



DANIEL

LIVING A LIFE OF FAITH

DANIEL 6:23

SMITH MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Senior Pastor, John T. Jicka

March 29, 2020

9:45am & 11:00am

**Livestream services available at
Smithmemorial.org**

GUESTS

We are so glad to have you worship with us through our online services! If you are a first-time guest, please consider contacting our Deacon of the Week, or a Decision Counselor. We'd love the opportunity to get to know you, and to welcome you to our church when we're able to return to corporate worship services.

Deacon of the Week

Greg Dowell – 757-561-5170

If we can minister to you this week, please call.

Decision Counselors

Ron Nicholas, Tyrone Robinson, Dustin Turlington

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

All events, gatherings, and activities for SMBC remain canceled or postponed until further notice. We pray that we can return to fellowship face-to-face very soon. Please let us know how we can be praying for you, and meeting any needs that you and your family may have in the meantime.

Beyond 2020 Campaign

Pledges to date: \$786,855.

Actual Contributions through March 22, 2020: \$747,220.

Notate "Beyond 2020" on your envelope.

THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR

Still Here for You

It has been eerily quiet in our church over the last couple of weeks. We miss each of you dearly, and want you to know that as long as it is safe to do so, limited staff will continue to hold regular office hours. We're here to take your phone calls and emails, and to pray with you.

Many of you have made quick stops by the church just to drop off your tithe and offering to God's ministry. Your short pop-ins are so refreshing to us – almost like mini reunions!

We also want you to know that online giving has increased by as much as 136% in the last week! I know that will be encouraging to so many of you that are praying for God's church to remain focused on the mission through this time of isolation. God is so good! If you've been reluctant to give online, but would like to know how, just go to smithmemorial.org and click the green **GIVE** button!

“Sacred Marriage” Small Group Study

SMBC is excited to announce a new small group study entitled “Sacred Marriage”. If you desire to see your marriage reflect a greater measure of holiness, mutual respect, and love between you and your spouse, consider setting aside time each week to participate in this marriage-affirming study. Author Gary Thomas helps us understand one of the marriage-union's greatest purposes – leading couples in a closer relationship with Him.

Study begins April 19 at 6PM, weekly through May 24.

*Contact Shawn or Dawn Lemon for more information and to sign-up.
757-254-1061*

EASTER EVENTS

Nothing was going to stop the death, burial, and triumphant resurrection of the Son of the Most-High God! He has conquered death and the grave once and for all; and for all those that have and ever will accept His pure and holy sacrifice, we know we will live in community and harmony as a fellowship of saints.

Because He lives!

The day is also coming when we will rejoice at the reunion of our church family after this unfortunate time in our country, and throughout the world. This Easter, we may not be able to celebrate the Risen Savior in the traditional ways that we often have. But rest assured, your church family sees this as an opportunity to sing a new song before the Lord (Psalm 96:1); and with that, we're devising some pretty creative ways of making this Easter unique and special for all!

How to Join the Family of God

If you are interested in trusting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you would like to talk with someone about a spiritual decision, we invite you to contact a decision counselor, or the deacon of the week. Their contact information is listed on the first page of the bulletin. Someone will be happy to pray with you about your next step in faith. You may also call the deacon of the week to set a time to meet and answer any questions you may have.

How to Show Your Faith: Baptism

If you have trusted Christ as your Savior and would like to make a public confession of your faith by participating in baptism, please come forward at the end of the service to let the pastor know.

We can help you prepare for your baptism.

How to Join the SMBC Family in Membership

We are excited to know you have been our guest here at SMBC and now you feel God leading you to become a member of this fellowship of believers and serve Him here.

To become an official member, we ask that you contact the church office. A trained member of SMBC will share with you our beliefs and enjoy hearing about how God has worked in your life. We look forward to talking with you about membership.

If you have questions or comments for the Elders, they can be reached at the following email: elders@smithmemorial.org

A Note from Pastor John

Would you like to go to the Holy Land in early 2021? Talk to me.
Pastor John

Daniel 11:2-35

Notes

Daniel was grieved for his people and he prayed. God honored his prayer with one long, last vision. These verses are the second treatment of, and the most voluminous part, of the vision.

