

Forsaking the Holy Covenant

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Daniel 11

³⁰ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

DANIEL 11 is the recital in advance of a sequence of events to transpire in their order. Its records parallel those found in the earlier chapters, 2, 7, 8 and 9.

Rise of the Papacy

Each of them portrays the rise and fall of the first four world empires as the media through which Satan worked in turn to carry forward his schemes, after which the great apostasy gave birth to the papal dominance of the world. Yet out of the tragedy of the Dark Ages, God's truth is shown to rise with greater glory and power to march toward the ultimate, eternal triumph.

This thirtieth verse is concerned with a critical and pivotal point in these developments. The four great world empires had come and gone. Pagan Rome, crippled by her licentiousness and luxury, was succumbing to the furious onslaught of

the barbarian invaders. Her usefulness to the devil having ended, he turned to another means by which to continue his operations. Those Satanic movements are described in the few short words:

³⁰ ...he shall...have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

By this means the papacy was formed. For centuries prior to this, there had been a steady decline in spiritual power in God's church accompanied by a corresponding conformity to worldly practices. From the glory of the apostolic period to the midnight darkness of the papal era, the transition had surely taken place.

Understanding Satan's Devices

This transition needs to be thoroughly understood for the danger of its repetition shadows the pathway of every movement raised by God. Those of us today who recognize, identify with, and support the message of the hour stand in the same peril. The greater the light, the larger the measure of power, the more intense the initial consecration, the more present the might of the Spirit, the more effectively Satan can use these forces if they can be diverted into his hands.

The advantage in these contests wherein the evil one seeks to take that which God has established and divert it into his service, lies on his side for he knows what he is doing, whereas the people of God are woefully ignorant of his devices. There is no excuse for this, for explicit warnings are provided in the Scriptures. Were these to be faithfully heeded, there never would be an apostasy in the church.

But the frightening fact remains that there is not an instance in history where the enemy has failed thus far to turn a glorious group of conquering Christians into a dominating, persecuting paganism or papacy. Fortunately there has always

been the faithful remnant who have refused to compromise their principles and through whom the seed of a further development of truth is preserved.

Our Danger

Today, we are poised on the edge of climactic events. Once again the church has arrived at that point where the work can be speedily finished, All around us are those who have forsaken the holy covenant and formed intelligence with the man of sin. Should the remnant in this shining hour fail to understand the procedures by which Satan ensnares, then they will fail exactly as all the others before them.

Therefore, the text under consideration here is one which claims the earnest attention of every child of God. The failure to learn its lessons can only involve eternal loss. No superficial study is sufficient to adequately grasp the issues and to understand the techniques employed. The mind must be put to the stretch and the lessons learned, rehearsed again and again until they have penetrated deep into the consciousness and the mind is programmed to instantly detect and reject the stealthy approach of the destroyer.

Enmity and Friendship

The statement before us, “he shall...have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant,” marks the end of a transition. The period before the metamorphosis was marked by conditions in which there was no intelligence whatsoever between the man of sin and those who held to the holy covenant for the simple reason that such is impossible. The total separation between the two parties is assured because of opposite principles, teachings, and above all spirit which motivate each respectively.

This is a lesson which dawns only slowly on the minds of the elect. There is so much in the world which is apparently

good, so much in the teachings of Babylon which seems to be the counterpart of the truth, that the conviction that there should be such rigid separation becomes diluted.

Yet, while the gulf between those who follow the man of sin, and those who serve God must be maintained and even widened, it cannot be successfully done by legislation. In other words, the direct command to come out and be separate is not enough. If the spirit is in any way in accord with Babylon there will be, in the heart, a longing to be back there, even though the strength of intellectual conviction or the force of circumstances prevents the return.

A convincing witness to this is provided in the Exodus when the Israelites, though being guided to the promised land, longed in their spirits to go back to Egypt. In their flesh they were separated from that great apostasy, but in their hearts there was no separation.

Only when the principles of God's government are so built into the child of God that the Spirit of God has become his spirit, will the separation between the two be assured. When this is so, then there will be no intelligence between the man of sin and those loyal to the holy covenant.

While the man of sin had intelligence with those who forsook the holy covenant, he could never have it with those who did not forsake it. The writing of this study is prompted by a deep concern that each believer understand why and how this is so. It is not sufficient to point to the differences in belief to establish the basis for this division. The truth lies much deeper than this for it is repeatedly demonstrated that people can have sharply contrasting beliefs and yet work in dedicated harmony.

