

Study on Daniel Chapter Eleven

Tonight we are going to be looking at some quotations from the books of Maccabees. These books are part of the Apocrypha which are not generally recognised as being spiritually inspired but are the historical account of the wars of the Maccabees (Judas Maccabees and his family) between the last book of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament a period of approximately 400 years.

Several historical facts are also given by Josephus a Jewish historian who although he was not a Christian, recorded facts for posterity.

The interpretation of Daniel's vision from the Persian Empire to the death of Alexander (323 B.C.)

This chapter points forward to specific rulers of the near East during the last few centuries before Christ. The following outline will help to understand the historical fulfilment of this prophecy.

Tonight we are only going to study up to **verse 27** as this chapter has too much to cover in one night.

Read **Chapter 11: verse 1-2**

The four Kings of **verse 2** (although this cannot be stated dogmatically) were the Persian rulers Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius 1st and probably Xerxes who attempted the conquest of Greece in 408 BC. By using his great wealth as stated in (**Esther 1:3-4**) Persian kings often held great banquets before going to war.

The celebrations lasted 180 days or about 6 months; because its real purpose was to plan the battle strategy for invading Greece and to demonstrate that the king had sufficient wealth to carry it out. Waging war was not only for survival it was a means of acquiring more wealth, territory and power.

Read **verse 3 - 4**

The mighty King of **verse 3 and 4** was Alexander the Great who conquered the Persian Empire - roughly around 330 BC. The division of his Kingdom after his death into four parts included Greece, the Asiatic near East, Egypt and Asia Minor.

Read **verse 5**

The King of the South in **verse 5** was Ptolemy 1 of Egypt who reigned from 323 - 285 BC (a period of 38 years) and also included one of his princes, his son, Ptolemy 2nd and he added various islands and seaport cities to the Egyptian realm.

Read **verse 6 - 9**

In **verse 6** these prophecies seemed to have been fulfilled many years later in the Seleucid wars between Egypt and Syria (252 BC). Ptolemy 2nd (King of the South) gave his daughter Bernice in marriage to Antiochus 2nd of the Asiatic or Syrian Empire (who was King of the North) to finalise a peace treaty between their two lands but she and her husband were both murdered by his divorced 1st wife Laodice so Bernice's brother Ptolemy 3rd when he ascended the Egyptian throne declared war against the Seleucids to avenge his sister's murder by invading and pillaging the whole realm of Syria (**verses 7-9.**)

Verse 9

The Seleucid king attacks Ptolemy 3rd; he fails and returns to his home

Read **verse 10**

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Verse 10 – 12

And his sons will engage in war (Seleucus had three sons who ruled viz. Seleucus 3rd, Antiochus 3rd and Seleucus 4th). Antiochus 4th would attack the king of the south.

Verse 11

Ptolemy 4th Philopater shall fight against him and be victorious (this was the battle of Raphia in 217 BC)

Verse 12

And the king of Egypt and his army will be elated at such success but it will not last.

Read verses 13 - 15

Verse 13

And the Seleucid king Antiochus 3rd shall raise another army greater than the first and after some time he will attack again. He defeated many Egyptian cities and established himself in Israel the beautiful land which is mentioned in **11:16**. He was later defeated by the Romans at Magnesia **11:18**.

Verse 14

At this time many warlike Jews will ally themselves with Antiochus 3rd and thus help him to victory but this shall be their own undoing. The Jews helped Antiochus army with provisions when on his return from Egypt he besieged the Egyptian garrison left in Jerusalem. Those Jews unconsciously helped to fulfil the purpose of God as to the trials that await Judea according to this vision. Though helping to fulfil the vision they shall fail in their aim of making Judea independent. In other words the Jews had their own agenda that back fired on them

Verse 15

So Antiochus 2nd shall take the well fortified city of Sidon where Scopas, Ptolemy's general, has taken refuge after his defeat at Panium (198 BC)

Read Verses 16 - 17

Verse 16

The king of the Seleucids will, on this occasion, be unbeatable and he shall thus gain control of Palestine.

Verse 17

Antiochus shall then seek to establish his home front by exercising his power in an equitable way toward the Jews and contracting a marriage between his daughter Cleopatra (his political pawn) and the boy Ptolemy 5th of Egypt. The arrangement did not work to his advantage as Cleopatra favoured her husband over her father

Read Verse 18

Verse 18

The Antiochus 3rd turned his attention to the coasts of Asia Minor in 197 BC then Thracia in 196 BC and Greece in 192 BC. A Roman general (two really) shall put an end to his attack on their dominions in 191 BC at Thermopylae where he was defeated by Acilius Glabrio and again in 190BC at Magnesium where Cornelius Scipio defeated him.

Read verse 19

Verse 19

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Antiochus was shackled by a crippling tax and lost all the property west and north of the Taurus Mountains. He would turn his attention to his own territory and Persia where he would die (robbing temples) Attempting to plunder the temple of Jupiter at Elymais, by night, whether through greed or the need of money to pay the Roman tribute of a thousand talents, he was slain with his soldiers in an insurrection of the local inhabitants.

