

Daniel 11:2-20
January 24, 2016

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

DEB: M-A-P-S

DEB: Outline of Daniel 11

- 11:2 – Prophecies Concerning Persia (Fulfilled)
- 11:3-4 - Prophecies Concerning Greece (Fulfilled)
- 11:5-20 - Prophecies Concerning Egypt (“South”) and Syria (“North”) (Fulfilled)
- 11:21-35 – Prophecies Concerning Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Fulfilled)
- 11:36-45 – Prophecies Concerning the End Times (Not Fulfilled until 7-yr Tribulation)

I love Hank Hanegraaff’s acronym that helps us remember why the Bible is not just “reliable,” but flawless. Today, we appreciate the “P” in M-A-P-S, or “Prophetic Fulfillment.” Daniel is one of more than 130 prophecies in the first 35 verses that are validated by a review of the history of the period. God’s omniscience and omnipotence (power over history) are unmistakably set forth in this chapter. You know God is sovereign and controls human history when He speaks through His prophets to foretell events, and then they happen just the way He said they would!

Transition: Today’s study will reinforce the sovereignty of God. Last week we found Gabriel coming to Daniel with a vision that concerned a “great war.” We acknowledged the reality of spiritual warfare and received a glimpse of principalities that fight in the supernatural realm that we’re not always aware of. This vision overwhelmed him to the point he felt anguish, helpless, and could hardly breathe. Today’s chapter *reveals the contents of this vision*. Today is the “rest of the story” as Paul Harvey would put it.

Q: How many loved going to history classes in high school or college? [If yes, you will love all the details you will learn today.]

Q: How many of you weren’t fond of history because you didn’t understand why you needed to know it? [If that’s you, you will just have to endure this!]

DEB – I have given you a handout that lists all the rulers who were prophesied throughout chapter 11. We will hear a history of key events leading up to the end of times. Gabriel begins with the Persian period, the time in which Daniel was living, making reference to four of its kings. And that’s where we will pick up the reading of Scripture. As we read this text, it’s fair to wonder “What’s in it for me?” I would like for you to consider that **All of us CAN endure many human rulers who come and go BY remembering a few key ATTRIBUTES of God that help us keep our faith as God builds our future.**

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Dan 11:2-4]

V.2:

- “Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

V.3:

- Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases.

V.4:

- After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

Process Observations/Questions:

Review HO and give them history

[Read Dan 11:5-20]

V.5:

- “The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power.

V.6:

- After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days she will be handed over, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her.

V.7:

- “One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the North and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious.

V.8:

- He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the king of the North alone.

V.9:

- Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country.

V.10:

- His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress.

V.11:

- “Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated.

V.12:

- When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant.

V.13:

- For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped.

V.14:

- “In those times many will rise against the king of the South. The violent men among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success.

V.15:

- Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand.

V.16:

- The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it.

V.17:

- He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him.

V.18:

- Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him.

V.19:

- After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more.

V.20:

- “His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.

Process Observations/Questions:

Review HO and share details of the conflicts described above.

LOOK:

When God created the universe, He knew exactly what human history was going to look like because He’s sovereignly allowed it. He knows who the rulers/leaders are at any given moment and time. He knows who honors Him and who doesn’t. Those who don’t honor God fall. He’s already told us that we are victorious in Jesus, and now our job is to continue to be a faithful follower trusting His leadership.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Miller, S. R. (1994). *The New American Commentary: Daniel* (Vol. 18, pp. 289–297). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

In 10:13, 21 it is revealed that Michael had helped the interpreting angel; now in 11:1 Gabriel related that he had supported and protected Michael. The first year of Darius the Mede was ca. 538 B.C., two years before this vision. Gabriel's awesome power is evidenced by the fact that he was called on to "support" Michael. How he would have protected Michael is not known since the harming of an angel in any way is certainly a strange concept. Angelic conflicts may occur in the earthly arena (as this passage teaches) or in heaven (cf. Rev 12:7).

Therefore an intense spiritual conflict took place during the first year of Darius the Mede. Since Michael (Israel's prince) was involved, the battle must have concerned the Jewish people. The text does not name the occasion of this particular struggle, but it may have been the fall of Babylon (Young), the conveying of the "seventy sevens" prophecy in chap. 9 (cf. 9:1), or the decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return to Palestine (Archer, Wood). All of these events took place in the first year of Darius the Mede (Cyrus), but the latter suggestion seems to be most likely. If so, the conflict involved Cyrus's decision to allow the Jews to return to their homeland. Archer remarks: "Knowing that such a development could lead to the ultimate appearance of the Son of God as the Messiah for God's redeemed, Satan and all his hosts were determined to thwart the renewal of Israel and the deliverance of its people from destruction."

