

DANIEL: Chapter 11

Historically Daniel 11 has been used by evangelical theologians to further their understanding that the Scriptures have supernatural origin and are in fact authored by God through a man. The amazing details of this chapter in Daniel have forced liberal rationalistic theologians to discount the chapter as a later addition to the book- usually during the Maccabean era. This was first an idea, which was fostered by the Jewish Gnostic Porphyry in the 3rd century A.D.

11:1 “And as for me in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.”

Darius the Mede has been identified by evangelical scholars as Cyrus’ Median general with another name- Gubaru. This dates the prophecy at 539/38 B.C.- Far in advance of the liberal commentators dating of 165 B.C.

11:2 “And now I will show you the truth. Behold three more kings shall arise in Persia; and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them; and when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.”

The “three more kings” are Cyrus, Cambyses and Darius. The “fourth” Persian King which will be “far richer” than them is Xerxes. Xerxes did fight against the Greeks, but was defeated at Salamis in 480 B.C. by the Greeks.

11:3 “Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will.”

This mighty king was Alexander the Great who conquered the known world at the age of 32 in the 330’s B.C. His “great dominion” was worldwide.

11:4 “And when he has arisen his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.”

Alexander’s kingdom was divided into four parts at his death. Four of his generals who were not related to him by blood took the Greek empire. General Cassander took Macedonia, General Lysimachus took Asia Minor, General Seleucus took Syria and the east and General Ptolemy took Egypt.

11:5 “Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and his dominion shall be a great dominion.”

“The king of the south” is Ptolemy I. One of “his princes” is referring to Seleucus Nicator. Nicator was originally a general for Ptolemy. He became so strong later, however, that he became king of Syria/Babylon in 311 and went on to conquer all the way to India. Nicator was the strongest of Alexander the Great’s successors. “His dominion shall be a great dominion” refers to the vast expanse of Nicator’s conquests.

11:6 “After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make peace but she shall not retain the strength

of her arm, and he and his offspring shall not endure; but she shall be given up, and her attendants, her child, and he who got possession of her.”

There is a jump in this verse from the one immediately preceding it. “King of the south” refers to Ptolemy II in Egypt who reigned from 285-246 B.C. The “daughter of the king of the south” refers to Ptolemy’s daughter- Berenice. In 252 B.C., Ptolemy II gave her in marriage to the “king of the north” who is now Antiochus II. Antiochus II reigned from 261-247 B.C. Antiochus II promised to divorce his first wife Laodice in order to marry Berenice, Ptolemy II’s daughter. Laodice did not appreciate this and with resolution murdered Antiochus II (her former husband) by poisoning him and also murdered Berenice and the offspring produced by Antiochus II and Berenice.

11:7 “In those times a branch from her roots shall arise in his place; he shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.”

The “branch from her roots” is referring to murdered Berenice’s brother- Ptolemy III. In retaliation for his sister’s murder, Ptolemy III marched north out of Egypt and invaded Syria. Ptolemy reigned from 246-221 in Egypt. Ptolemy III enjoyed a great victory in this invasion of Syria.

11:8 “He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their molten images and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north.”

Ptolemy III plundered the Syrians mightily but did not try to hold or eliminate the northern kingdom. The wealth gained by Ptolemy III enabled him to start temple building on a huge scale. Today, these temples are the finest examples of Greek temples in Egypt. The “king of the north” in this passage is Seleucus II (247-226).

11:9 “Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return into his own land.”

Seleucus II did make a brief incursion into the south but Ptolemy III defeated him in 240 B.C.

11:10 “His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall come on and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress.”

“His sons”- (the sons of Seleucus II)- Seleucus III (226-223 reign) and Antiochus III (223-187 reign). “His fortress” is the fortress of the king of the south Ptolemy IV of Egypt (221-203 reign). Antiochus III attacked Gaza on the Egyptian border. Seleucus III only reigned for 2 years in Syria and then was mysteriously killed while at war in Asia Minor in 223. His brother Antiochus III took over in 223 and reigned until 187. This verse is probably specifically relating to Antiochus III.

