

HOW TO LIVE IN “SYNC” WITH GOD

11 ²Now I will tell you what shall surely happen. Three more kings will reign 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 all his resources against the realm of Greece. ³Then a mighty king shall appear, who will rule with power and do as he pleases. ⁴After he has appeared, his kingdom will be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven. But it will not be given to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his kingdom will be uprooted and given to others.

⁵The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than him and gain dominion—his dominion shall be a great dominion.

⁶After some years [the king of the South and the king of the North] will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will be married to the king of the North to make an alliance. But she will not retain her power; neither will he stand, nor his power. In those days she will be given up, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who married her. ⁷But one from her family line shall arise to take her place. He will come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the North. He will fight against them and be victorious. ⁸He will also seize their gods—their metal images, as well as their valuable articles of silver and gold, and carry them off to Egypt. Then for some years he will refrain [from attacking] the king of the North. ⁹Then [the king of the North] will invade the realm of the king of the South, but he will retreat back to his own land. ¹⁰His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army that will sweep on like an irresistible flood; and they shall again wage war, even to his fortress. ¹¹Then the king of the South will be enraged and will come out and fight against him—that is, against the king of the North. [The king of the North] will raise up a great army, but that army will be defeated by [the king of the South]. ¹²When the great army has been disposed of, the heart of [the king of the South] will be exalted; he will cause tens of thousands to fall, but he will not triumph. ¹³Then the king of the North will return, having assembled an army even larger than his former one. After several years he will attack with a huge army fully equipped. ¹⁴In those times many will stand against the king of the South. Also, the violent men among your people will rebel in an effort to fulfill the vision, but they will fall. ¹⁵So the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will not be able to stand their ground; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. ¹⁶He who comes against [the king of the South] will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to stand against him. And he will stand in the Glorious Land, and it shall be entirely in his hand. ¹⁷He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom, offering [the king of the South] equitable terms that he intends to carry out. He will also give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow [the kingdom]; but she will not take a stand for him or work on his behalf. ¹⁸After this he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them. But a commander will make him desist from his boasting without repaying him by boasting against him. ¹⁹Then he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own land; but he will stumble and fall, and be heard of no longer. ²⁰In his place one shall arise who will send out a tax collector who will pass through the Glorious Kingdom. But within a few days he will be destroyed, though not in anger or in battle.

²¹In his place there will arise a contemptible person, one on whom the honor of the kingdom has not been bestowed. He will come by stealth and obtain the kingdom by means of intrigue. ²²Overflowing armies will be swept away before him and will be broken; and also the prince of the covenant. ²³After an alliance has been made with him, he will practice deceit; he will advance and gain power with [only] a small number of supporters by means of stealth. ²⁴He will enter the fertile areas of the provinces and will do something neither his fathers nor forefathers had done: he will distribute plunder, booty and spoils among his allies. He will [successfully] devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time.

²⁵He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a vast army. So the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war. But he will not stand, for they will devise schemes against him. ²⁶Indeed, those who eat of the king's choice food will break him, and his army will be swept away, and many shall be slain. ²⁷The hearts of both these kings will be set on doing mischief; they will speak lies to each other at the same table. But their devices will not succeed, for [their] end shall yet come at the appointed time.

²⁸Then [the king of the North] will return to his own land, with great wealth. But his heart will be set against the holy covenant; so he will take action and then return to his own land. ²⁹At the appointed time he will return and [once again] enter [the kingdom of] the South. But this time the outcome will not be the same as his previous [expedition]. ³⁰Ships from the western coastlands will oppose him; he will be intimidated and retreat. [Then] he will vent his fury against the holy covenant and take action [against it]. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹He will send armed forces to desecrate the sanctuary, the [place of] refuge. They will take away the daily sacrifice and set up in its place the abomination that causes desolation. ³²By means of persuasive words he will cause those who have transgressed against the covenant to become apostates. But the people who know their God will be strong and take action [against him]. ³³Those who are wise among the people will instruct many; though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or be captured or be plundered. ³⁴Now as they fall, they will receive a little help; and many shall join themselves with them, but not sincerely. ³⁵Some of those who are wise shall fall in order to refine them, purge them, and make them pure for the end time; because [the end] is still to come at the appointed time. (Dan. 11:2-35)

Introduction

To get things accomplished and to avoid counter-productive work, it is important to be “on the same page,” “on the same wave length,” to be “in sync.”

The importance of synchronization can be illustrated in many ways; for example: in the NFL championship game of January 1991, the New York kicker successfully kicked five field goals, but he missed one. The one he missed was due to a lack of synchronization. Noting that the opposing team had too many players on the field, the Giants rushed the play, thereby throwing off their timing and causing the kick to go wide of the goal posts; they missed the field goal because they were not in “sync.”

