

Daniel's Vision of Chapter 12

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

Written By: Pastor John T. Anderson

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“But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one shall help him.

“At that time Michael shall stand up, the great Prince Who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.” Daniel 11:44-12:1.

Today we conclude our study of the great book of Daniel. I trust its study has been as rewarding for you as it has been for me! What a timely message of encouragement. Properly understood, it reveals a God Who saved us poor sinners at the cross (when “Messiah the Prince” was “cut off”), Who wants now to refine and purify us to live with angels, and Who is coming back very soon to do just that. The “Stone” will strike the statue and bring earthly kingdoms to an end. This message should provoke us to a complete surrender to Him to allow Him to do His work of restoration in our characters to make us ready for heaven. Prophecy is God's “stimulus package” to awaken us to godly living.

What does it mean when it talks about the “king of the north” being upset by news from the east and “planting his tents” between the seas and the “glorious holy mountain”? Who is the “king of the north” in this part of the vision? The “king of the north” is a term which represented Syria during the Seleucid period in the early part of chapter eleven's vision which we studied last week. On many occasions the rulers of Syria opposed God's people and caused trouble for them.

“North” is a term in Scripture that is used frequently to identify the place of the enemy. Even Babylon, which strictly speaking was more east than north of Jerusalem, is said to come from the “north.”

Speaking of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, “Then the Lord said to me, ‘out of the north calamity shall break forth.’” Jeremiah 1:14. Since the best roads circumvented the desert which was between Judea and Babylon, making a giant loop coming southward from Mesopotamia, it was as if Babylon came from the “north.”

The Bible has a pattern of using terms and symbols in this way. Peter closed his letter by saying, "Everyone in Babylon says 'hello.'" I Peter 5:13. Did he use the term "Babylon" in a literal way? No, it is clear that he wasn't speaking of literal Babylon when he wrote this, but of that entity which occupied the role of ancient Babylon, the enemy of God. In Peter's day that was Rome. He felt comfortable in using the term "Babylon" and applying it to the kingdom which oppressed and opposed the people of God in his lifetime.

We can see clearly that the setting of the last part of Daniel 11 and Daniel 12 is set in the context of Christ's return, when He will deliver those written in the book of life. All the visions of the book of Daniel find their terminus in the grand climax of the Second Advent. Therefore, the term "king of the north" is used in this part of the vision to represent that entity which stands in the role of the enemy of God in these last days. In the latter part of Daniel 11, the "king of the north" is that last day entity which opposes God and His kingdom, His government and His laws.

Satan from the very beginning has engineered his policy of opposition against God's throne. He enticed a third of the angels to rebel against God's authority. He tempted Eve to disobey God's express commandment. Throughout history he has tirelessly endeavored to bring about chaos through disobedience to God's law. What is as sacred as God Himself? It is His holy law, which is a transcript of His character. God and His law are inseparable. In what better way could Satan conduct his rebellion against God than by attacking the law of His realm? In early Old Testament times he enticed God's people to disobey God's law through the worship of idols and the disregard of His Sabbath. In later Old Testament, after the return from captivity, he tempted well-meaning religious leaders to pile so many requirements on the Sabbath that it was impossible to keep, and thus Satan distorted its truth.

Now he proclaims that God's law is done away with and can be freely disregarded. He claims that the cross has made void the law, but it was our sins that were nailed to the cross, not God's law! If God's law could have been set aside, Jesus didn't need to die! Calvary is an unanswerable argument that God's law remains intact.

But through well-intentioned people Satan has advanced his agenda of anarchy, his attack against God's kingdom. Remember that it was well-meaning religious people who put Jesus on the cross. Christ said, "the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service." John 16.2.

Daniel 11 concludes with the statement that after hearing news that "troubles him" he will mount an attack to "destroy and annihilate many" and will "plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain." We already know, from studying the vision of Daniel 7 (along with Revelation 13), that Satan will use religious people to enact laws which restrict freedom and bring persecution on those who resist. This is the same message that Daniel 11 touches on.

What about this “troubling news” that brings persecution? Is there a parallel we can study to gain understanding? After Daniel’s day, later in history, we recall there was a story in which “news” from the “east” “troubled” one on the throne and resulted in “annihilation.” Who was that, and when did that happen? That was King Herod, who heard the news brought by the wise men of the east, asking about the birth of Jesus the Messiah. “When Herod the king heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” Matthew 2:3. The result of that was Herod giving an order to kill all the male babies of Bethlehem two years and younger. That happened when Jesus came the first time.

The “news from the east” is heaven’s message of salvation through faith. It is the Gospel of redemption and restoration. It is the Good News of Christ giving us victory over every sin and besetment. In the end of time, it will be the “news” of Christ’s second coming (“east” in the Bible is the symbolic direction of heaven) and the call to obey His commandments announced by loving, godly witnesses which will bring about the furious anger of Satan and those under his control.