In this passage humanity is afforded a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes activity that took place in the Persian government. Cyrus released the Jews, but unknown to the Persian monarch angelic forces played a part in this decision. Satan and his demons had been bound so that the will of God would be accomplished.

(1) Prophecies Concerning Persia (11:2)

²“Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

11:2 Gabriel now promises to share the message with Daniel, emphasizing that although this revelation was amazing, it was nevertheless “the truth.” “The truth” probably implies a connection with the earlier “Book of Truth” (10:21).

“Three more kings” would refer to those after Cyrus, who was then reigning (cf. 10:1). Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.) is clearly identified as the fourth king by the description of his great wealth and expedition against Greece. It is a matter of historical record that the three kings who ruled between Cyrus and Xerxes I were Cambyses (530–522), Smerdis (pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata; 522), and Darius I Hystaspes (522–486).

Kings after Xerxes are not mentioned, apparently because the later Persian rulers were not germane to the writer's purpose. The most likely reason for this is that the counterattack of Alexander, referred to in the next verse, was particularly encouraged by the massive military campaign launched against Greece by Xerxes I.

(2) Prophecies Concerning Greece (11:3–4)

³ Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases.
⁴ After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

11:3 Scholars agree that the “mighty king” of v. 3 was Alexander the Great (336–323 B.C.), the ruler who brought about the downfall of the Persian Empire. The description of his exploits and his kingdom are unmistakable. Moreover, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Seleucid-Greek ruler, proceeded out of one of the four divisions of this mighty king’s realm (cf. vv. 21–24). Thus the “mighty king” was the first ruler of the Greek Empire, Alexander, who launched his attack against Medo-Persia in 334 B.C. and completed his victory of that empire by 331 B.C. After conquering much of the known world, he died in the city of Babylon in 323 B.C., evidently of a fever.

11:4 Upon Alexander’s death, his empire came to be divided into four sections (cf. 8:8) by his military commanders. The rulers were commonly known as the “Diadochi,” which means “successors” (cf. 7:6 and 8:8).

Alexander’s sons (Alexander IV and Herakles) were both murdered, so no part of his empire went to “his descendants.” None of the divisions of the Greek Empire ever rivaled the combined strength of Alexander’s dominion.

(3) Prophecies Concerning Egypt and Syria (11:5–20)

⁵ “The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. ⁶ After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North to make an alliance, but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last. In those days she will be handed over, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her.

⁷ “One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the king of the North and enter his fortress; he will fight against them and be victorious. ⁸ He will also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the king of the North alone. ⁹ Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country. ¹⁰ His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress.

¹¹ “Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. ¹² When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant. ¹³ For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped.

¹⁴ “In those times many will rise against the king of the South. The violent men among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success. ¹⁵ Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. ¹⁶ The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it. ¹⁷ He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the

king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him. ¹⁸ Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him. ¹⁹ After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more.

²⁰ **“His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.**

Verses 5–20 comprise a history of the ongoing conflicts between two divisions of the Greek Empire, the Ptolemaic (Egyptian) and the Seleucid (Syrian), from the death of Alexander (323 B.C.) until the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–163 B.C.). The revelation was limited to these two divisions because Palestine, the home of God’s people, lay between them and was continually involved in their later history. Especially significant is the fact that from the Seleucid kingdom eventually would appear the evil Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the “little horn” of chap. 8.

PTOLEMY I SOTER AND SELEUCUS I NICATOR (11:5)

11:5 In vv. 5–12 the period of Ptolemaic dominance is recounted. The “king of the South” (v. 5) is a reference to Ptolemy I Soter (323–285 B.C.), the ruler of Egypt (cf. v. 8, where the king of the south’s land is stated to be Egypt) who had been a highly capable general under Alexander.

“One of his commanders” alludes to Seleucus I Nicator (312/311–280 B.C.), who had been a lesser general under Alexander. He was appointed satrap of Babylonia in 321 B.C., but when another general, Antigonus, seized Babylonia, Seleucus fled (in 316 B.C.) to Ptolemy Soter in Egypt to serve under him, thus becoming “one of his commanders.” Antigonus was defeated in 312 B.C. at Gaza, and Seleucus returned to his former satrapy; there he greatly increased his power, eventually controlling more territory than Ptolemy. With the inception of Seleucus’s rule, the “Seleucid era” was inaugurated. Seleucus’s kingdom included Babylonia, Syria, and Media. According to Arrian, it was the largest of all the divisions of the Greek Empire.

PTOLEMY II PHILADELPHUS AND ANTIOCHUS II THEOS (11:6)

11:6 From the beginning, conflicts arose between the kingdoms of the Ptolemies (Egypt) and the Seleucids (Syria). Ptolemy I died in 285 B.C., and these clashes continued under his son Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 B.C.), who according to tradition instigated the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek called the Septuagint. Finally, Ptolemy II made a treaty of peace with the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus II Theos (261–246 B.C.; grandson of Seleucus), about 250 B.C., and it is to this alliance that v. 6 refers.