When we are “out of sync” with the ways of God we will find ourselves futilely working in opposition to His will.

The passage before us, Daniel 11:2-35, presents an approximately 320-year panorama of Near Eastern history, covering that period between the Jews’ return to Palestine and the years leading up to the birth of Christ. The purpose of this panoramic vision is stated in Daniel 10:14, *“I have come to inform you what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to those future days.”* Several points along this panorama are filled with potential for God’s people to get “out of sync” with God’s will and God’s ways.

So that we might function within the LORD’s divine will, as opposed to operating in opposition to His will, let us learn from this passage How to Live in “Sync” with God.

I. Focus on Your Role, Not God’s Role (Dan. 11:14)

Verse 14 speaks of a time when *“the violent men”* in Israel shall take matters into their own hands in an effort *“to fulfill the vision; but they will fall.”* This verse is informing us that some within Israel would resort to violent means in an effort to bring about the liberation of Israel from pagan domination and establish the kingdom of God.

At this particular time the people of Israel found themselves under Egyptian rule (in Daniel 11 Egypt is usually referred to as “the king of the South.”) However, several uprisings within Egypt itself served to weaken its power. These internal uprisings inspired some of the Jews in Palestine to rebel against their Egyptian overlords. But this Jewish rebellion led by Tobias would not result in independence, instead it would result in new and greater perils. Having rebelled against Egypt, the Jews looked to Syria for favor and protection. Eventually the Syrian “protection” would become far more threatening and oppressive than the former Egyptian occupation (*An Exposition of Daniel*, H.C. Leupold, pp. 487-490.) Thus, taking matters into their own hands, these Jewish leaders did not *“fulfill the vision;”* on the contrary, they fell.

How many times do we seek to take matters into our own hands? How many times do we seek to assume God’s role or dictate to Him what His role should be (i.e., what God should do)?

Do we ever tell Christ that if He would get rid of the cross it would be a lot easier for us and many others to follow Him? This is just what Peter sought to do in response to our Lord’s prophecy of the cross:

Then he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²Now he spoke these things publicly. So Peter took him [aside] and began to rebuke him. (Mk. 8:31-32)

But note our Lord's response to Peter:

But [Jesus], turning around and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and said, Get behind me, Satan; for your mind is not focused on the things of God, but on the things of men. ³⁴Then he called to himself the [whole] crowd [along] with his disciples, and said to them, If any man desires to be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Mk. 8:33-34)

Do we ever tell Christ that the Christian life should consist of nothing but glorious spiritual highs without any descent for service into the valleys where we encounter demonic opposition? This was Peter's suggestion when he and James and John were with the Lord Jesus at the time of His transfiguration: *"Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will erect three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah'"* (Matt. 17:4.) But consider the Lord's response: Instead of acquiescing to Peter's suggestion, He led His disciples down from the mountain to where they encounter human suffering and demonic activity—and where they behold the Lord's saving power:

When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. ¹⁵"Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He is an epileptic and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water ..."¹⁸Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment. (Matt. 17:14-15,18)

Do we ever show more interest in the way Christ is dealing with His other disciples than in the calling He has given us? Note how Peter has a greater interest in what Jesus has in store for John than what he himself is called to do: *"Peter, turning around, saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following [them] ..."²¹Upon seeing him, Peter asked Jesus, 'Lord, what about this man?'"* (Jn. 21:20-21.) But observe the way in which our Lord's responded to Peter's inquiry: *"Jesus answered him, 'If I want him to remain [alive] until I come [back], what [is that] to you? Follow me'"* (Jn. 21:22.)

The Bible indicates that there is one area where we are especially prone to assume God's role, and that is the attempt to take personal vengeance against those who have wronged us. But note the LORD's warning, given through the Apostle Paul, that we restrain ourselves from doing so and leave the matter of administering justice in His hands: *"Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but allow God to express his wrath, for it is written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord"* (Rom. 12:19.)

If we would live "in sync" with God, we must focus on our role, not on God's role.

II. Focus on the Usefulness of Adversity, Not Its Grievousness (Dan. 11:31-35)

Verses 31-35 speak of the distressful times of adversity that would come upon the nation of Israel in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of Syria. The sanctuary would be profaned, and the abomination that causes desolation (i.e.; the abominable pagan image that would cause the sanctuary to be polluted and thereby offend God's holy presence) would be erected. The godly in Israel would fall by the sword and by flames, and be taken into captivity.

All of us are very averse to experiencing adversity. We have no taste for it, no desire to welcome it into our lives; we make every effort to bar the door against it, and to run the other way when we see it coming. The more we are able to shelter ourselves from adversity, the more we tend to view adversity as unnatural, and even as the epitome of evil.

