

## **Daniel 11 fulfillment explanation from 'Studies of biblical prophecy' by bible researcher Bryan Huie**

### **DANIEL 11:1 "Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him."**

According to Gabriel, he had strengthened Darius the Mede. There is much scholarly dispute over the identity of the Darius mentioned in verse 1. Various theories have been advanced by eminent scholars to identify this ruler. Some believe he is Gubaru (Gobryas), the general who led the actual attack on Babylon. Others, following the Greek historian Xenophon and supported by Josephus (Ant. 10.11.4), have adopted the view that Darius was "the son of Astyages" – namely, Cyaxares II. One other suggestion is that Darius was a title for Astyages, the last king of the Medes and the grandfather of Cyrus the Great. Regardless of the actual identity of Darius, it is clear that he ruled by appointment (Dan. 5:31; 9:1).

This introduction by Gabriel has a meaning that has rarely been recognized. In the Daniel 9:1-2, we see that in the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel realized how long Jerusalem would remain desolate (70 years), based on the prophecies of Jeremiah. Because of this realization and in accordance with God's instructions in the Torah (Lev. 26:40-42), Daniel prayed to God and confessed the sins of his people (Dan. 9:3-19). After doing so, Gabriel was sent to Daniel and gave him the prophecy of the 70 weeks (Dan. 9:24-27), which was a time line showing when the Messiah would appear in Israel. The mention of Darius the Mede here by Gabriel is not random, but was rather intended to point Daniel (and us) back to this previously specified period of time in order to understand WHEN the prophetic events he is about to outline would occur. Therefore, we can look for the fulfillment of this prophecy within that prophesied 70 weeks of years.

### **DANIEL 11:2 "And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece."**

This prophecy was given in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia (c. 535 BCE). The next three Medo-Persian kings after Cyrus were: (1) his son, Cambyses II (530-522 BCE); (2) Gaumata the Magian (also known as the pseudo-Smerdis – 522 BCE); and (3) the Persian Darius I (the Great – 522-486 BCE). The fourth king was (4) Xerxes (486-465 BCE).

Xerxes' mother was Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus the Great. His father, Darius the Great, left him the task of punishing the Greeks for their part in the Ionian rebellion (499-494 BCE) and their defeat of the Persian army at the battle of Marathon (490 BCE).

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

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

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

After the military defeat of Xerxes by the Greeks, a number of additional Persian kings ruled the empire. But Xerxes had set the stage for a strong Greek ruler to arise. This ruler was the Macedonian Alexander the Great, who defeated Persian King Darius III Codomannus in 333 BCE at the battle of Issus (located on the Mediterranean coast in what is now southeast Turkey). This defeat signaled the beginning of the end of the Persian empire. At the height of his power, Alexander conquered and ruled an empire that stretched from southern Europe to north Africa to central Asia. But the Greek empire of Alexander was not destined to endure. He fell ill and died on June 10, 323 BCE in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon.

**DANIEL 11:4 "And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these."**

Alexander left a huge empire at his death. His family and his generals jostled for control of this kingdom. When the dust settled, only two of his top officers remained alive. His other generals, his mother, his wife, his son, his illegitimate son, his sister, his half-sister, and his half-brother, were all dead. Of this group, only one general (Antipater) died of natural causes.

After much fighting and jockeying for position, Alexander's empire was divided into four major portions by 301 BCE: (1) Cassander ruled over Greece, (2) Lysimachus ruled in Asia Minor, (3) Seleucus I Nicator ruled in Babylon and Persia, and (4) Ptolemy I Soter ruled over the Holy Land and Egypt.

**DANIEL 11:5 "Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion."**

Twenty years later (281 BCE), when Seleucus I killed Lysimachus in battle, only two dynasties remained in Alexander's old empire – the Seleucid kings in the north and the Ptolemaic kings in the south.

**DANIEL 11:6 "And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times."**

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

However, after Ptolemy II died in 246 BCE, Antiochus II repudiated his marriage to Berenice and left her and their infant son to return to Laodice. Doubting his faithfulness, Laodice quickly murdered Antiochus II with poison. She then convinced her son, Seleucus II Callinicus, to kill both Berenice and her son. So, just as the prophecy said would happen, Ptolemy II king of the South, his daughter Berenice, and Antiochus II king of the North all lost in their struggle for power.

