

Pastor Edward Nelson – ednelson@centurylink.net – My Journey with Daniel 11

I have been blessed to be raised in a Seventh-day Adventist home. I have always had an interest in the Scriptures, and would often ask my parents about the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. It was during college that I first read *The Great Controversy* and got a clearer understanding of the prophecies relevant to our time. Later, the Lord called me to leave my profession (Engineering) and opened a door for me to attend seminary at Andrews University.

After seminary, while serving at my first church, the students of my youth group declared they wanted to study Daniel 11 because they had been learning about the history of the Ptolemies and Seleucids. I quickly discouraged that idea because it was obvious that they knew more about it than I did. Later, after preaching an evangelistic series on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation several church members asked me to lead a study on Daniel 11, which I reluctantly agreed to do with much trepidation and prayer. I leaned heavily on Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation* till we lost our way at verse 23. After reading many other SDA resources on Daniel 11, I finally settled on one particular view to teach, but when I heard the members comment, "You sure have to know the most obscure history to understand this prophecy!" I realized we were on the wrong track.

Seeking God for wisdom beyond my own, and studying the verses in their original language, and carefully comparing scripture with scripture, I studied until there seemed to be a breakthrough. After careful study, we found verse 23 contained a key that pointed the way forward for the rest of the chapter, and the group was continually delighted to find that typology and the history of ancient Israel seemed to be the key that unlocked the rest of the chapter.

Understanding of Prophetic Interpretation –

Daniel 11 is part of God's witness to His people at just the time they need it. It is a prophecy of "what will happen to your people in the latter days" (Dan 10:14) and has been a continual blessing to the people of God as a "light that shines in a dark place" (2 Pet 1:19) throughout their history. It is given for us to know that God is in control and that we can count on His almighty and merciful presence to continually "stand watch" over His people (Dan 12:1) no matter how dark things may appear. It is also given to us to assure us that God will deliver His people and that those who have lost their lives remaining faithful to Him and His covenant "will arise to [their] inheritance at the end of the days" (Dan 12:13).

I believe that before accepting any teaching, "we should demand a plain 'Thus saith the Lord' in its support" (GC 595). I believe that "no prophecy... is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet 1:20) and that "the Bible is its own interpreter" (4T 499). I believe that if we wish to arrive at God's truth and His meaning and purpose in giving the prophecies we cannot hold tightly to our own ideas, nor indulge in speculation, but must be willing to be led as God's Word and His Spirit opens the truth to us from whatever source it may come. No man has been given all the light, and we are to press together in unity and humility of spirit and *seek the Lord and His Word for His truth* – not to confirm our own preconceived ideas.

God has called us to "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among [us], but that [we should] be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:10), giving the trumpet a certain sound and giving His message in unity of Spirit and with power.

Interpretive Keys for Daniel 11 –

1. **Daniel 11 is built on the framework of Daniel 8**, for the angel says “I have come to make you understand”, “for the vision refers to many days yet to come”. The word used for vision (*chazown*) here refers to the vision of Daniel 8 (See Daniel 8:1, 2, 13, 15, 17 and 26). Both Daniel 8 and 11 answer the questions asked in Daniel 8:13 regarding the trampling of the host (the people of God) and the sanctuary (the intercession of Christ in heaven).
2. **Key interpretive text** – (NKJ Dan 10:14) ¹⁴ "Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision *refers to many days yet to come*" (Note the emphasis on the latter days and compare this with Daniel 8:17 & 19).
3. **The vision of the glorified Christ in His sanctuary** given in Daniel 10:5-6 (compare the vision to what John saw in Revelation 1:10-17) is another interpretive key that the sanctuary spoken of being defiled by the little horn in Daniel 8 and by the King of the North in Daniel 11 is not the typical sanctuary (the earthly), but the antitypical sanctuary (the heavenly).
4. **The prophecy of Daniel 11 must be studied and compared with other portions of the prophetic scripture that speak of the same topics.** For example, the language Paul uses in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 is drawn from Daniel 11:36, and speaks of this powers demise without human hand in both places (see also Dan 8:25; Dan 11:45; 2 Thess 2:8).
5. **The visions and interpretations of Daniel present a continuous forward chronological flow of time, including Daniel 11 which is a continuing interpretation of Daniel 8.** This is evidenced in both the vision and interpretive portions given in Daniel 2, 7, 8 and 9.
6. **The King of the South is Egypt throughout the prophecy.** This is easy enough to establish at the beginning of the prophecy (Dan 11:7-9) as well as at its end (Dan 11:40, 42).
7. **The King of the North is Babylon throughout the prophecy.** The exilic books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah identify Babylon as the “land of the north” Zechariah 2:6-7 and “Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon” as “from the north” Ezekiel 26:7. Daniel’s immediate context makes this clear. The rulers of the great empires – Cyrus *the Great*, Alexander *the Great*, Antiochus III *the Great* were not given this title because of their greatness – but because they were lords of Babylon. This fact is seen clearly in the story of Hezekiah’s interactions with Rabshakeh. The title given Sennacherib (*Great-king*) when he invaded Judah (2 Kings 18:19) is indicative that he was ruler of the Babylon. Seleucus I Nicator was originally given Babylon and had to retake possession of it before he moved his capital westward. His kingdom is identified by the Bible in this prophecy as the “King of the North” because he and many of the kings that followed him were the lords of Babylon.
8. **The second half of the prophecy of Daniel 11 should be understood typologically or symbolically based on a careful study of Daniel 11:23.** As the sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 11:31 is the antitypical (heavenly, not earthly), and the people persecuted in v. 33-35 are antitypical (the Church not Jews) – so are the other references made later in the chapter. Egypt is antitypical of a world power that refuses to acknowledge God (see Rev 11:3-13 and GC Ch. 15) and Babylon is antitypical of a power that took God’s people captive (1,260 days), defiled the knowledge of the heavenly temple, and forced God’s people to serve idols.