By no means does the Bible indicate that we are to enjoy adversity, but it does teach that we are to expect adversity: *"I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation. But have courage; I have conquered the world"* (Jn. 16:33.) It teaches that we are to profit from adversity: *"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it"* (Heb. 12:11.) It even goes so far as to say we are to rejoice in adversity (because of what God will accomplish in us through it): *"And not only so, but let us even rejoice in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces steadfastness, ⁴and steadfastness [produces] approval, and approval [produces] hope, ⁵and that hope shall not disappoint [us]"* (Rom. 5:3-5a.) Furthermore, the Scriptures teach that we are also to bear one another's burdens in adversity: *"Bear one another's burdens, and by doing so you will fulfill the law of Christ"* (Gal. 6:2.)

A closer look at verses 31-35 reveals several ways in which the LORD employs adversity for the good of His people. The LORD can and does use adversity to assert Christian conviction: In the days when Antiochus forced the Jews to deny their faith, those who truly knew Christ withstood him even at the risk of their lives (vs. 32.) According to verse 35, the Lord used adversity to produce and refine Christian character. The Apostle Peter reminds suffering Christians of this same fact:

... now for a little while, since it is necessary, you have been brought to grief by all kinds of trials. ⁷[This has happened] so that the genuineness of your faith—[being] of greater value than gold that perishes—having been tested by fire, may be verified, [resulting] in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:6-7)

If we would live "in sync" with God, we must focus on the usefulness of adversity, not on its grievousness. We must trust in God's promise: *"we know that all things*

work together for good for those who love God, those who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28.) We must remember the example of Christ:

Let us focus our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Heb. 12:2-3)

We must rely ever more completely upon God:

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened so that we might not rely on our selves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us. (2 Cor. 1:8-10)

III. Focus on Christ, and Nothing Less (Dan. 11:34)

In verse 34 we are told that in the midst of their adversity the people of God were helped with *“a little help”* (here is a reference to the Maccabees.)

At Modein, a village west of Jerusalem, there lived an elderly priest named Matathias. When he was ordered by the Syrian official to offer a pagan sacrifice, he killed the official, tore down the altar, and together with his sons fled into the hills (the story is related in 1 Maccabees 2:15-28.) After his death in 166 B.C., his son, Judas Maccabeus, using guerilla tactics, won a number of brilliant victories over the Syrians. In 164 B.C. the temple was cleansed and re-dedicated.

But note that the deliverance by the Maccabees is described as being only *“a little help.”* This deliverance would soon degenerate into worldly goals and self-ambition. It started out as a revolt to purify the land of pagan influence. But soon its goal became politically oriented, namely, the effort to gain national independence from the Syrians. Eventually it degenerated into corruption and self-ambition—the descendants of the Maccabees established a monarchy that was little different from the nations around them. Furthermore, this deliverance is seen as insignificant when compared to the deliverance that would be won by Jesus the Messiah.

Many times we are tempted to settle for something less than Christ, or to settle for something less than the full salvation Christ has to offer, namely, redemption from our sins: *“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he **will save his people from their sins**” (Matt. 1:21.)*

We might be tempted to focus on a conservative, “Christian,” political agenda, rather than the salvation of our own souls and the souls of others from sin, the devil, and hell. Note how the Lord Jesus resisted the attempts of the Jews to make Him an earthly liberator and king: *“Jesus, perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force in order to make him king, withdrew again into the hills by himself”* (Jn. 6:15.) We might be tempted to focus on social action, as good and necessary as that may be, rather than reconciliation to God and eternal life. Note how the Lord Jesus urges the people of His day to seek more than earthly bread; He urges them to seek first the kingdom of God:

Jesus answered them, “I tell you the truth, You are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷Do not work for the food that spoils, but for the food that lasts for eternal life, [the food] that the Son of man will give you. (Jn. 6:26-27a)

If we would live “in sync” with God, we must focus on Christ—and the salvation He offers us—and settle for nothing less:

I regard all things as loss on account of the all-surpassing value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, because of whom I have suffered the loss of all things. Indeed, I regard all such things as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ, ⁹and be found in him—not having my own righteousness that is [derived] from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that is from God [received] by faith—¹⁰so that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death, ¹¹that I may in some way attain the resurrection from the dead. (Phil. 3:8-11)

Conclusion

Are we living “in sync” with God? How do we go about bringing our lives into “sync” with God? Consider the Psalmist’s prayer:

Teach me, O Jehovah, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end. ³⁴Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. ³⁵Direct me in the path of your commandments, for there I find delight. ³⁶Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward covetousness. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; and revive me in your ways. (Psl. 119:33-37)

**See accompanying Appendices for an Exposition of Daniel 11:2-35
and Daniel 11:36-12:4**