

Daniel Chapter 11

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Timing of Chapter 11

- 11:1 looks back two years, to the first year of Darius the Mede. At that time, Daniel had prayed (ch. 9). Cyrus issued a decree and Jews started to return to Israel.
- Daniel is recording this in 536 B.C., two to three years into the reign of Darius and his boss, Cyrus the Great.

Outline of Chapter 11

- The rule of Persia, 1-2
- Rise and fall of Greece, 3-4
- Near-term conflict of the Kings of North and South, 5-35
- Far-term conflict of Antichrist and King of the South, 36-45

Who's Who?

- Verse 1 offers a slight difficulty with the pronoun *him*. Who is it—Darius?
- I take it that it refers back to Michael. The meaning is that archangel Michael was strengthened by this messenger angel, probably Gabriel, in his support of Israel in the rule of Darius and Cyrus.

The Truth of This is Emphasized

- The emphasis on truth in 10:1, 10:21, and 11:2 is notable. Why does God put it here?
- Chapter 11 is perhaps the most attacked chapter in the Bible by unbelievers, because of its precise predictions of future movements of kingdoms – all which have been fulfilled.

By the Way...

- All of chapter 11's predictions were written down prior to the events—by hundreds of years.
- What's more, some of the events were occurring as Daniel manuscripts were likely sitting in caves in Qumran (at the Dead Sea).

The Rule of Persia, 1-2

- Three more kings will arise in Persia after Cyrus:
 - Cambyses II, 530-522
 - Bardiya, brother of Cambyses II, < 1 yr
 - Darius I Hystaspes, 522-486
 - And there are more...

The Rule of Persia, 1-2

- Then the fourth Persian king will be far richer than them, and will stir up conflict with Greece.
 - Xerxes I, 485-464 (Ahasuerus in Esther)
 - The book of Esther shows how wealthy this king was.

Xerxes I's Failed Campaign in Greece

- “He is also notable in Western history for his failed invasion of Greece in 480 BC. His forces temporarily overran mainland Greece north of the Isthmus of Corinth until the losses at Salamis and Plataea a year later reversed these gains and ended the second invasion decisively.”
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xerxes_I

Rise and fall of Greece, 3-4

- Fast forward past 9 more kings of Persia to the mid-300s B.C.
- We know this is Greece because:
 - Greece is mentioned in verse 2.
 - “Mighty king” in verse 3 fits Alexander the Great.
 - “Kingdom...broken up and divided...four winds.”
and the correlation with 8:8, 21-22 and 7:6.

Rise and fall of Greece, 3-4

- Negative descriptions of the split kingdom.
 - Like in 8:22 “not with its power”
 - Chapter 11 adds “not among his posterity”
 - And “nor according to his dominion”
- The kingdom is uprooted and given to others, not to Alexander’s descendants as expected.

What are the Four Kingdoms?

- The “four winds” expression alerts us to what we read in verse 5 about a King of the South.
- There is also a King of the North that is a prominent player.
- These kings are not individuals, but a series of kings that rule in the southern and northern kingdoms.

What are the Four Kingdoms?

- The King of the South is the prophetic name of the Ptolemy dynasty in Egypt, which is to the south of Israel.
- The King of the North is the prophetic name for the Seleucid dynasty of Syria, which is to the north of Israel.

History: Ptolemies

- Macedonian Greek royal dynasty lasting from 305 to 30 B.C. in Egypt. Spoke Koine Greek.
- Founded by Ptolemy I Soter (“savior”), a general under Alexander the Great. Founding was official at 305 B.C.
- Male rulers were known as Ptolemy I through XV.

History: Ptolemies

- Queens took the names Cleopatra, Arsinoe or Berenice. Some married their brothers.
- There were at least seven Cleopatras. The most famous was Cleopatra VII Philopator. She was the last ruler of the dynasty. When she died (10 or 12 of August 30 B.C.), Rome took over Egypt as a province.

History: Seleucids

- Another Hellenistic empire, this one lasting from 312 to 63 B.C.
- Founded by Seleucus I Nicator (“victor”), a general under Alexander the Great. After some conflict, he held much of the territory conquered by Alexander.

History: Seleucids

- The empire's rulers were not very humble:
 - Antiochus I Soter (“savior”, d. 261 B.C.)
 - Antiochus II Theos (“god”, d. 246)
 - Seleucus II Callinicus (“gloriously triumphant”, d. 225)
 - Antiochus III Megas (“the Great”, d. 187)
 - Seleucus IV Philopator (“father loving”, d. 175)
 - Antiochus IV Epiphanes (“god manifest”, d. 164)

History: Seleucids

- The empire degraded after that point to almost nothing.
- The Roman general Pompey defeated the last of the Seleucids in about 63 B.C. in order to bring stability to Syria. Syria was turned into a Roman province.