11:11 “Then the king of the south moved with anger, shall come out and fight with the king of the north; and he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand.”

“King of the south” is Ptolemy IV (221-203 reign). Ptolemy IV defeated Antiochus III in 217 at Raphia.

11:12 “And when the multitude is taken, his heart shall be exalted and he shall cast down tens of thousands but he shall not prevail.”

The apparent victory of Ptolemy IV over Antiochus III had relatively short-lived benefits for the southern kingdom.

11:13 “For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the former; and after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.”

The “king of the north”- Antiochus III returned against Ptolemy 14 years later with a great army.

11:14 “In those times many shall rise against the king of the south; and the men of violence among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision; but they shall fail.”

Antiochus III recruited Jews to fight against Ptolemy IV. Because of this when Ptolemy IV’s forces gained the upper hand his leading General- Scopas had Palestine devastated in 200 B.C.

11:15 “Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siege works, and take a well fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his picked troops, for there shall be no strength to stand.”

Antiochus III finally conquered Ptolemy IV probably at Sidon in 198 where Scopas (Ptolemy’s general) surrendered.

11:16 “But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and one shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land and all of it shall be in his power.”

Antiochus took the “glorious land” around 198 B.C. Palestine was given into the control of Antiochus III.

11:17 “He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of peace and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom; but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.”

Antiochus III eventually gave his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V for a marriage alliance hoping that he would gain advantage over Egypt this way. Unfortunately for Antiochus, Cleopatra sided with Egypt and the Ptolemaic kingdom.

11:18 “Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many of them; but a commander shall put an end to his insolence; indeed he shall turn his insolence back upon him.”

Antiochus III turned his “face to the coastlands” and invaded Thrace and Greece. The Romans fought with him and defeated him at Thermopylae in 189 B.C. He agreed to give up parts of Asia Minor, part of his military and pay a heavy fine. One of the hostages that the Romans took to Rome as a hostage was Antiochus IV who would later call himself Antiochus Epiphanes.

11:19 “Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.”

In 187 Antiochus III died.

11:20 “Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute through the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor battle.”

“One who shall send an exactor” in this passage is Seleucus IV who reigned from 187-175 B.C. Seleucus IV was the brother of Antiochus IV (Antiochus Epiphanes). Seleucus IV was assassinated in 175 B.C.

11:21 “In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given; he shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.”

The “contemptible person” is Antiochus Epiphanes. Epiphanes declared himself to be king instead of Seleucus IV’s rightful heir to the throne. Because of the lack of vigor in the Seleucid kingdom, Antiochus Epiphanes began a vigorous program of Hellenization especially incorporating the worship of Zeus (of which Antiochus considered himself to be the earthly incarnation). Epiphanes reigned from 175-164 B.C.

11:22 “Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, and the prince of the covenant also.”

These were primarily carried out against Ptolemy VI of Egypt (181-145 reign). The “prince of the covenant” here may refer to the high priest of the Jews whom Epiphanes had murdered and then replaced him with his brother.

11:23 “And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully; and he shall become strong with a small people.”

This alliance was an alliance for greater Hellenization among the Jews by placing Menelaus in as high priest which would also further line Antiochus IV’s pockets from the temple treasury as Menelaus had offered money to Epiphanes if Epiphanes would see to it that Menelaus was put in as high priest.

11:24 “Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province; and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his father’s fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.”

In 170 Antiochus attacked Ptolemy VI.

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 wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him.”

Antiochus went to Memphis after defeating Ptolemy VI and Antiochus declared himself King of Egypt. He left Ptolemy VI in Memphis to be the ruler there and sent Ptolemy’s brother west to be the ruler of Alexandria. Antiochus Epiphanes’ reason for this was to divide Egypt, thus weakening it from the inside so as to curtail the possibility of rebellion against Epiphanes’ rule there. Ptolemy VI (“king of the south” in this passage) suffered mutiny among his subjects and thus fell from power.

11:26 “Even those who eat his rich food shall be his undoing; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.”

There was treachery present although Epiphanes and Ptolemy VI professed friendship after their earlier war years.

