

GLEF 2023 MESSAGE - DANIEL 11 (L6) - by Mssn Emmanuel Ogbonna July 9, 2023

Topic: GOD, THE RULER OF HISTORY

Text: Daniel 11:2-45

Key Verse: 11:36^b - “...*for what has been determined must take place.*”

PRAYER (Thank God, Speak to us LORD, Give us true comfort that YOU are in charge of our life history..)

INTRODUCTION

Thank God for the privilege to participate in this sixth GLEF (Global Leadership Empowerment Forum). It’s a very busy week. Many presenters prayed and prepared - with great dedication and hardwork so that we can learn how to shine like the stars forever. (let’s appreciate them with a clap).

GLEF is a spiritual training period to prepare us for serving our campuses as next generation Bible teachers who will lead the spiritual revival for this generation. Spiritual training is not easy for our flesh, it feels hard, but it pays for eternity.

This year, we are studying the book of Daniel, to learn how we can shine as stars in this corrupt generation. (*Dan. 12:3*)

Daniel was an example of a global leader and shining star of his time. He made a decision not to be defiled himself, but to serve God’s purpose in his generation. He loved his people and prayed earnestly for their salvation and God showed him visions about what will happen to his people in future. With Daniel’s visions, the Jews were able to put their hope in God throughout the dark ages as they waited for God’s promised Messiah.

Daniel 11 is an explanation of Daniel’s vision of a great war (Dan. 10:1). The Angel told him about the world powers that will rule over Judah in the future. The earthly rulers would not acknowledge God, they would persecute God’s people severely, but will come to their end in God’s time. This is what God determined, that through persecution His people can be purified. The good news is that God is The Sovereign Ruler of history, His Kingdom is everlasting.

May we learn to put our faith in God The Ruler of our life history. May we learn to accept God’s will that has been determined - for us to be spiritual leaders for campus students in Jesus name.

Amen.

PART 1: WORLDLY KINGS BATTLE FOR POWER (2-30)

[Let us read vs 2]

“Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will arise in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.”

The book of Daniel was written while Daniel and the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon. Their captivity situation was due to their stubborn sin problem (Jer. 25:4-11), and captivity was one way God disciplined them as His beloved children. Daniel was about 17 years when he went into Babylonian captivity, he made a decision (Dan. 1:8) to live a righteous and prayerful life (Dan. 6:10) even as a captive. God blessed him and protected him throughout the 70 years of Israel’s captivity in Babylon. Daniel loved his people so much, and he studied the Bible and prayed to know God’s plan for Israel. (Dan. 9:19).

Read vs. 2^a - “Now then, I tell you THE TRUTH...”

God sent His Angel to tell Daniel about the future of the Jews. The Angel started by saying; **“I tell you the Truth..”** - This emphasis tells us that God’s Word is THE TRUTH that guides us for today and for the future. God’s Word is THE TRUTH that saves us and our Bible students from the power of sin. Daniel received God’s True Word for him and his people, and found hope in God The Ruler of their history.

The Angel went on to tell Daniel the kingdoms that will rule over Judah in future. This prophecy of the Angel was fulfilled very accurately, and history confirmed it.

Dan. 11 mentioned the Persian kingdom, the rise of the Greek kingdom, and the constant battles between the north and south regions of the divided Greek kingdom.

In 539 B.C. Persian forces invaded Babylon, and seized it without a fight.

The kingdom of Persia is represented as the chest and arms of silver in the mighty statue which King Nebuchadnezzar dreamt about in Dan. 2:32, Persia is also the bear in Dan. 7:5, and it is the ram with two horns in Dan. 8:3.

At the time of the vision, Cyrus of Persia (10:1) and Darius of Mede (11:1) were ruling the Medo-Persian empire (or simply called Persian empire). After Cyrus, four more kings ruled Persia, they are;

1. Cambyses II (530-522 B.C.),
2. Smerdis <1yr (522 B.C.)
3. Darius I (522-486 B.C.) and
4. Xerxes I (486-465 B.C.) the richest of them all.

King Xerxes-I had inherited a lot of wealth from the combined effort of the previous kings who looted different cities and imposed a heavy tax on the citizens. He became proud and intoxicated by wealth, so he decided to fight and acquire the Greek kingdom. He was shamefully defeated and murdered by the captain of his guards.

