

# Daniel 11

## God and Human Hostility

### Introduction

Among the most helpful passages in the book of Daniel may be Daniel 11:6. At first the verse sounds like unintelligible ancient history. In actual fact it contains a gripping human-interest story that reveals a great deal about God.

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

Whatever does it mean?

We shall see on page 286 that around 250 B.C., King Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt and King Antiochus Theos of Syria attempted to guarantee peace between their countries by having King Antiochus marry King Ptolemy's daughter, Berenice.

Antiochus already had a wife, called Laodice. It was part of the deal that he divorce her.

So the divorce was arranged, the new marriage was celebrated, and in due course a baby boy arrived who could someday be the next king. Unfortunately Antiochus soon found that he didn't like Berenice very well. He kept making comparisons between her and his first wife. And when Berenice's father, the king of Egypt, died, Antiochus divorced her and took Laodice back again.

But Laodice had become bitter. She was afraid, too, of what her husband might do next. So using her royal powers in a manner all too common in those days, she had Antiochus, Berenice, and Berenice's attendants and little son all murdered.

It's not a pretty story. Think of the tears these women shed. Think of the rejection, insecurity, and hostility that they felt.

Then remember that the angel told Daniel about the whole situation *almost three hundred years before it happened.*

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Hebrews 13:8.

God knows about every broken heart and broken home. He knows the crushing pain that human hostility induces. And in Daniel 10-12 Jesus appears at the beginning and end of prophecy to teach us that *if we'll let Him*, He'll comfort, encourage, and guide us in every personal tragedy.

*The human race as hostile.* But Daniel 11 deals with more than personal tragedy. It ranges over history, as if the angel who spoke it were a kind of cosmic Walter Cronkite reviewing headlines on TV and signing off, "So that's the way it is"—or rather, since this is predictive prophecy, "So that's the way it will be."

And like the evening headlines, almost every act reported in this chapter is a hostile one. Every actor appears in a bad light, fighting or preparing to fight someone. Except that, near the end, a few "wise" persons appear, who stand firmly for God under heavy provocation.

God knows all about us; and what He knows for the most part isn't good, "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. Sin is always committed against somebody, either our neighbor or the Lord. In this chapter hostile humans are portrayed as cheating, undercutting, and killing one another, then turning their practiced pride and rage against God Himself.

In the context of so much human hostility, this fifth vision of Daniel teaches us that God is present to heal whenever we seek Him.

It also teaches that God is present to blow the whistle on our nasty contests. Verses 27, 29, and 35 refer to "appointed" times. The apostle Paul was similarly aware of God's stopwatch when he said in Acts 17:26, 27,

And he [God] made from one  
[man] every nation of men  
to live on all the face of the earth,  
*having determined allotted  
periods*  
and the boundaries of their  
habitations,  
that they should seek God,

in the hope that they might feel  
after him  
and find him.

*Yet he is not far from each one  
of us.*

*The language of Daniel 11.* The language of Daniel 11 is considered to be "literal" in that it isn't symbolic in the same way that the language of chapters 2, 7, and 8 is. There are no multi-element images, no beasts or horns. Just the same, its language is far from easy. It is cryptic, almost like a code. Each sentence condenses quantities of information. Many metaphors are employed. Many pronouns do not seem, at first, to have clear antecedents. The underlying Hebrew presents problems.

Our first reaction is to wish that God had made the story plainer. Then we reflect that He told the story in this manner for our sakes. The prophecy is for us, and He chose to express it as He did, knowing His way was best.

*Numerous interpretations.* The cryptic quality of Daniel 11 has led to a variety of interpretations.

But, by intentionally omitting the names of people and the dates of major events, God has encouraged us to study the course of history and to make our own comparisons between what He said and what we find. For some Christians, matching history to this particular prophecy has become a religious diversion, even a lifelong passion, more fascinating and far more rewarding than doing jigsaw pictures or crossword puzzles.

The most popular interpretation has always been that the heart of the chapter (verses 21-39) deals with Antiochus Epiphanes, of whom we have heard before (see pages 190-192). Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, held this

interpretation in the first century A.D. It is possible that Christ's disciples did also.

If the disciples did hold this view, they must have been very surprised to hear Jesus say that the "**abomination that makes desolate**" (translated "desolating sacrilege" in Matthew 24:15) that was "spoken" of by Daniel the prophet (in Daniel 8:13 and 11:31) was still to be fulfilled in the future (see footnote, page 248). Their surprise must have grown when they heard Jesus add, "Let the reader [of Daniel] understand." "**Understand**" is a key word in the book of Daniel.

Jesus was present when the angel gave Daniel the contents of chapter 11. The fact that *He* considered the Antiochus Epiphanes interpretation to be inadequate is significant.

There is no doubt that the interpretation which applies verses 21-39 to Antiochus Epiphanes is very old. But is this a good recommendation for it? At the close of the vision the angel told Daniel to "**shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end.**" Then another angel commented, "**The wise will understand.**"

In other words, old interpretations are *bound to be inadequate*. Only interpretations made in relatively recent years have any chance of getting the real issues straight. The vision was sealed until the time of the end.

No doubt God would be happy to see you working on your own interpretation of Daniel 11. You would need to read history books, pray earnestly, and consult with other studious, praying Christians. "You must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation." 2 Peter 1:20.

But don't be misled by any single translation, and be wary of brief foot-

notes in study Bibles. Scholars wrestling with the linguistic difficulties involved have sometimes adapted the Hebrew and tailored their translations to fit a cherished interpretation when they really shouldn't have done so. Years ago the well-known Charles H. H. Wright warned that "these modern attempts to correct the text of Daniel so as to bring it into closer harmony with the records of the Maccabean times are . . . highly suspicious. If the Patristic, mediaeval, and post-Reformation writers have twisted sentences of Daniel to make them express the meaning those commentators desired them to convey, all such writers have been far outshone in that particular point by modern critics."<sup>1</sup>

*Aids to interpretation.* Before attempting to find out what the angel tried to tell Daniel (and us) in chapter 11, it will be helpful to set down a number of observations to influence us as we go along.

1. *Study helps.* In harmony with what we have been saying, we should expect to study history books and to examine more than one Bible translation.

2. *Long time.* Daniel 11 begins with a reference to King Cyrus, who was reigning at the time, and ends at the "**time of the end,**" when Michael will stand up and raise the dead. Thus we should expect the interpretation of Daniel 11 to lead us over long periods of time.