**DANIEL 11:7 "But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail."**

Ptolemy III Euergetes, the eldest son of Ptolemy II and brother of Berenice, was not happy about the murder of his sister. He immediately invaded the Seleucid empire. His armies defeated the forces of new king of the North, Seleucus II, who was the son of Antiochus II and Laodice. His campaign was successful, and his armies achieved victory from the Tigris River to the coasts of Asia Minor. Ptolemy III captured and put to death Laodice. He was even able to enter Seleucia, the port city on the Tigris River of the capital Antioch, and leave a garrison there.

**DANIEL 11:8 "And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North."**

During the Third Syrian War, king of the South Ptolemy III is credited with recovering many of the sacred statues that the Persian forces of Cambyses had carried off during their conquest of Egypt some three hundred years earlier. Because of this, he was known as Euergetes ("Benefactor"). Ptolemy III acquired much gold and silver during his victorious campaign; in fact, from Seleucia alone he received 1,500 talents of silver annually as tribute (about 10% of his annual income). He outlived Seleucus II, who died after falling from his horse, by four or five years (222 BCE).

**DANIEL 11:9 "Also the king of the North [lit. "he"] shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land."**

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

**DANIEL 11:10 "However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife."**

The sons of Seleucus II were Seleucus III Ceraunos ("Thunder") and Antiochus III (the Great). Seleucus III, the eldest son of Seleucus II, began a war against the Egyptian provinces in Asia Minor. However, he was unsuccessful, and was assassinated by members of his army in Asia Minor in 223 BCE. Seleucus II's younger son, Antiochus III, took the throne at the age of 18 after his brother's death. In 219-218 BCE, Antiochus III victoriously went through Judea, coming almost to the borders of Egypt.

**DANIEL 11:11 "And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy."**

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

**DANIEL 11:12 "When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail."**

After his victory over Antiochus III, Ptolemy IV spent only three months settling affairs in the Holy Land before heading back to Alexandria. He was apparently eager to return to his luxurious and decadent life in Egypt. In his haste to go home, Ptolemy IV left the important port of Seleucia-in-Pieria on the Phoenician coast (which his father had first captured) in the hands of Antiochus III. After his victory at Gaza, the Egyptian troops trained to fight the Seleucids began a successful guerilla campaign against his rule in Egypt. By the end of Ptolemy IV's reign, they had achieved total independence in the southern part of Egypt.

**DANIEL 11:13 "For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment."**

After the death of Ptolemy IV in 204 BCE, Antiochus III rallied his forces once again to attack the kingdom of the South. In the Fifth Syrian War (202-195 BCE), Antiochus III swept down into Judea from Syria. He retook the territory that he had occupied some eighteen years previously. When Antiochus III withdrew for the winter, the Egyptian commander Scopas reconquered the southern portions of the lost territory, including Judea and Jerusalem.

**DANIEL 11:14 "Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall."**

Antiochus III negotiated an alliance with King Philip V of Macedonia to divide up Egypt's Asian possessions. After some temporary setbacks (particularly at Gaza), Antiochus III's army inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ptolemaic forces about 199 BCE at Paneas, near the headwaters of the Jordan River. Regarding the prophesied actions of the Jews, the Jewish historian Josephus wrote:

"Yet was it not long afterward when Antiochus overcame Scopas, in a battle fought at the fountains of Jordan, and destroyed a great part of his army. But afterward, when Antiochus subdued those cities of Celesyria which Scopas had gotten into his possession, and Samaria with them, the Jews, of their own accord, went over to him, and received him into the city [Jerusalem], and gave plentiful provision to all his army, and to his elephants, and readily assisted him when he besieged the garrison which was in the citadel of Jerusalem." (Ant. 12.3.3)  
Unfortunately, this Jewish assistance was not to be remembered when Antiochus IV later came against Jerusalem.