Read verses 20 - 21

Verse 20

The Seleucus 4th Philopater would come to power, and he heard that there was money in the temple treasury in Jerusalem belonging to the widows and orphans and other high officials. He sent Heliodorus, his prime minister, throughout his kingdom supposedly to raise money but in actual fact to raid the temple treasury. Soon after the money raising expedition, Seleucus 4th would be slain by Heliodorus as a political expedient (i.e. it was advantageous to have Heliodorus do away with Seleucus because of the upheaval caused by the desecration of the temple (2 Maccabees 3: 7) "And when Appollonius met the King , he informed him of the money whereof he had been told; and the king appointed Heliodorus who was his chancellor, and sent him with a commandment to accomplish the removal of the aforesaid money"

Verse 21

Then the contemptible Antiochus 4th Epiphanes shall take the throne. The expected heir (Demetrius 1st Soter, son of Seleucus 4th) will not receive the kingdom. By flattery Antiochus 4th will win the support of Eumenes and Attalus – kings in Asia Minor, who will help him gain the throne of the Syrians "who gave in peaceably"

Read verses 22 – 27

Verse 22

Antiochus shall be successful in war against great, armies like that of Ptolemy 6th Philometer (170 BC near Pelusium) He will depose Onias 3rd, (The Jewish High Priest - the prince of the covenant.)

Verse 23

Many made leagues with Antiochus but he would work deceitfully against all his allies. He would gain much power though the Syrian people are not large

Verse 24

Antiochus will be a shrewd man who will wait his best opportunity before making his moves against the places he desires. He will set a precedence of lavish giving to ensure his stability (See 1 Maccabees 3: 25 -30 "and he feared that he should not have enough as at other times for the charges and the gifts which he gave afore time with a liberal hand and he abounded above the kings that were before him" and he will use cunning in going against enemy fortresses. He will succeed in this for a while.

Verse 25

He shall engage in war against Ptolemy 6th (170BC) who will be defeated, partly by sedition in and from his army. (Sedition – the stirring up of rebellion against the government)

Verse 26

Some close associates of the Ptolemy king will aid in his defeat and his army shall be "overflowed" and many slain (1 Maccabees 1: 18) "And they made war against Ptolemy king of Egypt and Ptolemy was put to shame before him and fled and many fell wounded to death."

Verse 27

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All the apparent candour and joint projects discussed will mask only evil intentions. Neither of those kings will ultimately benefit anything. Since God appoints their end, both kingdoms will fall (Probably Antiochus 4th of Syria and Ptolemy 6th of Egypt)

Treachery and deceit are a power brokers way to position himself over someone else. When two power brokers try to gain the upper hand it is a mutually weakening and self-destructive process. It is also futile because God ultimately holds all power in His hands). We will finish there for this evening and continue our study next time.

Read verses 28 – 32

Verse 28

He shall return to his own land with much booty, persecute Israel much and then return to Syria (1 Maccabees 1: 19 "and they got possession of the strong cities in the land of Egypt; and he took the spoils of Egypt") Antiochus 4th, plundered Jerusalem, desecrated the Temple and stopped the Jews daily sacrifices. He slew 80,000 people, took 40,000 prisoners and sold 40,000 as slaves and again we can read about that in 11 Maccabees, chapter 5.

Guided by Menelaus the High Priest, he entered the sanctuary with blasphemies, took away the gold and silver vessels, sacrificed swine (pigs) on the altar and sprinkled broth made from pig's flesh throughout the temple. To sacrifice a pig in the Temple was the worst kind of insult an enemy could level against the Jews. This all happened between 168 and 167 BC.

Verse 29

When God has it planned he will again attack Egypt (168 BC) but this time he will not be as successful as before. This is talking about when Antiochus had planned to attack Egypt advancing with a fleet and an army demanding Cyprus, Pelusium and the mouth of the Nile but he wasn't successful because he was met by the Roman ambassador, four miles from Alexandria, with a decree from the Roman senate telling him to back off. The Romans did not want anyone interfering with Egypt as for four months of the year this was their source of Grain. Antiochus submitted and retired from Egypt. He was not a "happy chappy" as we will see in verse 30

Verse 30

For ships from Cyprus, a Roman dominion, bear Roman envoys ordering his withdrawal. He will return in humiliation and exercise his rage on the temple and people of God while making use of apostates (fallers away from the Jewish faith)) from the Holy covenant. (Verse 28)

Verse 31

He will send men and officers who shall profane Jerusalem and the Temple, causing to cease the daily worship there, by an offering of pig's flesh on the altar and sprinkling the entire place with pig's broth

Verse 32

And the apostates will be used, making them more profane, but the people of God will be loyal to their knowledge and relationship with Him. Antiochus would flatter the ones that had already fallen away but the faithful would stand firm against him

Read verse 33 and 34.

