

CAN YOU WIN A NUCLEAR WAR WITH HAND GUNS?

Today's Text: Daniel Chap. 11

Extracts:

At the appointed time [the enemy king from the North] **shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore *he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant; and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.* And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifice, and place there the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; *but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits* [Dan. 11: 29-31]**

*African farmers have a running battle with hungry elephants because these huge land animals have special taste for maize, the staple crop for millions of Africans.¹ Usually, the animals invade the farms close to harvest time. However, in a study published recently in the scientific journal, **Current Biology**, Oxford University researchers have found a simple and cheap solution. They have discovered that elephants dread and avoid bees which can inflict painful stings inside their trunks. So, by recording the buzz of angry bees and playing the buzzing sound through concealed loudspeakers on the farms, 94% of the elephants ran away within 80 seconds of hearing it!*

Ordinarily, the odds were against the farmers. They could have set traps or carried arms to fight against the elephants with little or no effect. That would have been like trying to win a nuclear war with hand guns! However, the scientists came to their aid. They carefully and patiently studied the habits of the elephants. They then discovered their strengths and weaknesses. On the basis of such knowledge, they were able to devise a simple way to stop their menace against the farmers. Now the farmers have got knowledge to make them strong and do exploits against their huge enemy.

As we approach end times, the enemies warring against our salvation are getting more ferocious, yet more subtle. Only God can fight for us against them. Do you in deed know God? Let us find out in today's study.

¹ "Bees to make elephants 'buzz off,'" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/science/nature/7033830.stm> published 2007/10/08

1. The signs of the end times are everywhere

On the Mount of Olives, the disciples came privately to Jesus and asked Him, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and the end of the age?” [Matt. 24: 3]. He told them (among others), “When you see the ‘abomination of desolation’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, ...then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house, and let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes” [vv. 15-18]. Then, He added, “For then, there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be... for false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. SEE, I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFOREHAND” [vv. 21, 24, 25].

Let us leave the Bible prophecy experts to contend over the ‘correct’ times and seasons referred to by Daniel and Jesus. For us believers that have not yet been called home to heaven, the end times are already here. How are we preparing for the tough battles that we face? For a start, let us underline the following developments as prophesied by Daniel”

a) *The enemy shall return in rage against the holy covenant and do damage*

We know that Satan is in truth the enemy of Christ right from the Garden of Eden [Gen. 3: 15] to the lake of fire and brimstone [Rev. 20: 10]. All through human history, the enemy of Christ has posed in different forms- for example, as the Pharaoh of Egypt to delay the freedom of the children of Israel in captivity, or as Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, or as secularism in the modern world. In Daniel’s prophecy, the enemy was no longer satisfied with simply persecuting believers. He had to take over their place of worship and desecrate it [Dan. 11: 30]. He took away the “daily sacrifice” and placed there a new and idolatrous symbol of worship, “the abomination of desolation” [v. 31].

Having ‘displaced’ God, the enemy “shall do according to his own will; he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god (and) shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods” [v. 36].

One form that the new rage has taken is using state law to do *damage to God’s commandments*. Originally, the doctrine of separation of church and state was to prevent one faith from being adopted as state religion in a pluralistic society. That is in line with God’s desire that we come to Him of our own free will, not by force or coercion. Another form that the rage has taken is the *theory of evolution*, that humans evolved from lower animals, never created by God. With tremendous scientific discoveries in the last century (which can hardly be anchored on evolution), the atheists have hijacked the scientific community and drowned out the promising research based on creationism.

The net effect of those developments is that the enemy has pushed God out of the public domain, such as schools and government offices. Only evolution can be taught in science classes and creationism is confined to religious instruction classes.

If the difference between Christianity and other major world religions is Christ, then the fight to exclude God is actually a war against Christ and His church. Wherever they have succeeded in doing so, they have displaced “daily worship” and replaced it with the “abomination of desolation.” Abortions and same-sex marriages, for example, are products of the damage that is being done against the holy covenant.

b) *The enemy will show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant*

When you commend and reward undesirable conduct, you will get more of it. By showing “regard for those who forsake the holy covenant,” and flattering “those who do wickedly against the covenant” [vv. 30, 32], the enemy would simply reinforce the worship of the abomination of desolation.

According to ‘Gresham’s Law,’ bad money drives out good money. In no time, those who insist on upholding the word of God are seen as extremists and promoters of hatred. Honest and truth-telling politicians can hardly win elections. State functionaries trying to bring corrupt politicians to book for their loot are vilified as pursuing political vendetta. Success is measured largely or only in terms of ends (usually material) with little or no regard for morally defensible means.

c) *Even the elect could be deceived!*

Those people “who understand” and are capable of instructing many in the truth of God shall for a time be persecuted “by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering.” As they suffer, “they shall be aided with a little help; *but many shall join with them by intrigue*” [Dan. 11: 33-34]. In the Olivet discourse, Jesus underlined this situation to His disciples when He alerted them that false christs and false prophets shall show great signs and wonders that could deceive the elect. Therefore, they needed to be watchful [Matt. 24: 24].

For family, position or money, many believers have *allowed* themselves to be deceived by the enemy. For example, the abortion lobbyist is the surviving child of a God-fearing or pro-life mother. The Christian couple in a same-sex marriage can *never* have their own biological children from their union. The corrupt politician who pays tithes on his loot is only deceiving himself!