11:27 “And as for the two kings, their minds shall be bent on mischief; they shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail; for the end is yet to be at the same time appointed.”

Treachery between them.

11:28 “And he shall return to his land with great substance, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will, and return to his own land.”

After this expedition in Egypt, Epiphanes heard that there was unease in Jerusalem. His designated high priest had plundered the temple and desecrated it. Because of this the Jews were rioting. Epiphanes went north and desecrated the temple again with Menelaus, leaving his own soldiers in command in Jerusalem he left to go further north.

11:29 “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before.”

Epiphanes heard of treachery against him in Egypt so he returned to Memphis in 168/69 B.C. and retook it.

11:30 “For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and give heed to those who forsake the holy covenant.”

With his success in Memphis, Epiphanes turned west to Alexandria to strengthen and re-strengthen his grip in Egypt. Before arriving in Alexandria, a Roman representative, Popilius Laenas (a former acquaintance of Epiphanes' from the days when Epiphanes was a hostage there) told Epiphanes to evacuate Egypt. Epiphanes, knowing Roman might militarily, wisely withdrew.

11:31 “Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.”

11:32 “He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant; but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.”

In these two verses we see Epiphanes' satanic character. He was determined to keep Palestine loyal to him. Since he considered himself to be the manifestation of god Zeus upon earth he ordered an intensification of Hellenization in Jerusalem. He marched 22,000 men against Jerusalem on a Sabbath and had many people killed. Jerusalem was plundered and burned. Many children and women were taken as hostages. In 167 B.C. he attempted to totally obliterate Jewish religion. He forbade the observance of the Sabbath, festivals, sacrifices, and circumcision. The Torah was burned; idolatrous altars were set up and Jews were forced to offer up unclean sacrifices and eat swine flesh. This all culminated in the infamous deed on Chislev 25 (Dec. 16, 167 B.C.) when the temple in

Jerusalem as well as the temple on Mt. Gerazim became the places designated by Epiphanes for the worship of Zeus. An altar to Zeus was erected on top of the altar of burnt offering. Swine flesh was offered on this altar. The Jews who submitted to these abominations were allowed to live; those who opposed were killed. "The people who know their God" in this passage are those of the Maccabean revolt who withstood these ungodly actions of Epiphanes.

11:33 "And those among the people who are wise shall make man understand, though they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder for some days."

11:34 "When they fall they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery;"

11:35 "and some of those who are wise shall fall, to refine and to cleanse them and to make them white, until the time of the end, for it is yet for the time appointed."

The Maccabees had great successes in their rebellion against this profanation of the temple etc. Antiochus was enraged at hearing of these great successes. He would have stopped the Maccabees but instead went to Persia and died insane in the summer of 163 B.C.

11:36 "And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god; and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is determined shall be done."

11:37 "He shall give no heed to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women, he shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all."

11:38 "He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these; a god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts."

11:39 "He shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god; those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price."

It is apparent that these three verses also refer to the craziness of Epiphanes.

Apollo the historic deity of the Seleucid/Antiochene dynasty, disappeared almost entirely from the Seleucid coinage after the reign of Epiphanes, being replaced by Zeus. The king must also have attempted to suppress the lascivious cult of the "darling of women" during his attempt to unify religion to the worship of himself as Zeus incarnate.

11:40 "At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him; but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through."

11:41 "He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out his hand: Edom, Moab and the main part of the Ammonites."

11:42 "He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape."

11:43 "He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train."

11:44 "But tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many."

11:45 “And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

Some of contemporary commentators have seen this both as Rome or Antiochus Epiphanes.

The purpose of this study has been to show the beauty of God’s plan in history. How with precision, God predicted through his man, Daniel 200 years in advance that these events would occur. This is of utmost importance for faith in the inspiration of Scripture and trust in the Canon, which has been passed down first from the Jews and then through the centuries of the Christian church. We can trust our Bibles. Hallelujah!

Compiled by Ron Smith
from the following sources:

- Halley**
- Baldwin**
- Calvin**
- Bruce**