

THE DANIEL 11 PROPHECY

HISTORY FROM THE 5TH – 1ST
CENTURIES B.C., DETAILED IN
ADVANCE



MICHAEL FILIPEK

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Prophecy is one of the greatest apologetics that demonstrates the reality of God and the Bible as His inspired Word. Unfortunately, many Christians are not well-versed in these areas and often neglect to use this evidence when facing the objections of the critics.

But what do we mean when we say that Bible prophecy is an evidence for God and the supernatural origin of the Bible? And how do we establish what we can actually “know” about anything? Let’s begin by answering these important questions, which will help to establish our prophetic perspective. The first thing we need to do is examine three epistemological anchor points that form the basis of our belief in the supernatural origin of the Bible.

Epistemology: The theory of knowledge, its method, its scope, and its limits. Epistemology is the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion. It defines what we can actually **know**.¹

So, let’s examine the three points that form the basis of our epistemology.

-The Basis Of Our Epistemology:

1. The Bible is a highly **integrated message system**.
2. The Bible contains an astonishing amount of **prophecy**.
3. The Bible contains **intricately hidden subtleties encoded into the very text itself that clearly transcend the knowledge and intent of the human authors**.

Note: We can't fully describe each of the following three points here, but to better understand what we mean by each, please consult the companion study entitled "The Basis Of Our Epistemology".

During this study, we will mainly be investigating Biblical content having to do with Points #1 and 2 – involving **integration** and **prophecy**. These two points help support each other. Biblical prophecy proves integration, and Biblical integration involves prophecy. One of the primary ways you can validate the Bible's extra-dimensional origin is through its continual use of prophecy. Let's discuss this further.

As we mentioned, Biblical prophecy proves the integration of the Bible. Integration is a proof of extra-dimensional authorship because of the following reason – the Bible is one continuous story written over a period of almost 1,500 years, by many human authors who mostly didn't know each other and weren't alive at the same time, and yet, we find that the themes and events in scripture are woven together as one unified story. This points to a common Author who is behind it all, influencing and inspiring the human penmen who wrote down what they were inspired to say.

In other words, imagine your favorite novel or storybook...imagine you one day found out that the chapters were written by different people who mostly didn't know each other and weren't alive at the same time, over a period of 1,500 years ... yet, the storyline was flawless, or, to use our term, integrated. Obviously, this is impossible – especially when the earlier chapters predict how the later chapters would turn out with amazing precision – and its predictions align with the record of human history. This points to a common Author outside

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of time who was guiding and inspiring the human writers to compose this unified story. This is what we mean by integration.

Let's talk more about prophecy for a moment before continuing. What exactly do we mean by prophecy, and how exactly does this prove anything?

The Bible repeatedly demonstrates its uniqueness by making a habit of describing history before it happens. This is what we mean by prophecy. And if this statement is true, it would require then that the author knew what was going to happen ahead of time, which obviously the human writers couldn't. This characteristic of prophecy is a method of authentication that is unique to the true Author (God), because He exists outside of the dimension of time altogether and enjoys a one hundred percent success rate. In other words, we know the Bible cannot come from man – it must come from a Being outside of time itself.

So, we will find that prophecy is not just an odd curiosity – it's a demonstration that God is real, that He cares, and that He has chosen to reveal to us in advance what His plans are for the world, and for you and I personally. As we go through this study, keep in mind how the content we will examine demonstrates our epistemological anchor-points. So, with that backdrop in place, let's now begin to shift our focus toward the topic of this study – the incredible prophecies in Daniel 11.

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1. -Merriam-Webster, entry "Epistemology," *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistemology> - Retrieved 11/11/18)

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW OF DANIEL 11

The longest continuous prophecy in the Bible is found in Chapter 11 of Daniel, and continues into the beginning of Chapter 12. This Chapter involves a prophetic vision that Daniel experiences while encountering an angelic visitation. The entire previous chapter (Chapter 10) serves as the introduction to the prophetic vision of Chapter 11.

“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.”

-Daniel 10:1

The third year of Cyrus, king of Persia, would have been around 536/5 BC, as his first official year of reign was around 538/7.¹ Chapter 10 records the angel visiting Daniel during a three-week period of fasting.

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“And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent...”

-Daniel 10:11

The angel then tells Daniel that he was sent to explain to him what would happen to the Jewish people in the latter days.

“Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.”

-Daniel 10:14

The vision predicts in detail the same progression of major world empires as had been previously revealed in Daniel Chapter 2 through Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and in Chapter 7 in the vision of the four beasts followed by the entry of the Son of Man (the four beasts represented the four major world empires that would arise – Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome).

This prophecy in Daniel 11 would begin with the Medo-Persian rule (the second world empire), since at the time of this prophecy, Babylon (the first world empire) had already passed. Through this angel sent to inform Daniel, God was going to reveal some amazing details about the major world powers, continuing through to the time of the end, just prior to Christ’s Second Coming. But before we begin, let’s zoom our focus out for a moment and recognize the incredible prophetic nature of this chapter.

It was the incredible precision of Daniel’s portrayal of historical world events within this chapter that lead the pagan philosopher Porphyry (third century AD) to claim the Book of Daniel to be a forgery completed after-the-fact. Porphyry advocated the idea that since what happened in history corresponded so perfectly to the content of Daniel 11, then the Book of Daniel must have been completed much later in the second century BC once the events had already taken place.

Of course, in some of our companion studies, we have already

discussed at length many points of evidence that would disprove this idea that Daniel was written in the second century BC – so, we won't rehash all of those points here. But for more information on that, please see the companion study entitled, "Establishing The Prophetic Validity Of The Book Of Daniel".

So, Porphyry actually did much of our work for us, in showing how well actual historical world events parallel Daniel 11 (which we know quite well from the abundance of documented history still available to us from this Greco-Roman period).

In response to Porphyry's assertions regarding Daniel being a later forgery, the well-known ancient Church father and translator of the Latin Vulgate, Jerome (347-420 AD), issued his own commentary on Daniel, repudiating the claims of Porphyry. Jerome's commentary has been known by many for over a thousand years, as being the standard commentary on the prophetic history found in Daniel.

Going into this examination of Daniel 11, it is important to recognize that this entire chapter is a precise outline of history written hundreds of years in advance. While history buffs will love it, the average reader might find the facts and specifics a bit boring. However, as we go through each verse in detail, even if you are disinterested in the actual history, try to focus on the amazing precision of the fulfillments that we will analyze. Many Christians unfortunately know nothing about this chapter. Many don't even realize it exists. Those who do, often don't recognize how absolutely incredible this prophetic chapter is. So, if for no other reason than to be in awe of God's incredible Word, and to bolster your faith in the supernatural origin of the Bible, let's begin our investigation of Daniel Chapter 11.

1. -Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998, p. 266.

CHAPTER 3

OUR PROPHETIC PERCEPTION OF DANIEL 11

This prophecy details future historical events affecting the Jews from the fifth to the first centuries BC, but also seems to contain dual prophecies with deeper insights relating to future end time events that will transpire in like fashion (you might call it a near term and a far term, or ultimate fulfillment). In other words, many of the historical events prophesied about, apparently also act as a type or shadow of the final world leader spoken of throughout scripture, as well as the events present upon the earth at that time. Our basis for this is in part, a later quote by Jesus which speaks of an event called the “abomination of desolation,” which by His time, had already happened (this event is actually detailed ahead of time, here in Chapter 11).

The abomination of desolation referred to an event that took place in 168/7 BC in which the Greek-Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Jewish Temple in his attempt to eradicate the Jewish religion.¹

This historical event took on additional prophetic significance when four disciples received a private briefing by Jesus Himself on the Second Coming, in which Jesus alluded to a future reoccurrence of a similar desecration as the key to all end-time prophecy.

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)”

-Matthew 24:15

Jesus was speaking some two hundred years **after** the abomination of desolation had already occurred, but He implied that it would happen again! In other words, He used what was common historical knowledge to his audience in order to teach them about its ultimate fulfillment in the end times. We find that the abomination of desolation is the central milestone in the middle of the climactic seven-year period comprising the seventieth week of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy. We also recognize that this ultimate event – the future abomination of desolation – roughly marks the beginning of the latter half of this “final week”, called the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21).

As sometimes occurs in Biblical prophecy, the immediate, local application of a passage clearly begins to transcend that context to yield a glimpse of a larger, more climactic fulfillment. In the Bible, prophecy is cyclical. While the content of Daniel 11 has clearly been fulfilled historically, many of the verses toward the end of the chapter, which anticipate the careers of historical rulers Antiochus Epiphanes and Herod the Great, begin to strangely surpass just that local application and start to profile the ultimate final world ruler, portrayed as the Willful King, but better known as the Antichrist.

Additionally, the idioms and descriptions used towards the end of Daniel 11 clearly profile this future Man of Sin, called the Antichrist, in a way consistent with the rest of the Biblical content concerning this character. A further confirmation of this perception is seen in the way Chapter 11 ends and the way Chapter 12 begins. The chapter breaks in the Bible were inserted by man, and sometimes obfuscate the flow of the narrative. We see that the first several verses of Chapter 12 are a continuation of the Chapter 11 narrative of the vision seen by Daniel. These verses clearly speak of the future Great Tribulation and subsequent Second Coming of Jesus. Let’s read Verses 1-3 of Chapter 12.