Daniel 11:44 is saying the same thing as Revelation 12:17. “And the dragon (the devil) was enraged with the woman (the true church), and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” The reason Satan’s fury has not yet been aroused is that the “news from the east” has been corrupted by the worldliness of the church and the “woman” has not yet surrendered to “keep the commandments and have the testimony of Jesus.” When God’s people live as did Jesus, the wrath of the dragon will be awakened.

The issue has always been the same: loyalty to Christ expressed by obedience to His law. There is no other way, but “to trust and obey.” “To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.” Proverbs 21:3. That issue was packaged in the Garden of Eden in the choice between two trees. In the last days of earth’s history that issue will be seen in the choice between two days, God’s Sabbath, or the worship day of man’s making, Sunday.

Now in these last days that same issue of loyalty to Christ expressed by obedience to His law will come into focus in the question of which day of worship is to be honored. God’s last appeal is to “worship Him that made heaven and earth.” Revelation 14:7. Satan hates it when God’s Book is clearly taught and His law is uplifted as sacred. The day will soon be here when he will cause trouble for those who honor the Creator God by keeping holy the day that is His reminder of creation. Ponder this question carefully: Why should we be surprised that the Church of Rome today has welcomed the theory of evolution, since she has followed Satan’s counsel in attempting to obliterate the seventh-day Sabbath, that points to God as Creator?

Soon our country, birthed in liberty, will change course and effect laws which restrict freedom of worship. It is through the appointed representatives that a nation “speaks.” The term “parliament,” a legislative body, is built from the root “to speak,” as in the phrase “parlez vous francais?” The Jews sealed their fate when their council, the Sanhedrin, voted to put Christ on the cross. Our country someday will turn her back on the principles of freedom and through her

legislature “speak like the dragon.” It is the devil who uses force to effect his purposes. The time will come when the Scripture will be fulfilled, “It is time for You to act, O LORD, for they have regarded Your law as void.” Psalm 119:126.

What about this phrase “he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain”? According to the division of Canaan given in Deuteronomy 34, the Great Sea, the Mediterranean was to be the western boundary. The “glorious holy mountain” is an obvious reference to Jerusalem. This phrase would be recognized by any Israelite as an enemy invasion into the territory that God claimed as His own. The phrase “plant his tents” is expressive of hostile takeover, a military assault. It means “to take a defiant and aggressive posture for the purpose of attack; to edge in on another’s territory in an offensive attitude.”

Satan has always desired to take the place of God. That was his intention in heaven, as noted by Isaiah. “I will exalt my throne above the stars. I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:13, 14. This is the same principle Paul addressed when he spoke of the “man of sin who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God.” II Thessalonians 2:4, 5. It is Satan pushing himself, through human agencies, into the precincts of the divine, God’s territory, trying to take over and control that which belongs to God alone.

Do we have a picture of this “planting his tents,” this attitude of hostile takeover elsewhere in Scripture? Yes, we do. When Absalom attempted to usurp the throne of the one who had given him life, his father David, he gained control of the palace and did an outrageous thing to flaunt his ill-gotten authority. Under the devious guidance of Ahithophel, the former counselor of David, “They pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house (palace), and Absalom went in to his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel.” II Samuel 16:22.

Why did he do that? This was a defiant act by which he attempted to establish his throne above that of his father. It was an aggressive act, entering forbidden territory, tampering with that which did not belong to him. Satan’s original scheme was to put himself in God’s place. In the last days, he will “plant his tents” in the territory which God claims as His own, the territory of His sacred law. In a similar way that Absalom tried to wrest the kingdom from David, Satan will conspire to have legislation passed which will likewise desecrate God’s law for the purpose of establishing his throne.

But Absalom’s rebellion came to an end and none could help him. In the same way, Satan will launch a final attempt to gain worship by taking that which belongs to God, desecrating it and compelling all to worship, to show his contempt against God’s law. Draw connecting lines in your mind between Satan’s attempts to plant his throne above the stars when the rebellion began, the rebel Absalom’s defiant act against David’s concubines and Satan’s last day effort to compel worship by setting aside the Sabbath of the Lord, “planting his tents toward the glorious land.” All Israel saw and recognized the invasive act of Absalom; it was done “in the sight of all Israel.”