The prophecy is a message of encouragement but not a message of “everything is going to be nice and easy.” It was a message that Israel was going to be in the middle of a long, long, terrible period of war and they were going to need to have sustained faith and courage. THAT’s the kind of faith building encouragement God gave here in ch. 11.

I. Encouragement to be Faithful in Your Time (Daniel 11:2-35)

The angel told Daniel what was going to happen to the Jews after 535 BC (Daniel’s current year). Daniel 10:14, “*Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.*” Daniel 10:1, “*...it concerned a great war.*”

Verse 2 began where Daniel was and sped him through the rest of the dominant years of the Persian Empire. I say “dominant years” because after the 4 kings mentioned (Ahasuerus – Ezra 4:6, Artaxerxes – Ezra 4:7-23, Darius – Ezra 4:24, and Xerxes – Esther) there were other Persian kings, but they were subjected to the power of the Greek Empire. Verses 3-4 speak of the rise and fall of Alexander the Great and the 4 generals who would break up his conquered territories to rule as separate kingdoms (Lysimachus,

Cassander, Ptolemy, and Seleucus Nicator). To get a sense of the pace of chapter 11, we need to understand that verses 2-5 cover a period of 212 years (535-323 BC).

Daniel 11:5-20 deals with the time frame of 323-175 BC—the next 148 years. These verses document part of the extended war between the Seleucans (Syria) and Ptolemies (Egypt). If we looked at a map it would become clear why this mattered to Daniel and the unfolding of God’s redemptive plan. Israel was “no man’s land” in this war. It was tread upon during every offensive, and retreat, in either direction. They suffered greatly for generations.

Daniel 11 is one of the most difficult chapters in the Bible. It is prophecy that, in the case of verses 2-35, has become history. Married to a good history book, we can make the following connections:

- 11:5 “*king of the South*” = Ptolemy Soter; “*one of his commanders*” = Seleucus Nicator
- 11:6 “*The daughter of the king of the South*” = Berenice and Ptolemy Philadelphia; “*king of the North*” = Antiochus Theos
- 11:7-9 “*One from her family line*” = Ptolemy Euergetes; “*king of the North*” = Seleucus Callinicus
- 11:10 “*His sons*” = Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great
- 11:11-16 “*the king of the South*” = Ptolemy Philopater; “*king of the North*” = Antiochus the Great
- 11:17 “*he*” = Antiochus the Great; “*king of the south*” = (boy king) Ptolemy Epiphanes; “*a daughter*” = Cleopatra
- 11:18-19 “*he*” = Antiochus the Great; “*a commander*” = Roman commander Lucius Cornelius Scipio
- 11:20 “*His successor*” = Seleucus Philopater; “*a tax collector*” = Heliodorus

Daniel chapter 11 would be best studied in a college course on ancient history and a seminary course in prophecy. Only by taking THAT kind of time and focusing THAT closely to the details could

we see just how beautifully and intricately the Bible predicted all of those events. I hope that by connecting the above names with their companion verses you might be able to study, on your own, about the events that were prophesied and were fulfilled.

Remember, the focus of this divine message was Israel. Consider the vicious rub on their lives and land during every invasion. The soldiers of both armies lived off the land and abused the inhabitants and their homes. Jewish leaders would make deals with one king or the other to improve their situations. Retribution always came by the other side. Even the kings that made promises, to compromised Jews, never kept them. These terrible days saw many generations come and go and each one had the opportunity to be faithful in his or her time.

II. Encouragement to be Faithful to the Truth

(Daniel 10:1,21; 11:2)

There is an old argument about the book of Daniel. Unbelieving critics have written many books disputing the possibility of Daniel being written during the time of the Babylonian and Persian Empires. They deny the authenticity of the book for one simple reason. It's too accurate.

Chapter 11:2-35 has 135 detailed predictions spanning 371 years. The accuracy is flawless. The scope is mind-blowing. The unbeliever has no other choice but to reject it saying, "There's just no way!"