The Sadducees were fanatical in their view that there was no resurrection of the dead and withstood to the point of violence the Pharisees' assertions that there was. They could be

relied on to plunge into dispute on this question about as often as they met, yet, opposite as their beliefs were, they entered into a common working conspiracy to crucify the Saviour of the world.

Likewise the Romans and Jews had two divergent philosophies of religion, but at Calvary it was shown that they were possessed of the same spirit of hostility against the principles expressed in the life and teachings of Christ. Consequently, they had intelligence with each other, leading both to join in the same work of destruction.

Numerous are the instances in history where men possessed differences of religious belief, yet joined in harmony with each other simply because their working principles were identical. It is the unity of spirit which is the deciding factor in confederation of evil forces.

It is because the whole world will be possessed of the same spirit in the end, that it will become joined in one universal bond of union, though sharply divided on points of doctrine. There are those who, as they view the divergent views of pressure groups today, find it difficult to see how they could ever become unified as the prophecy predicts they will. But let these understand the principle that it is not belief but spirit which unites a people, and they will have no further comprehension problems.

The Mystery-Unfolding Cross

The Great Controversy, p. 652:

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries.

In the light streaming from that focal point in history, any mystery surrounding these principles is burned away like mist before the rising sun. That marvelous instrument of sacrifice stands at the heart of the holy covenant for, without it, there could be no covenant. Calvary sets in italics the truth

that the man of sin can find no intelligence with those who do not forsake the holy covenant.

The Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews all followed the man of sin as they partook largely of his spirit and procedures. To the Greeks and Romans, the cross was foolishness, stupidity, nonsense, a thing to be despised and scorned, while to the Jews it was a stumbling-block. So it is written:

1 Corinthians 1

²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.

It is necessary to grasp why the beautiful revelation of the deepest attributes of righteousness was foolishness and a stumbling-block to the man of sin. There is much more to this than immediately meets the eye and persistent research should be undertaken till the spiritual eye penetrates beyond the surface superficiality of the casual reader.

Until this is undertaken, it will not be possible to discern the falsity in the denial by the followers of the man of sin either in Paul's day or our own, that the apostle's words apply to them. To support their claim they will point to the high place of honor the cross is accorded in every aspect of their religious activities. They will direct the attention to the steeple cross, the one around their necks, on their Bible book-marks and on the Easter buns. They will contend that if the cross is foolishness to them, they would certainly not regard it so highly.

In these latter days, the cross does hold a highly honored place in the religious life of Christendom. This is universally known but it is not so widely recognized that it held an equally respected status in Greek and Roman culture¹. In fact,

¹ "The sign of the cross, represented in its simplest form by a crossing of two lines at right angles, greatly antedates, in both the East and the West, the introduction of Christianity. It goes back to a very remote period of

it was the only place that the cross, as an object constructed from wood or crafted from a precious metal, was known then, for in that form it has never had any place in the religious system instituted by God. Whenever the visible cross begins to appear on church steeples, buildings and human bodies, the evidence is being presented that the connection with God is slipping.

But, while the visible cross had no place in the divine order, the principle of the cross is as eternal as God is Himself, both in the past and in the interminable future. In a moment, we will study further this distinction between the cross made of material things and what it stood for, and the cross of Christ and what it represented.

The point to be established is that the cross was a well known and widely displayed element in religious worship in Paul's day. Therefore, the Greek and Roman of that time would greet with ridicule Paul's assertion that to them it was foolishness. Paul is the one whom they would have categorized as being foolish, for no one in his right mind would classify them as regarding the cross as such.

The sincerity with which the Greek and Roman would voice their protestations cannot be doubted. They really believed that they gave the fullest honor to the cross, though such belief does not make it true. On the other hand, Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the spirit, definitely spoke the truth. How, then, could God through His servant bring to the Greek and Roman mind a conviction sufficient to convince them of their error?

Certainly it could not be done by simply telling them that

human civilization....the cross was originally not a mere means or object of ornament, and from the earliest times had certainly another—i.e. symbolico-religious—significance." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, article: "Archeology of the Cross and Crucifix".

the cross was foolishness to them for they would simply counter according to their conviction that it was not. This meeting of claim with counter-claim only results in an impasse which remains unbreakable until the correct key is used.

