

The Military Campaigns of the Papal King

Daniel 11:38-39

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The King that was foretold to come by the angel, Gabriel, in Daniel 11:36-39 can be identified in history by various characteristics listed in these verses which we have sought to demonstrate are found and realized in the Papacy.

For example, though the Papacy is usually thought of as being a religious office in the Church of Rome, the Papacy is also a political king/monarch that rules over the Vatican state (and previously ruled over the papal states which comprised much of central/northern Italy, 756- 1870). The Pope is indeed a king (Daniel 11:36).

The Papacy does according to his will (Daniel 11:36). In fact, the Pope has an infallible will in matters of faith and morals when speaking from his throne (*ex cathedra*).

The Papacy has exalted itself above every earthly authority in church/state throughout the whole world (Daniel 11:36).

The Papacy has spoken “marvelous things” (Daniel 11:36) i.e. extraordinary/remarkable things against the God of gods in claiming to be God Almighty on earth and to be the Head of the Universal Church in usurping the office and authority of Christ upon earth.

The Papacy has fallen away/apostatized from “the God of his fathers” (Daniel 11:37) by departing from the apostolic faith in doctrine, worship, and church government.

The Papacy has prohibited “the desire of women” (Daniel 11:37) i.e. has forbidden those serving in clerical offices to be married and to have children (which is the desire of women).

Today we come to consider another characteristic of this king (Daniel 11:38): he will honor “the God of forces” i.e. he will instigate violent/deadly military campaigns against those who oppose him.

Now some may look at the Papacy at the present time and conclude that the king in Daniel 11:36-39 cannot be the Papacy because the Papacy does not have a military nor does it support violence/war in the world, but opposes it. That may be the outward expression that the Papacy seeks at the present time to convey, but from the time that the Papacy was given the papal states (civil power) by Pepin (King of the Franks) in 756 and was united in alliance Charlemagne (Emperor of the revived Roman Empire) in 800, the Papacy has exerted significant political/military power against those who opposed it. Moreover, in the final military battle before the glorious millennial reign of Christ from heaven over all the earth, the false prophet (the hierarchy of Rome under the Papacy) will be united with the civil beast in seeking to rule the world and will be defeated by King Jesus (Revelation 16:13-14).

Our text today in Daniel 11:38-39 speaks of “the God of forces”, and it has two possible interpretations over which biblical scholars are divided: (1) it’s used in a military sense; (2) it’s used in a religious sense. This week we’ll consider how the Papal King has honored/used military campaigns for centuries to promote his will against his enemies, and next Lord’s Day we’ll consider the religious interpretation of “the God of forces”. Today, let’s first examine the text in Daniel 11:38-39, and then we’ll examine history for confirmation.

I. An Examination of the Text.

A. Rather than honoring “the God of his fathers” (Daniel 11:37), the Papal King will “in his estate” (i.e. in the place of the God of his fathers) honor “the God of forces” (Daniel 11:38).

1. The Papal King will not put his trust in the God of the apostles (whom he claims to be his fathers). He will not follow the doctrine, worship, and church government revealed by God to the apostles, but will fall away from it and will put his confidence in military might to achieve his goals.

2. Pope Boniface VIII declared (*Unam Sanctum*, 1302) that the Church of Rome has power

over two swords—spiritual and temporal power and that the temporal power of kings is subordinate to the spiritual power of the priesthood in Rome and is exercised by permission of the priesthood. Kings are ultimately under the power of the Papacy.

3. “The God of forces” is also translated, “The God of munitions/fortresses” which also conveys the use of military arms. The Hebrew word translated “forces” (*mauzim*) is used earlier in this chapter in a military sense (Daniel 11:7,10—fortress).

4. Why are military forces called “the God of forces”? This is not used in a narrow religious sense of a god who the Papal King will bow down and worship, but “the God of forces” is used in the sense of the Papal King putting his trust in military might to accomplish his will. Instead of trusting in the God of his fathers (i.e. the apostles) in exercising a spiritual rule as a pastor/bishop/elder with others, he will put his trust in a new/strange god—military might (Daniel 11:39). Whatever we put our trust in to bring us victory over the problems we face in this world acts as our god (whether it be a politician, an expert, a doctor, money, job etc.). We may not bow down to it, but it is what we are putting our trust in to rescue us from trouble/trials (Psalm 118:8-9).

5. This new/strange god is further described in Daniel 11:38. “And” may be translated “even” to indicate this is just further elaboration of the same god (“the god of forces”). Like Daniel 11:37, this speaks of the Papal King’s apostasy from the God of his fathers (the apostles). The Papal King will honor the military in which he places his trust with various rewards. Many became wealthy through the Papacy’s holy wars.

Europeans from all classes of society found ways to profit from the holy wars, and as a result, new banking methods were developed by the Order of the Knights Templar. As a result of the Crusades, the Italian merchant warriors were able to develop long-distance trade routes with the Near East....For many of these knights, the Church absolved all debts by crusaders, even debt incurred before the Crusades.

https://www.dailyhistory.org/What_Were_the_Financial_Benefits_of_the_Crusades

In 1107–11 the first king to travel from Europe on crusade was Sigurd I of Norway.... When Sigurd left the Holy Land, his ships were laden with so much treasure that they displayed it on their masts and sails, where it caught the light to dazzling effect (**The official website for BBC History Magazine—“Crusaders: did they fight for God or gold?”**).

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/crusaders-fight-god-gold-riches-dan-jones/>

B. Daniel 11:39 does not introduce new material, but rather to further elaborates the same military achievements of the Papal King.