**DANIEL 11:15 "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 best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand."**

Following his defeat at Paneas, Scopas fled to the fortified port city of Sidon. But after Antiochus III besieged it, Scopas surrendered in 199 BCE in exchange for safe passage out of the city back to Egypt. He and his troops were allowed to leave the city naked after giving up their weapons.

**DANIEL 11:16 "But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power."**

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

**DANIEL 11:17 "He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him."**

Young Ptolemy V had entered into a treaty with Antiochus III after his military defeat in the Fifth Syrian War. Through this treaty, Antiochus III tried to strengthen his position and expand his empire even further. Ptolemy V surrendered his Asian holdings to the king of the North and accepted Antiochus III's daughter, Cleopatra I, as a bride. They were married in 194 BCE. Through this marriage, Antiochus III sought to gain a foothold in Egypt itself through his daughter. But his plan backfired. Cleopatra I was a true wife to Ptolemy V, standing by him instead of seeking to benefit her father. Cleopatra I was beloved by the Egyptian people for her loyalty to her husband.

**DANIEL 11:18 "After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him."**

In 192 BCE, the ambitious Antiochus III crossed into Greece to aid the Aetolians. He sent ambassadors to Rome asking for friendship. However, the Roman senate replied that they would be friends if Antiochus III left the Greeks in Asia free and independent and if he kept away from Europe. Antiochus III refused, and went to war against Rome. With 10,000 men, Antiochus III sailed across the Aegean Sea and took some strongholds in Asia Minor.

But in doing so, he alienated his former ally, Macedonian king Philip V. The Roman army entered Asia Minor and defeated the larger forces of Antiochus III at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 BCE. In the peace treaty of Apamea in 188 BCE, Roman general Publius Scipio set a high cost on Antiochus III for peace. He demanded twenty hostages (including his son, Antiochus IV), a reduction of naval ships to twelve, and payment to Rome for the cost of the war totaling 15,000 talents over the next twelve years. The all-consuming ambition of Antiochus III had finally brought defeat to the kingdom of the North.

**DANIEL 11:19 "Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found."**

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

**DANIEL 11:20 ""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."**

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

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

In 175 BCE, after Demetrius had been sent away to Rome, Seleucus IV was poisoned by his minister Heliodorus. Some historians think that Heliodorus desired the throne for himself, while others believe that Antiochus IV was behind the murder. Seleucus' young son, (another Antiochus – age 5) was put on the throne in his place. However, Heliodorus was the actual power behind the throne.

**DANIEL 11:21 "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."**

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

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

**DANIEL 11:22 "With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant."**

Because of his ability to charm people and ally himself with them, Antiochus IV Epiphanes ("God manifest") was able to overcome all threats to his throne. The prince of the covenant here is a reference to the Jewish high priest Onias III. He was the high priest at the time that Antiochus IV came to the throne. A brother of Onias named Joshua, who had become hellenized and changed his name to Jason, made a deal with Antiochus IV. Jason told him that he would pay Antiochus IV a large bribe if he would remove Onias and make him high priest in his place.

So Antiochus IV forced Onias out and installed his brother Jason as high priest in Jerusalem in 174 BCE. In 172 BCE, Jason sent a priest named Menelaus to Antiochus IV with his tribute money. However, Menelaus took Jason's money, added some of his own to it, and bribed Antiochus IV to secure the high priesthood for himself.

Menelaus then returned to Jerusalem and deposed Jason, who fled for his life. Antiochus IV's double-cross of Jason shows the true nature of his character.

**DANIEL 11:23 "And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people."**

Once again, the "king of the North" set his sights on the kingdom of the South. In Egypt, the 14-year old Ptolemy VI Philometer had become king. He was the nephew of Antiochus IV; his mother (Cleopatra I) was Antiochus IV's sister. Antiochus IV sought an alliance with Ptolemy VI, seeking to take advantage of what he perceived as weakness in the Ptolemaic kingdom and gain Egypt for himself. He moved through Syria and Judea into Egypt with a small army, so as to not arouse suspicion to his true motive, and seized Egypt. His cover story was that he was coming to act as the "protector" of his nephew, Ptolemy VI.