That key, in this case, is the recognition that there are two crosses. There is the cross as seen by the Greek and the Roman and there is the cross as it was seen by Paul and is to be seen by every true child of God. The cross as the Greeks and Romans knew it, was certainly not foolishness to them, but as Paul saw it, it was. Paul, in his assertion, is speaking of the one, while they had the other in mind.

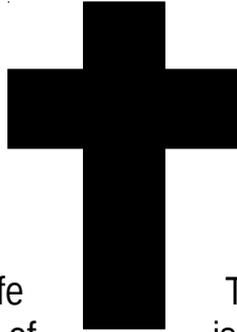
Until the Greek understood that Paul was not speaking of the cross with which he was familiar, he could never be convinced that the cross of Christ was foolishness to him. But let the principles for which the cross of Christ stands be offered to the Greek and the Roman and to any man of the world today, and they will decidedly reject it as foolishness and stupidity.

On Golgotha's hill stood but one cross apart from that of the two thieves. Satan had Christ nailed there and lifted Him up as a spectacle testifying to the principles and procedures which he hoped to establish in place of God's righteous ways. He demonstrated there, to what lengths he would go to achieve his ends. He showed forever that the basis of his life was to serve self no matter what the cost may be to others. Even if this involved sacrificing the life of the One who created him, he would not stop short of that. Satan wears a garment dipped in blood—the blood of others.

There cannot be two principles of operation more opposite, hostile or irreconcilable than these. Between them, there can be no intelligence, no co-operation, no working union of any kind. Their separation is predetermined by their natures. To

one or the other of them, every man and woman on the earth gives allegiance.

ONE CROSS TWO MESSAGES



GOD'S

The Law of Life
is the Principle of
Self-Sacrificing Love

This is
Service to Others
Irrespective of the
Cost to the Server

Christ's Garment is
Dipped in Blood
= His Own =

**THE HOLY
COVENANT**

SATAN'S

The Law of Life
is the Principle of
Self-Serving Love

This is
Service to Self
Irrespective of the
Cost to Others

Satan's Garment is
Dipped in Blood
= Others =

**THE UNHOLY
COVENANT**

That allegiance is more than a mere loyalty. It springs from the fact that the principle of one cross or the other is the in-built way of life. Therefore, everyone whose ways are guided by the code of self-service no matter what the cost may be to others, will certainly give their allegiance to the cross as it was known to, and adored by, the Greeks and Romans. They will journey through life with garments dipped in blood—the blood of others.

On the other hand, the lives of God's children will be motivated by the same formula as Christ demonstrated in its most perfect and wonderful form on Calvary. They will devote their lives in service to others no matter what the cost may be to themselves. They will wear garments rolled in blood—their own blood. Their allegiance will be given wholeheartedly and sincerely to the cross of Christ.

His Cross and Mine

There is an aspect of Calvary's cross which the Greek and Roman would never regard as being foolish. This is the fact that Christ died so that others may live. They can really appreciate someone else making the sacrifice on their behalf and in their place. It is for this reason that modern religion is marked by the teaching that Christ did it all in our place leaving nothing but for the follower to accept all as a simple gift. In these theologies there is only His cross and never mine. There is no sharing in His death, no consecration of the life to selfless service, no matter what the cost may be to the giver. This is the calling of the cross, the pathway into which it directs every follower of Christ and His Father.

When Jesus was on this earth, He alone, fully understood this principle of behavior. Every day, all day, He went to the cross bearing its sacrifice, its burden, its cost, that His mighty mission might be accomplished. Every hour of His time was devoted to the blessing and rescue of others no matter what

the cost might be to Himself.

But His apostles could not understand this nor fully participate in this program. Instead, they were thinking and dreaming of worldly honor and glory, the aggrandizement of themselves as part of the Jewish nation at terrible cost to others. For them to have what they desired, hundreds of thousands of Romans would have to yield their lives, their properties, their freedom and their future. They dreamed of crowns, not of crosses. To them Jesus spoke the word of power when He said:

Matthew 16

²⁴ If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

These words were not spoken for a special situation and occasion nor is their application limited to a restricted period or need. There Christ spelled out the code for human relationships for eternity. When Jesus said to them, "If any man will come after Me," He was outlining much more than immediately meets the eye.