1. “The strange god” is again the military might in which the Papal King puts his trust in gaining victory over his enemies.

2. One last point is made about the Papal King giving rule over many and dividing land to those who fight in his religious wars.

The Crusades allowed Europeans who would have previously been unable to own land to acquire lucrative estates in the Middle East.

https://www.dailyhistory.org/What_Were_the_Financial_Benefits_of_the_Crusades

In the aftermath of 1099, four crusader states were established along the Palestinian and Syrian coast: the kingdom of Jerusalem, the counties of Edessa and Tripoli and the principality of Antioch. They offered estates to be farmed, villages to be taxed, port cities to be developed and merchant routes connecting the Mediterranean world with the faraway markets of India and China. Very

quickly, the more resourceful powers of western Europe realised how much potential lay in these acquisitions. They made a beeline to the east to carve out their own roles in this exciting new world, establishing lordships, bishoprics and trading stations (**The official website for BBC History Magazine—"Crusaders: did they fight for God or gold?"**).

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/medieval/crusaders-fight-god-gold-riches-dan-jones/>

3. Let's move on from an examination of the text in Daniel 11:38-39 to consider the Papacy's use of "holy wars" to extend its power.

II. An Examination of History.

A. The Crusades into the Middle East (especially the Holy Land).

1. Crusades refer to religious wars initiated by the Papacy under the banner of the cross. The Papal declarations for these "holy wars" was said to be in order to free the Holy Land from Muslim control and to rescue Christians suffering under the dominion of Islam. The word "crusade" comes from the Latin word, *crux*, which means "cross".

2. There were nine crusades (depending on how they are counted) inaugurated by the Papacy stretching from 1095 to 1272 (almost 200 years).

The power of the papacy also increased a bit in part due to the Crusades, especially the First. It was rare that any European leader set off on a Crusade on their own; typically, Crusades were only launched because a pope insisted upon it. When they were successful, the prestige of the papacy was enhanced...

<https://www.learnreligions.com/military-and-political-outcome-of-the-crusades-249768>

3. I mentioned earlier some of the material benefits from the crusades, but the alleged spiritual benefit that the crusaders were falsely promised by the Pope were indulgences in having the guilt of their sin expunged and temporal punishment in purgatory removed.

4. These "holy wars" would not have occurred apart from the call of the Papacy to arms. Regardless of what one might think of the warrant for such religious wars to defend Christians under Muslim persecution, the point from our text is that this Papal King will honor "the God of forces" i.e. military power. This exercise of military power by a church leader was unheard of until the Papacy exercised the sword of temporal power (not by the priesthood of the Old Testament or the apostles of the New Testament or church leaders until the Papacy).

B. Crusades against the Waldensians.

1. The Waldensians were a peaceful group of proto-Protestants that opposed the office of the Papacy as being the Antichrist and opposed various doctrines of the Church of Rome. They would not submit themselves to the rule of the Papacy.

2. In the Papal Decree, "*Id Nostris Cordis*", Pope Innocent VIII in 1487, outlined a full indulgence of forgiveness of sins for anyone who joined the crusades against the Waldensians in order to exterminate them. Thousands upon thousands were slaughtered (men, women, and children). This "holy war" stretched out for about 200 years.

3. The Waldensians officially adopted Reformed theology in 1532 and were admitted into the Reformation Church.

4. Even Pope Francis acknowledged this Papal sanctioned slaughter over many years of the Waldensians and sought the forgiveness of the modern Waldensians in Turin, Italy June 22, 2015.

C. The Roman Inquisitions.

1. In 1542, Pope Paul III (1534-49) established the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition as the final court in trials of heresy.

2. For centuries, the Inquisitions were called “the Holy Office” of the Church of Rome. Hundreds upon hundreds of “heretics” were tortured/killed in order to allegedly save their soul by recanting their “heresy” (the most sadistic forms of torture imaginable).

3. Once again, these are not fables, but were acknowledged by Pope John Paul II in 2000 at which time he sought forgiveness for this “holy war”, and he went so far as to compare the violence of the Inquisition to “the crimes of Hitler’s Nazism and Marxist Stalinism.”

<https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/637/other-things/facing-inquisition>

4. These are a few notable examples from many instances that might be cited of how the Papal King has used military and violent force and has honored “the God of forces” against his enemies (which was a complete departure from the use of solely ecclesiastical power by the apostles of Christ and faithful ministers that followed them).

D. Application

1. The Papacy turned from trusting in the God of their fathers (the apostles) and instead turned to trusting in the God of forces to achieve their goal of overcoming enemies (Psalm 20:7). This is seeking to achieve one’s goals by expediency. When our goals are not reached as soon as we desire, let us not resort to means that are worldly (reformation is not achieved by voting for the lesser of two evils).

2. Once the authority of God is usurped, there is no place to stop in accomplishing one’s will (whether in the family, church, state). Authority that is lawful must be exercised for biblical truth, not against the truth; and must be used to edify, not to destroy. Tyranny begins when we turn away from God’s Law to establish our own law. God’s Law is called by James “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25). To be graciously given by God a heart that desires/loves His law is not bondage, but is freedom. Our duties/rights come from God and His Law.

3. From where do wars/conflicts arise? Listen to James 4:1. We may see the lust for power in the use of wars by the Papal King, but do we not understand that wars/conflicts in our family and church also arise from our lusts/desires to have our own will. We will not submit to Christ and His good/holy commandments. Jesus is the Prince of peace.

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