

## Prophecy is Pre-written History

**Text:** Daniel 11:1-20

### Introduction:

1. Daniel 10-12 are one unit and detail the fourth and final vision Daniel received. In this chapter we get into the main prophetic detail of the vision.
2. Daniel 11 is a powerful testament to the inspiration of Scripture. It is packed full of prophecies that we can now see fulfilled in history. According to M.A. Butler, over 130 specific prophecies from Vs. 1-35 have been accurately fulfilled. Dr. Charles Feinberg states: "It is truly a manual of divine inspiration. The events prophesied in this chapter are traced as accurately as one would have expected from a history of those times written AFTER the fact."
3. In fact, "this prophecy is so precise that critics are sure that it was written after Daniel's lifetime after the fulfillment of the events." (Cloud) Robert Sargent writes, "No other chapter in the Word of God has stirred up the wicked hearts of so-called Higher Critics more than Daniel 11. This is because it contains a detailed and accurate account of Jewish and Gentile history primarily covering the "Four Hundred Silent Years" between Malachi and Matthew. To the unbelieving mind, this chapter had to have been written after the fact."
4. Illustration: A Professor at a liberal theological seminary was teaching from the book of Daniel. His class consisted of young men and women. At the beginning of his lecture he said, "*Now I want you to understand that Daniel was written during the Maccabean period in the second century BC, not by the historic Daniel who lived in the sixth century BC. The facts were written as all history is, after the events took place.*" One young man raised his hand and asked, "*How can that be, sir, when Christ said in (Matt 24:16) that it was written by Daniel?*" The professor paused for a moment, looked at the student in the eyes and said, "*Young man I know more about the book of Daniel than Jesus did.*" This is just one example of many that could be given of the sort of blind and evil unbelief that exists towards this prophetic chapter.
5. The chapter divides into two main sections:
  - **Vs. 1-35** pertain to the Greek kingdoms of Egypt (Ptolemy) and Syria (Seleucid) and particularly to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. These events occurred exactly as written between 301 and 168 B.C. The history is found in Josephus and the book of the Maccabees.
  - **Vs. 36-45** pertain to the Antichrist. The words "time of the end" point beyond Antiochus, beyond the church age, to the last days.
6. In this sermon we will study the first 20 verses which take us from the reign of Ahasuerus the Persian to Antiochus Epiphanes. We will divide the text into three sections under the names of the three prominent kings covered in these verses.

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### I. Ahasuerus the Persian (Vs. 1-2)

#### A. His Predecessors (Vs. 1-2a)

The three kings the followed Darius the Mede were:

1. Cambyses (Xerxes or Ahasuerus of Ezra 4:6)
2. Pseudo-Smerdis (the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4:7-23)
3. Darius Hystaspes (Darius I, the Darius of Ezra 4:24)

#### B. His Power (Vs. 2b)

1. The fourth king is Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther
2. Read Esther 1:1-9 (particularly Vs. 4) for a description of the sort of pomp and riches that characterized his reign, just as the Word of God predicted.

#### C. His Provocation (Vs. 2c)

1. Ahasuerus (Xerxes) attacked the Grecians with a great army, stirring up others to join the fight as the Word of God predicted.
2. Ironside: "He stirred up Asia against the realm of Grecia and with an immense army of over two million and a half (if we can trust the computation of the historians those days), crossed the Hellespont and invaded Greece...the Grecians never forgave this insult to their race and nursed the desire for vengeance until the days of Alexander the Great."