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“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble (*the Tribulation*), such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake (*the resurrection*), some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

-Daniel 12:1-3

So, it is very clear that these verses act as a continuation of the events of Chapter 11, leaving us no doubt that the end times are ultimately coming into view as a multiple fulfillment prophecy towards the end of this chapter.

Lastly, bear in mind that the context of the Daniel 11 events involves the nation of Israel. The events detailed would affect Israel continually, due to its geographic location as a buffer state positioned in between the nations of the North and the South – nations that were perpetually vying for power and preeminence. When the passages refer to a “King of the North” or a “King of the South,” it is helpful to keep in mind that Israel is the point of reference. While the chapter records a great amount of interesting history, we should keep in mind that the emphasis is mostly on the events of this time period that directly affected Israel.

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1. -The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, article “Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid king,” Jan. 5, 2021, *Encyclopedia Britannica*. (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Antiochus-IV-Epiphanes> - Retrieved 1/04/19)

CHAPTER 4

DANIEL 11 AND THE “SILENT YEARS”

Many often refer to the approximately four hundred years between the Testaments as the “silent years,” as no scripture was given during that period. In other words, this was the time in between when the last Old Testament book and first New Testament book were written – so, in the book order of our English Bibles, this basically means the historical time in between Malachi and Matthew.

The nation of Israel was given these four hundred years to study their scriptures, to seek God (Psalm 43-44), and to prepare for the coming Messiah, the timing of whose arrival was already provided to them prophetically in Daniel 9:25. Unfortunately, they did not utilize this time accordingly and as a nation, were not ready for His arrival.

This resulted in the development of several major factions – the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees were the wealthy class of Judean religious elite. They held to only the Torah in regards to religion, but like most aristocrats, they did not believe in God’s apocalyptic intervention in human history. They denied the afterlife as well as the idea of angels or spirits. The Pharisees were conservative zealots who, with the help of the scribes, developed the religious oral law. But they reached the point where their own commentaries and opinions on scripture were venerated on the same level as scripture.¹

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Religious and civil matters were governed by the lesser and the greater Sanhedrin. The greater Sanhedrin – the supreme court of Israel at this time – was comprised of seventy ruling members, including both Sadducees and Pharisees.²

Additionally, synagogues – new places of worship and social activity, which probably began during the Babylonian captivity – had sprouted up all over the country.³

It was during this period of time that religiosity reigned, and though many were zealous for God’s commands, they often lost focus of the true reasons behind His commands. It was this context that later lead to the often-explosive confrontations between Jesus and the Jewish religious rulers. These four hundred so-called “silent years” blinded and deafened the nation to the point where most of the Jews could not even consider the concept of a humble Messiah (Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 6:10; John 12:40).

Because of this, the nation of Israel as a whole was completely unaware of the “time of their visitation” (Luke 19:44), and ended up rejecting Jesus Christ as their Messiah, despite the fact that the timing of His appearing was prophesied precisely in Daniel 9:25. Their ignorance of this Messianic event was what Jesus declared as being the reason Jerusalem was ultimately later destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. The nation now would have to be scattered in order to endure affliction among the Gentile nations – to one day be brought back into their land again. In our generation, we have begun to witness the reversal of this in the 1900s, as Israel again became a nation and many Jews have returned.

But why does all of this about the “silent years” matter? Because the near-term fulfillments of the prophecies within Daniel 11 take place during this period of time. So, as we will soon demonstrate by analyzing the chapter, this title is a grave misnomer. The Bible is not “silent” concerning these four hundred years. Rather, they were already detailed with great precision hundreds of years in advance!

Our modern historical understanding of this time period serves as a remarkable confirmation of the prophetic nature of the Bible. Our knowledge of this time period is actually quite vast. We have a multi-

tude of mainly Greek and Roman histories to consult, as well as the historical writings of Josephus, the books of the Maccabees, and others.

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1. -"What are the differences between the Sadducees and Pharisees?" *GotQuestions.org*. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/Sadducees-Pharisees.html> - Retrieved 1/04/19)
 2. -Ibid.
 3. -"What is a synagogue?" *GotQuestions.org*. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/what-is-a-synagogue.html> - Retrieved 1/04/19)

CHAPTER 5

DANIEL 11 – A VERSE-BY-VERSE ANALYSIS

The first thing we will do is actually read through Daniel 11 in its entirety. After doing that, we will then go through each verse individually and identify the corresponding historical fulfillment.

¹ Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

² And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

³ And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

⁴ And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

⁵ And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

⁶ And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for

the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

⁷ But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

⁸ And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.

⁹ So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

¹⁰ But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

¹¹ And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

¹² And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.

¹³ For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

¹⁴ And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

¹⁵ So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

¹⁶ But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own

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will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

¹⁷ He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

¹⁸ After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.

¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

²⁰ Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

²¹ And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

²² And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

²³ And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

²⁴ He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.

²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.

²⁶ Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

²⁷ And both of these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they

shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.

²⁸ Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

²⁹ At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

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.

³¹ And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

³² And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

³³ And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

³⁴ Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

³⁵ And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

³⁶ And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

³⁷ Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

³⁸ But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

³⁹ Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god,

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whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

⁴⁰ And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

⁴¹ He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

⁴² He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

⁴³ But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

⁴⁴ But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

⁴⁵ And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

-Daniel 11

Now, in order to get a feel for the detail and precision included in these prophecies, we will examine this chapter on a verse-by-verse basis. After reading each verse, or segment of a verse, we will then examine each corresponding fulfillment that the record of history appears to bear out.

Note: The historical statements within this study rely upon five main resources. We encourage you to look further into them in order to take a deeper look at the history of this period.^{1 2 3 4 5}

Before beginning, let's first become familiar with a topical outline of the content of this chapter.

Historical Outline of Daniel 11:1-12:3

#1 - Introduction (Verse 1)

#2 - Persian Rule (Verse 2)

#3 - Greek Rule (Verses 3–35)

- Alexander the Great (Verses 3-4)
- Seleucids and Ptolemies (Verses 5-20)
- Antiochus Epiphanes (Verses 21-35)

***The Maccabees/Hasmoneans (Verses 32-35)

#4 - Roman Rule (Verses 36-45)

- Herod the Great (Verses 36-39)
- Caesar Augustus (Verses 40-43)
- Herod the Great (Verses 44-45)

#5 - Messianic Rule (Chapter 12:1-3)

- The Rescue of Israel (Verse 1)
- The Resurrections (Verse 2)
- The Reward of the Righteous (Verse 3)

Reading through Daniel 11 after being familiar with an outline used as an overlay greatly helps to differentiate the content of the passages and makes it more understandable.

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To understand the setting of Daniel 11, we need to recognize that earlier, in Chapter 10, we are told that Daniel had a vision in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. As mentioned previously, this would probably have been around 536/535 BC.⁶ So, that is where the prophecy begins from a historical reference perspective. The angel was sent to explain the vision to Daniel. His explanation of the prophecy begins in the 11th Chapter of Daniel – so, as we begin reading, we should understand that this is the angel speaking.

Daniel 11:1-2

“Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.”

-Daniel 11:1-2

First, to avoid confusion, we must point out that Darius the Mede is probably a reference to an appointed local ruler of Babylon put in place by Cyrus. There are many scholars who believe that this individual can be identified more specifically as Gubaru (Gobryas), the governor of Babylon under Cyrus.⁷

So, as we already read in Chapter 10, this vision took place during the third year of the reign of Cyrus – around 536/535 BC.⁸ Next, the passages mentioned that there will be four more kings during the Medo-Persian empire. The next four Medo-Persian kings after Cyrus were:

#1 - His son, Cambyses II (530-522 BC).

#2 - Gaumata the Magian (also known as the pseudo-Smerdis, an impostor who impersonated the real Smerdis to obtain the throne. The real Smerdis had been caused to be killed by his brother Cambyses – 522 BC).

#3 - The Persian, Darius I (Darius Hystaspes), who married a daughter of Cyrus (522-486 B.C.).

#4 - Xerxes, or the Ahasuerus of Queen Esther, the son of Darius Hystaspes. See Esther 1:4-7 (486-465 BC). Xerxes was far richer than all before him – in accordance with the prophecy. His enormous wealth (which we saw was prophesied in Verse 2) was referenced often by the Greek historian Herodotus, who wrote in the fifth century BC).⁹

We next, saw that the prophecy predicts that this king would “stir up all the realm of Grecia” – or, Greece. Xerxes’ mother was Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus the Great. His father, Darius the Great, left him the task of punishing the Greeks for their part in the Ionian Rebellion (499-494 BC) and their defeat of the Persian army at the Battle of Marathon (490 BC).

Xerxes began extensively preparing for his expedition against the Greeks in 483 BC by raising money and accumulating provisions. He had a channel dug through the isthmus of the peninsula of Mount Athos, stored supplies along the road through Thrace, and had two bridges constructed across the Hellespont. In preparation to punish the Greeks, Xerxes also entered into an alliance with Carthage. Even many of the smaller Greek states sided with the Persians. A large fleet and a vast army (numbered by some at over two million men) were gathered and he defeated the Greeks at Thermopylae. He certainly did “stir up all against the kingdom of Greece” – as the prophecy said.