3. *Landmarks.* Spotted along this time period are a few prominent markers to guide us on our way, as buoys guide ships and omnitransmitters guide planes. The most important of these markers are (a) the "**prince of the covenant**" in verse 22 and (b) the "**abomination that makes desolate**" in verse 31. The Hebrew

word for "prince" is not the common word "sar" but the relatively rare "nagid" and is identical to the word for the "prince" who "causes the covenant to prevail" in Daniel 9:24-27. The "prince of the covenant" is *Jesus Christ* (see page 219); hence, by the time we reach verse 22 in our interpretation of Daniel 11, we must be down at least to the time of Christ. And as for the "abomination that makes desolate" (verse 31), Jesus indicated in Matthew 24:15 that it was future to His day. By the time we reach verse 31 we must be well into the Christian era.

4. *Parallels.* We have learned that the great prophetic panoramas of Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 9 not only parallel but also augment each other. We will expect Daniel 11 also to introduce new material while at the same time running parallel to the other visions (see page 295).

5. *Christian history.* We have seen that Daniel 7 and 9 deal largely with the course of the Christian church. The little horn of Daniel 7 represents Christian Rome trampling on God's law and persecuting His saints during a specially designated 1260 years, 538-1798. The little horn of Daniel 8 represents both pagan and Christian Rome, contributing to that misrepresentation of Christ's heavenly ministry which is pictured as ending in 1844, at the close of the 2300 year-days. We will anticipate, then, that Daniel 11 will probably also deal some of the time with the Christian church.

6. "Your people." We are supported in this expectation when we hear the

angel tell Daniel that the message concerns "your people." Daniel 10:14. In our study of Daniel 9:19, 24 we learned that the term "your people" means ethnic Israel until the close of the seventy weeks (A.D. 34) and after that Christian Israel—the church of all believers in Jesus, both Jew and Gentile (see pages 231-234).

*Encouragement about details.* Daniel 11 contains many details. If you don't like details, you may prefer to come back and read the chapter later; but do not be dismayed. God loves details.

Scientists tell us that each drop of rainwater that falls during a thunderstorm contains at least 100 billion billion atoms. And that each atom is composed of protons, neutrons, and electrons. And that each proton and neutron is most likely composed, in turn, of as many as three infinitesimally tiny, rapidly spinning, toplike particles called quarks.

There are over four billion people in our world. Each has his or her own set of social, economic, and family problems. How good it is that the God of raindrops knows all there is to know about everyone's concerns and the hostilities they generate, that He has known about them for centuries in advance, and that He "is not far from each one of us." Acts 17:27.

The fact that man has walked on the moon doesn't mean nearly so much as the fact that, in a very practical sense, God walks on the earth. Think about this as you read Daniel 11 and be encouraged.

## CHAPTER 11

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

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. <sup>3</sup> Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will. <sup>4</sup> 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.

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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

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. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return into his own land.

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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And when the multitude is taken, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. <sup>13</sup> 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.

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 fulfil the vision; but they shall fail. <sup>15</sup> Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks, 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. <sup>16</sup> But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land, and all of it shall be in his power. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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.

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 in battle. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, and the prince of the covenant also. <sup>23</sup> And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully; and he shall become strong with a small people. <sup>24</sup> Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province;



and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> Even those who eat his rich food shall be his undoing; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. <sup>27</sup> 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 time appointed. <sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> "At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south; but it shall not be this time as it was before. <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant; but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. <sup>33</sup> And those among the people who are wise shall make many understand, though they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder, for some days. <sup>34</sup> When they fall, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery; <sup>35</sup> 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.

<sup>36</sup> "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. <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>40</sup> "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. <sup>41</sup> He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. <sup>42</sup> He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. <sup>43</sup> 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. <sup>44</sup> 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. <sup>45</sup> 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.

# The Message of Daniel 11

## God Knows All About Us

A principal difference between the vision of Daniel 11 and the other visions in the book is that, whereas the others deal with the sweep of empires, this one often talks about individuals. In the other visions, “king” means “kingdom.” In Daniel 11, “king” often means “king.”

You have read the chapter and likely you haven’t known what to do with it. Now let’s look at it again and see how specific events in history match specific phrases in the prophecy.

*The common interpretation of verses 1-13.* There is hardly any disagreement among Bible students about the first thirteen verses. Let’s go over this first part slowly enough so we can see how accurately it has been fulfilled.

1. **And as for me [Gabriel],  
in the first year of Darius the Mede,  
I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.**

Gabriel, whom we assume the angel to be, here says that a year or two before this vision he had personally assisted Darius the Mede (not King Darius I) in his administration of Babylon. This information helps explain why Darius was so friendly to Daniel in the matter of the lions’ den.

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.**

After the death of King Cyrus, who was reigning at the time of the vision, the next three kings of Persia were Cambyses (530-522), a usurper called the False Smerdis or Bardiya (522), and Darius I (522-486). Cyrus and Darius I both issued decrees to rebuild the temple.

The fourth king was Xerxes (486-465), known in the Bible as Ahasuerus and the husband of Queen Esther. He spent four full years stockpiling supplies and assembling manpower for a military expedition against Greece, just as the angel had predicted. He truly stirred up “all.” His army teemed with contingents from forty nations—Persians sporting turbans, Assyrians wearing brass helmets, Colchians with wooden hats, Thracians with fox-skin caps, Ethiopians draped in leopard skins, and so on and on.<sup>2</sup> Together they marched, perhaps 300,000<sup>3</sup> of them, mostly on foot, all the way from their homelands to the battles of Salamis (480) and Plataea (479) in Greece—and to complete defeat.

3. **Then a mighty king [Alexander] shall arise  
who shall rule with great dominion  
and do according to his will.**

Victory over the Great King of Persia was a heady tonic for citizens of the little city-states of Greece. Dreams of conquering the Persian Empire began to dance in their heads. Eventually Alexander, son of King Philip of Macedonia, united most of the Greeks, then crossed the Hellespont into Asia and, as we saw earlier (pages 156, 157), completely conquered the empire of the Great King.

4. **And when he [Alexander] 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 was just settling into the task of building the capital of his new empire at the site of old Babylon, when swamp fever overtook him. He died in June 323 B.C. at the age of 32 and was survived by a brain-damaged half brother, Philip, and by an infant son, born actually after Alexander's death. His leading generals fought with each other, eliminated the brother and the son, and in 301 sliced up the empire four ways. The far west went to Cassander, the north to Lysimachus, the east to Seleucus, and the south to Ptolemy.

5. **The king of the south [Ptolemy] shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and his dominion shall be a great dominion.**

The terms "king of the north" and "king of the south" appear frequently in Daniel 11. They designate, at first, the persons who controlled Syria and Egypt, countries lying *north* and *south* of Jerusalem. The actual areas controlled by these kings varied from time to time. Sometimes the northern (Seleucid) kingdom reached from the Aegean Sea to India, and sometimes it consisted of only a few city-states. The king of (Ptolemaic) Egypt annexed Libya and also certain areas on the coast of Asia Minor. During much of the early period covered by Daniel 11, Egypt also controlled Lebanon, Cyprus, and Judea. See map on page 285.