Other History

- Two other splits in Alexander's kingdom:
 - Cassander ruled Macedonia.
 - Lysimachus ruled Thrace and Asia Minor.
 - These were western empires, not northern or southern.
- They do not relate to our study.

Prophecy and History Meet

- Daniel is giving a prophetic preview of events that were to occur in the relatively near future, yet still a long ways off:
 - He speaks of events 50 years future with the invasion of Greece.
 - The Kings of North and South began to exist about 230 years future to Daniel.
 - The prophecy continues to cover forward to 370 years future to Daniel, and then way beyond that.

Prophecy and History Meet

- Our study method will be to walk through the verses and intermix the prophecy with the history. Both will appear together.
- The sources that I used to come to these conclusions include secular history and conservative Bible commentators.

Back and Forth Wars, v. 5-20

- There evidently was no love lost between the north and south dynasties (i.e., they had strong enmity toward each other), even though they were both somehow Hellenistic and Macedonian in origin.
- The identification of the characters is difficult with all the pronouns.

Kings Identified

- Verse 5: Ptolemy I Soter (323-285) and Seleucus I Nicator (312-281) are mentioned.
- Verse 6: Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246), daughter Berenice. She married northern king Antiochus II Theos (261-246) as an alliance.
- Verse 7: The branch is Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-222). He was a branch from her roots, meaning a brother. He defeated Syria.

Kings Identified

- Verse 9: Probably Seleucus II Callinicus (246-225); Eusebius outlived him by a few years.
- Verse 10: Syrian rulers Seleucus III Soter (225-223) and Antiochus III the Great (223-187).
- Verse 11: Ptolemy IV Philopator (222-203) defeated Antiochus III.

Kings Identified

- Verse 13: Still Antiochus III the Great (223-187).
 - He took over Israel (the glorious land) so that Ptolemaic (Egyptian) control over Palestine ended around 198. Control passed to the hands of the Syrians to the north.
 - Israeli revolutionaries could not win independence from Egypt.

Kings Identified

- Verse 17: Still Antiochus III the Great (223-187).
 - Another political marriage, this time his daughter Cleopatra, hoping to destroy Egypt internally. Yet she sided with her new husband.
 - He wanted the “coastlands” (v. 18, Greece, etc.) but Rome had something to say about that.

Kings Identified

- Verse 14, King of the South: Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181). He is prominent through v. 24.
- Verse 20: Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175), a king of the north.
 - He was a “tax collector.” A war-indemnity levied by Rome forced him to raise a lot of money.

Kings Identified

- Verse 25, King of the South: Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-164), who faced Antiochus IV Epiphanes in two invasions of Egypt.

The Rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- Verses 21-35 cover a “vile” (despised, despicable, contemptible) king of the north.
- It is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, ruled 175-164 B.C.
- “Not given the honor of royalty” = his older brother was king but was killed by a subordinate.
- “Seize the kingdom by intrigue” = Antiochus took the throne. Some maneuvering happened.

The Rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- Verse 22: The “prince of the covenant” was a high priest known as Onias III, killed by his own brother who became loyal to Antiochus.
- Verses 23-25: Antiochus schemed to take over Egypt and its treasures, by various political movements and trickery.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- Verses 25-28: He battled Egypt.
- Verses 29-30: He went against Egypt again (168), but a Roman ambassador came and demanded Antiochus pull out of Egypt and Cyprus, or the Roman Senate would declare war against him. He acceded to that demand.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- As a result, he was very angry, and took it out on the Jews as he returned north through their land (verses 31-35):
 - “Raging like a wild animal, he set out from Egypt and took Jerusalem by storm. He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants. In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery.” — 2 Maccabees 5:11–14

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- He later slaughtered a pig on the altar and put a statue of Zeus in the temple.
 - This was the abomination of desolation, which prevented true Jewish worship.
 - This was a foreshadowing of a similar event that will occur in the end times at the instigation of the Antichrist.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- Verse 32: Those who do wickedly against the covenant are Jews who compromise for political advantage, not caring about the faith.
- Verse 33-35: The faithful will try to fight back. The Maccabees did so, and won in the end. Refer to the celebration of Hanukkah.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- In the grand scheme of world history, Antiochus (and even the entire Seleucid empire) does not get much space in the history books.
- But he gets a lot of attention in the Bible because he persecuted the Jews *and* because his character foreshadows the Antichrist.

Transition at Verses 35-36

- The text in v. 35 mentions “until the time of the end.” This seems to signal a shift from the nearer term centuries to the far-term fulfillment at the time of the end.
- This time of the end is yet future to 2019, over two millennia later.

Meanwhile...

- Verses 33-35 says that the people who “understand” will fall.
 - The understanding refers to the wisdom of righteousness and faithfulness to God.
 - Their “fall” refers to death from persecution and war. This fate will refine them and the nation. God uses trials to do that in the lives of His true sheep.