### II. Alexander the Great (Vs. 3-9)

#### A. The Success of Alexander (Vs. 3)

1. "great dominion" = Alexander conquered the known world in 12 short years. His military career was one unbroken chain of victories.
2. "do according to his will" = he was undefeatable. Alexander is the notable horn on the goat in Daniel 8

#### B. The Successors of Alexander (Vs. 4)

1. "his kingdom shall be broken" = Alexander the Great died at the height of his power ("when he shall stand up") at the age of 33.
2. "his kingdom...shall be divided" = prediction of the four-fold division of the Greek empire.
3. "not to his posterity" = the kingdom would not be inherited by any one in Alexander's family.
  - a. John Phillips explains:

"None of his posterity received any lasting inheritance. His half-brother, Philip Aridaeus, succeeded him, but after six years he was murdered, along with his wife Euridice, at the instigation of Alexander's mother, Olympias. The generals did not recognize his illegitimate son, Hercules, and whom Polysperchon murdered along with his mother, Barsine, Alexander's former mistress. His wife Statira, daughter of the ill-fated Darius, was murdered by Roxane, another of Alexander's wives. His posthumous son Alexander Aegus, born to Roxane, was put under a guardian and then murdered by the order of Olympias through the treachery of the general Cassander. Alexander's mother, Olympias, was murdered. His

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sister, Cleopatra, queen of Epirus, was murdered. **Within fifteen years of his own death, none of his family remained alive. Thus, exactly was the Word of God fulfilled.**”

- b. The kingdom was subsequently divided between Alexander's four generals.

### **C. The Subsequent kings after Alexander (Vs. 5-9)**

Note: Vs. 5-20 of this chapter gives the history of battles between the southern kingdom (Ptolemy in Egypt) and the northern kingdom (Seleucid in Syria) - “king of the south...king of the north”

Geographically, Israel stood between these two kingdoms and became the meat in the sandwich between their struggles. This is why the prophecy focuses on these two parts of the divided Greek Empire. Scofield described Palestine as lying “between the anvil and the hammer.” Israel is described 3 times in this chapter as “the glorious land” (Vs. 16, 41 & 45). Let's look at a number of kings that came before Antiochus the Great. Note: Much of the below information is drawn from David Cloud's commentary on Daniel.

#### **1. Ptolemy Lagus (South) and Seleucus Nicator (North) (Vs. 5)**

- a. The strong king of the south was Ptolemy Lagus, one of Alexander's generals. “He reigned over Egypt, Lybia, Cyrene, Ethiopia, Arabia, Phoenicia, Coelesyria, Cyprus, and several istles in the Aegean Sea, and many cities in Greece.” (John Gill)
- b. The stronger prince of the north was Seleucus Nicator. “Seleucas was stronger than Ptolemy and had a greater dominion. His empire included Syria, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor.” (Cloud)

#### **2. Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus Theos (Vs. 6)**

- a. These kings were successors of Ptolemy and Seleucus
- b. “in the end of years” = they made an alliance after many years of warfare
- c. “the king's daughter of the south” = this was a lady by the name of Bernice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus who was given in marriage to the king of the north (Antiochus Theos) to “make an agreement” (alliance) between the two kingdoms
- d. “but she shall not retain the power of the arm...” (6b) = here's what happened. When Bernice's father died, Antiochus divorced her and took Laodice, his former wife, again. She, likely embittered on account of the divorce, killed him and her son Seleucus Callinicus was placed on the throne.

#### **3. Ptolemy Euergetes (Bernice's brother) and Seleucus Callinicus (Vs. 7-9)**

- a. “branch of her roots” (Vs. 7) = Ptolemy Euergetes (Bernice's brother) took the throne of the Southern kingdom

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- b. “shall come with an army” (Vs. 7) = He raised an army against Seleucus Callinicus of the north and was victorious.
- c. Ironside writes: “Ptolemy Euergetes forced his way across the land of Palestine, spreading desolation everywhere, actuated by the desire to avenge the murder of his sister and to wipe out the dishonor inflicted on Egypt. He was everywhere successful, utterly defeating Callinicus and reaping an immense spoil.”
- d. Vs. 8-9 document his return to Egypt with the spoils of war. “Ptolemy carried away captives, 2,500 idols that had previously been carried away from Egypt by Cambyses, plus 40,000 talents of silver and many vessels of gold and silver.” (Cloud)
- e. “he shall continue more years than the king of the north” = he outlived Seleucus by four years.