The capital of Egypt under the Ptolemies was not Cairo but Alexandria, a flourishing community founded by Alexander. The principal capital of the Seleucid kingdom was Antioch, in Syria, near to the Mediterranean.

All the kings of Egypt carried the name Ptolemy (TOL-uh-mee), and all the kings of Syria who are referred to in Daniel 11 were called either Antiochus or Seleucus. Because so many had the same names, each was distinguished in ancient times by a second name chosen by the king himself or given to him by his people. Today we give them numbers as well. The result is admittedly a series of "jawbreakers"!

In verse 5 the angel said that the "king of the south" would be "strong." Ptolemy I Soter (323-280) was, in fact, strong right from the start. Egypt was immensely wealthy and rather easy to protect. The "prince" who became "stronger than he" was Seleucus I Nicator, the general who originally won the eastern part of

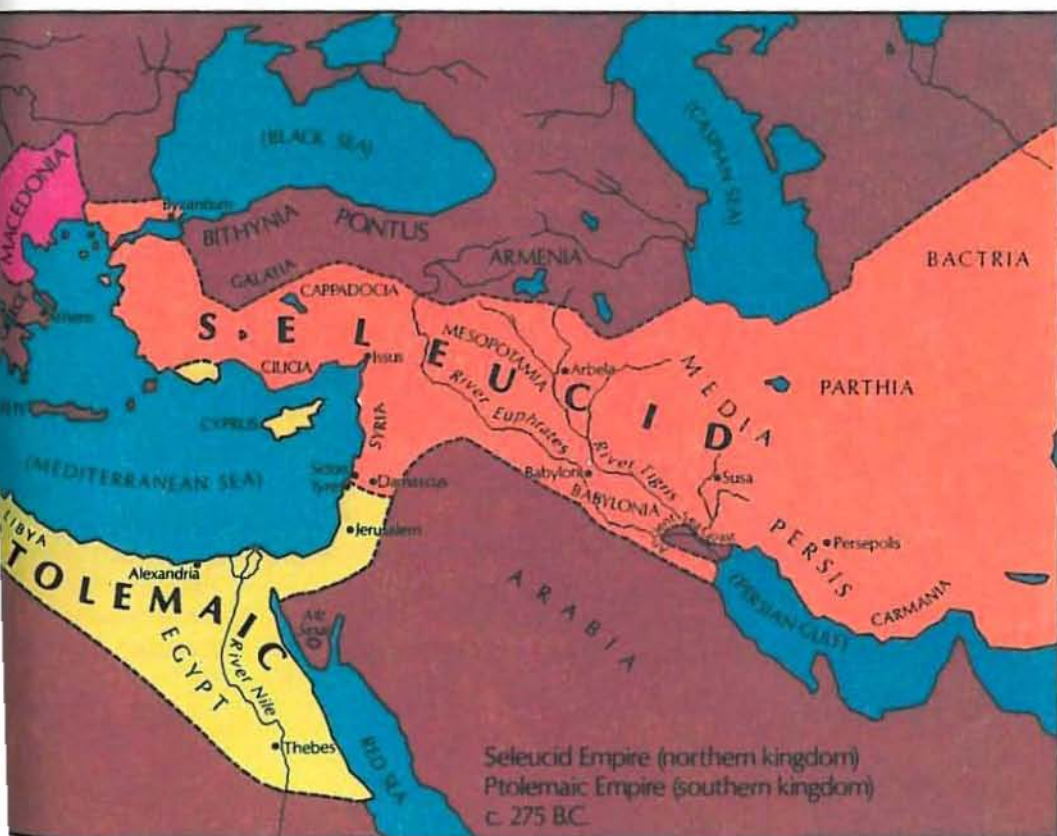


Alexander's empire. Seleucus was driven out of the east by yet another one of Alexander's generals and fled to Egypt for safety. Ptolemy gave him special status and helped him outfit a new army.

Quickly successful in driving his rival out of the east, Seleucus followed through by pushing Lysimachus out of Syria and Asia Minor, thus making himself "**king of the north**"—and the master of most of Alexander's former empire, from the Aegean to India. He would have liked to control Judea too, taking it away from Egypt; but Ptolemy reminded Seleucus that without his help in the first place, he could never have staged his comeback.

6. After some years they [Antiochus II and Ptolemy II] 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 her offspring shall not endure; but she shall be given up, and her attendants, her child, and he who got possession of her.

*When Alexander's "horn" kingdom was "broken," it was divided into four (later three) "horn" kingdoms, each led at first by one of Alexander's four generals.*



## KINGS OF THE SOUTH AND KINGS OF THE NORTH

THE PTOLEMIES		THE SELEUCIDS	
Ptolemy I Soter	*323-282	Seleucus I Nicator	312-281
Ptolemy II Philadelphus	285-246	Antiochus I Soter	281-261
		Antiochus II Theos	261-246
Ptolemy III Euergetes	246-221	Seleucus II Callinicos	246-225
		Seleucus III Ceraunos	225-223
Ptolemy IV Epiphanes	221-203	Antiochus III the Great	223-187
Ptolemy V Epiphanes	203-181	Seleucus IV Philopater	187-175
Ptolemy VI Eupator	181	Antiochus IV Epiphanes	175-164
Ptolemy VII Philometer	181-145	Antiochus V Eupator	164-150
Etc. to B.C. 51		Etc., to B.C. 65	
Cleopatra VI	51-30		

\*Ptolemy I Soter was designated "satrap," 323-305, but after 305 his new title as "king" was made retroactive to 323.

Ptolemaic dates from Edwyn Bevan, *The House of Ptolemy*. Seleucid dates from Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 2d ed.

We looked at this verse on page 277. We have to remind ourselves that all these details were revealed by God almost three hundred years in advance. The "they" at the beginning of the verse refers to Antiochus II Theos (261-246) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246). Antiochus II, you recall, divorced Laodice in order to marry Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II. When Ptolemy II died, Antiochus took Laodice back, but she had Antiochus and Berenice and Berenice's baby and attendants all killed.

Breaking his relationship with his wife was a strange basis for a king to adopt for building a new relationship with a foreign king.

7. **In those times a branch from her roots [Ptolemy III] shall arise in his place; he shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north [Antiochus II], and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.**

By his divorce and remarriage Antiochus II lost far more than he could have hoped to gain. For the next king of Egypt, Ptolemy III (246-221), a brother of Berenice's, determined to avenge Berenice's death by invading Syria. He took his army all the way to Babylon and beyond before voluntarily pulling back!<sup>4</sup> His navy occupied Seleucia, the port that served Antioch, the capital of Syria, and for some time Egyptian shipping dominated the eastern Mediterranean.