In the spring of 480 BC, Xerxes set out from Sardis. At first, he was victorious. But when Xerxes attacked the Greek fleet under negative conditions at the Battle of Salamis (September 28, 480 BC), he lost, even though his fleet was more than three times as large as the Greek navy (1,207 ships to 371). This battle decided the war; Xerxes was forced to retire to Sardis, and the army which he left in Greece was finally beaten the next year. The Delian League (also known as the Athenian Empire), was formed in 477 BC as an offensive and defen-

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sive alliance of the Greek city-states against the Persians. The Greek empire had begun its rise.

We now skip over nine minor rulers as Xerxes was the last Persian king to invade Greece.

Daniel 11:3

“And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.”

-Daniel 11:3

After the military defeat of Xerxes by the Greeks, a number of additional Persian kings ruled the empire. But Xerxes had set the stage for a strong Greek ruler to arise. This ruler was the Macedonian, Alexander the Great, who defeated the Persian King Darius III Codomannus in 333 BC at the Battle of Issus (located on the Mediterranean coast in what is now southeast Turkey). This defeat signaled the beginning of the end of the Persian empire.

Alexander was born in Pella in 356 BC and succeeded his father Philip II to the throne at the age of twenty. He spent most of his ruling years on an unprecedented military campaign through Asia and north-east Africa, creating one of the largest empires of the ancient world. By the young age of thirty, his empire stretched from Greece to north-western India. He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered one of history’s most successful military commanders.

Alexander perfectly fulfills the prophecy of a mighty king standing up who would rule with great dominion, doing according to his will. But the Greek empire of Alexander was not destined to endure. He fell ill and died on June 10, 323 BC in the palace in Babylon.

Daniel 11:4

“And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity,

nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.”

-Daniel 11:4

Alexander left a huge empire at his death. His family and his generals jostled for control of this kingdom. When the dust settled, only two of his top officers remained alive. His other generals, his mother, his wife, his son, his illegitimate son, his sister, his half-sister, and his half-brother, were all dead. Of this group, only one general (Antipater) died of natural causes. As the prophecy states, none of his posterity would inherit his kingdom. Additionally, the prophecy declares that his kingdom would be split four ways.

After much fighting and jockeying for position, Alexander’s empire was divided into four major portions by 301 BC:

1. **Cassander** ruled over Greece.
2. **Lysimachus** ruled in Asia Minor.
3. **Seleucus I Nicator** ruled in Babylon and Persia.
4. **Ptolemy I Soter** ruled over the Holy Land and Egypt.

Daniel 11:5

“And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.”

-Daniel 11:5

The wording of this verse in the *King James Version* is a bit hard to understand, so let’s consider the way the *English Standard Version* renders it.

“Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority.”

-Daniel 11:5 (ESV)

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Ptolemy Soter, who had Egypt, Palestine and part of Syria in the south, is the king of the South at this point of the prophecy. He was to be strong. He ruled from 323 BC to 285 BC. “One of his princes” refers to one of the mighty king’s (Alexander’s) princes, and the prophecy states he would be stronger than Ptolemy. This turns out to be Seleucus Nicator.

Lysimachus took over Cassander’s territory and then Lysimachus lost all of it to Seleucus Nicator who then had three quarters of Alexander’s kingdom, leaving Ptolemy in the south with a quarter – exactly as the prophecy said.

So, Alexander’s empire began a long period of conflict between the Seleucid kings in the North and the Ptolemaic kings in the South.

Daniel 11:6

“And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king’s daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.”

-Daniel 11:6

In 249 BC, the king of the South, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, sent his daughter Berenice to the king of the North, Antiochus II Theos. His plan was to stop the war that was raging (the Second Syrian War) and unite the two kingdoms through their marriage. Unfortunately, this plan had a flaw – Antiochus II was already married. However, because he knew his marriage to Ptolemy II’s daughter would ensure peace and allow him to regain most of the Syrian possessions his father had lost to the king of the South, Antiochus II put away his wife Laodice and married Berenice. She persuaded him to reject Laodice’s children and set up her own to succeed him on the throne.

However, after Ptolemy II died in 246 BC, Antiochus II repudiated his marriage to Berenice and left her and their infant son to return to

Laodice. Doubting his faithfulness, Laodice quickly murdered Antiochus II with poison. She then convinced her son, Seleucus II Callinicus, to kill both Berenice and her son. So, just as the prophecy said would happen, Ptolemy II, king of the South, his daughter Berenice, and Antiochus II, king of the North, all lost in their struggle for power.

Daniel 11:7

“But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:”

-Daniel 11:7

Ptolemy III Euergetes, the eldest son of Ptolemy II and brother of Berenice, was not happy about the murder of his sister. He immediately invaded the Seleucid Empire. His armies defeated the forces of the new king of the North, Seleucus II, who was the son of Antiochus II and Laodice. His campaign was successful, and his armies achieved victory from the Tigris River to the coasts of Asia Minor.

Ptolemy III captured Laodice and put her to death. He was even able to enter Seleucia, the port city on the Tigris River of the capital Antioch, and leave a garrison there.

Daniel 11:8

“And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.”

-Daniel 11:8

During the Third Syrian War, the king of the South, Ptolemy III, is credited with recovering many of the sacred statues that the Persian forces of Cambyses had carried off during their conquest of Egypt

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some three hundred years earlier. Because of this, he was known as Euergetes (“Benefactor”).

Ptolemy III acquired much gold and silver during his victorious campaign; in fact, from Seleucia alone he received 1,500 talents of silver annually as tribute (about ten percent of his annual income). He outlived Seleucus II, who died after falling from his horse, by four or five years (222 BC) – just as the prophecy said.

Daniel 11:9

“Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.”

-Daniel 11:9 (NKJV)

In 240 BC, the king of the North, Seleucus II, attempted to invade Egypt in response to the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of Ptolemy III. However, he had to return in defeat after his fleet perished in a storm.

Daniel 11:10

“But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress.”

-Daniel 11:10

The sons of Seleucus II were Seleucus III Ceraunos (“Thunder”) and Antiochus III (the Great). Seleucus III, the eldest son of Seleucus II, began a war against the Egyptian provinces in Asia Minor. However, he was unsuccessful, and was assassinated by members of his army in Asia Minor in 223 BC. Seleucus II’s younger son, Antiochus III, took the throne at the age of eighteen after his brother’s death. In 219-218 BC, Antiochus III victoriously went through Judea, coming almost to the borders of Egypt.

Daniel 11:11

“And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.”

-Daniel 11:11

Antiochus III met Ptolemy IV Philopater at the Battle of Raphia (also known as the Battle of Gaza) in 217 BC. Antiochus III, the king of the North, had 62,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 103 war elephants. But the forces of Ptolemy IV, king of the South, were victorious in the battle. Antiochus III was forced to withdraw into Lebanon.

Daniel 11:12

“And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.”

-Daniel 11:12

After his victory over Antiochus III in the Battle of Raphia, Ptolemy Philopater visited the cities in Coele-Syria (the area that Antiochus was trying to take from Ptolemy) to boost their morale and give gifts to their temples. Naturally he came to Jerusalem. While there, he was so impressed with the Temple that he wanted to enter it, including the Holy of Holies – an obvious problem, by Old Testament Law. Ptolemy was struck with temporary paralysis, which forced him to withdraw and return to Egypt, though he went uttering curses and vowing revenge for such humiliating treatment.

He sought revenge upon the Jews many times but was unsuccessful, until in 213 BC there was an insurrection of the Egyptians, of which he made occasion to gain revenge upon the Jews, slaying forty thousand of them at Alexandria. This did nothing in gaining him more

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power or strength, for it turned many of his own nation against him – all exactly as the prophecy had stated.

Daniel 11:13

“For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.”

-Daniel 11:13

Ptolemy Philopater died in 204 BC, leaving his son, Ptolemy Epiphanes, to take the throne at the age of four or five years. Seeing this, Antiochus III thought it an excellent opportunity to enlarge his kingdom by coming upon Egypt and upon such a young king. Antiochus III rallied his forces once again to attack the kingdom of the South. In the Fifth Syrian War (202-195 BC), Antiochus III swept down into Judea from Syria. He retook the territory that he had occupied some eighteen years previously. When Antiochus III withdrew for the winter, the Egyptian commander Scopas retook the southern portions of the lost territory, including Judea and Jerusalem.

Daniel 11:14

“And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.”

-Daniel 11:14

Antiochus III negotiated an alliance with King Philip V of Macedonia against Egypt, with the agreement to divide up Egypt’s Asian possessions. After some temporary setbacks (particularly at Gaza), Antiochus III’s army inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ptolemaic forces about 199 BC at Paneas, near the headwaters of the Jordan River. At the same time that this was going on, the provinces of Egypt were rebelling against Agathocles the prime minister of Egypt, who

was conducting the affairs of the kingdom for the young king. The power that he could exercise was going to his head, with Egypt itself being disturbed by seditions. The Alexandrians rose up and caused him, his sister, mother, and their associates to be put to death.