### III. Antiochus the Great (Vs. 10-20)

#### A. His Battles with the Southern Kingdom (Vs. 10-16)

- 1. Battle # 1 (Vs.10) – Antiochus the Great attacks Ptolemy of the south and prevails
  - a. “but his sons” = the sons of Seleucus, Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great. They assembled a large army to attack the southern kingdom.
  - b. Ceraunus, Antiochus’ brother dies before the conquest so Antiochus leads the army to victory.
- 2. Battle # 2 (Vs. 11-12) – Ptolemy Philopater of the south attacks Antiochus of the north and prevails
  - a. “Ptolemy had 70,000 soldiers, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 elephants, whereas Antiochus had 72,000 soldiers, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 elephants. Ptolemy defeated Antiochus and killed thousands of his soldiers.” (Cloud)
  - c. “he shall not be strengthened by it” = after this victory, Ptolemy was lifted up in pride and gave himself to sensual pleasures. “He might have spoiled Antiochus of his kingdom; but, content with the recovery of the cities he lost, made peace and greedily took advantage of ease, and rolled himself in luxury, uncleanness and intemperance.” (Gill)
- 3. Battle # 3 (Vs. 13-16) – Antiochus the Great attacks Ptolemy Epiphanes (Ptolemy Philopater’s son) of the South
  - a. This was 13 or 14 years after the last battle where Antiochus lost to Ptolemy Philopater.
  - b. “a great army” = Some say it consisted of 300,000 footmen, besides horsemen and elephants.
  - c. “much riches” = Antiochus brought abundant provisions and money to pay his soldiers

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- d. “cast up a mount” = refers to besieging the city with battering rams and other war engines
- e. “the glorious land” = a reference to the land of Israel
- f. “shall be consumed” = Israel wasn’t consumed at that time but it would be later

### **B. His Attempted Alliance with the Southern Kingdom (Vs. 17)**

- 1. Antiochus was minded to launch a further attack on Egypt but decided to make a marriage alliance with Egypt by giving his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to young Ptolemy Epiphanes (Ptolemy V).
- 2. “daughter of women” = a reference to her renowned beauty
- 3. “but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him” = his plan backfired! Instead of the daughter supporting daddy, she fell in love with hubby!!!

### **C. His Assault on the Greek Isles and Territories and defeat by the Romans (Vs. 18-19)**

- 1. John Gill writes, “Disappointed in his design on the kingdom of Egypt, he turned his face, and steered his course another way, and with a large fleet sailed into the Aegean sea; and, as Jerome relates, took Rhodes, Samos, Colophon, and Phocaea, and many other islands; and also several cities of Greece and Asia, which lay on the sea coasts.”
- 2. “but a prince...shall cause the reproach to cease” = the Romans defeated Antiochus. “...the reproach which Antiochus cast upon the Roman nation was turned upon his own head...” (Gill)
- 3. “he shall turn his face toward...his own land” = Antiochus the Great returned to his own country. He died at the age of 52 when he tried to attack and rob a temple of Jupiter in Elam and was killed by the people.

### **D. His son’s brief reign and death (Vs. 20)**

- 1. The Romans demanded a 12,000-talent tribute. Antiochus’ son, Seleucus Philopater levied great taxes in order to pay the dept.
- 2. His reign was brief as he was murdered by his treasurer Heliodorus.

## **Conclusion:**

- 1. In our next lesson we will look at Antiochus Epiphanes who is a type of the antichrist and then on to the antichrist himself.
- 2. We will likely not remember all the names of the kings involved but we should come away with a great sense of wonder in the inspiration of Scripture. When God predicts the future, it is as good as history. It will happen! You can trust your Bible!
- 3. This chapter also reminds us of the truth of the sovereignty of God. He is on the throne and history is “His story!”