About 100 years later, Alexander the great marched against Persia and defeated it. God also declared the end of the Persian kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and in Daniel's visions. In Dan. 8:5-7, the goat with the prominent horn represents the kingdom of Greece, and it destroyed the ram - Persia. God's Word once again fulfilled both in history and in scriptures.

Alexander was so powerful and is popularly referred to as great, no one could stand him. He conquered kingdoms so fast and his empire became large within a very short time. He was like the president of the world. He conquered many nations, but could not conquer the power of death. Jesus is our Great King who has conquered sin and death. Halleluyah. Amen.

After Alex, the Greek kingdom was broken into 4 parts - Syria, Egypt, Thracia and Greece. Four of his generals hijacked these smaller kingdoms, none went to Alexander's children/family as declared by the Angel (Dan. 8:8, 11:4).

Verses 5-20 is about the north and south kingdoms, that is; Syria and Egypt, based on their location from Judah. When you begin to hear things like 'king of the north' and 'king of the south,' don't get confused, they represent different successors of the kings of Syria (Seleucids), and the kings of Egypt (Ptolemies).

War continued between these kingdoms, Israel was caught in the middle and suffered under godless kings. The character of worldly kings is that they always desire to have more power, more places and more people to rule, and so the devil works hard to keep wars going.

The northern and southern kings employed ungodly strategies in order to win their battles; they formed alliances through marriages (vs. 6), they sat at the table pretending to be friends and lying to each other. There is also betrayal, unforgiveness and bloody revenge.

Today, nations continue to fight wars. Ungodly political leaders are full of greed, stubbornness and no love for the people who are destroyed in their constant battles. This is because they have set their ambition/hearts on the things of the world.

Read Matthew 6:21 - (For) where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Believers should not envy the ungodly people, their ambition is earthly and selfish. Our ambition is on the things of God, that's why we undergo intense GLEF training - to become the next generation of fruitful Bible teachers/Shepherds/Missionaries. Our ambition is godly.. It is to raise disciples of Jesus Christ. We pray to send 100,000 Missionaries to 233 nations of the world.

(vs. 21-32) is about Antiochus Epiphanes, a king of the north. He is a contemptible person (deceiver or man of intrigues). When he became king of the north (or Syria) he dealt so badly with Judah and the temple of God, he stopped the Jewish daily sacrifice and set up an abomination when he offered an unclean animal (pig/sow) on the altar. He did so much evil, similar to what the antichrist would do in the last days. The antichrist will totally oppose God and God's people, but it will only be for a time. All the worldly kingdoms will surely have an end. Only God's kingdom will last forever. God The Sovereign Ruler of history is in control of the history of the world! All that he determined about the worldly kingdoms are fulfilled both in history and in scriptures. We may study the Bible to know God's plan for our salvation, and teach the Bible so that other students can see God's everlasting plan to make us Kingdom of Priests and Holy nation through Jesus Christ.

By studying this world history shown to Daniel, we can learn to be different from worldly leaders. Worldly leaders battle for earthly power, but we may fight the good fight of faith and overcome the temptation to sin. We may also fight against unbelief by praying, studying/teaching the Bible. Let us repent, overcome our pride, greed, stubbornness and put away all ungodly ambition so that we can live as God's people in this world, showing God's love to all people.

Bible teachers are different from ungodly political leaders. Ungodly leaders do not have true love for the people, and they don't care about the salvation of the people. Ungodly leaders depend on wealth, large/powerful army, weapons/tactics, lies, tricks and bribery. They impose burdensome taxes to sponsor their lavish lifestyle. Their marriages are not pure because they have bad

motives. They are full of jealousy and greed for more territories, they corrupt many, encourage compromise, and have no regard for The Almighty God. All these actions are summarized in one word - sin. Ungodly leaders live a sinful life.

We (Bible teachers/Global leaders) are different! We acknowledge God.. we know He is The Sovereign Ruler of our history, and we obey His command. We love Bible students, we give sacrificially due to our giving spirit. We avoid lies and other sinful lifestyles.

Global leaders/Bible teachers are sincere in their decisions, including marriage decision. By God's Grace UBF has established many godly housechurches by faith, and there are many testimonies today from these housechurch families. My family is one. I am happy and grateful to God for bringing me to the USA as a Missionary, and establishing my housechurch by faith. My Coworker/wife Shps Angela is a loving woman of God. (Thank you my dear wife). By the Grace of God our HC is serving some students Bible study and praying for them with sincere love in our hearts.