Many Jews (or, as the prophecy had put it – “thy people,” i.e., Daniel’s people) also joined Antiochus against Egypt. In the expedition he was aided by zealous Jews, spoken of in the prophecy as “robbers of thy people,” so as to revolt from Ptolemy, and join themselves to Antiochus. These Jews, seeking to establish their own independence, helped Antiochus’ army with provisions, and when on his return from Egypt, he besieged the Egyptian garrison left in Jerusalem. Those zealous Jews unknowingly helped to fulfill the purpose of God (“to establish the vision”), as to the trials that awaited Judea, according to this vision. Though helping to fulfill the vision, they shall fail (as the prophecy had said) in their own aim of making Judea independent. Unfortunately, this Jewish assistance was not to be remembered when Antiochus IV later came against Jerusalem.

Daniel 11:15

“So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people (*or, “his best troops” – as phrased in the NKJV*), neither shall there be any strength to withstand.”

-Daniel 11:15

Following his defeat at Paneas, Scopas fled to the fortified port city of Sidon, where Antiochus III laid a siege against it. Three of the ablest generals of Egypt went to aid against the siege, but without success. With famine and an opponent Scopas could not cope with, he had to surrender on the dishonorable terms of life only. Scopas and his ten thousand men were let go, stripped and naked.

Daniel 11:16

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“But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.”

-Daniel 11:16

With his final victory over Scopas at Sidon, Antiochus the Great took the Holy Land away from the Egyptians for good. Judea and Jerusalem had passed from the king of the South to the king of the North.

Daniel 11:17

“He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.”

-Daniel 11:17

Young Ptolemy V had entered into a treaty with Antiochus III after his military defeat in the Fifth Syrian War. Through this treaty, Antiochus III tried to strengthen his position and expand his empire even further. Ptolemy V surrendered his Asian holdings to the king of the North and accepted Antiochus III's daughter, Cleopatra I, as a bride. They were married in 194 BC.

Through this marriage, Antiochus III sought to gain a foothold in Egypt itself through his daughter. But his plan backfired. Cleopatra I was a true wife to Ptolemy V, standing by him instead of seeking to benefit her father. Cleopatra I was beloved by the Egyptian people for her loyalty to her husband – in incredible fulfillment to the prophecy.

Daniel 11:18

“After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him

to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.”

-Daniel 11:18

Again, the *King James Version* here is a bit difficult to understand, so let's turn to the *English Standard Version* for clarity.

“Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him.”

-Daniel 11:18 (ESV)

In 192 BC, the ambitious Antiochus III crossed into Greece to aid the Aetolians. He sent ambassadors to Rome asking for friendship. However, the Roman Senate replied that they would be friends if Antiochus III left the Greeks in Asia free and independent and if he kept away from Europe. Antiochus III refused, and went to war against Rome. With ten thousand men, Antiochus III sailed across the Aegean Sea and took some strongholds in Asia Minor.

But in doing so, he alienated his former ally, Macedonian king Philip V. The Roman army entered Asia Minor and defeated the larger forces of Antiochus III at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BC. In the peace treaty of Apamea in 188 BC, the Roman general Publius Scipio set a high cost on Antiochus III for peace. He demanded twenty hostages (including his son, Antiochus IV), a reduction of naval ships to twelve, and payment to Rome for the cost of the war totaling fifteen thousand talents over the next twelve years.

The all-consuming ambition of Antiochus III had finally brought defeat to the kingdom of the North.

Daniel 11:19

“Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.”

-Daniel 11:19

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As a consequence of the Roman victory over Antiochus III, the outlying provinces of the Seleucid Empire again reasserted their independence. With his kingdom now reduced to Syria, Mesopotamia, and western Iran, Antiochus III was in dire need of funds with which to pay Rome for the cost of the war. In 187 BC, while attempting to plunder a pagan temple in Babylon near Susa (Shushan), Antiochus III was murdered.

Daniel 11:20

“Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.”

-Daniel 11:20

Antiochus III's eldest son, Seleucus IV Philopater, took over after his father's death. Due to the heavy debt burden imposed by Rome, he was forced to seek an ambitious taxation policy on his shrunken empire. This included heavy taxation on the people of Israel. In fact, Seleucus IV even sent his treasurer, Heliodorus, to the Temple in Jerusalem to extract money.

The Roman Senate decided to trade hostages; therefore, they ordered Seleucus IV to send his son Demetrius, the heir to the throne, to Rome. In return, the Romans released Seleucus IV's younger brother, Antiochus IV. When released, Antiochus IV went to Athens.

In 175 BC, after Demetrius had been sent away to Rome, Seleucus IV was poisoned by his minister Heliodorus. Some historians think that Heliodorus desired the throne for himself, while others believe that Antiochus IV was behind the murder. Seleucus' young son, (another Antiochus – age five) was put on the throne in his place. However, Heliodorus was the actual power behind the throne.

Daniel 11:21

“And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.”

-Daniel 11:21

With Seleucus IV dead, the rightful heir to the throne was the young Demetrius. However, he was no longer available, having been sent to Rome as a hostage. At the time of the murder, Antiochus IV was in Athens. However, when he heard of his brother’s death, he quickly sailed to Pergamum. Once there, he sought the help of Eumenes II, the king of Pergamum. By flattering Eumenes II and his brother Attalus, he received their support and backing.

Antiochus IV arrived in Seleucia with a powerful ally and thwarted Heliodorus’ designs on the throne. He became co-regent and protector of Seleucus IV’s infant son (also named Antiochus). In 170 BC, the younger Antiochus was murdered while Antiochus IV was conveniently absent, paving the way for him to take sole possession of the throne.

Daniel 11:22

“And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.”

-Daniel 11:22

Because of his ability to charm people and ally himself with them, Antiochus IV, who called himself Epiphanes (meaning, “God manifest”), was able to overcome all threats to his throne.

There is some debate amongst scholars and historians as to the identity of the “prince of the covenant” referenced here. One conjecture is that it is possibly a reference to the situation involving the Jewish high priest Onias III. He was the high priest at the time that Antiochus IV came to the throne. A brother of Onias named Joshua, who had become Hellenized and changed his name to Jason, made a deal with Antiochus IV. Jason told him that he would pay Antiochus

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IV a large bribe if he would remove Onias and make him high priest in his place. So, Antiochus IV forced Onias out and installed his brother Jason as high priest in Jerusalem in 174 BC.

In 172 BC, Jason sent a priest named Menelaus to Antiochus IV with his tribute money. However, Menelaus took Jason's money, added some of his own to it, and bribed Antiochus IV to secure the high priesthood for himself. Menelaus then returned to Jerusalem and deposed Jason, who fled for his life.

Another view is that Ptolemy VI was “the prince of the covenant” since Antiochus later made a treaty (or covenant) with him.

Daniel 11:23

“And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.”

-Daniel 11:23

Once again, the “king of the North” set his sights on the kingdom of the South. In Egypt, the fourteen-year-old Ptolemy VI Philometor had become king. He was the nephew of Antiochus IV; his mother (Cleopatra I) was Antiochus IV's sister.

Antiochus IV sought an alliance with Ptolemy VI, seeking to take advantage of what he perceived as weakness in the Ptolemaic kingdom and gain Egypt for himself. He moved through Syria and Judea into Egypt with a small army, so as to not arouse suspicion to his true motive, and seized Egypt. His cover story was that he was coming to act as the “protector” of his nephew, Ptolemy VI.

Daniel 11:24

“He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.”

-Daniel 11:24

Antiochus IV pursued a novel plan for gaining the Egyptian-controlled provinces. He moved into the parts of the kingdom that were the richest. Then he did something that no other Seleucid king had ever done. Antiochus IV spread around some of the spoils from his war campaigns to secure the loyalty of the people. The historical book of I Maccabees states that he spent much on the public (I Maccabees 3:30). It is even reported that he would go into the streets and throw money to the citizens there. However, this was only the beginning of Antiochus IV's plan. Using his cunning, he visited Egyptian strongholds to find out their power.

Daniel 11:25

“And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.”

-Daniel 11:25

In 170 BC, when Antiochus IV felt secure about the state of his own kingdom, he decided to take Egypt by force in what came to be known as the Sixth Syrian War. He regarded Ptolemy VI as a weak ruler and therefore not capable of successfully waging war against him.

Antiochus IV was able to move his army to the border of Egypt before he was met by the Egyptians at Pelusium, near the Nile Delta. The Egyptians had a large army arrayed against him there. During this military expedition, Antiochus gained Pelusium and later took Memphis.

Daniel 11:26

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“Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.”

-Daniel 11:26

Ptolemy VI's army, although large, was not able to withstand Antiochus IV. In large part, this was due to the intrigues of Antiochus IV, who corrupted several of the Egyptian ministers and officers – recalling the words of the previous verse which stated that “they shall forecast devices against him” – an archaic way of referring to betrayal. This was one of the main causes of the defeat of Ptolemy VI. Those who were in his confidence and possessed the secrets of the state betrayed him to Antiochus IV.