8. **He [Ptolemy III] shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their molten images and with their precious vessels of silver and gold;**

**and for some years he shall refrain from  
attacking the king of the north.**

In the process of his triumphant Syrian campaign, Ptolemy III captured 2500 gold and silver images, many of them being Egyptian gods that had been stolen by a succession of conquerors over the centuries. Watching him carry these lifeless idols south through Palestine on his way home to Egypt, the Jews must have smiled in contempt. But the Egyptians were delighted at what their Greek king had achieved for them, and they hailed him as their benefactor. In Greek "benefactor" is "euergetes": hence Ptolemy III *Euergetes*.

Ptolemy III *Euergetes* was quite satisfied with himself after his profitable foray, and he didn't attack the Syrians again as long as he lived.

- 9. Then the latter [a new king of the north, Seleucus II]  
shall come into the realm of the king of the south  
but shall return into his own land.**

The Ptolemies and Seleucids resumed their quarrel, like feuding Hatfields and McCoys. For well over a century the Jews apprehensively observed their armies marching north and south through Palestine, knowing that victory or defeat could change their overlords and their liberties and taxes too.

In the year 242 Seleucus II Callinicus attempted to avenge himself for Egypt's deep penetration of his ancestral lands, but his army was vanquished and his navy blown away. He returned to Antioch badly bloodied and empty-handed.

- 10. His sons [the two sons of Seleucus II, namely Seleucus III,  
who was assassinated after a short reign (225-223) and  
Antiochus III the Great (223-187)]  
shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces,  
which shall come and overflow and pass through,  
and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress.**
- 11. Then the king of the south [Ptolemy IV],  
moved with anger,  
shall come out and fight with the king of the north [Antiochus III];  
and he [Antiochus III] shall raise a great multitude,  
but it shall be given into his [Ptolemy's] hand.**
- 12. But when the multitude is taken [that is, the army defeated]  
his heart [Ptolemy's] shall be exalted,  
and he shall cast down tens of thousands,  
but he shall not prevail.**

These three verses deal principally with the battle of Raphia, June 22, 217 B.C., as if God chose to pay special attention to this particular battle as an evidence of His interest in every battle.

But why should God be concerned about a battle?

At Raphia in 217 B.C. approximately 70,000 foot soldiers and 5000 cavalry



were committed on each side. The body count next day showed that Antiochus III had lost 10,000 killed and 4000 taken prisoner. Ptolemy's losses were lighter but still significant. When hostility is so rampant and so many men suffer and die, should not God care?

It is a point of interest that both armies at Raphia, like armies at some other major battles, deployed trained elephants to confuse the cavalry and to provide elevated mobile fortresses. Wrote a later Roman war reporter, Ammianus Marcellinus: "Elephants, frightful with their wrinkled bodies and loaded with armed men, [are] a hideous spectacle, dreadful beyond every form of horror."<sup>5</sup> The Egyptians used 73 of the big beasts, herded in from Somalia, and the Syrians, 102, brought all the way from India. Despite their numerical disadvantage, Egypt won the battle, for Antiochus lacked discipline.

Yet victory gained Ptolemy little in the long run. He was a notorious debauchee. He failed to follow up the success his generals had handed him—and Antiochus III was eager for a rematch.

13. **For the king of the north [Antiochus III]  
shall again raise a multitude, greater than the former;  
and after some years  
he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.**

Resilient as a tennis ball, Antiochus III bounced high after his defeat at Raphia. He led his army to India in the east and to the Aegean in the west, making the "king of the north" once more nominal master of most of Alexander's former empire. Hoping to be master of it all, he prepared for a second attack on Egypt.

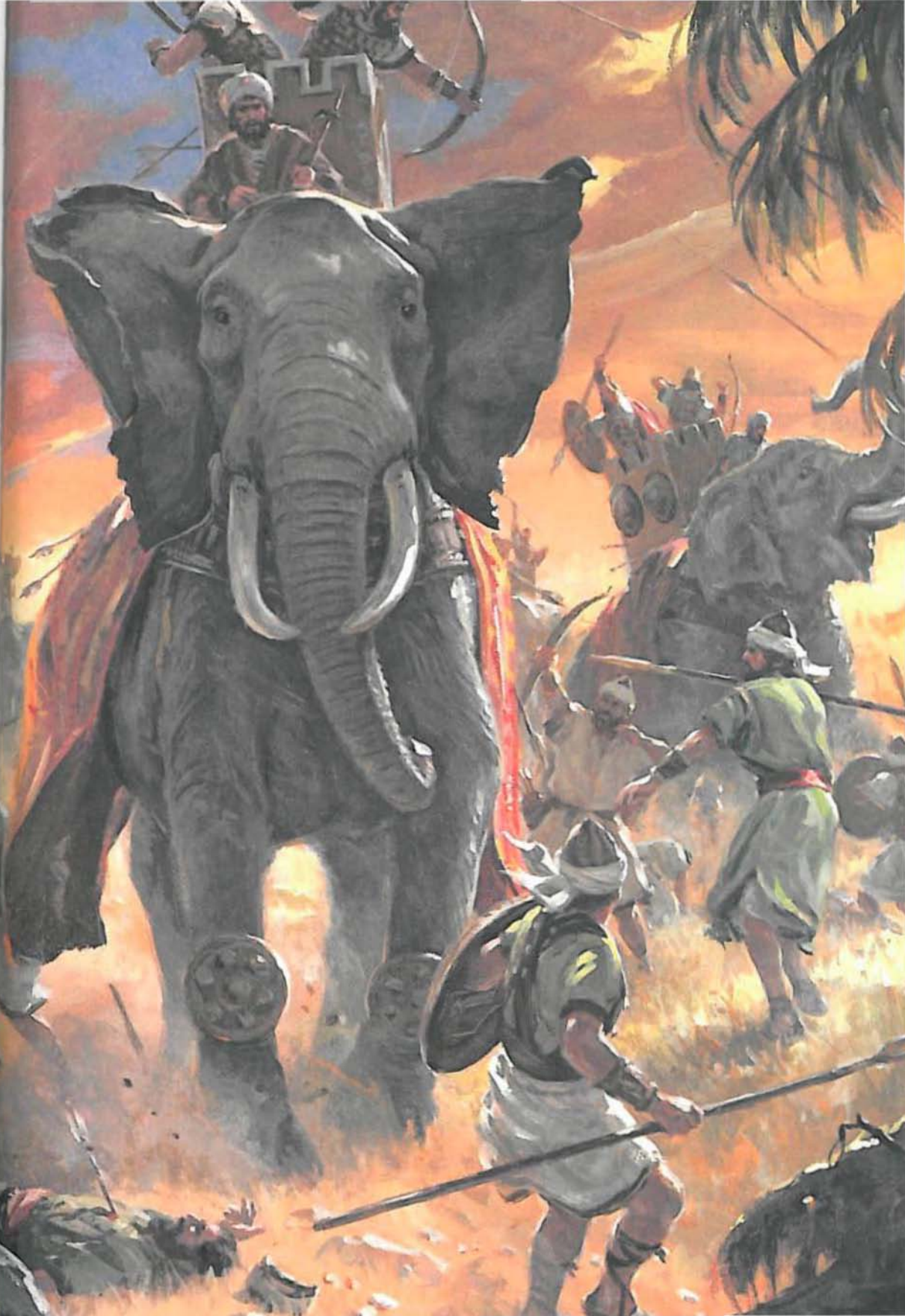
The timing seemed propitious, for the new king of the south was Ptolemy V Epiphanes, a boy of six. Besides, there was unrest along the Nile, Egyptians defying and even rioting against their Greek overlords. It is of interest to know that the famous Rosetta Stone, now housed in the British Museum, records concessions made to the restless Egyptian people by the regents of the boy king, Ptolemy V, in an effort to prevent further trouble.