However, while preparing this message, I could see in my heart the worldly desire for success according to the standard of the world. The world measures success mostly by how much possession or educational qualifications one has. Matt. 16:26 says "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?..". For Christians, success is SALVATION. True success is when we believe in Jesus as our Savior and teach the Bible to help others get saved by faith in Jesus. I came to the USA about 11 months ago as a Missionary of the gospel, also as a postgraduate student at Rutgers University. This is God's miracle to place me within Rutgers campus so that I can have my studies and also get access to teach many students the Bible everyday. By God's Grace I started well, reaching out to students both by talking about Jesus and by sharing some printed gospel materials to invite them for Bible study. After my first semester, my desire to invite Bible students reduced so much, this is because I became ambitious about academic success, so I gave a lot of attention to my school assignments and very little attention to serving campus students or even my personal Bible study. I set my ambition towards educational excellence because I considered it as a way to secure my future in the USA. My excess focus on survival and future stability was a distraction to my devotion for God's mission. As a Bible student I learned about the need to always put my trust in God, and I live as a Missionary in the USA with this faith in God. God has been faithful to me, He provides for me and my family, but I still struggle with worry about our future survival. I repent of my sin

of worrying about the future. This message is clearly showing me that God is The Sovereign Ruler over my life, He is aware and in control of my future, and His Word concerning my life is true. God has determined for me to be a Bible teacher for campus students. I pray to focus on God's mission and serve as a spiritual leader for this generation.

While worldly leaders battle for worldly power, believers/Bible teachers/global leaders may fight the good fight of faith for personal salvation and for salvation of the whole world. We are the true leaders the world needs: - Our weapon is the **Gospel of Jesus Christ**

- Tactic/strategy is **Love** (Agape)

- Battlefield is **Campuses all over the world**. Matt. 28:18-20

We must rise up as reliable self-motivated global leaders today and save many campus students with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PART 2: MADE SPOTLESS UNTIL THE END (31-45)

[Let us read vs 31-32]

*“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but **the people who know their God** will firmly resist him.”*

Verse 31-45 is about the evil actions of Antiochus Epiphanes towards the Jews. He persecuted them so much because they worship God. Due to the persecution and corruption of the time, many were discouraged from worshiping God - they became corrupt. But the people that had personal relationship with God did not succumb to persecution or fall into the corruption of the time - they resisted the ungodly king and maintained their faith even until death.

During the era of Antiochus Epiphanes, there was a great attack on the people of God. In 167B.C. the temple was desecrated. He sacrificed a pig (unclean) unto zeus on the altar of God. This was the abomination that caused the desolation of the temple. The Jews could no longer worship God freely. They were severely persecuted and also betrayed by other Jews who had become corrupt. The Maccabaeus rebelled against Antiochus, took back the temple, and rededicated it for God’s worship. This is the reason Jews celebrate the Feast of Dedication - Hanukkah.

The action of Antiochus Epiphanes towards the Jews is just a clue to what the antichrist would do in the last days. The antichrist has not been clearly manifested, but we are already experiencing the deeds of the antichrist in our society today. 1Jn 4:3 - “..every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”

In Vs. 32-39; We see some actions of antichrist. The antichrist would encourage corruption and evil, he will flatter/praise/honor those who reject God’s covenant (Jesus), and everyone who wants to live for Jesus will be persecuted, but those who have personal relationship with God will endure persecution and serve God even in the time of crisis. When they are persecuted, it will only make them shine as stars, spotless till the end.

In our world today there is a lot of temptation to do evil, and many Christians struggle to please

God. Ungodliness seems to be the most popular and celebrated thing. Ungodliness has spread over the internet, in schools, and also in many churches. Technology and the internet is good for our progress, but it has become the most popular tool satan uses to corrupt many people through; gambling, ungodly dating, pornography, promotion of alcohol and other addictive substances, worldly fashion, pleasure-seeking lifestyles, and greedy desire to get-rich-quick by ungodly means. We also have government policies today that suppress the worship of God in many ways, but promote ungodly and unnatural practices. The school system has also been attacked by satan - ungodly curriculums have been developed and adopted, and many innocent children have become exposed to evil knowledge that doesn't please God. Many churches have also adopted ungodly doctrines that encourage sin and spiritual laziness. Enough!