For example, Ptolemy Macron (also called “Ptolemy the son of Dorymenes”) had been appointed by Ptolemy VI as governor of Cyprus. However, sensing the young king's weakness, he deserted to Antiochus IV, who made him governor of Coele-Syria and Phoenicia.

Daniel 11:27

“And both of these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.”

-Daniel 11:27

After he took control of Pelusium and Memphis, Antiochus IV set his sights on Alexandria. Due to the intrigues of Antiochus IV mentioned in Verse 26, the Alexandrians had renounced their allegiance to Ptolemy VI, and had made his younger brother, Ptolemy VII Euergetes, king in his place. While at Memphis, Antiochus IV and Ptolemy VI had frequent meetings. Antiochus IV professed his great friendship to his nephew and concern for his interests, but his true plan was to weaken Egypt by setting the brothers against one another.

Conversely, Ptolemy VI professed gratitude to his uncle for the interest he took in his affairs. He laid the blame of the war upon his minister Eulaeus, one the guardians appointed to watch over him after

his father's death. All the while, Ptolemy VI sought to smooth over things with his brother Ptolemy VII so they could join forces against their deceitful uncle, Antiochus IV.

Daniel 11:28

“Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.”

-Daniel 11:28

While Antiochus IV was engaged in Egypt, a false rumor arose in Judea that he had been killed. This prompted the deposed high priest Jason to raise an army of one thousand men and attack Jerusalem. His army captured the city and forced the high priest Menelaus to take refuge in the Akra fortress in Jerusalem. When news of the fighting in Jerusalem reached Antiochus IV, he took it to mean that Judea was in revolt against him.

Antiochus IV left Egypt; on his way home, he and his armies marched against Jerusalem. He commanded his soldiers to kill everyone they encountered (men, women, and children). Within the space of three days, his forces had killed somewhere between forty thousand and eighty thousand people. A similar number were captured and sold into slavery.

Not satisfied with the slaughter, Antiochus IV entered the Temple and (guided by Menelaus) took the holy vessels, including the golden altar, the menorah, the table for the shewbread, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple. He took all the silver and gold, as well as the hidden treasures, which he found. After appointing the Phrygian, Phillip, as governor in Jerusalem, Antiochus IV then returned to Antioch.

Daniel 11:29

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“At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.”

-Daniel 11:29

Meanwhile in Egypt, the brothers, Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VII reconciled and agreed to share power. This annulled Antiochus IV’s alliance with Ptolemy VI and caused his loss of control over the Ptolemaic kingdom. Because of this, in 168 BC Antiochus IV once again sought to go to war against Egypt. However, this time he would not have the same success he had achieved previously.

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 11:30

Because they knew that they could not defeat Antiochus IV alone, the Ptolemy brothers appealed to Rome for help. In order to check the threat of Greek expansion, the Romans agreed to provide assistance. The “ships from Kittim” here refer to the ships which brought the Roman legions to Egypt in fulfillment of the defense pact. This word *kittim* was a label used of the Mediterranean region.¹⁰

As Antiochus IV and his army marched toward Alexandria, they were met by three Roman senators led by Gaius Popillius Laenas in Eleusis, a suburb of Alexandria. There, Roman ambassador Popillius delivered to Antiochus IV the Senate’s demand that he withdraw from Egypt. When the king requested time for consultation, Popillius drew a circle around Antiochus IV with a stick he was carrying and told him not to leave the circle until he gave his response. The king of the North was astonished at this display of Roman arrogance, but after a brief time, said he would do all that the Romans demanded.

On his return to Syria, Antiochus IV tried to ease the sting of the

humiliation he had suffered at the hands of the Romans by taking out his frustration on the Jews in Judea. His armies encircled Jerusalem and then attacked. All those Jews who resisted were executed. However, the pro-Hellenistic Jews who allied themselves with Antiochus IV were left unharmed – all exactly according to the prophecy.

Daniel 11:31

“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”

-Daniel 11:31

Antiochus IV’s army desecrated the Temple and stopped the daily sacrifices. He commanded a change in all the ordinances of God. No sacrifices were to be offered in the sanctuary, the sabbaths and feasts were to be profaned, and he commanded that the Jews were not to circumcise their sons. Upon pain of death, they were commanded to profane the Jewish religion so that eventually the Law would be forgotten.

Antiochus IV appointed inspectors to watch the Jews and commanded the cities of Judah to offer pagan sacrifices. In 168 BC, in a deliberate attempt to offend the Jews, the Syrians placed an image of Zeus in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. This event was termed the “abomination of desolation.” The term abomination in the scriptures is often used to refer to idolatry – the worship of a false God.¹¹ The “abomination that maketh desolate” is the ultimate extreme of this. The placing of a pagan deity in the most holy place on the planet certainly epitomizes this description.

This well-known event also foreshadows another future desolation at the hands of the coming world leader, commonly called the “Antichrist,” which will take place in the yet-to-be rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem. We know this because hundreds of years later, after this historical desecration took place in 168 BC, Jesus Christ refers to it as an event still to take place during a future end time scenario – specifi-

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cally calling it the “abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Matthew 24:15). So, we know that as often happens with Bible prophecy, there is a near-term fulfillment as well as a long-term or ultimate fulfillment. In other words, Jesus showed us that this actual historical event that took place in 168 BC is a type or foreshadowing of a future end times event that will happen according to the same pattern. It is important to recognize that Paul, John, and Jesus all make allusions to a future Temple standing in the end times. But let’s get back to the historical near-term fulfillment in 168 BC.

Antiochus IV then had a swine slaughtered on the altar in the Temple as an offering to Zeus. If you know how the Jews feel about pork – based on the Old Testament Law – then you can begin to understand how this was done to intentionally enrage them. Antiochus IV absolutely desecrated the Jewish Temple in the most severe ways possible in order to maximally offend and provoke them. His extreme actions in large part spurred the Maccabean revolt, to be discussed shortly.

Looking ahead a bit, it took the Jews three years to succeed in the rebellion and destroy and remake all the vessels of the Temple that were considered desecrated by this event. The rededication of the Temple is still commemorated today in the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah.¹²

Daniel 11:32

“And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”

-Daniel 11:32

After venting his anger upon the Jews and desecrating the Temple, Antiochus IV decreed that his entire kingdom should become one people, each giving up his own customs. The other peoples under his rule accepted Antiochus IV’s command. Because of his flattering approach, many of the people of Israel also forsook the Law and

adopted his religion. Yet, many in Israel stood firm and rejected the innovations of the king of the North.

The actions of Antiochus so incensed the Jews, that they resulted in the Maccabean revolt, in which its leaders performed incredible exploits to cast off the yoke of the Syrian king. The second class of persons spoken of in Verse 32 of Daniel 11, “those that do know their God,” is easily identified in Mattathias, the godly and patriotic priest, and his five sons (the Maccabees), who led this successful revolt against Antiochus – and also speaks of those of Mattathias’ family who ruled Israel as governors and priests for one hundred thirty years (the Hasmoneans). These were indeed made “strong” through “knowing their God,” and performed “exploits” of greatest valor, particularly Judas, who was surnamed Maccabeus, meaning “the Hammer.” This nickname of Judas has been applied to the whole family (the Maccabees), but they are properly known as the Hasmonean kings.

Daniel 11:33

“And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.”

-Daniel 11:33

Whenever Antiochus IV’s men found copies of the Torah, they tore them to pieces and burned them. Whoever was found in possession of a Torah was put to death. According to Antiochus IV’s decree, women who had their children circumcised were put to death, along with their entire families and those who had circumcised them. Still, many in Israel chose to die rather than to obey the commands of Antiochus.

Daniel 11:34

“Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.”

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-Daniel 11:34

As the historical book of I Maccabees shows (and as we just mentioned), the decrees of Antiochus IV eventually led to a rebellion initiated by the priest Mattathias and his five sons (most notably, Judas Maccabeus). He and his family had fled from Jerusalem to Modein when the Seleucid forces took the city. There, Mattathias killed a Jew who was sacrificing according to Antiochus IV's command, as well as the king's officer who was forcing them to sacrifice. From this first act of rebellion, a guerilla war against the forces of Antiochus IV began.

After the death of his father Mattathias in 166 BC, Judas Maccabeus defeated the large army of Antiochus IV's general, Apollonius. This victory helped Judas gather a sizable force; however, only a minority of the soldiers were actually faithful men.

Next, Seron, the commander of the Syrian army, came against the forces of Judas. This army was also defeated, as Judas' fame spread all the way to Antioch. Antiochus IV was greatly angered by the exploits of Judas and his men, and he gathered his army. He opened the royal treasury and gave his soldiers a year's wages, ordering them to be ready for whatever action needed to be taken.

This approach quickly emptied the royal treasury of funds and made it necessary for Antiochus IV to seek additional tribute and spoil from his lands. In 166 BC, he decided to go to Persia to collect or seize by force the needed money. Antiochus IV left his general Lysias in charge of his son and half of his army, with instructions to attack and destroy Jerusalem and Judea. Lysias sent an army of forty thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry and marched into Judea. He met the forces of Judas Maccabeus (three thousand poorly equipped men) near Emmaus. However, despite being vastly outnumbered, Judas' army routed the Syrians, killing three thousand and putting the rest to flight.