*Interpretation of Daniel 11:14, 15.* When I was a boy, one of my teachers observed that "prophecy is history written in advance." I hope you have enjoyed seeing how the first thirteen verses of Daniel 11 have been minutely fulfilled.

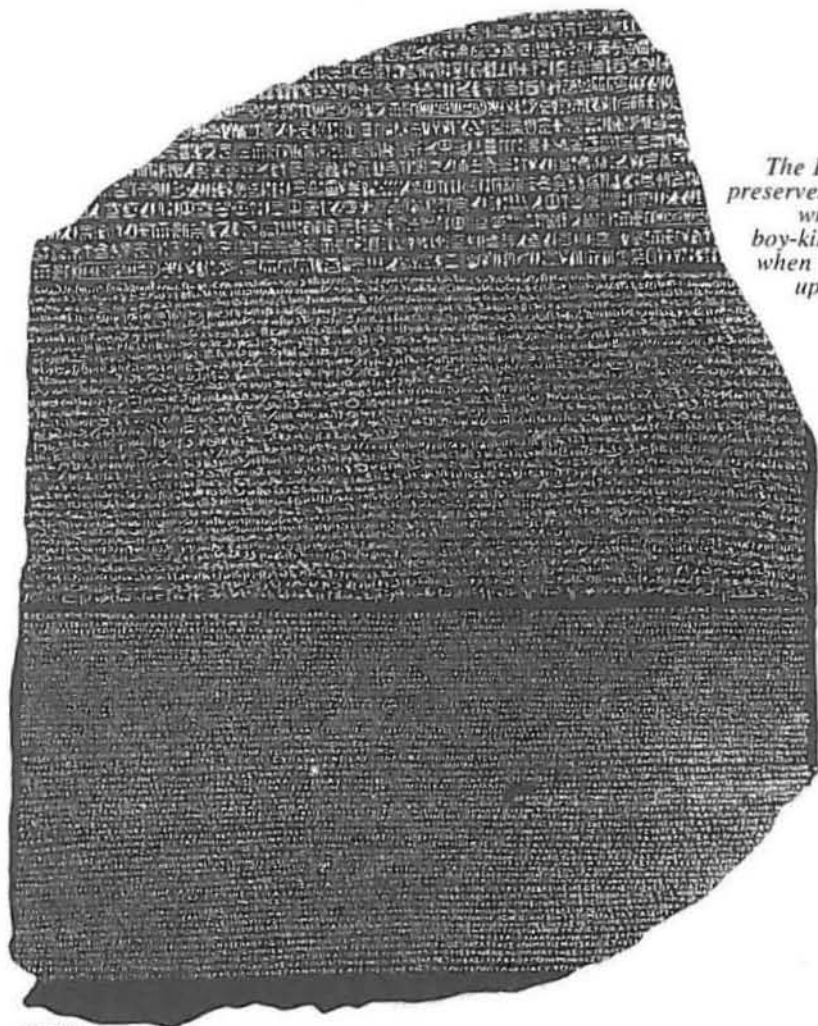
These opening verses are interpreted rather unanimously; verses 14-39, however, have occasioned a variety of expositions. Let us look first at verses 14 and 15.

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.**

Among the "many" who were to "rise against the king of the south" were those Egyptians we mentioned a moment ago who were rebelling against their Greek overlords. In addition, Antiochus III, a determined enemy, secured an alliance with







*The Rosetta Stone preserves concessions wrung from the boy-king Ptolemy V when "many" rose up against him.*

KEYSTONE

Philip of Macedon, the current successor to Cassander in the west. *All these rose in hostility against the king of the south.*

But who were the **"men of violence among your own people"** who would **"lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision"** but who would **"fail"**? Some commentators speculate that a party of militants must have gathered around a Jewish fanatic, impressed by some wild vision of his that the time was ripe to break free while Syria and Egypt were at war. Such a group may have existed, but so far *no record of one has come to light.*

The K.J.V. has, for this part of verse 14, **"The robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall."**

The underlying Hebrew means, literally, "the breakers of your people," and the R.S.V. *interprets* this phrase to refer to violent people among the Jews. Obviously the Hebrew can just as well refer to *outsiders who come in* to rob or break the Jews.

So who are the **"robbers"** or **"breakers"** of God's people? In the vision of

Daniel 7 the fourth beast **“devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue.”** Daniel 7:7. In Daniel 8:13 the little horn **“trampled”** the sanctuary underfoot. The fourth beast and the little horn are *Rome*: so the angel’s real meaning in Daniel 11:14 is that the Romans would enter the story at this point in fulfillment of the visions of Daniel 7 and 8 and—also in fulfillment of Daniel 7 and 8—that they would in the course of time trample on God’s people and, ultimately, fall. Verse 14 wraps up Roman history in a concise prophetic nugget.

As a fact, it *was* in the days of Antiochus III that the Romans *did* enter the history of the eastern Mediterranean. When they learned that Antiochus III had made an alliance with Philip of Macedon against Ptolemy V of Egypt, they feared the development of a new superpower in the Middle East and warned Philip and Antiochus III to *stay out of Egypt*. Their warning amounted to a kind of Mediterranean “Monroe Doctrine” or “Cuban Policy.”

Antiochus III, Ptolemy IV, and Philip had all come to the throne between 221 and 223 B.C., and all were young men (aged 17-23) at the time, observes historian E. R. Bevan. “The world in which their reigns began was the Graeco-Macedonian world as it had been constituted by the conquests of Alexander the Great; *the world in which they ended was a new world over which was flung the shadow of Rome.*”<sup>6</sup> The prophecy of Daniel 11 takes into account this momentous transition in human events.