Believers/Bible teachers need to rise as a **vast army of God**, we must change the narrative and make God's Word more popular in our world. In these dark times God is raising us like a great awakening to shine the light of Jesus Christ in this generation. Last Sunday we heard Acts 19 message (Sh. Peter Schweitzer) - How Paul challenged the sinful generation through Disciple making and intensive bible study. Let us fight ungodliness and gain many students back for Jesus by holding on to God's Word and God's vision like Daniel, and through one-to-one Bible study and constant follow-up.

Read vs. 32-35, "With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him. Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time."

From the Bible we can understand that persecution differently. 1Peter 3:13-17 teaches us that if we suffer for doing good, we are blessed. Persecution reveals those who truly know their God, while those who are pretending to know God will not last when they are persecuted. Somehow, through persecution/suffering, God separates the faithful from the unfaithful.

Many claim to be believers just with the mouth, but their heart is not with God. In hard times they compromise. They sin against God at every opportunity. God knows His faithful people,

those who believe Jesus Christ sincerely from the heart will always put Him first in all decisions. They will live as godly example in their speech, thought, actions and relationship with others no matter the consequence/persecution they face. *2Tim. 3:12 - In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

[Read vs. 36-37] - “The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. The antichrist will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all.”

This tells the actions of the antichrist. He will exalt himself and blaspheme God. In vs. 37, talking about the desire of women. It is the desire of many young women of Israel to be chosen by God as the mother of the Messiah. So, we can say Jesus is the desire mentioned here. The antichrist would have no regard for Jesus!.. Overall, the antichrist’s interest is to oppose Jesus Christ and severely persecute God’s people.

He may appear successful in conquering the world and persecuting the people of God, but he will not last forever. The truth is that the antichrist will unknowingly be working for God’s ultimate plan of salvation/purification. For example, in 1Cor. 2:6-8 (..we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden.. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.), we learn that the rulers of this world did not know God’s plan, they thought they won when they crucified Jesus, but no, they only fulfilled God’s salvation plan for Jesus to die for the sins of the world.

In the end, the antichrist will be destroyed, not by human power, but by God, and God will establish the everlasting kingdom where the faithful ones will shine forever.

As Missionaries and Bible teachers, different persecutions tests our faith in God, but we must endure till the end, and we will surely be rewarded by The Almighty God Who welcomes us into His Kingdom of Priests and Holy nation. In some parts of the world (m-nations) there is severe punishment for practicing Christianity, but this should not hinder us. We need to show sincere love to the innocent campus students in these nations of the world by serving as missionaries/Bible teachers to the nations. We are praying that God may raise next generation

missionaries that can carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to the fore front of persecution in m-nations and all the earth.

Persecution may also come in form of social and emotional discomfort. Notice how we work so hard to serve during GLEF. Many of us spend the night/early morning in spiritual labor to prepare presentations, music and prayer-topics so that our next generation spiritual leaders can get sufficient training and build confidence in serving God's mission. We also persevere to have daily bread devotion and testimony writing. We overcome many challenges and struggles so that we can serve this generation with God's Word, for we trust that God's Word can change us into spotless people that shine forever in God's kingdom. Our friends and family may understand why we suffer and work so hard for God. They may persecute us with unkind words and bad attitudes. Sometimes we ask 'Why am I doing all this?!'

In this world, antichrist and ungodly people may seem like the winning team, but **the real winners are the believers/Bible teachers who stay faithful to God to the end.** The antichrist and all ungodly people will not last forever, their end will come. Their ultimate end is in hell fire. Those who remain faithful and overcome the persecution/stress of following Jesus, will be with God in His everlasting kingdom.

Through this leadership forum, let us have faith in God The Sovereign Ruler over our lives. He knows the end from the beginning and is in complete control of history. Also consider all of our sufferings and hard work for God as a refining/purification process to make us spotless, shining the light of Jesus Christ to the end. Amen.

Key Verse: Dan. 11:36^b - "...for what has been determined must take place."

PRAYER (Dear God, we say Thank You - You are The Ruler of our history. You have revealed to us Your plan to purify and make us spotless. Help us believe Your True Word, help us **avoid the corruption** of the world. Teach us to shine Your light in this generation **as Kingdom of Priests and holy nation.** We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.)