2. But there is a faithful remnant!

Daniel says that “the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry on great exploits” [**Dan. 11: 32**]. In other words, there are some believers who cannot be deceived by the enemy because they *know their God*? What does it mean to know God?

I have never been to China, for example. But do I know the place? Yes, to some extent. I have *read* about it through the Internet. I have *seen* pictures of events there through television news reports. I have *heard* from Chinese who come from there and from radio stations that broadcast from there (in English, of course!). I have *used* products made in China. But will the fact that I have read or heard *about* it, or seen pictures of it or used products from there amount to knowing it? No! Even if I were to physically go there, I would still not be able to claim to know it *beyond* the few places that I may be able to visit there. God is bigger than China and He is invisible. His ways and thoughts are as far apart as the heavens are higher than the earth [**Is. 55: 9**]. How then can Daniel talk about people knowing Him?

Happily, God delights in our knowing Him, as He has said through the prophet Jeremiah, “Let the rich man glory in this, *that he understands and knows Me*, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth, *for in these I delight*” [**Jer. 9: 24**]. We can know *about* God through:

a) *His creations*

Even those who claim not to believe in God cannot escape the clear evidence of His creations, for “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” [**Ps. 19: 1**]. The earth and its fullness are His, including they that dwell therein [**Ps. 24: 1**]. Unbelieving scientists are beginning to be frustrated because each additional excavation or probe into outer space points to a Creator, not evolution!

b) *His word*

God’s word is sure “for as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall (His) word be that goes forth from (His) mouth; it shall not return to (Him) void, but it shall accomplish what (He) pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing for which (He) sent it” [**Is. 55: 10-11**]. It was by His word that all things were created [**Gen. 1**], and the entirety of His word is truth [**Ps. 119: 160**].

God’s word that He has revealed to us is summarized in the Scriptures, popularly called the ‘Holy Bible.’ God has enjoined us to read and meditate upon it day and night and abide by its precepts if we want to be

prosperous and successful [**Josh. 1: 8**]. He has given us His word in the Scriptures “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” [**2 Tim. 3: 16**]. That is why God’s word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths [**Ps. 119: 105**].

Nevertheless, *to know God goes beyond knowing His word*. First of all, it is not every reader of the Bible that believes that it contains His word. After all, Moslems believe that the *Koran* completes and supersedes the book of the Jews (Old Testament) and Christians (New Testament), and that God is unknowable. Many people study the Bible just to spot ‘contradictions’ with which to ‘destroy’ Christian doctrine. When Saul (Paul) went on the rampage against Christians, he was armed with the zeal of knowing God as contained in the Law of Moses! When he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul came to know God *in full* [**Acts 9: 1-19**].

Therefore, no one knows God until s(he) has met and accepted Jesus for “no one has seen God *at any time* (but) the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” [**Jn 1: 18**]. Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” [**Col. 1: 15**], and “in Him dwells *all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” [**Col. 2: 9**]. When Philip, one of His twelve Apostles, asked Jesus to show them the Father, He replied, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” [**Jn 14: 8-9**]. So, these then are they who know God:

a) *Sons and daughters of God*

God created all humans but only those humans who have received Jesus as the only begotten Son of God have the *right* to be called sons and daughters of God [**Jn 1: 12**]. No one can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit [**1 Cor. 12: 3**] by whom we “received the Spirit of adoption to cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’” That is what has made us sons (and daughters) of God and “joint heirs with Christ” [**Rom. 8: 14-17**]. These are the born-again who have received water and Holy Spirit baptism that enables them to see heaven (from the earth) and enter therein (at death) [**Jn 3: 3, 5**].

b) *Brothers and sisters of Jesus*

To be born again is a necessary condition for knowing God but it is not sufficient. You have to also become the brothers and sisters of the Lord. What does that mean?

When Jesus was told that His mother and brothers were waiting outside to see Him, He looked around the room, at the circle of those sitting with Him and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For *whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and My mother*” [**Mk 3: 31-35**]. Therefore, you have a new relationship with God, one of total

surrender to His ways and service [**Ecc. 12: 13**] since you were created for His pleasure [**Rev. 4: 11**].

c) *Friends of God*

God called Abraham His friend [**Is. 41: 8**]. Jesus told His disciples, “*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you*” [**Jn 15: 14-15**]. Abraham was a man of faith [**Heb. 11: 8-10**] and Jesus has been highly exalted by His Father because He obeyed to the point of death on the cross [**Phil. 2: 5-11**]. When you trust God and obey Him wholeheartedly, you become His friend.

3. Conclusion: Know your God and do exploits!

Daniel said, “and some of the *people of understanding* shall fall (in order) to refine them, purify them, and *make them white*, until the time of the end” [**Dan. 11: 35**]. Jesus added, “He who endures to the end shall be saved” [**Matt. 24: 13**]. Of the Gentile multitude in white robes that John saw while he was in a trance on the island of Patmos, an elder gave him the following explanation [**Rev. 7: 13-17**]:

These are the ones who came out of the great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore, nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The war for your salvation is fierce. It is worse than a nuclear war and you cannot win with hand guns (i.e., man-made weapons). You need to know God. Are you a son or daughter of God? Are you the brother or sister of Jesus? Are you a friend of God? If your answer to all three questions is an emphatic ‘yes,’ then you know God. You are strong and can continue to do exploits!