In 165 BC, Lysias again sent the Syrian army (now numbering sixty thousand infantrymen and five thousand cavalry) against the Jewish

forces, which had risen to ten thousand. This time, five thousand Syrians were killed and Lysias fled back to Antioch.

Because of his great victory, Judas and his men were able to recapture the Temple. The pious Jews cleansed and renewed it, and on the 25th of Kislev, 165 BC, three years after the first abominable sacrifice had been offered, the new altar was rededicated and holy sacrifices were offered. The Jews celebrated the rededication of the Temple for eight days.

In memory of the Jewish victory and rededication of the Temple, Judas Maccabeus decreed that the Feast of Dedication (called Hanukkah in Hebrew) was to be observed every year thereafter for eight days, beginning on the 25th of Kislev. It surprises many that this feast of Hanukkah is actually referenced in the New Testament in John 10:22.

In 164 BC, Antiochus IV's army was defeated at Elymais, Persia when he attempted to plunder the city of its gold and silver. Soon thereafter, a messenger came from Antioch and notified him of the defeat of his armies by Judas and the Jews. Terribly shaken by these events, he fell sick and became bedridden. Antiochus IV died shortly a short time later.

Daniel 11:35

“And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.”

-Daniel 11:35

When the Gentile nations around Judea heard of their victory over the Seleucids, they became very angry. They began to kill those Jews who lived among them. Judas Maccabeus and his brother Simon went out to fight against those Gentiles who sought to kill the Jews and defeated them.

After the death of Judas Maccabeus in battle in 161 BC, persecution continued upon the Jews, as history records. Many wicked Jews

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who had opposed Judas and his goals took the opportunity after his death to persecute and kill righteous Jews.

Beginning with Mattathias' leadership of the rebellion against Antiochus IV, the rule of the Hasmoneans (named after Mattathias' grandfather, Asmoneus) lasted from 168 until 37 BC. The words "until the time of the end" refer to the end of this second period of Jewish sovereignty. The "appointed time" refers to the seventy weeks of years that Gabriel had earlier told Daniel about (Daniel 9:24-27), which (after the first sixty-nine), led to the appearance of the Messiah.

We have just gone through over one hundred specific prophetic statements in these past thirty-five verses. This serves as an impressive introduction to the verses that follow. These thirty-five verses serve as an astonishing prophetic validation of the Bible through their precise fulfillments in the historical events we have examined. They also serve to set the stage for the following verses, which we recognize have happened historically, but also seem to prefigure similar prophetic events yet to happen in the end times. We have already seen this type of "dual fulfillment" displayed in some of the last verses examined, such as Verse 31 (the "abomination of desolation"), which clearly, in addition to being recorded history, also profiles a future end times event, as indicated by the later words of Jesus.

In other words, they record history in advance, but increasingly with a dual layer of prophetic insight that also profiles the end of days and the coming world leader known widely as the Antichrist. This coming king is profiled through several historical world leaders, who all displayed characteristics associated with him. We have already clearly seen this done with Antiochus IV, but as this chapter concludes, we will see another historical king that the text uses to prefigure the activities of the coming Antichrist.

As Chapter 11 closes, we see that the narrative continues into Chapter 12, which immediately opens describing end-times Second Coming events. This confirms what we have just stated, about the last

verses of Chapter 11 seeming to transcend the near-term BC fulfillments and extend to a greater, more ultimate fulfillment set to take place during the Tribulation. So, let's remain sensitive to that as we continue.

Daniel 11:36

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.”

-Daniel 11:36

In this verse, the king being spoken of changes. Starting back in Verse 21, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) was the referenced king. Then, Verses 32 through 35 spoke of his defeat by the Maccabees, and also encompass the subsequent fall of their dynasty. But the context shows that the remaining verses in this chapter – starting with this one (Verse 36) – cannot apply to Antiochus IV. Because of this, most Christian scholars try to insert a huge chronological gap in the prophecy here, claiming that the rest of it applies only to the end-time antitype, the Antichrist. Most who take this view do advocate for a literal view of scripture – to their credit. But in this study, we will advocate for an even more literal approach than the interpretation just described. Here's how and why...

If up to this point, the text has been historical, describing the inter-testamental time period, then it would seem logical that this same pattern would continue. If the text up to this point has contained at least some dual historical and end-times prophecies (such as the abomination of desolation), then if we are consistent in our interpretation, we should expect that same style to continue, rather than change abruptly without warning. We of course realize that hidden gaps in prophecies sometimes do occur in scripture, but

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we don't believe this is one, as our understanding of the record of history seems to clearly indicate the continuance of historical near-term fulfillments in these verses.

It would appear that those who advocate for claiming that the remaining verses are only end-times prophecies – and didn't have a near-term fulfillment during the inter-testamental period – are only advocating for that because their perception of history no longer seems to align with the text. But this is only true if you take for granted that Antiochus IV is still the king being referenced. If you remain flexible and are not married to that idea, then you will see that history actually does continue to parallel this narrative.

In other words, what appears to have caused scholars to stray away from the correct understanding at this point of the prophecy is that they were unable to find a successor to Antiochus IV who matched the description of “the king” in Verse 36. But two points must be kept in mind in order to properly understand this prophecy.

First, the subject is the Seleucid or Ptolemaic dynasties **only while these kingdoms affected Daniel's people, Israel**. When you keep the focus on Israel – as the text intends – you recognize that when the Seleucids no longer govern Israel, the focus will shift to the one who **is** governing Israel. Therefore, the expression “the king,” without any other description, should absolutely mean one who was king over Israel.

Secondly, the immediately preceding verses (Daniel 11:32-35) refer to the Jews and their situation during and after the Maccabean revolt. Based on the history of this period, we should look for the fulfillment of this verse by a “king” other than Antiochus IV or the immediately following Hasmonean rulers. We must stay current with where the prophecy is leading.

So then, by following this train of thinking, our question should be, “was there a king who ruled Israel after the end of the Hasmonean era?” Both secular history and the New Testament do record the acts of a very notorious king who appeared on the scene in Israel at the end of the Hasmonean period. As we will see, this king fulfilled every

prophetic description given in Verses 36 through 39. That king was Herod the Great.

In Verse 36, the one spoken of is not identified as either the king of the North or the king of the South, but simply as “the king” – further helping us recognize that the focus is no longer the Seleucids vs. the Ptolemies. Herod was seated as king on the throne of Israel when the Messiah, Jesus, was born. He is also referred to as “the king” in the Gospels (Matthew 2:1, 3, 9, and Luke 1:5). He, like Antiochus IV before him, was a type of the coming Antichrist, as his actions will reveal. Let’s look at the specific points in Verse 36 and see how Herod fulfilled them.

- “The king shall do according to his own will”

The first thing said of this king is that he would “do according to his own will.” While most take this to mean that the king would do as he pleased, it is instructive to see how this phrase is used elsewhere in the prophecy. In Daniel 11:3, we see that it is said of Alexander the Great – that he also would “do according to his will.” Similar words are used of Antiochus the Great in Daniel 11:16. This means more than simply a strong-willed ruler who did things his own way. Both of these rulers (Alexander and Antiochus III) were exceptionally successful in achieving their goals. This title of the “Willful King” is also often seen as a prophetic title of the coming Antichrist, with “willful” being a trait embodied in these other historical rulers.

Success in achieving and maintaining power also defined Herod the Great. History shows that Herod was an Idumean, or, an Edomite (the Edomites were forcibly converted to Judaism under the Hasmonean ruler John Hyrcanus around 130 BC). Herod’s father Antipater II, a friend and advisor of the Hasmonean ruler Hyrcanus II, was made procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar. In that position, Antipater II made Herod the governor of Galilee at the age of 25 in 47 BC. Herod ingratiated himself with Rome following the assassination of Julius Caesar and eventually married Mariamne, a granddaughter of Hyrcanus II (even though he was already married with a young son).

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Due to a recommendation by Hyrcanus II (as well as a bribe paid to Roman ruler Mark Antony), Herod was appointed as a tetrarch over Judea in 41 BC (a tetrarch in the Roman Empire was the governor of one of four divisions of a country or province).

Shortly thereafter, the Parthians overran Judea in 40 BC and installed Antigonus, the Hasmonean brother of Hyrcanus II, as king. Herod fled and eventually came to Rome, where he was appointed king of Judea by Gaius Octavius (the grandnephew of Julius Caesar) and Mark Antony. He left Rome with an army and by 37 BC had captured Judea and deposed Antigonus. He bribed Antony to have Antigonus killed, lest his claims to the Judean throne be found to be more legitimate than Herod's. All in all, Herod's rise to power showed that he was very successful at doing "according to his own will."

Viewing the expression in the sense of doing as he pleased, history shows that Herod was ruthless and cruel in doing his own will. He did not hesitate to murder those he considered to be threats to his rule, including Hyrcanus II and almost the entire Hasmonean line. Even those closest to him, his own family, were not safe. Herod had his beloved wife, Mariamne, executed on a trumped-up charge of adultery, as well as three of his own sons because he suspected them of conspiring to take his throne. These and other deeds of evil willfulness characterized his entire reign.