There was yet another occasion when the enemy planted his tents toward the glorious holy mountain. When Rome came against Jerusalem in the first century, Christians recognized the fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic words. With Rome's idolatrous symbols waving on the pennants of her troops surrounding Jerusalem, Christians read the meaning of Christ's words, the "abomination of desolation." Roman reliance on ungodly forces, as indicated in the messages of their flags was an "abomination," a goliath-like voice of defiance challenging the God of Israel. The armies of Rome would soon bring "desolation." Those who had listened to the voice of Jesus knew that it was time to get out, because God would not protect the city since it had rejected Him. In David's day, Israel witnessed the hostile action of Absalom. In the first century Christians saw and recognized the invasive assault of Rome. Do we today see and recognize the invasive posture of Satan, working through human agencies, against the sacred law of God, the planting of his tents in God's territory?

Why will Satan's attempt fail? "At that time Michael shall stand up, the great Prince Who stands watch over the sons of your people." Who is Michael? Michael is a name given to Christ, used predominantly in contexts of direct conflict with the devil. This last vision of Daniel was introduced with the phrase "it was of great conflict." Daniel 10:1, margin. In the Bible, this "great conflict" is between Christ and Satan. In Revelation 12:7 we read, "And war broke out in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought."

In Jude we are given an insight into the resurrection of Moses at which time there is a dispute between the devil and Michael. "Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!'" Jude 9. Moses had died and was buried. But we know that he must have been brought back to life because he appeared to Christ on the mount of transfiguration. He must have been resurrected. It is to this event that Jude refers.

The devil said, "You can't have him. He's mine. He's a sinner who deserves to die and remain in the grave." But Michael the archangel did not argue with him; He simply said, "The Lord rebuke you," and brought Moses to life. Who is it that brings people back to life? It is Jesus! That same dispute that took place over the body of Moses will take place on a world-wide basis when He comes back. In I Thessalonians 4 we see Michael the Archangel coming to raise the dead, of whom Moses was a type. Satan will claim the bodies of the saints as his, just as he did the body of Moses, safely locked in the chambers of death. Satan will say, "You can't have them. They are mine. They were sinners and deserve to die." But Jesus, Who is the Resurrection and the Life will say, "No. By My grace their sins are forgiven. They have believed in Me and I will bring them back from the grave. Awake, awake, you that sleep in the dust."

What does the name "Michael" mean? In Hebrew, it can be either a question or a statement. We see the "el" at the end of the name, which is the name of "God," as in Daniel and Ezekiel. The first part means "like." The name Michael can be either the statement, "The One Who is like God," or a question "Who is like God?" Given the intent of Satan to be "like the Most High;" given the fact that Jesus, the "express image of His Person," the One Who said "I and My Father are One," and

“If you have seen Me you have seen the Father,” is the only One Who is completely “like God,” the term Michael is a uniquely appropriate title for Christ in the context of direct conflict with the devil.

But why is He called “Archangel”? Doesn’t that make Him subordinate and inferior to God? Keep in mind that on many occasions God visited His people and appeared as an “Angel.” (See Genesis 16:7, 13; Exodus 3:2-6; Judges 13:3-22, etc.) The word “angel” means “messenger,” and as Christ is the highest of God’s messengers (Hebrews 1:1, 2) and the Head of the angelic host (and is Himself God Almighty), He is rightfully due the title Archangel. It is Christ, Michael, Who has guarded, watched over and saved His people throughout history. He is the great “Prince” (*tsar*, or Czar) Who rules over the universe and before Whose throne every knee will bow, to the glory of the Father.

In this verse we are told that Michael will “stand up.” This verb can have at least two connotations. It is when the judge stands up that court is over. We are told that He “sits” as Judge. That’s how Daniel described the beginning of the heavenly judgment: “the court was seated, and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:10. We are told that He “sits” as the Refiner and Purifier of souls. Malachi 3:3. One day that part of the judgment will be over. Jesus will declare that the ones holy will remain holy and the ones unholy will remain unholy. That is why today, while there is still time, we need to plead with Christ to purify us and make us holy. Today is the “pruning” time. You don’t want to be left with an unholy temper, unholy thoughts, unholy practices in your life when the judgment is finished. If that happens, you will be left that way forever and forfeit your inheritance. When the Judge stands up, court is finished. That hasn’t happened yet, but the day is soon approaching.

To “stand up” also means to “take action.” For centuries God’s people have longed for the final fulfillment of His plan, when He will step in and put evil down. “How long?” has been the question on the lips of God’s people since the day Adam and Eve held the lifeless form of Abel. It seems that evil has full sway. It seems that evil is unchecked. It seems from the daily news that evil will triumph.