**DANIEL 11:24 "He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time."**

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

**DANIEL 11:25 "He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him."**

In 170 BCE, when Antiochus IV felt secure about the state of his own kingdom, he decided to take Egypt by force in what came to be known as the Sixth Syrian War. He regarded Ptolemy VI as a weak ruler and therefore not capable of successfully waging war against him. Antiochus IV was able to move his army to the border of Egypt before he was met by the Egyptians at Pelusium, which is near the Nile Delta. The Egyptians had a large army

arrayed against him there. Antiochus, risking death by riding into the midst of the battle of Pelusium, ordered the Egyptians to be taken alive instead of slain. By this policy, he gained Pelusium and later took Memphis.

**DANIEL 11:26 "Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain."**

Ptolemy VI's army, although large, was not able to withstand Antiochus IV. In large part, this was due to the intrigues of Antiochus IV, who corrupted several of the Egyptian ministers and officers. This was one of the main causes of the defeat of Ptolemy VI. Those who were in his confidence and possessed the secrets of the state betrayed him to Antiochus IV. For example, Ptolemy Macron (also called "Ptolemy the son of Dorymenes") had been appointed by Ptolemy VI as governor of Cyprus. However, sensing the young king's weakness, he deserted to Antiochus IV, who made him governor of Coele Syria and Phoenicia.

**DANIEL 11:27 "Both these kings' hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time."**

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

Conversely, Ptolemy VI professed gratitude to his uncle for the interest he took in his affairs. He laid the blame of the war upon his minister Eulaeus, one the guardians appointed to watch over him after his father's death. All the while, Ptolemy VI sought to smooth over things with his brother Ptolemy VII so they could join forces against their deceitful uncle, Antiochus IV. DANIEL 11:28 "While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land."

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While Antiochus IV was engaged in Egypt, a false rumor arose in Judea that he had been killed. This prompted deposed high priest Jason to raise an army of 1,000 men and attack Jerusalem. His army captured the city and forced the high priest Menelaus to take refuge in the Akra fortress in Jerusalem. When news of the fighting in Jerusalem reached Antiochus IV, he took it to mean that Judea was in revolt against him.

Antiochus IV left Egypt; on his way home, he and his armies marched against Jerusalem. He commanded his soldiers to kill everyone they encountered (men, women, and children). Within the space of three days, his forces had killed somewhere between 40,000 and 80,000 people. A similar number were captured and sold into slavery.

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

**DANIEL 11:29 "At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter."**

Meanwhile, in Egypt brothers Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VII reconciled and agreed to share power. This annulled Antiochus IV's alliance with Ptolemy VI and caused his loss of control over the Ptolemaic kingdom. Because of this,

in 168 BCE Antiochus IV once again sought to go to war against Egypt. However, this time he would not have the same success as he achieved previously.

**DANIEL 11:30 "For ships from Cyprus [Kittim] shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant."**

Because they knew that they could not defeat Antiochus IV alone, the Ptolemy brothers appealed to Rome for help. In order to check the threat of Greek expansion, the Romans agreed to provide assistance. The "ships from Kittim" here refer to the ships which brought the Roman legions to Egypt in fulfillment of the defense pact.

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

On his return to Syria, Antiochus IV tried to ease the sting of the humiliation he had suffered at the hands of the Romans by taking out his frustration on the Jews in Judea. His armies encircled Jerusalem and then attacked. All those Jews who resisted were executed. However, the pro Hellenistic Jews who allied themselves with Antiochus IV were left unharmed.

**DANIEL 11:31 "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation."**

Antiochus IV's army desecrated the Temple and stopped the daily sacrifices. On the 15th of Kislev, in December 168 BCE, the Syrians built a pagan altar over the altar of burnt offering in the Temple and placed an image of Zeus Olympius upon it. Ten days later, on the 25th of Kislev, swine's flesh was offered on the altar to Zeus.

**DANIEL 11:32 "Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits."**

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

Antiochus IV commanded a change in all the ordinances of God. No sacrifices were to be offered in the sanctuary, the Sabbaths and feasts were to be profaned, and that the Jews were not to circumcise their sons. Upon pain of death, they were commanded to profane the true religion so that eventually the Law would be forgotten.

