

Daniel 11

Tonight: Review; Discuss Daniel 11:1–35

Next week: Daniel 11:36–12:13

Overview of This Vision (10–12)

- This vision foretells “great warfare” (ASV) or “great conflict” (10:1, NAS, ESV)—conflict or warfare that would have a big impact on the children of Israel (10:14).
- This struggle or conflict would take place on both earthly and heavenly planes. Chapter 10, in particular, gives us a tiny glimpse into the activities on a heavenly plane.
- Tremendous detail is provided in this prophecy—details of historical events “many days yet to come” (10:14). So much accurate detail that even hard core skeptics insist someone else wrote it, after these events took place.

The Lead Up in Chapter 10

- Daniel had been mourning, fasting, and praying for 3 weeks.
- A “certain man” (presumably an angel) appeared to him, and his appearance was such that Daniel lost all strength.
- He explained to Daniel why he had come (tell Daniel what would happen to his people), and why he was delayed in coming (“prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me”).
- He will now relate to Daniel the full vision (chs. 11–12).

Outline—11:2–35

- The rise of 4 Persian kings is foretold (2).
- A mighty king will arise in Greece (3).
- The Greek Empire will be broken up and divided toward the four winds (4).
- There will be conflicts between two empires that emerge from this broken empire: the Ptolemies in the South, and the Seleucids in the North (5–20).
- From the north will arise a king who does great harm to the people of God (21–35).

Outline

- The rise of 4 Persian kings is foretold (2).
 - Cyrus was followed by these three kings: Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius I; and then by a fourth named Xerxes (son of Darius I), who did launch a strong attack against Greece.
- A mighty king will arise in Greece (3).
 - Verse 4 seems to confirm it's a king of Greece.
 - Conflicts continued off and on between Persia and Greece until they were ended by Alexander the Great.

Outline

- The Greek empire will be broken up and divided toward the four winds (4).
 - Note the similar language in Daniel 8:8, 21–22.
 - Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C., 180 years after this prophecy. At the height of his conquests, he died in Babylon in 323 B.C. at the age of 32.
 - “But not among his posterity”: Control of the empire did NOT fall to his family, but was divided among his generals.

Outline

- There will be conflicts between two empires that emerge from this broken empire: the Ptolemies in the South, and the Seleucids in the North (5–20).
 - The “king of the South” in v. 5 is Ptolemy I, who took Egypt and formed a strong empire there (controlled Judea, too). He helped his former comrade, Seleucus (“one of his princes”), secure Syria for his possession (“king of the north” in v. 6).
 - Situated between these two empires, Judea “became a sort of football kicked back and forth between these 2 empires” (Harkrider), especially with the kings who succeeded the two men mentioned above (see esp. vv. 14–20).



Trace the history of these 2 empires, and it's quite amazing how the details of the text in vv. 5–20 line up with these historical events.

For example...

- Verse 17:
 - Antiochus the Great had just won a decisive battle against the Ptolemies, led by general Scopas (vv. 14–15).
 - His plan now is to take Judea away from Egypt and make it part of his kingdom (v. 16).
 - Antiochus arranged for his daughter Cleopatra (not of Julius Ceasar fame) to marry Ptolemy, who was not yet 7 years old. The marriage was not consummated until 5 years later. Antiochus' plan to control Egypt via this marriage failed, though, because Cleopatra sided with her husband, not her father (“she shall not stand with him or be for him”).

Returning to the Outline

- The rise and reign of Antiochus IV (Antiochus Epiphanes) (21–35).
 - The same one foretold in chapter 8, the little horn that grew up from one of the four horns of the Grecian empire.
 - “And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue” (v. 21).
 - Antiochus IV was the son of Antiochus the Great, but Demetrius Soter was actually the rightful heir. Using flattery and intrigue he seized the kingdom for himself.

Highlights (lowlights) of His Reign

- Verses 25–28
 - Antiochus made a second invasion of Egypt, winning decisively, largely because the king of the South was betrayed by his own supporters (“they shall devise plans against him...those who eat of the portion of his delicacies”).
 - As Antiochus returned through Judea, he attacked Jerusalem and killed 80,000 Jews (1 Macc. 1:20–28, which is harmony with what we just read in v. 28).

Highlights (lowlights) of His Reign

- Verses 29–35
 - Antiochus invaded Egypt a third time, but with a different result, because the Romans came in their ships and frustrated his plans.
 - He turned his rage against the Jews. He used Jews who were willing to compromise to work his will on their own countrymen. He appointed soldiers to guard the temple, outlawed observance of law of Moses, set up the cult of Zeus in the temple, encouraged his men to commit ritual fornication in the temple, etc.

Highlights (lowlights) of His Reign

- Continuing with verses 29–35
 - The righteous among the Jews resisted, but at great cost.
 - The Maccabees, Judas Maccabeus in particular, led an armed resistance against the Syrians, beginning in about 167 B.C.
 - It was a time of great trial for God's people, a trial which very much separated the wheat from the chaff.