Under the terms of the agreement, Berenice, Ptolemy’s daughter (“the daughter of the king of the South”), was to marry Antiochus (“the king of the North”) to seal the “alliance” between the two kingdoms. Her son was then to become heir to the Seleucid throne. However, Antiochus was already married to a powerful and influential woman named Laodice who succeeded in murdering Antiochus, Berenice, and their child. Thus their “power” did “not last.” Laodice then ruled as queen regent during the minority of her son, Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226 B.C.).

PTOLEMY III EUERGETES AND SELEUCUS II CALLINICUS (11:7–9)

11:7 “One from her [Berenice’s] family line” points to Berenice’s brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 B.C.), who succeeded his father, Philadelphus, to the throne of Egypt. “To take her place” reads literally “in his place,” and Montgomery probably is correct in

understanding the phrase to indicate that Ptolemy III would rule “in his father’s [Ptolemy II’s] place.”

In retaliation for his sister’s murder, Ptolemy III attacked Syria (“the king of the North”) with a great army. This war lasted from 246 to 241 B.C. during the course of which Ptolemy even captured and looted the Seleucid capital of Antioch. The Egyptian king soundly defeated the Syrian forces and evidently put the evil Laodice to death.

11:8 Ptolemy seized Syria’s “gods” and other valuables. He also returned to Egypt treasures, including sacred idols, taken by the Persian monarch Cambyses in 524 B.C.; for this feat the native Egyptians bestowed upon Ptolemy III the title “Euergetes [Benefactor].” Ptolemy made a peace treaty with Seleucus II in 240 B.C. in order to pursue his Aegean conquests.

11:9 For both grammatical and historical reasons, it is best to take “the king of the North” (NIV, NASB, NRSV, NKJV) as the subject of v. 9 rather than “the king of the South” (KJV). There is no record that Seleucus II ever attempted an invasion of Egypt proper. Evidently this campaign was brief with a swift “retreat” to Syria.

ANTIOCHUS III (THE GREAT) AND HIS CONFLICTS WITH PTOLEMY IV PHILOPATOR AND PTOLEMY V EPIPHANES (11:10–19)

Antiochus III was an extremely important personality, for during his reign Palestine fell under Seleucid control. His conflicts with Egypt recounted here provide an explanation of how this came about. With Palestine dominated by the Seleucids, the stage was set for the coming of the tyrant depicted in vv. 21–35.

11:10 Seleucus II died in 226 B.C., but his sons, Seleucus III Ceraunus (226–223 B.C.) and Antiochus III (the Great; 223–187 B.C.), continued the wars (rather than “prepare for war”; Heb. *gārâ*) with the Ptolemies. Seleucus III was murdered after a brief three-year reign, and his brother, Antiochus III, came to power. He was called the “Great” because of his military successes, and in 219–218 B.C. he campaigned in Phoenicia and Palestine, part of the Ptolemaic Empire (“as far as his [the king of the South’s] fortress”).

11:11 In response Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–203 B.C.) launched a counterattack. Both armies were quite large. According to Polybius, Ptolemy’s forces consisted of 70,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 elephants; whereas Antiochus’s army had 62,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 elephants. When the battle ended [in 217 B.C.], Ptolemy had won a great victory over the Syrians at Raphia (located in Palestine).

11:12 Because of this victory Ptolemy’s heart was “filled with pride.” The Egyptian army slaughtered “many thousands” of the Syrian troops in the battle. Montgomery reports that Antiochus lost seventeen thousand soldiers. Yet Ptolemaic supremacy was not to continue.

11:13 At this point in the chapter a significant development takes place. No longer are the Ptolemies dominant, but vv. 13–35 describe the ensuing period of Seleucid supremacy.

Approximately fifteen years later (202 B.C.) Antiochus III again invaded Ptolemaic territories with a huge army. The occasion for this invasion was the death of Ptolemy IV in 203 B.C. and the crowning of his young son (between four and six years of age), Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203–181 B.C.), as the new king. Antiochus III took full advantage of the opportunity and attacked Phoenicia and Palestine; by 201 B.C. the fortress in Gaza had fallen to the Syrians.

11:14 Since the time of Jerome these opposers of the king of Egypt have been understood to have been “Philip V of Macedon, ally of Antiochus, and native insurrections within Egypt.” “The violent men” is literally “the sons of the violent ones.” The word *pārîš*, “violent one,” is

used in the Old Testament to speak of robbers and murderers. Here it is a label for those Jews who aided Antiochus.

