wants to give His people comfort. They can face the future knowing that He already has planned what will be happening. As all these events unfold in the future those who have read Scripture have been able to prepare themselves for the challenges that lay ahead. God is merciful in that He provides us all that we need to know to be ready for those times.

 The prophet Isaiah shares these words of God with the people to encourage them. **“It is He who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, but He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble” (Isaiah 40:23-24).** The Lord establishes all kingdoms, and they will be in power if He wills it. We need to be careful not to get caught up in all the political turmoil today because as soon as this season is over another leader will arise and the drama will continue. Even though the things on this earth are temporary, God is eternal, and He never changes. He never changes because the truth never changes. Let us focus on Him and His perfect will so that we can enjoy the gift of eternal life with Him forever in His heavenly kingdom.