Transition at Verses 35-36

- It appears that after Antiochus, the Bible skips over 100 years of Seleucid rulers and 130 years of Ptolemaic rulers, and then some.
- **Note:** Antiochus' evil is a historical anchor which we can work backwards from to identify kings earlier in Daniel 11. He is also a shadow of another evil king who is yet future.

The Time of the End

- The prophecy is now set in the “time of the end” (v. 35) which refers to the far future.
- The king of the north will do several things:
 - Act according to his own will;
 - Exalt himself above every god;
 - Speak blasphemies against the true God;
 - Prosper until God’s wrath has been accomplished.

The King of the North

- Antiochus IV Epiphanes dropped from the scene of history in 164 B.C. or so.
- Remember that these kings are collective references to dynasties of kings. So the “king of the north” does not refer to a single person.
- The king now refers to the future Antichrist.

Wrath Accomplished

- What this means is that God uses an evil instrument to accomplish His wrath against the target of His wrath, which may be the world, or the church, or the Jewish people.
 - Here the focus is upon the Jewish nation suffering under the Antichrist. The time is the Tribulation (Revelation 6-19).

Wrath Accomplished

- Centuries earlier, Habakkuk complained that God was using a people more wicked than Israel to judge Israel (Hab. 1:13).
 - That is God's prerogative.
 - God assures the prophet that He will avenge the blood shed by the Assyrians. They will not get off scot free even though God has used them to accomplish His purpose.

Character of Antichrist

- From verse 36, the king:
 - Will exalt himself above every god – 2 Thess. 2:4
- From verse 37:
 - He will not regard the God of his fathers. Whether he is a Jew is not certain here, but he could be.
 - He will not regard any god. He will be some kind of practical atheist.

Character of Antichrist

- From verse 37:
 - He will not regard the desire of women. He will have an unnatural aspect. Whether he is homosexual or just celibate is not specified. It may be that he loves other things, like the next verse says.
 - This cannot be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, for he was married to his sister Laodice, who bore Antiochus IV a boy and girl: Antiochus V Eupator and Laodice VI.

Character of the Antichrist

- From verse 38:
 - He will honor a ‘god of fortresses.’ He extols power. It matters little whether in his mind this is an actual ‘god’ or a philosophy. It could be Ares.
 - He will heap riches upon this ‘god’ as he pursues it in his worship of power and military might.

Action of the Antichrist, v. 39

- He will attack military strongholds in the region and defeat them, gaining territory.
- At this point his relationship to a foreign god becomes confusing. It appears that this foreign god (who is a demon, see 10:13 for example) helps him achieve his victories.

Action of the Antichrist, v. 39

- Furthermore, the translation is a bit confusing. The NKJV seems to suggest he is honoring a foreign god.
- Other translations are helpful in that they show he is honoring those who acknowledge him.

Tribulation Conflict, v. 40

- The king of the south is a future Egyptian or north African power.
- The southern king attacks, but is repelled by the Antichrist, who uses overwhelming force.

Tribulation Conflict, v. 41-42

- Now, Israel comes into the picture again—the Glorious Land is mentioned.
 - We can easily imagine such a conflict erupting at almost any time in the Middle East powder keg, especially a conflict centering on Israel.
- Many will be defeated, like Egypt. But some named countries will be spared.

Tribulation Conflict, v. 43

- Massive riches due to the spoils of war will be added to Antichrist's treasuries.
- Other north African nations will follow the Antichrist.

End of the Antichrist, v. 44-45

- After great victory, troubling news will come. Armies from east and north will come against him in the land of Israel.
- He will take up his position between Mediterranean and Dead Seas and Jerusalem.
- He will be soundly defeated. How? See next...

Defeat of the Antichrist

- The setting: Armageddon, Revelation 16:16, 19:17-20. See Zech. 12:2-3, 14:2-4.
- The defeat: Christ kills the Antichrist, the false prophet, and their army. See 2 Thessalonians 2:8.
- No human help could assist him.

Application

- This is a huge chapter with lots of details. You might wonder what is the point.
- Biblical prophecy is accurate.
- God is in control even in bad times.
- God watches out for His people.
- Thank God for these things.

Application

- We must recognize that the Antichrist is really coming. You do not want to be unprepared for that time.
- This is why this question is so crucial: “What is the Gospel?” Do you believe in Christ? If so, you are safe. If not, you are not.

Further Notes

- Biblical prophecy is very selective, skipping as it does over many years that are not important for God's people to know.
- God's revelation is centered on *words*, not on visions or dreams or the like. His Word is called *word* for a reason. We must know the Word.

Further Notes

- 11:22 refers to the murder of Onias III. He was the last of the legitimate priests. After this the Jewish priests were false priests that held more of a political office than truly OT-religion office. This includes the priests during the time of Christ.