Antiochus IV appointed inspectors to watch the Jews and commanded the cities of Judah to offer pagan sacrifices. Yet many in Israel stood firm and rejected the innovations of the king of the North.

**DANIEL 11:33 "And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering."**

Whenever Antiochus IV's men found copies of the Torah, they tore them to pieces and burned them. Whoever was found in possession of a Torah was put to death. According to Antiochus IV's decree, women who had their



children circumcised were put to death, along with their entire families and those who had circumcised them. Still, many in Israel chose to die rather than to break the holy covenant.

**DANIEL 11:34 "Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue."**

As the historical book of I Maccabees shows, the decrees of Antiochus IV eventually led to a rebellion started by the priest Mattathias and his five sons (including Judas Maccabee). He and his family had fled from Jerusalem to Modein when the Seleucid forces took the city. There, Mattathias killed a Jew who was sacrificing according to Antiochus IV's command, as well as the king's officer who was forcing them to sacrifice. From this first act of rebellion, a guerilla war against the forces of Antiochus IV began. After the death of his father Mattathias in 167 BCE, Judas Maccabee defeated the large army of Antiochus IV's general Apollonius. This victory helped Judas to gather a sizable force; however, only a minority of the soldiers were actually faithful men.

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

This approach quickly emptied the royal treasury of funds and made it necessary for Antiochus IV to seek additional tribute and spoil from his lands. In 166 BCE, he decided to go to Persia to collect or seize by force the needed money. Antiochus IV left his general Lysias in charge of his son and half of his army, with instructions to attack and destroy Jerusalem and Judea. Lysias sent an army of 40,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry and marched into Judea. He met the forces of Judas Maccabee (3,000 poorly equipped men) near Emmaus. However, despite being vastly outnumbered, Judas' army routed the Syrians, killing 3,000 and putting the rest to flight.

In 165 BCE, Lysias again sent the Syrian army (now numbering 60,000 infantrymen and 5,000 cavalry) against the Jewish forces, which had risen to 10,000. This time, 5,000 Syrians were killed and Lysias fled back to Antioch. Because of his great victory, Judas and his men were able to recapture the Temple.

The pious Jews cleansed and renewed it, and on Kislev 25, 165 BCE, three years to the day after the first abominable sacrifice had been offered, the new altar was rededicated and holy sacrifices offered. The Jews celebrated the rededication of the Temple for eight days. In memory of the Jewish victory and rededication of the Temple, Judas Maccabee decreed that the Feast of Dedication (called Chanukah in Hebrew) was to be observed every year thereafter for eight days, beginning on Kislev 25.

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

**DANIEL 11:35 "And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time."**

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

After the death of Judas Maccabee in battle in 161 BCE, persecution continued upon the Jews, as history records. Many wicked Jews who had opposed Judas and his goals took opportunity after his death to persecute and kill righteous Jews.

Beginning with Mattathias' leadership of the rebellion against Antiochus IV, the rule of the Hasmoneans (named after Mattathias' grandfather, Asmoneus) lasted from 168 until 37 BCE. The words "until the time of the end" refer to the end of this second period of Jewish sovereignty. The "appointed time" refers to the 70 weeks of years that Gabriel had earlier told Daniel about (Dan. 9:24-27), which led to the appearance of the Messiah.

**DANIEL 11:36 "And the king shall do as he wills. 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 decreed shall be done."**

In this verse, the king being spoken of changes. Starting in verse 21, Antiochus IV Epiphanes was the referenced king. Verses 32 through 35 prophesy his defeat by the Maccabees (the Hasmoneans) and encompass the subsequent fall of their dynasty. But the context shows that the remaining verses in this chapter cannot apply to Antiochus IV.

Most Christian scholars try to insert a huge chronological gap in the prophecy here, making the rest of it apply not to the antetype Antiochus IV, but to the end-time type, the Antichrist. But staying in the time sequence context earlier alluded to by Gabriel (Dan. 11:1), what should we expect to see next in this prophecy? Was there a king who ruled Israel after the end of the Hasmonean era?