These Israelites “will rebel” against Egypt (or against God) “in fulfillment of the vision,” evidently the prophecy recorded here. Of course, the fulfillment of the prediction was not the intention of these persons, but it was nevertheless the result. “But without success” reads literally, “But they [those who sided with Antiochus] will fall.” Although General Scopas of the Egyptian forces was ultimately defeated, he punished the leaders of Jerusalem and Judah who rebelled against the Ptolemaic government. Scopas’s squelching of such a Jewish uprising against Egypt may have been suggested by Polybius.⁵⁶

11:15 General Scopas engaged the Syrian forces at the Battle of Panium (near the NT Caesarea Philippi, now called Banias) in 199 B.C. and suffered severe losses. He then retreated to Sidon on the Phoenician coast. Antiochus’s forces pursued the Egyptians and besieged Sidon. General Scopas finally surrendered in 198 B.C.

11:16 With the defeat of the Egyptians at Sidon, Antiochus (“the invader”) acquired complete control over Phoenicia and Palestine. Although Palestine had come under Antiochus’s control for a brief time previously (ca. 219–217 B.C.), now the “Beautiful Land” (Palestine; cf. 8:9; Ezek 20:6) would become a permanent possession of the Syrian Empire. This fact is extremely important because it sets the stage for the reign of terror to follow under the Syrian Greek ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

“And will have the power to destroy it” most likely means that Antiochus had “complete” power over the land. Antiochus did punish the Jews who were pro-Egyptian, but when he entered Jerusalem in 198 B.C., he received a warm welcome, for most looked upon him “as a deliverer and benefactor.” Little did the Jews realize that within twenty-three years this change in government would lead to one of the most horrible periods in their history.

11:17 Backed by Antiochus’s army, the Syrians forced terms of peace (“an alliance”) upon the Egyptian king. To seal the agreement, Antiochus gave his “daughter,” Cleopatra, to Ptolemy V as a wife. Antiochus hoped that through Cleopatra he could gain further control over Egypt. Yet the plan did “not succeed,” for Cleopatra loved her husband and supported the Ptolemaic cause completely.

11:18 Verses 18–19 prophesy Antiochus’s defeat and ignominious end. Having vanquished the Egyptians, in 197 B.C. or shortly thereafter Antiochus turned “his attention to the coastlands,” the islands or countries around the Mediterranean. After Antiochus had some initial successes, Lucius Cornelius Scipio (“Asiaticus”) was sent against him by the Roman government. In 191 B.C. the Romans, fighting with their Greek allies, routed the Syrians at Thermopylae and forced them to withdraw from Greece and flee to Asia Minor. Then thirty thousand Roman troops pursued Antiochus into Asia and defeated his much larger army of seventy thousand at the Battle of Magnesia near Smyrna (Turkey) in 190 B.C.

In 188 B.C. the Romans forced Antiochus to sign the Treaty of Apamea. Polybius reported that the Syrian king was ordered to surrender territory, much of his military force, twenty hostages (one of whom was Antiochus IV), and pay a heavy indemnity to Rome.

11:19 After this humiliating defeat, Antiochus returned to his country, where he was killed by an angry mob in 187 B.C. In desperate need of funds, particularly those required to meet the indemnity payments to Rome, the Syrian ruler pillaged the temple of Zeus (Bel) at Elymais but was killed in the process, evidently by the citizens defending their sanctuary.

SELEUCUS IV PHILOPATOR (11:20)

11:20 The son and “successor” of Antiochus III was Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 B.C.), who sent a “tax collector” (Heliodorus) to collect money to pay the thousand talents indemnity demanded annually by the Romans as part of the treaty at Apamea. According to 2 Macc 3:7–40, Seleucus even sent Heliodorus to plunder the temple in Jerusalem in order to provide funds for the Syrian treasury, but a frightful vision of mighty angels prevented this sacrilege.

Seleucus IV reigned only “a few years” and was not killed by an angry mob (“in anger”) like his father or “in battle.” Heliodorus, his tax collector and prime minister, evidently seeking to gain the throne for himself, poisoned the king (possibly abetted by Antiochus IV).

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (p. 1289). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

11:2 Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.) is unmistakably identified as the fourth Persian king by the description of his great wealth and expedition against Greece. This astonishing prediction by Daniel is one of more than 130 prophecies in the first 35 verses that are validated by a review of the history of the period. God’s omniscience and omnipotence (power over history) are unmistakably set forth in this chapter.

11:3–35 Critical scholars point to the great number of historical details in Daniel regarding events in the Greek period, particularly the persecutions of Antiochus IV (175–163 B.C.) in verses 21–35, as proof that the book must have been written in the second century B.C. In light of the book’s claims and other compelling evidence, only an *a priori* assumption that inspired predictive prophecy is impossible could rule out this text being a preview of future history written by Daniel in the sixth century B.C.