- "He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god"

The word "god" here is the Hebrew "el." *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* says...

"the primary meanings of this root as used in scripture are 'god' (pagan or false gods), 'God' (the true God of Israel) and less frequently, 'the mighty' (referring to men or angels)."¹³

It is clear that Herod exalted and magnified himself above every "mighty one" in Israel, whether priests or rulers. He appointed whomever he chose to the sacred office of high priest. However,

because he owed true allegiance only to himself in his lust for absolute power, Herod truthfully could be said to have exalted and magnified himself above all other gods (including the God of Israel, whose will he attempted to thwart by attempting to destroy the promised Messiah – as recorded in Matthew 2).

- “He shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods”

The Hebrew word *niphla’ot*, rendered “blasphemies” in some translations, actually means “marvelous” (if used in a positive sense) or “astonishing” (in a negative sense).¹⁴

This charge against Herod primarily seems to refer to his command to slaughter the male babies of Bethlehem. This was done for the express purpose of destroying the coming Messiah (Matthew 2:4), the one God had promised to send to be king over His people, Israel. Herod chose to act directly against God’s will in this way to ensure that his own throne would not be taken over by the rightful heir, the Messiah, the Son of David. We will examine this action more later on.

Daniel 11:37

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.”

-Daniel 11:37

- “He shall regard neither the God of his fathers... nor regard any God”

Even though Herod was an Idumean (a descendant of Esau), his family had converted to Judaism in the second century BC. Therefore, Herod was generally regarded as a Jew. In fact, when addressing the Jewish people, Herod customarily used the expression “our fathers” to emphasize his genealogical ties to the patriarchs. Yet Herod promoted Greek and Roman gods and built the port city of Caesarea (named

after the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus), which became a symbol in Jewish eyes of everything pagan. In Caesarea, Herod built a huge temple dedicated to the worship of Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor, who was considered a god.

Additionally, he built temples dedicated to Augustus in Sebaste (the rebuilt city of Samaria) and Panias (a city long associated with the worship of the pagan god Pan). He also supported the restoration of the temple of Pythian Apollo on the Greek island of Rhodes, participated in the building of the temple to Ba'al Shamim at Si'a, and contributed to temples in Tyre and Sidon. Herod extensively remodeled the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, but then placed a huge golden Roman eagle at the main entrance, which religious Jews saw as a blasphemous idol. At one point, a group of Torah students destroyed this emblem of idolatry, earning themselves the fate of being burned alive by Herod. Herod's regard was for the benefits that he could achieve by supporting various gods; his religion was one of expedience, not conviction. He truly exalted himself above all the gods.

- “The desire of women”

The phrase “the desire of women” has been variously understood. Some scholars have argued that, speaking of the end-time Antichrist, this indicates that he will have no sexual desire for women. Others have suggested that in order to truly understand this phrase according to the Jewish mind, you must recognize its cultural and religious significance. In Haggai 2:7, the Messiah is called “the desire of all nations.” The exact same Hebrew word *chemdah* (Strong's #2532) – meaning desire – is used in that verse and in this verse – Daniel 11:37.¹⁵

It was well established that the hope of every religious Jewish woman was to be the mother of the prophesied Messiah. Therefore, it was the Messiah who was recognized as being “the desire” of Jewish women.^{16 17}

Additionally, children in general are “the desire of women.” The fact that Herod attempted to murder the infant Messiah by destroying

a multitude of babies shows that he had no regard for the maternal desire of women. Herod exalted himself above all by valuing holding onto his power and position above everyone and everything else, including the God of Israel.

It is certainly possible that this phrase could take on a homosexual or asexual connotation with regards to the coming Antichrist. However, the culturally significant meaning of this phrase seems to refer to the Messiah and in a wider sense, children in general.

Daniel 11:38

“But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.”

-Daniel 11:38

- “But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces”

Herod’s actions in securing and holding on to power provide an impressive fulfillment of this verse. The phrase “god of forces,” or “fortresses” (as most other Bible versions render it), is uncommon enough that it provides us a ready means of identification.

The Roman emperors proclaimed themselves to be “gods,” and it was by their military “forces” or “fortresses” that they enlarged and sustained their power and their empires. Herod had complete authority, and he used it ruthlessly. He established an enormous secret police force, brutally killing anyone suspected of plotting against him, and he created Roman peace by slaughtering all dissidents.

Herod also controlled the religious leadership by placing a lackey in the position of high priest. If any of his appointees was foolish enough to displease him, Herod killed him and replaced him with another lackey.

Furthermore, Herod was well known for constructing immense fortresses and building projects. The vast majority of popular tourist sites in present-day Israel were originally built by Herod. He built

fortresses throughout the land just in case he should ever need sanctuary. These included Sabaste in the Hills of Ephraim, the central region of Israel; Herodium, just east of Bethlehem; and Jericho. Each of these fortresses was architecturally unique.

Sabaste was originally called Samaria. It had been the capital of Israel during the Divided Kingdom, and Samaria became the name for the entire northern region. Herod built over the ruins of Samaria, which had been built atop a mountain. He ordered the construction of an enormous colonnade of imported marble starting from the base of the mountain and rising to the summit.

The mountain Herod had chosen for the fortress Herodium was too low. Herod has his architects raise the summit and build his palace inside this man-made cone. It is generally believed that Herod was buried in Herodium, but no grave was ever found. To supply water for the Jericho fortress, Herod had an enormous aqueduct built, which carried water from Ein Kelt.

One of Herod's greatest building projects was in Jerusalem. Partially in order to ingratiate himself to the Jews, he wanted to enlarge and embellish the Temple, but the mountain on which the First Temple and the Second Temple were built, was just too small for his plans. That didn't stop Herod. He dramatically increased the size of the Temple Mount by constructing huge encasement walls and filling them in with pure dirt, creating a large trapezoid. He was then able to proceed with his architectural plans to enlarge the Temple and its courtyards.

Herod protected the Temple Mount with a large military fortress called Antonia, honoring Mark Antony. He protected the western entrance of Jerusalem (and, incidentally, his villa situated there) with a huge tri-towered fortress called the Citadel. The Citadel loomed over the wealthy part of town, called the Upper City.

But Herod's most famous fortress was Masada. Located on the shores of the Dead Sea, Masada was built on a high plateau. Access was only along a steep, sharply winding path called the Snake Path. At the top, Herod had two palaces: a magnificent three-tiered northern palace complete with columns and frescoes offered a spectacular view

of the Dead Sea. A larger mosaic-decorated western palace was probably planned as an administrative headquarters.

Herod's architects created water channels and cisterns to provide drinking water during the long, dry summers. Huge storehouses guaranteed food in case of siege. A strong wall enclosed the entire summit of the plateau. It was an awesome fortress and appeared to be invulnerable.

Herod's projects were built through the use of thousands of Jews as forced laborers moving enormous blocks of limestone. Many of these blocks weighed more than ten tons. Because of his despotic actions, the Jews despised and feared Herod. Even projects that he commissioned to endear him to the people failed to change their hatred for him.

Herod continued to build. In honor of Octavian (Augustus Caesar), Herod took the ancient port city of Strato's Tower just south of Haifa and renamed it Caesarea. There, he created a deep-sea port, surrounded the city with a wall, and constructed an amphitheater. To supply the port with ample water, Herod build another enormous aqueduct.

Although Herod was a terrible tyrant, his buildings and fortresses remain awesome architectural achievements even today.

- “And a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things”

The pagan Roman rulers considered themselves to be gods. Herod was quick to honor the warring Roman rulers with tribute and building projects. Herod introduced Greek-style games in honor of Caesar. He often sent delegations to Rome to deliver valuable gifts and money to show his respect to Caesar.

Daniel 11:39

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“Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.”

-Daniel 11:39

Verse 39 continues the subject from the previous verse. Using the support and backing of the Roman emperor, Herod was able to overcome all of his foes. In the process, he promoted the glory of the Romans in Judea to his own benefit. Herod gave land and authority to those who supported him in order to secure their allegiance.

When viewed properly, we can see that every item that was foretold of “the king” in Verses 36-39 was precisely fulfilled in the reign of Herod.

Daniel 11:40

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.”

-Daniel 11:40

This passage is another confirmation that the king we have been talking about – who we have identified as Herod – wasn’t a king of the North or king of the South. This passage mentions both of those kings coming out in war, with Herod being initially pulled along by the king of the South, indicating that he is obviously neither of them. Although in most translations, the wording makes it difficult to follow which “he” this passage is referring to at certain points, the idea here is that there would be a massive conflict between the kings of the North and South – with Herod being dragged along as an accessory. Remember, this prophecy is not primarily concerned with Syria, Egypt, Rome or any other foreign power, but with the fate of Daniel’s people, the Jews. Verses 40-43 are a parenthetical insert describing the last major battle over the land of Israel before the Messiah appeared.

For the final time in this prophecy, we see the king of the South and the king of the North engage one another in battle – with Herod caught in the middle. Here, the king of the South is Mark Antony and his ally Cleopatra (the last monarch to occupy the Egyptian throne). The king of the North is Octavius (or Octavian, Caesar Augustus), who, as the official representative of Rome, was ruler of the former Syrian empire of the Seleucids.