What appears to have caused scholars to stray away from the correct understanding at this point of the prophecy is that they were unable to find a successor to Antiochus IV who matched the description of "the king." But two points must be kept in mind in order to properly understand this prophecy. The subject is the Seleucid or Ptolemaic dynasties ONLY as these kingdoms affected Daniel's people. Therefore, the expression "the king," without any other description, could certainly mean one who was king over Israel. Secondly, the immediately preceding verses (Dan. 11:32-35) refer to the Jews and their situation during and after the Maccabean revolt. Based on the history of this period, we should look for the fulfillment of this verse by a "king" other than Antiochus IV or the Hasmonean rulers.

Both secular history and the New Testament record the acts of a king who appeared on the scene in Israel at the end of the Hasmonean period. As we shall see, this king fulfilled every prophetic description given in verses 36 through 39. That king was Herod the Great. In verse 36, the one spoken of is not identified as either the king of the North or the king of the South, but simply as "the king." Herod was seated as king on the throne of Israel when Messiah Yeshua was born. He is the called "the king" in the Gospels (Matt. 2:1, 3, 9; Luke 1:5). He, like Antiochus IV before him, was an antetype of the coming Antichrist, as his actions revealed. Let's look at the specific points in the prophecy and see how Herod fulfilled them.

### **"The King Shall Do According to His Own Will"**

The first thing said of this king is that he would "do according to his own will." While most take this to mean that the king would do as he pleased, it is instructive to see how this phrase is used elsewhere in the prophecy. In Daniel 11:3, we see that it is said of Alexander the Great that he would "do according to his will." Similar words are used of Antiochus the Great in Daniel 11:16. This means more than simply a strong-willed ruler who did things his own way. Both of these rulers (Alexander and Antiochus III) were exceptionally successful in achieving their goals.

Success in achieving and maintaining power also defined Herod the Great. History shows that Herod was an Idumean (the Edomites were forcibly converted to Judaism under the Hasmonean ruler John Hyrcanus about 130 BCE). His father Antipater II, a friend and advisor of Hasmonean ruler Hyrcanus II, was made procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar. In that position, Antipater II made Herod the governor of Galilee at the age of 25 in 47 BCE.

Herod ingratiated himself with Rome following the assassination of Julius Caesar and eventually married Mariamne, a granddaughter of Hyrcanus II (even though he was already married with a young son). Due to a recommendation by Hyrcanus II (as well as a bribe paid to Roman ruler Mark Antony), Herod was appointed as a tetrarch over Judea in 41 BCE.

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

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

### **"He Shall Exalt and Magnify Himself Above Every God"**

The text also states that the king "shall exalt and magnify himself above every god." The word "god" here is the Hebrew 'el. The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament says that "the primary meanings of this root as used in Scripture are 'god' (pagan or false gods) 'God' (the true God of Israel) and less frequently, 'the mighty' (referring to men or angels)." It is clear that Herod exalted and magnified himself above every "mighty one" in Israel, whether priests or rulers. He appointed whomever he chose to the sacred office of high priest. However, because he owed true allegiance only to himself in his lust for absolute power, Herod truthfully could be said to have exalted and magnified himself above all other gods (including the God of Israel, whose will he attempted to thwart by destroying the promised Messiah).

### **"He Shall Speak Astonishing Things Against the God of Gods"**

The Hebrew word niphla'ot, rendered "blasphemies" in some translations, actually means "marvelous" (if used in a positive sense) or "astonishing" (in a negative sense). This charge against Herod primarily refers to his command to slaughter the male babies of Bethlehem. This was done for the express purpose of destroying the coming Messiah (Matt. 2:4), the one God had promised to send to be king over His people Israel. Herod chose to act directly against God's will in this way to ensure that his throne would not be taken over by the rightful heir, Messiah the Son of David. We shall look at this action more later.