15. **Then the king of the north [Antiochus III]  
shall come and throw up siegeworks,  
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.**

Heedless of Rome’s admonition to stay out of Egypt, Antiochus III went ahead with his aggression. North of the Sea of Galilee, near the site of the later city called Caesarea Philippi, where Peter recognized Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 16:13-20), Antiochus trounced a well-trained army led by Scopas, a skilled and experienced general in the service of Egypt. The defeated troops retired to Tyre, but Antiochus followed them and laid siege. When the fighting was over, the king of the north had a firm grip on the Jewish homeland of Judea, and Ptolemaic Egypt never owned it again.

Having now examined fifteen verses of Daniel 11 in detail in order to illustrate the method of interpretation, we can afford to be more cursory with the rest.

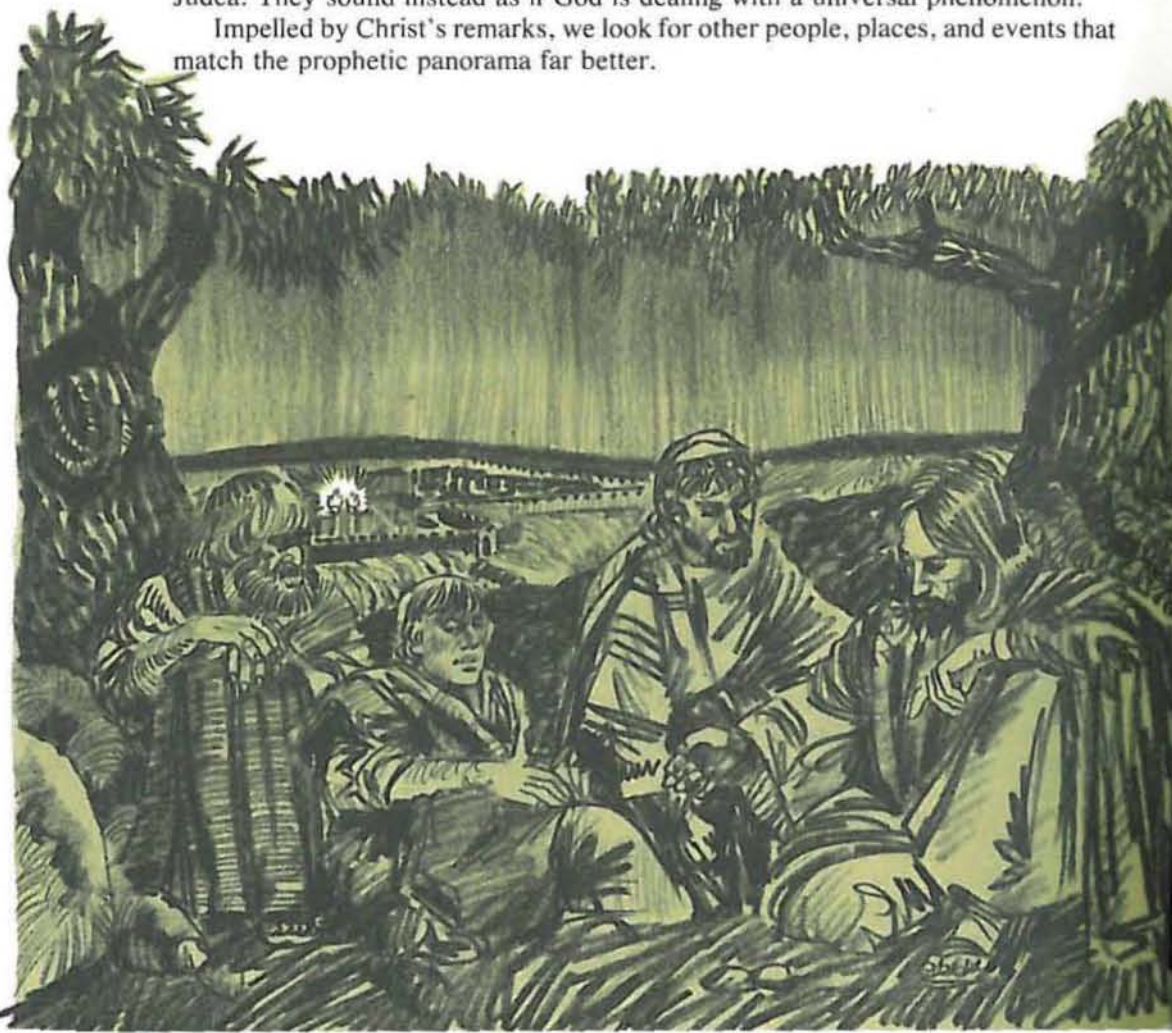
*The common interpretation of verses 16-39.* The interpretation that applies verses 16-39 to the career of Antiochus Epiphanes is so widely available that it need not be repeated here. Unfortunately it misses the two basic landmarks (in verses 22 and 31) that we discussed on pages 279 and 280. It supposes that the **“prince of the covenant”** is merely the obscure priest, Onias III, instead of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and it assumes that the **“abomination that makes desolate”** ap-

peared more than 160 years *before* the days of Jesus, even though in Matthew 24:15 Jesus indicated that it would appear *after* His day. This interpretation also assumes that the person in verse 20 who was to be **“broken, neither in anger nor in battle,”** was Seleucus IV Philopater. But according to the best available evidence,<sup>7</sup> Seleucus IV Philopater was murdered.

In spite of its shortcomings, the Antiochus Epiphanes interpretation bore such an apparent relationship to the career of the little king that it seems to have been believed by many Jews in the time of Christ. As we note on pages 278 and 279, it is possible that even the disciples believed it. If so, they were startled when—sitting with Jesus on the Mount of Olives overlooking the Jerusalem temple on a cool spring night shortly before the crucifixion—they heard Jesus invite them to “understand” that the “abomination that makes desolate” was still in the future (see footnote, page 248).

*A broader interpretation of verses 14-39.* With a vast hindsight which we enjoy today but which the disciples on the Mount of Olives did not possess, we now reread verses 14-39, looking for the new “understanding” that Jesus recommended. And now we notice that the climax verses, 31-39, definitely point to something or someone far bigger than Antiochus Epiphanes and his three-year persecution in tiny Judea. They sound instead as if God is dealing with a universal phenomenon.

Impelled by Christ’s remarks, we look for other people, places, and events that match the prophetic panorama far better.