To come after Him involves walking in His way, living as He lived, and being guided by the same code. It means to have intelligence with Him, fellowship in His sufferings and participation in His standards of service. To enter this kind of life, to be a true follower of Christ, requires that all who would achieve such an attainment must take up their cross and follow. They are not to take up Christ's cross for there is none who could bear that but He. They are to take up their own crosses and bear them exactly as Christ bore His.

It is a mistake to suppose that Christ came and merely did a great work for us. While great care must be taken not to minimize what He did for each lost soul, emphasis must be placed upon Christ's mission to reveal and to lead into heaven's way of life. Every moment of His life, Jesus lived and

taught that but never with such finality, clarity and comprehensiveness as at the cross. That was the ultimate statement of His life's work. There He did nothing different from what He had always done and ever will do. He only did the same thing in the greatest and most complete form possible.

From that elevation, the brilliant rays of divine light project the message of God to infinity. Never, in the entire span of past eternity, has there been a declaration to compare with it, nor will the eternity of the future provide anything which will ever outshine it. All who would be saved must draw near to that lesson book and learn the message sounded there. As they come under the thrilling influence of that supreme testimony of divine wisdom and power, it will call forth from them a response to take up their crosses and follow.

As they accept the cross, a divine miracle begins to work within as they are transformed into the same image from glory to glory. The mighty transforming power of God implants within them the spirit of self-sacrificing service, stimulating them to arise to the dedication of themselves in blessing to others irrespective of the cost to themselves.

This is the Holy Covenant.

The Early Church

It was when those apostles were brought to the foot of the tree of torture, that they began to behold the wonder and glory of the wisdom and power of God. A wonderful new light shone into their minds and hearts. Chastened, convicted and repentant, they bowed in communal prayer for ten earnest days until the glory of the Spirit of God descended upon them.

Never before in history had a church viewed so clearly and distinctly the exact nature of the spirit and constitution of

God's kingdom. Grasping the reality of it, they entered into the holy covenant, and marvelous were the results. The earth rang with the proclamation of God's achievement on Golgotha's hill, and the citadels of evil recoiled from the staggering impact.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 547:

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the disciples went forth to proclaim a living Saviour, their one desire was the salvation of souls. They rejoiced in the sweetness of communion with saints. They were tender, thoughtful, self-denying, willing to make any sacrifice for the truth's sake. In their daily association with one another, they revealed the love that Christ had enjoined upon them. By unselfish words and deeds, they strove to kindle this love in other hearts.

Thus it is testified that these men were bound in holy covenant relation with God. His and their spirits were one. The blessed principle of the cross alone found expression through them, and, with such, the man of sin could have no intelligence whatsoever. Before that could happen they must forsake the code of behavior which leads all to serve others no matter what the cost to themselves might be, and replace it with self-service irrespective of the cost to others.

The great apostasy was the steady, though at first imperceptible, transition from the one to the other. When the church had forsaken the holy covenant and replaced it with the unholy one, then, and not before, the man of sin could and did have intelligence with them. They joined their forces and the Papacy emerged. What followed was the darkest, cruelest, and most harrowing period ever known to man. If ever a convincing testimony to the fearful consequences of forsaking the holy covenant was given, it certainly was provided then.

The Choice Today

But that dread apostasy did not obliterate or extinguish the

glory of the testimony given on Golgotha. Its influence abides, reaching out to encompass and draw all who will respond to its holy appeals. In gentle but insistent tones, it urges that a choice be made between the holy and the unholy covenant.

It is unfortunate that the urgent necessity of making such a decision, can strongly impress for a time, and then quickly dim as life's cares and responsibilities crowd in. Alert to this danger, the wise virgin will constantly remind himself through faithful study of the Word, of the beauty and power of the holy covenant. He will keep himself totally dedicated to it, thereby eliminating any possibility of intelligence being developed between him and the man of sin.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 551:

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life, and sheds a refining influence on all around.

May the hearts of every believer be so enlightened with the light and life from Calvary that their lives and interests will be inseparably bound up with God in the holy covenant so that in turn there never can be any intelligence with the man of sin.

*The holy covenant is
self-sacrificing service
no matter what the cost may be
to the server.*

*The unholy covenant is
self-service
no matter what the cost may be
to others.*