**DANIEL 11:37 "He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above them all."**

### **"He Shall Regard Neither the God of His Fathers... Nor Regard Any God"**

Even though Herod was an Idumean (a descendant of Esau), his family had converted to Judaism in the 2nd century BCE. Therefore, Herod was generally regarded as a Jew. In fact, when addressing the Jewish people, Herod customarily used the expression "our fathers" to emphasize his genealogical ties to the patriarchs. Yet Herod promoted Greek and Roman gods and built the port city of Caesarea (named after the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus), which became a symbol in Jewish eyes of everything pagan. In Caesarea, Herod built a huge temple dedicated to the worship of Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor/god. Additionally, he built temples

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

### **"The Desire of Women"**

The phrase "the desire of women" has been variously understood. Some scholars have opined that, speaking of the end-time Antichrist, this indicates that he will have no desire for women. This is far from the intended meaning of this phrase, however. In Haggai 2:7, the Messiah is called "the desire of all nations." The exact same Hebrew word, chemdat, is used in that verse and Daniel 11:37. It was the hope of every religious Jewish woman that she might be the mother of the prophesied Messiah. Therefore, it was primarily the Messiah who was "the desire" of Jewish women.

Additionally, children in general are "the desire of women." The fact that Herod attempted to murder the infant Messiah by destroying numerous babies shows that he had no regard for the maternal nature of women. Each one of the slain infants was "the desire" of his own mother. Herod exalted himself above all by valuing holding onto his power and position above everyone and everything else, including the God of Israel.

**DANIEL 11:38 "But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things."**

Herod's actions in securing and holding on to power provide an impressive fulfillment of this verse. The phrase "god of forces," or "fortresses," is uncommon enough that it provides us a ready means of identification. The Roman emperors proclaimed themselves to be "gods," and it was by their military "forces" or "fortresses" that they enlarged and sustained their power and their empire. Herod was quick to honor the warring Roman rulers with tribute and building projects. He rebuilt many fortresses in the land and temples in surrounding Gentile areas, including three temples dedicated to Caesar Augustus. He rebuilt the ancient Phoenician coastal fort called Strato's Tower and renamed it Caesarea in honor of Caesar Augustus; he rebuilt Samaria, and renamed it Sebaste (sebastos was the Greek word for "reverend," equivalent to the Latin augustus). He built many other fortified cities and named them in honor of Caesar. Herod also introduced Greek-style games in honor of Caesar. He often sent delegations to Rome to deliver valuable gifts and money to show his respect to Caesar.

**DANIEL 11:39 "Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain."**

Verse 39 continues the subject from the previous verse. Using the support and backing of the Roman emperor, Herod was able to overcome all of his foes. In the process, he promoted the glory of the Romans in Judea to his own benefit. Herod gave land and authority to those who supported him in order to secure their allegiance. When viewed properly, we can see that every item foretold of "the king" in verses 36-39 was fulfilled in the reign of Herod.

**DANIEL 11:40 "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through."**

Remember, this prophecy is not primarily concerned with Syria, Egypt, Rome or any other foreign power, but with the fate of Daniel's people, the Jews. Verses 40-43 are a parenthetical insert describing the last major battle over the land of Israel before the Messiah appeared.

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

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

The Roman historian Plutarch wrote that the first move in the war was made by Antony (at the insistence of Cleopatra). Thus we see that the "king of the South" indeed first attacked the "king of the North." The Roman Senate quickly pronounced Antony an outlaw and declared war on Cleopatra.

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

Amazingly, the prophecy was accurately fulfilled in regard to the composition of the forces engaged in the war. Despite the fact that each side had assembled large infantry forces, Plutarch records that these infantry were not engaged at all in the short war. Although his generals advised Antony to use his overwhelming infantry advantage to defeat Octavius, Antony decided to prosecute the war primarily with ships in order to satisfy the request of Cleopatra. Thus the conflict was decided by chariots, horsemen, and in a major naval battle, approximately 630 ships. After the navy of Antony and Cleopatra was routed off the promontory of Actium in Greece on September 2, 31 BCE, the infantry deserted and never saw battle.