Verse 33

And the teachers of the people will teach many but they too will suffer death or captivity during this long period of persecution.

Verse 34

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But despite this the teachers will find some support in men like Judas (Maccabees). There will of course, be those who spy and intrigue for the enemy.

Difficult times remind us of our weaknesses and our inability to cope. We want answers, leadership, and clear direction. During these times, God's word begins to interest even those who never look at it. We should be ready to use our opportunities to share God's word in needy times. We must also be prepared to face persecution and rejection as we teach and preach

Verse 35

The persecution that the loyal will have to undergo will, ultimately work out for their own benefit. They will have to suffer until God puts an end to the Seleucids for, make no mistake - It is appointed.

God's messenger describes a time of trial when even wise believers may stumble. This could mean

1. falling into sin
2. being fearful and losing faith
3. mistakenly following wrong teachings or
4. experiencing severe suffering or martyrdom

If we persevere in our faith, any such experience will only refine us and make us stronger. [Are you facing trials at the moment?](#) Recognise them as opportunities to strengthen your faith. If we remain steadfast in these experiences, we will be stronger in our faith and closer to God.

Read Verses 36–39

This is probably the Romans that are spoken about here because of the references to gods. The kings are probably the Caesars of the Empire. The god spoken of here would not be one of their original gods but one erected by the Caesar. Possibly the power they had was their gods

Verse 37. The one desired by woman may refer to Tammuz – a Babylonian fertile God. Tammuz is also mentioned in [Ezekiel 8:14](#), in other words, this person won't recognise any deity or other religions at all. Not even pagan ones, instead he will proclaim himself to be divine and the ultimate power

Verse 38. The God of fortresses is believed by some to be either Jupiter or Zeus. The implication is that this King will make war with his god more than all his predecessors did. He will wage war and glory in its horrors

Read Verses 40–45

The Ptolemy's are still in the south (This was the famous Cleopatra) and in the north there is now Rome (Antiochus). Verse 40 is probably the battle of Actium in 31 BC that had ended the Ptolemy kingdom. In verse 40 the Ptolemies gets into battle with Antiochus, Antiochus wins the battle and then goes on to invade many countries sweeping through them like a flood.(This period is controversial as there is very little evidence to support it as only one historian Porphyry actually mentions it.)

Antiochus also invaded the beautiful land, which was Israel. But Edom, Moab and the Ammonites were not touched as he used their help in crushing the Jews of whom they were the ancient enemies. Even Egypt would not escape.

Verse 43

Egypt did not escape as Antiochus took control of the gold and silver and all the treasures of Egypt

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Read Verse 44

The tidings or reports mentioned here were of the Jewish restoration of the temple under Judus Maccabees. This totally infuriated Antiochus after all his hard work to destroy the Jews and he set out to annihilate them

Read 45

He pitched his tents between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea near Mount Zion (Jerusalem). These tents weren't just your holiday campers tents, but Palace like military tents such as sultans or royal princes would travel with. Antiochus was subsequently so devastated at "Tables" when he heard that his military leader Lysias had been overcome by the Jews and also the failure of his expedition to the Temple of Elymais that we can read of in **Maccabees 9**: that that was his last successful campaign.

The desecration of the consecrated ground round Jerusalem by the idolatrous Roman ensigns (the flag of the Roman nation that depicted the Roman Emperors as God, an outward sign of Caesar's self imposed deity) also the Mohammedan mosque that was built on the temple mount and finally by the last Antichrist are all referred to. (**Read Isaiah 14:13**) Here referring to the King of Babylon a tool in the hands of the devil himself who has empowered and directed him in his opposition to God's people and his cause.

The visions of History

This chapter covers the 400 years of silence between the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the new. We will hear about the books of the Apocrypha in particular the books of the Maccabees and the wars of the Maccabees against Antiochus the 4th it is the interpretation of Daniel's vision from the Persian Empire to the death of Alexander the great in 323 B C

1. Who was the mighty king of verses 3 and 4?
2. Who was the king of the South in verse 5?
3. Bernice married Antiochus the 2nd. To finalise a peace treaty between the two lands. How did Antiochus first wife feel about this?
4. Who helped Antiochus army with provisions? Do you think they fulfilled God's purpose by doing this?
5. Why did Antiochus rob temples?
6. Today we hear of politicians and world leaders often misusing their power and lavishing gifts to gain favour and position to buy their way into government or knighthoods etc. How is this reflected in the way Antiochus acted?

Visions of History continues

The desecration of the Temple by Antiochus caused major problems for the Jews. Without their Temple, the altar of sacrifice etc many would turn away from God and he hoped they would turn to worshipping him

1. How many Jews did Antiochus slay, take prisoner and sell as slaves?
2. We hear about "The abomination that causes desolation." What animal did Antiochus sacrifice on the altar?

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3. What did he sprinkle though out the temple?
4. What is an Apostate? Verse 30
5. In times of trial even wise men and believers may stumble. What would this mean?
6. What were the tidings or reports mentioned in verse 44 referring to?