Reminding ourselves that the **"robbers of thy people"** (verse 14, K.J.V.) are the Romans, we now perceive that verse 16 outlines the conquest of **"the glorious land"** of Palestine by the Roman general, Pompey. Verses 16-19 portray the famous Roman Julius Caesar and his affair with **"the daughter of women,"** Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, and his later exploits in frontier areas, **"The coastlands."**

Subsequently Julius Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March, 44 B.C., at the hands of sixty fellow Romans led by G. Cassius Longinus, the **"commander"** who **"put an end to his insolence."** Verse 18. Yes, Julius Caesar was one of the world's more insufferably insolent men. Gifted with extraordinary capacity for hard work, he abused his talent at times with military butchery in order to achieve personal ambition. Once he launched a foreign war "deliberately, gratuitously and illegally" for his own personal aggrandizement, during which he claimed, "with some, but not total exaggeration," that his army had killed 430,000 Germans in one day.<sup>8</sup> His "insolent" attempt to replace the Roman republican form of government with a personal dictatorship led directly to his death—which was predicted twice for emphasis in verses 18 and 19 (just as some events are apparently repeated in verses 11 and 12).

Julius Caesar was followed (verse 20) by Caesar Augustus, the founder of the Roman Empire and the issuer of that famous "decree that all the world should be taxed" (Luke 2:1 K.J.V.), or "enrolled" (R.S.V.) for tax purposes, at the time when Jesus Christ was born.

There being no punctuation or paragraph divisions anywhere in the Hebrew of this chapter, we can assume a major paragraph break between verses 20 and 21.

Augustus founded not only the Roman Empire but also the *position of Roman emperor*. Because of this, the word "augustus" quickly became a synonym for "emperor," and every emperor was known as an augustus. As we saw on page 154, in the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ, the head of the Roman state was succeeded by the head of the Roman Church; that is, the "augustus" was succeeded by the "Holy Father." The **"contemptible person,"** then, who was to arise in the place of Augustus, was the medieval pope—viewed, like all other leaders in Daniel 11, from the angle only of his hostilities.

Remember: In Daniel 11 everyone is hostile, except for the **"wise"** people in verses 32-34 who stand firmly for God in time of persecution. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23.

Thus the medieval papacy grows to strength from an early position of smallness (verse 23), makes and breaks treaties (verse 23), and plunders the rich in order to reward its friends in unprecedented fashion (verse 24).

In this interpretation verses 25-30 foreshadow the era of the crusades—a momentous phenomenon and one of the most prominent examples of Roman Christianity as hostility. Initiated vigorously by the persuasive oratory of Pope Urban II, the era of the crusades saw Western Europe setting out no fewer than seven times within approximately 150 years (1095-1250) to wrest the Holy Land from the Muslims and render it safe for Christian pilgrims.

The Muslims who controlled Jerusalem at the time of the first crusade, and who regained control from time to time thereafter, were headed by the caliphs (or, later, the sultans) in *Egypt*.<sup>9</sup> So the first crusade was a great attack against the “**king of the south**” (verses 24, 25). And it was a great success—of sorts. Jerusalem was taken on July 15, 1099. In their religious zeal the invading Christians ran their consecrated swords through every Muslim and even every Jew they found inside the walls. “Men waded in blood up to their ankles.”<sup>10</sup> The slaughter was “as horrible as any recorded in history.”<sup>11</sup>

For a victory such as this, reports a contemporary, the Christians knelt in worship and with tears of joy gave thanks.<sup>12</sup>

The sixth crusade was unique. King Frederick II, who could speak several languages including Arabic, secured Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth by negotiation, without shedding a drop of blood.

But the crusades were not uniformly successful. Some of them, notably the children’s crusade, were disasters. The seventh also was “**not this time as it was before.**” Verse 29. In this, the final crusade to the Middle East, the pious monarch, Louis IX, was actually taken prisoner at Cairo, Egypt. Ten years later, the Egyptian sultan and his general, Baibans, drove the Christians out of Palestine to stay (until 1917).

During the crusades the Muslims hired Greek naval vessels to assist them in opposing the crusaders. Here are the “**ships from Kittim.**” Verse 30. (“From Kittim” signifies “from the west.”) Although Roman Christianity ultimately lost the crusades, trade between Europe and the east was greatly stimulated by them; and Italian merchants in Venice and Genoa were especially enriched. Verse 28. Europeans learned to enjoy sugar, cotton, glass mirrors, diapers, and many other products of the east.

The “**two kings**” who “**speak lies at the same table, but to no avail**” (verse 27) epitomize the perfidy and hypocrisy that conspicuously characterized the crusade experience. Historians call attention to the mutual mistrust of the allies on both sides, principally on the Christian side. More specifically, these “kings” may represent Christian leaders like Reginald of Chatillon and Guy de Lusignan who eagerly violated solemn peace treaties made with the generous Islamic sultan, Saladin.<sup>13</sup> They may also represent various other Christian and Muslim leaders who made and broke treaties as opportunity suggested, and also several of the crusaders who promised safety to Muslim townspeople if they would surrender, only to break their word and massacre them without mercy.<sup>14</sup> In the hope of finding gold that the Muslims might have swallowed, the Christians sometimes ripped open their stomachs.

Tragically, the papacy bears the primary responsibility for the crusades and their ghastly atrocities. Pope Urban II launched the first one. If he may be partly excused on the assumption that he did not fully anticipate its barbarous outcome, what can be said for Pope Eugene III, Pope Gregory VIII, Pope Clement III, Pope Innocent III, and Pope Gregory IX, who enthusiastically encouraged later



# PARALLELS IN DANIEL'S VISIONS—3

DANIEL 7	DANIEL 8	DANIEL 11
PERSIA, the bear v. 5	PERSIA, the ram vs. 3, 20	PERSIA, king v. 2
GREECE, the leopard v. 6	GREECE, the he-goat vs. 5, 21	GREECE v. 3; cf. v. 2
dominion given v. 6	was strong v. 8	a mighty king v. 3
	great horn broken v. 8	rules with great dominion v. 3
	toward four winds of heaven v. 8	kingdom broken v. 4
four heads v. 6		toward four winds of heaven v. 4
PAGAN ROME, the terrible beast vs. 7, 11, 19, 23	PAGAN ROME the little horn v. 9	PAGAN ROME robbers of thy people v. 14 K.J.V.
exceedingly strong	trampled on the host v. 10	a contemptible person v. 21
break in pieces		a small people v. 23
	toward glorious land v. 9	in glorious land v. 16
	prince of the host v. 11	toward four winds of heaven v. 22
CHRISTIAN ROME, the little horn vs. 8, 20-26	CHRISTIAN ROME the little horn v. 9	CHRISTIAN ROME burnt offering taken away v. 31
change times and law v. 25	burnt offering taken away v. 11	sanctuary profaned v. 31
	sanctuary cast down v. 11	works deceitfully v. 23
	cast down truth to ground v. 12	prospers v. 36
	practiced and prospered v. 12	abomination that makes desolate v. 31
	transgression of the desolation v. 13	how long? (12:7)
	time of the end v. 17	time of the end vs. 35, 40
	transgressor come to full measure v. 23	(12:4, 9)
	end of indignation v. 19	wicked do wickedly (12:10)
		indignation accomplished v. 36
three and half time v. 25	end at time appointed v. 19	end at time appointed vs. 27, 35
	becomes mighty v. 24	becomes strong with a small people v. 23
	destroys wonderfully v. 24	great fury to destroy v. 44
wear out saints v. 25	destroys the holy people v. 24	wise fall by sword v. 33
	causes craft to prosper v. 25	corrupts by flatteries v. 32
	magnifies himself v. 25	magnifies himself and vs. 36, 37
speak words against God v. 25		speaks against God v. 14
dominion taken away vs. 11, 26		
consumed to end vs. 11, 26		

crusades even though they well knew what was likely to happen? Indeed the papacy was emboldened by the spirit of the Middle East crusades to initiate similarly frightful European crusades against Christian "heretics." Many of these "heretics" were sincere believers in God's "holy covenant." Verses 28, 30. If ever Roman Christianity obscured the *tamid* ministry of our compassionate High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary (see pages 172-178), it did so during the era of the crusades.