But one day Christ is going to stand up and take action. He’s going to say, “It is enough.” God’s people will be sealed and ready for translation. The same Holy Spirit Who brought about their spiritual maturity will be resisted by those who have no interest in eternal things. They will have pushed away His sweet influence of grace and will be completely devoid of all godly characteristics and completely under the control of satanic agencies. At that point, every person will be either completely filled with God’s Spirit, or completely filled with the spirit of Satan. Today, God’s Spirit still strives with the ungodly and puts a restraint on the practice of evil. But the day will come when His Spirit, being repulsed by the stubbornness of man, will withdraw and leave the unrepentant under the control of the master they have chosen. You don’t want to be in that group!

This polarization between God's people and the congregation of Satan will unleash "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." *There has always been travail before birth.* When sin came in, God warned that it would be so. As God's community of saints are about to be birthed into eternal happiness and joy, there will be travail. Birth pangs will be felt. Persecution will arise. Satan will launch his last final effort to attempt to blot from the earth those who have chosen Jesus and have been faithful to Him. Satan sees in them the ones who will soon take his place in the celestial kingdom and his intense hatred and jealousy will be aroused against the company of obedient believers.

What we need to remember is that there is safety in Christ. Study and memorize the 91st psalm. What we need to know is, although this period will not be free from privation for God's people, He will see them through it. The God of Daniel 3 will be in the furnace with His worthies. The God of Daniel six will hold the lions' mouths shut. The God of Israel will shelter His redeemed with the cloud of His presence and make a way through the sea.

Opportunity will be given to share the truths of God's Word, and we are not to become anxious as to what should be said at that time. His Spirit will give us the words and the power to speak for Him in convincing tones.

"And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book." What a great verse this is! The phrase "found written" is suggestive of a search being made. "Found" means that there was a "looking into" process. There was an investigation. As part of God's just administration, this judgment of which we have just spoken includes an examination as to who are eligible to receive the inheritance. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." Matthew 7:21.

Above all else, when that time comes, you will want your name written in His book of life. Nothing else will matter. No impressive savings account or property portfolio will take the place of having your name there. Nothing that the world treasures as valuable will mean anything when that day comes. Is your name written there? Do you seek His wisdom daily? Are you asking Him to cleanse your heart of every sin? How precious is the time we have now, for Him to make within us a new heart!

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel 12:2. Here is brought to light the truth of what happens when people die. They "sleep" in the grave unconsciously till brought back to life. The Bible uses the term "sleep" to describe the condition of mankind in death over 50 times. Satan is the originator of the concept that "you shall not surely die." The Bible clearly teaches, "the living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5. This powerful truth is a protection against the seductive falsehood of spiritualism.

But what is this resurrection of which Gabriel speaks? Is it the same as the general resurrection of the righteous when Jesus comes back? No, this is a special resurrection that precedes that general “first resurrection.” When placed under oath before the Sanhedrin, Jesus testified to the high priest and the council, “Hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Matthew 26:64. It is certain that Jesus was speaking the truth and in order for that testimony to be fulfilled, it will necessitate a special resurrection which will include “key players” on the side of righteousness and evil, to witness the glory of His return.

“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” Daniel 12:3. Don’t be satisfied with the honor this world has to give; it will quickly fade. Be the “star” God wants you to be, in victorious living, in eager sharing of His love. Your joy will know no end.

“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” Daniel 12:4. It was not all the book of Daniel that was “sealed;” we have seen that an excellent understanding of most of its prophecies has been available since the time of Christ. It was only that part that related to the events tied to the 2300 day/year prophecy that was sealed. However, in the 19th century and onward, many have been “running to and fro” in the Scriptures with the result that “knowledge” of the prophecies has greatly increased. “The path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” Proverbs 4:18. It is also true, of course that knowledge in the world of technology, medicine and other things has grown at an exponential rate in the last few decades.

The “time of the end” began, according to the context of this chapter, at the close of the 1260 year prophecy in 1798. We studied before, from chapter 7, that this period began in 538 A.D. when the Church became free to exercise her power. From this time, in a general way, the Church would take the place of pagans in the oppression of God’s people.

The close proximity of the two time periods leads to the conclusion that their ending points are the same, thus we take the 1290 period to be from 508 A.D. Just before this the Frankish (French) King Clovis converted to Catholicism and became a close ally with the Church, and important victories over the Goths were won, leading to the complete removal of her enemies.

The Emperor Justinian decreed the head of the church of Rome sovereign in 533 A.D., but it would be in 538 A.D. when the enemies of the Church would be neutralized and the edict could become fully effective. We take the 1335 days, an additional 45 days/years from 1798 A.D., to be the period which came up to 1843 when Christians, happy and “blessed” in their expectation, believed their Lord to be coming.

We are now at God’s “two-minute warning.” Everything this Book has said has come true. Are you waiting for His return? Are your eyes turned toward the eastern sky? Is Jesus the Center of your life? One day we’ll meet Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, the three friends and all the others saved by grace. May that day be soon!