Antony and Octavius made a pact with a third party (Marcus Aemilius Lepidus) to rule Rome after the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC. In the civil war that followed Caesar's death, they defeated the assassins' forces in 42 BC. The next year, Antony fell in love with the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra. After Antony suffered a military defeat against the Parthians in 36 BC, he and Octavius had a falling out. Worsening the situation was the fact that, in 32 BC, Antony divorced his Roman wife, Octavia (the sister of Octavius) and ceded many of the eastern Roman territories to Cleopatra and their children. Finally, in 31 BC, a new civil war broke out between the Roman Senate-supported Octavius and Antony and Cleopatra.

The Roman historian Plutarch wrote that the first move in the war was made by Antony (at the insistence of Cleopatra). Thus, we see that the “king of the South” indeed first attacked the “king of the North” – just as the prophecy had said. The Roman Senate quickly pronounced Antony an outlaw and declared war on Cleopatra.

In this war, Herod supported Antony and sent supplies to his forces. He wished to join Antony for a final showdown with Octavius, but fortunately (for Herod), Antony dispatched him and his troops to fight the Nabatean king Malichus I.

Amazingly, the prophecy was accurately fulfilled in regard to the composition of the forces engaged in the war. Despite the fact that each side had assembled large infantry forces, Plutarch records that these infantries were not engaged at all in the short war. Although his generals advised Antony to use his overwhelming infantry advantage to defeat Octavius, Antony decided to prosecute the war primarily with ships in order to satisfy the request of Cleopatra. Thus, the conflict was decided by chariots, horsemen, and in a major naval battle

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– approximately six hundred thirty ships. After the navy of Antony and Cleopatra was badly defeated at the famous Battle of Actium in Greece on September 2, 31 BC, the infantry deserted and never saw battle.

Seeing that Antony was all but defeated, Herod helped Quintus Didius, the Roman governor of Syria prevent a troop of Antony’s gladiators from reaching Egypt to aid Antony. Herod then undertook a dangerous sea voyage in winter 30 BC to meet with Octavius on the Greek island of Rhodes. Herod came to him humbly and stated that he would be as loyal to Octavius as he had previously been to Antony. Octavius accepted Herod’s pledge and promised him continued rule over Judea.

Daniel 11:41

“He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.”

-Daniel 11:41

The subject of this verse is the continuing narrative referring to the king of the North, Octavius. The course Octavius took after his victory over Antony and Cleopatra accurately follows the prophecy. He passed through Syria, Judea (the “glorious land”), and Egypt in his pursuit of the pair. However, the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon were not invaded during this excursion. A later expedition into these areas (about 25 BC), under the command of Aelius Gallus along with five hundred troops from Herod, was not successful and no further efforts were made against them.

Daniel 11:42

“He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.”

-Daniel 11:42

Antony's plans to regroup their forces in Alexandria failed, since most of his soldiers had deserted to join Octavius. Based on a false report that Cleopatra had killed herself, Antony committed suicide with his own sword. Cleopatra actually lived for some weeks after Antony's death, and met Octavius on at least one occasion to negotiate the best possible situation for her children. Realizing that Octavius was planning to publicly exhibit her as a captive in his victory parade in Rome, she too committed suicide, reportedly by allowing a venomous snake to bite her.

Daniel 11:43

“He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels.”

-Daniel 11:43 (NKJV)

The prophecy here refers specifically to the vast treasures of Egypt. Therefore, its fulfillment must be looked for in the days of Egypt's power and wealth. It cannot have been fulfilled in the debased and poverty-stricken Egypt of later centuries. In the days of Antony and Cleopatra, the treasures of Egypt were of immense value, having been accumulated over the years of the Ptolemaic rule. Octavius captured the accumulated riches of Egypt with his victory over Antony and Cleopatra, and celebrated his triumph in Rome in 29 BC.

He became the first Roman emperor, entitled “Caesar Augustus.” Interest rates in the Roman Empire fell greatly, due to the influx of plunder from Egypt. Octavius returned in victory to Rome. His general, Cornelius Balbus, later conquered Libya and Ethiopia for Rome, exactly as the prophecy predicted.

So, this concludes the parenthetical events of Verses 40-43. Why are the parenthetical events of these verses singled out? Because they illustrate how Rome's domination over Judea was fully established and show the end of the separate history for the kingdom of the South. It also sets the stage for the political conditions that would

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exist at the time the prophesied Messiah was to arise, according to the seventy-weeks prophecy given to Daniel earlier.

Daniel 11:44

“But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.”

–Daniel 11:44 (NKJV)

Having updated the story flow in Verses 40-43 to show the Roman dominance of Judea and the end of the “king of the South,” the prophecy now reverts back to its earlier subject, Herod the king.

What news came “from the east” to trouble Herod? Clearly, it was the arrival of the Magi heralding the birth of the one “who had been born King of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2). As the next verse in Matthew’s Gospel states, “When Herod the king heard this, he was **troubled**, and all Jerusalem with him” (Matthew 2:3) – the same wording as the prophecy.

Nothing could “trouble” Herod more than reports of a supposed claimant to his throne. After the Magi failed to return with a report of the location of the newborn king, Herod became furious and commanded that all the male children in Bethlehem and in all of its districts, from two years old and under, be slain, “annihilating many.” Herod proclaimed this annihilation of the males of ages “two years and under” based on the time-frame he had determined from what the Magi had originally told him (Matthew 2:16).

Also, in the last years of Herod’s life, his oldest son Antipater conspired to take over his throne. Antipater was in Rome (which at this time had become the seat of what is indefinitely called “the North” in this prophecy). He sent letters to his father, giving information that two of his other sons, whom Herod meant to make his successors, had denigrated their father to Caesar. These “tidings out of the north” troubled Herod to the extent that he had the two sons killed. Later, Antipater himself was executed for his conspiracy and intrigue.

Herod's "great fury" was not confined to the infants of Bethlehem or to the members of his own family. It was also, at nearly this same time, that he burned alive those who had pulled down his golden image of the Roman eagle from the gate of the Temple.

Daniel 11:45

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

-Daniel 11:45

Herod had many royal palaces throughout Judea, including two in Jerusalem. But due to an illness, which worsened in March of 4 BC, he retired to his winter palace at Jericho, "between the seas," less than ten miles northwest of the Dead Sea, about forty-five miles east of the Mediterranean Sea, and less than twenty miles northeast of Jerusalem.

The description of the locations where this king would place the tabernacles of his palace, being "between the seas in the glorious holy mountain" is perfectly descriptive of Herod's palaces and even his extensive renovation of the Temple on Mount Zion, the "glorious holy mountain."

The final part of the prophecy shows that, in his last days, the king would seek deliverance from a threat to his life, but would not receive it. This was literally fulfilled at the end of Herod's life, as the Jewish historian Josephus vividly documented. After years of suffering from a painful disease (probably syphilis), Herod finally became so despondent that he attempted to take his own life with a knife. His cousin Achiab stopped him from this act of suicide. Immediately after his suicide attempt, Herod ordered the execution of his son, Antipater. Just five days later, he finally succumbed to his illness. Herod the king was seventy years old at the time of his death.

This signals the end of the eleventh chapter of Daniel. However, we must remember that the chapter and verse divisions within the Bible were inserted later, by man, in order to help us find passages

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easier. So, in order to gain further context, we will briefly examine the first verse of the following chapter, Daniel 12:1.

Daniel 12:1

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

-Daniel 12:1

Chapter 12 starts with the Hebrew phrase *uva’et*, which is translated “at that time.” When used in prophetic writings, this phrase always denotes the time of the appearance of Messiah to save Israel (Jeremiah 33:15; 50:4, 20; Joel 3:1; Zephaniah 3:20). At the beginning of this chapter, we finally see the time gap most seek to insert at Daniel 11:36.

The context of the first verse in Chapter 12 show that the prophecy has now undeniably jumped forward to the time of the ultimate salvation of Daniel’s people. So, it is clear that the last portion of verses from Chapter 11 not only recorded pre-Messianic Jewish history in advance, but also in a unique way, seems to prefigure the events that will take place during the end-times under the rule of the Antichrist.

With that, we will conclude our verse-by-verse examination of this incredible prophetic chapter.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

As we've seen with abundant clarity, the expansive prophecy recorded in Daniel 11 anticipates the political maneuverings of the powers that fought over and ruled Judea and the Jews throughout the period of the first sixty-nine weeks of the seventy weeks prophecy given earlier to Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). These powers included the northern Seleucid kingdom of Syria, the southern Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt, the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty, the Roman Empire, and Rome's vassal in Judea, Herod the Great.

Like many prophecies, this one is likely dual or cyclical in many ways. They seems to clearly have a near-term and far-term sense. Events that have occurred in ancient times will likely be replicated at the time of the end for an ultimate far-term fulfillment. It seems clear that Antiochus IV and Herod the Great are types of the coming Antichrist. What is remarkable from this extensive prophecy is how it thoroughly demonstrates the precision used to profile history in advance. Once again, the reality of the extra-dimensional origin of the Biblical text is made vivid to us through the uniqueness of prophecy.

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