No wonder Muslims, who are not ignorant of this history, still hesitate to accept Jesus Christ.

No wonder, either, that medieval Christianity shows up badly in the book of Daniel.

Within a setting like this the **"abomination that makes desolate"** (verse 31) clearly cannot be confined to a metal idol erected temporarily by Antiochus Epiphanes on a stone altar in old Jerusalem. Instead it is seen to be that vast system of belief and practice which for a thousand years or more led people away from the priestly ministry of Jesus, depriving them of access to the **"prince of the covenant"** mentioned in verse 22 (see pages 172, 173). The **"wise"** who fell **"by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder"** (verse 33) were the brave people of God such as the Waldenses, Lollards, Hussites, Lutherans, Anabaptists, and Huguenots, who chose to be hanged or drowned or burned at the stake or tortured or imprisoned rather than give up their living faith (see page 132). They also likely included devout Roman Catholics who held loyally to God when Protestants, in the spirit of medieval tyranny, inflicted counterpersecution.

The king who was to **"exalt himself and magnify himself above every God"** (verse 36) was the medieval papacy! Not that any pope ever intended to do such a thing. No pope intended to place himself above God. But when popes claimed the right to kill people whom God loved and to change the Ten Commandments that God delivered on Mount Sinai, did they not honor themselves above God (see pages 133-135)?

When medieval popes hired armies to achieve their political ends, when Julius II (who styled himself "Julius Caesar II") led his own armies into battle, was not the papacy putting its trust in the **"god of fortresses"**? Verse 38. And the new god who was to be honored with gold and silver and precious stones (verse 38)—was she not the Blessed Virgin, who, with all her purity and motherly compassion, has often occupied in Catholic devotion a more prominent place than her divine Son?

When we remember that the **"prince of the covenant"** is Jesus rather than merely Onias III and that the **"abomination that makes desolate"** was still future in Christ's day, we realize that the message of Daniel 11 is the same, ultimately, as the message of Daniel 7 and 8. In Daniel 11 God warns us that out of the secular empires of earth a politico-religious entity was to arise that would (1) replace Christ's priestly ministry with a counterfeit Christian ministry and (2) persecute the people who attempted to maintain faith in the true Christ.

Insofar as medieval teachings persist in the various denominations of Christianity today, obscuring Christ's heavenly ministry, ignoring the special judgment that is already in session, and persuading people that they do not need to keep all of the Ten Commandments, the **"abomination that makes desolate"** is still at work. The warning of Daniel 11 is *current* evidence that God cares enough to alert us to danger and direct us to Himself.

*What about Daniel 11:40-45?* We have said nothing so far about verses 40-45. The last of these verses apparently parallels in part the career and demise of Roman Christianity.

As we have seen (pages 172-177), the greatest fault of Roman Christianity has

been that it obscures the work of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. In Daniel 7 Roman Christianity is symbolized by a little horn on the head of a very unattractive symbolic animal. By way of punishment for its misleading activity, this animal is selected for special mention in Daniel 7:11 and 26, in connection with the pre-advent judgment. It is scheduled to have **"its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire."** For **"the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end."**

In Daniel 11:45 the latter-day "king of the north" will **"pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him."** The **"glorious holy mountain"** appears to be a metaphor for the Jerusalem temple which, in turn, symbolizes the heavenly sanctuary. Pitching **"palatial tents"** between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jerusalem temple symbolizes the encroachment of the king of the north on the prerogatives of Christ's sanctuary ministry. As a consequence of this encroachment the king of the north will be punished so that, like the little-horn animal of Daniel 7 that he parallels, he will **"come to his end, with none to help him."** The little horn-power and the king of the north seem to represent the same earthly power.

Some of these matters will come clearer when we study the book of Revelation in *God Cares, II*. But as to the precise events on earth that will accompany their fulfillment, wisdom suggests we may not know them until they actually take place.

The purpose of prophecy is not always to provide prior knowledge of specific future events. Many Bible prophecies were given with the intention that they would be understood—and build faith—only after they were fulfilled. Thus Jesus said about a certain prediction He made concerning Himself, "I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe." John 14:29; compare John 13:19; 16:4.

The impulse to schedule the future in detail has embarrassed many earnest Christians over the centuries. Armageddon, for instance, has probably been slated for more dates by enthusiastic Bible students than any other world event. Can you imagine the excitement that pulsed in millions of Christian breasts when in 1918 the newspapers daily plotted the progress of General E. H. Allenby as he approached the Ottoman army camped at Megiddo in Palestine? Megiddo is the traditional site of Armageddon!

In the meantime, we are in good company when we *desire* to schedule the future! Christ's own disciples, it appears, temporarily forgot His warning about the future-ness of the abomination of desolation. With only moments to go before His ascension, they asked Him if He were going right then to establish His everlasting kingdom!

Jesus replied that it was not for them to know the "times and seasons" which God chooses to keep secret. Acts 1:7. In the few remaining seconds that He was able to spend with them on earth, He diverted their attention from schedules about the kingdom to a promise-prophecy that He evidently valued as being far more important. "You shall receive power," He said, "when the Holy Spirit has come

upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8.

Jesus, who knows all there is to know about us, knew then and evidently knows now that the only remedy for our human hostilities is the new covenant, with its promises of (1) forgiveness, (2) power to change, and (3) a place among God's people (see pages 170, 171). He *wants us to introduce this covenant to everyone, everywhere*, in the power of His Spirit.

The inference is obvious. When this good news about the kingdom has been carried in the power of the Spirit "throughout the whole world," then and only then "the end will come." Matthew 24:14.

### Further Interesting Reading

*In Bible Readings for the Home:*

The chapters entitled "Trials and Their Object," "Confessing Faults and Forgiving One Another," "Meekness and Humility," and "The Game of Life."

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