But there is a way—a way the unbeliever will not consider. God is the way. The actual existence of God who revealed Himself and many of His mysteries in a Holy Book is what happened here. It's another supernatural occurrence in the book of Daniel. God told an angel what would happen. The angel told Daniel. Daniel wrote it down.

The inspired text indicates that God knew this would be disbelieved. When this last vision is introduced in 10:1 we read, "*Its message was true...*" 10:21 calls the source of this information "*the*

Book of Truth.” The angel reaffirms God’s point again in 11:2, “*Now then, I tell you the truth...*”

Believer, can you trust the book of Daniel? If you can trust Jesus, you can. Jesus quoted Daniel in Matthew 24:15. In His quote He affirmed His belief in the book of Daniel and the person of Daniel who Jesus called, “*the prophet.*”

Think about the original recipients of this prophecy. In terrible times, they had to trust a scroll that was written hundreds of years before by a man who claimed to have received the message from an angel sent by God. How is that different from the faith God is asking of us today?

III. Encouragement to be Faithful through the Trials

(Daniel 11:21-35)

Daniel 11:21-35 is about one last Seleucan (Syrian) king. He is introduced in Daniel 7:8 as the “*little horn*” and in Daniel 8:25 as the “*prince of princes.*” He is AN antichrist (not THE antichrist). Here he is called “*a contemptible person*” (11:21).

These verses track his ascendancy, his activities, and his atrocities. You can read all about Antiochus IV Epiphanes in any history article on the times. Here, the focus is Israel. The problem is apostacy. And, the story goes like this.

Antiochus Epiphanes had invaded Egypt with great success (11:25-28). He came just short of conquering all the fortified cities in Egypt and winning the war once and for all. In the end, he had to sit at the table and make a truce with Ptolemy Philometor (11:27). It was a truce that neither of them kept, but resulted in Antiochus Epiphanes acquiring a lot of wealth at Egypt’s expense.

When he invaded again, it turned out differently (11:29). He encountered a new obstacle—“*Ships of the western coastlands...*” (11:30). These ships were the Romans and their power was on the rise. A legate from the Roman Senate, Popilius Laenas, gave Antiochus Epiphanes an ultimatum. He drew a circle around the

deceiving, horrible king and told him, “Before you step out of that circle, you give me your answer in conformance with the senate’s demands.” (John Philips, *Exploring Daniel*. Page 186)

Antiochus Epiphanes had lost. He knew it. This was a TREMENDOUS HUMILIATION. A man with a demonic spirit could not countenance such an embarrassment. Verse 30, “*Then he will turn back and VENT HIS FURY against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.*”

Antiochus Epiphanes left Egypt, went straight to Judah, and slaughtered 10’s of thousands of Jews. He sold 10’s of thousands more into slavery. His army was savage. The evil spirit of antichrist inside him hated God and hated the people who God loved. He focused his rage on the faithful ones. He forbid circumcision. He brought a sudden halt to the sacrifices. He “*set up the abomination that causes desolation*” (31) when he sacrificed a pig on an altar to Zeus in the holy of holies. Furthermore, he banned the Holy Scriptures. Copies were burned. Anyone caught with them was executed. Everything beautiful in God’s sight was defiled or destroyed. Every obedience to God was severely punished. And, there was “*flattery*” intended to “*corrupt those who violated the covenant*” (32). There was “*favor to those who forsake the holy covenant*” (29).

Apostacy is abandoning and renouncing the faith. The days of Antiochus Epiphanes was a day of tremendous apostacy by the Jews. They considered their lives more precious than their faith. They took the pragmatic road. Being true to their covenant with God meant trouble. So, they did whatever Antiochus Epiphanes demanded—including renouncing YaHWeH, worshiping idols, and eventually worshiping Antiochus Epiphanes himself!

“*BUT THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR GOD WILL FIRMLY RESIST HIM*” (32). Praise God for people who “*did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death*” (Revelation 12:11). Even under the horrific trials of Antiochus Epiphanes, an antichrist, God had His faithful.

Daniel 11:2-35 is prophecy that became history. It's a challenging study. We do not need to be so immature as to shrink away from it because the message is tremendously important. God is asking His people to be faithful to Him in their own time, with the Truth of His Word, and in the face of terrible trials.



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