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

**DANIEL 11:41 "He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon."**

The course Octavius took after his victory over Antony and Cleopatra accurately follows the prophecy. He passed through Syria, Judea (the "glorious land"), and Egypt in his pursuit of the pair. However, the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon were not invaded during this excursion. A later expedition into these areas (about 25 BCE), under the command of Aelius Gallus along with 500 troops from Herod, was not successful and no further efforts were made against them.

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

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

**DANIEL 11:43 "He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels."**

The prophecy refers specifically to the vast treasures of Egypt. Therefore, its fulfillment must be looked for in the days of Egypt's power and wealth. It cannot have been fulfilled in the debased and poverty-stricken Egypt of later centuries. In the days of Antony and Cleopatra the treasures of Egypt were of immense value, having been accumulated over the years of the Ptolemaic rule. Octavius captured the accumulated riches of Egypt with his victory over Antony and Cleopatra, and celebrated his triumph in Rome in 29 BCE. He became the first Roman emperor, entitled "Caesar Augustus." Interest rates in the Roman empire fell greatly due to the influx of plunder from Egypt. Octavius returned in victory to Rome. Octavius' general, Cornelius Balbus, later took Libya and Ethiopia for Rome.

Why are the parenthetical events of verses 40-43 singled out? Because they illustrate how Rome's domination over Judea was fully established and show the end of the separate history for the kingdom of the South. It also sets the stage for the political conditions that would exist at the time the prophesied Messiah was to arise, according to the 70 weeks prophecy given to Daniel earlier.

**DANIEL 11:44 "But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many."**

Having updated the story flow in verses 40-43 to show the Roman dominance of Judea and the end of the "king of the South," the prophecy now reverts back to its earlier subject, Herod the king. What news came "from the east" to trouble Herod? Clearly, it was the arrival of the magi heralding the birth of the one "who had been born King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2). As the next verse in Matthew's Gospel states, "When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matt. 2:3).

Nothing could "trouble" Herod more than reports of a claimant to his throne. After the magi failed to return with a report of the location of the newborn king, Herod became extremely angry and commanded that all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, be slain, according to the time frame which he had determined from the wise men (Matt. 2:16).

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

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

Realizing that his death was near and that he and his family were generally hated by the Jews, Herod commanded that all the chief men of the Jewish nation be summoned to him at Jericho. Out of fear of not obeying a royal

decree, they came. Herod, in a seething rage, ordered them all to be shut up in the hippodrome there. He placed his sister Salome and her husband Alexas in charge of them, ordering that they were all to be killed when he died. He reasoned that only due to the death of so many noble Jewish men would his own death be mourned. Sanity prevailed, however, and his order was not carried out.

**DANIEL 11:45 "And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him."**

Herod had many royal palaces throughout Judea, including two in Jerusalem. But as his illness worsened in March, 4 BCE, he retired to his winter palace at Jericho, less than 10 miles northwest of the Dead Sea, about 45 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea, and less than 20 miles northeast of Jerusalem.

The final part of the prophecy shows that, in his last days, the king would seek deliverance from a threat to his life, but would not receive it. This was literally fulfilled at the end of Herod's life, as the Jewish historian Josephus vividly documented. After years of suffering from a painful disease (probably syphilis), Herod finally became so despondent that he attempted to take his own life with a paring knife. He was stopped from this act by his cousin Achiab. Immediately after his suicide attempt, Herod ordered the execution of this son, Antipater. Just five days later he finally succumbed to his illness. Herod the king was 70 years old at the time of his death.

## **CONCLUSION**

The expansive prophecy recorded in Daniel 11 shows the political maneuverings of the powers which fought over and ruled Judea and the Jews throughout the period of the 70 weeks prophecy earlier given to Daniel (Dan. 9:24-27). These powers included the northern Seleucid kingdom of Syria, the southern Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt, the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty, the Roman Empire, and Rome's vassal in Judea, Herod the Great.

Like many prophecies, this one is likely dual in some ways; events that have occurred in ancient times could be replicated at the time of the end. Obviously, Antiochus IV and Herod the Great are antetypes of the coming Antichrist. But to assign much of this prophecy to a yet future time is to miss the fact that this prophecy conclusively shows God is in control and world events happen according to His plan and purpose.