

Have you ever wondered what the point of prophecy is? Why does God choose to reveal the future in the first place? In our study last week, when Daniel first received this divine vision, he experienced strength, joy and encouragement, despite the terrible things he saw, because he knew he was loved by the God who sets the path of history. Even after a prophecy has been fulfilled and the events occur, it still serves as a signpost, pointing anyone who hears it to feel awe at the sovereignty and wisdom of God. It stands witness to God's faithfulness to always fulfill His word and promises. Most importantly to our study today, we were told the reason for this final prophecy in Chapter 10, verse 14 where the angel states he "came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come."

With these purposes of prophecy in mind, (inspiring strength and encouragement or awe and faith depending on which side of the events a person stands) it then holds true that the more specific and detailed a prophecy gets, the more effective it is at inspiring these things. If you read your horoscope today and it mentioned "someone close to you will cause you pain in the near future," I would hope you reject that as the bologna and nonsense that it is! That's not prophecy, it is so non-specific. How close to you? Emotional or physical pain? How near is the near future? This shouldn't inspire awe, it should be mocked.

But if instead, I told you "Tomorrow morning at 10:47am, you'll receive a call from a woman's voice. She'll refer to you as 'Agent A5, "The Condor"' and tell you where to find a hidden briefcase with \$100,000 worth of rare earth minerals" and then I was right about all of that, that is a reason to be impressed. Either I have divine knowledge of your future, or at the very least I have some direct influence so that I can make these events happen.

If the amount of detail determines how effective prophecy is at inspiring awe, then tonight will be the most inspiring study of prophecy you've ever heard. We have 45 verses of incredibly specific and detailed prophecy that has played out as accurate on the stage of history. These verses are so specific and accurate that if you remember back to the start of this study in the Spring, Pastor Tony explained that many people refuse to believe that this book could have been written by a man named Daniel in the time he says he lived. We don't have time tonight to reiterate all the reasons that this idea doesn't make sense and how we can know that this book is accurately dated, but I definitely encourage anyone interested to seek out the archive notes or lesson online.

Speaking of our limited time tonight, we've got 45 verses and... I know everyone in this room wants to go to bed eventually, so we won't be going crazy on details and maps, only focusing on the big picture tonight.

We start with one quick verse finishing the angel's description of his journey to Daniel.¹

Daniel 11:1 (ESV)

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

The angel says that in the same way he said before that the angel Michael came to his assistance, this angel at a time in the past also assisted Michael.²

From here to the end of the chapter, the messenger begins to describe to Daniel the prophecy he came to give. The first section describes **God's people surrounded by war (v2-20)**.

Daniel 11:2–4 (ESV)

2 "And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. 3 Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills. 4 And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.

The prophecy begins describing four Persian kings after the two that Daniel has already served under.³ That sixth Persian ruler is said to be crazy rich and he uses his wealth to upset the kingdom of Greece.

¹ The chapter break is likely attempting to follow the same pattern as other chapters in Daniel, starting a new chapter when Daniel's statements indicate the relevant date based on the reigning monarch. Unfortunately, that method doesn't make sense here as 11:1 is self-evidently not a dating statement by Daniel introducing a new vision, nor is it a new vision at all but it is instead the conclusionary statement of the messenger angel from the same vision of chapter 10 just before the angel delivers the prophecy.

² Reading this in English, it sounds like the angel is saying he stood up to strengthen Darius the Mede, but what is more natural to an ancient reader would be viewing that reference of "the first year of Darius the Mede" as a date, the way we say "the year 2026". That would mean the person the angel is saying he helped strengthen is Michael, which naturally fits with the details from Chapter 10 where Michael had previously come to strengthen and support this unnamed angel.

³ There is some disagreement on whether the "two" Medo-Persian monarchs mentioned in Daniel, Darius the Mede and Cyrus the great, are really two distinct men or if one of these terms could be considered a title, like the title "Pharaoh." I've chosen to describe them as two individual kings to match the statements within the book of Daniel and also to match the wording of Ezra 4:5 which describes both men's reigns separately, though in reversed order.

After this, a mighty ruler who will “do as he wills” will rise up and then suddenly be broken, leaving his newly formed kingdom not to his own heirs or even people in his own authority but to others. Our pattern is to understand what’s said, then compare to history.

In history, the four Medo-Persian rulers after Cyrus the Great were Cambyses, Smerdis (who was kind of a pretender king and didn’t reign for long at all), Darius I Hystaspes and Xerxes I. You might remember from our study in Esther a couple years ago that Xerxes I actually shows up in the book of Esther under the name Ahasuerus. Both historical records and the testimony of scripture in Esther prove that he indeed was insanely rich and that he did use that wealth to gain power and ultimately to try and attack Greece, just as Daniel’s prophecy describes.

But what about this mighty ruler that rises up suddenly? Well, this description matches perfectly with the description we already studied in Daniel chapter 8. Remember the goat that suddenly shows up and flies across the land and shatters the ram but then his strength is broken and divided up using that same language “to the four winds of heaven.” Thankfully, back in chapter 8 that angel explicitly told us that this ruler represented the Greek conqueror that shatters the strength of Medo-Persia and we know that man is Alexander the Great. Just like Adam explained when we studied chapter 8, this prophecy about Alexander’s life fits perfectly. The man rose up and conquered suddenly like a goat shooting across the land like a bullet but then he died a young age, his heirs were murdered and his Greek kingdom was split into four parts to his military generals.

Now of those four parts of the Grecian kingdom, two of them become the main focus for much of the rest of this chapter.

Daniel 11:5 (ESV)

5 “Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority.

Daniel is told that the southern nation that comes out of this conqueror’s broken kingdom will be a strong one, but a prince under that ruler will actually gain even more strength than the southern king.

The military general that took the southern region of the kingdom, mainly Egypt and the Palestinian region where Israel is located was a man named Ptolemy I Soter, so the Bible refers to him as “the king of the south”, it refers his kingdom as “the south” and I’ll interchangeably be referring to it as its proper name, the Ptolemaic

kingdom, or more simply just Egypt since that was the main part of this kingdom. Another one of Alexander's generals, named Seleucus Nicator was forced to flee for his life and ran to Ptolemy for protection and began serving under him. That arrangement didn't last long, though and eventually Seleucus returns back to the north and he conquers the areas of Babylonia, Syria and Media, holding even more land and having even more power than Ptolemy did. The prince under the king of the south gained a great authority and even more strength. This kingdom will be called "the north" in our text today, and I'll refer to it as the Seleucid empire, or more informally as Syria.

Daniel 11:6–9 (ESV)

6 After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported her in those times. 7 "And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail. 8 He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. 9 Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.

Daniel is told that these two kings will come to an alliance based on the daughter of the southern king, but that woman and her whole family will fall. Then some branch of her family tree will come back for revenge against the northern king and win the battle for revenge. As a result, this new southern king loots the idols and treasures of the northern kingdom and takes them back to Egypt before settling down for peace for a while. The northern king tries to counteract but ends up just going home.

Several years into the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms, we find these events fulfilled perfectly. At this time the nations are ruled by Ptolemy I's son, (you'll never guess his name) Ptolemy II Philadelphus, and the Seleucid Empire is ruled by Seleucus's grandson, Antiochus II Theos. Ptolemy II does exactly what God describes to Daniel, and sends his daughter, named Berenice, to marry Antiochus II in a peace treaty. Now unfortunately, Antiochus II was already married to a woman named Laodice. Some years later, Ptolemy II dies and so Antiochus II no longer feels the need to honor his marriage to Berenice and Laodice enters into favor once more. Unfortunately, hell hath no fury like a woman's scorn and Laodice decides she didn't like being

treated this way so she goes ahead and has Berenice, her family and her child murdered, and while she's at it she has her husband murdered as well so that her son Seleucus II Callinicus can take the throne.

So, the southern king, Ptolemy II, his daughter and her whole family are all dead, but Ptolemy II's son, Berenice's brother, takes the throne. Great name on this guy, Ptolemy III Eurgetes. He takes the Egyptian army north to Syria but is too late to save his sister, and so now he sets out on a war of revenge, running absolutely rampant in the northern kingdom. This new northern king, Laodice's son Seleucus II, leaves Syria to go hide in Asia Minor while Ptolemy III rampages. Just as God described, Ptolemy III brings all sorts of silver and idols and loot back to Egypt, stops attacking the northern kingdom and eventually Seleucus II returns and reclaims much of his lost territory.

Historically, the invasion described in verse 9 must have been so inconsequential that it's actually not recorded anywhere. There is no record of Seleucus II trying to retaliate against Egypt. **Now, some could see this as evidence to doubt the prophecy, despite the insane degree of accuracy in the prophecy so far, but I choose to see it as a confirmation because the verse describes a pointless and non-interesting campaign, so it only makes sense that we have no record of it.**

Daniel 11:10–13 (ESV)

¹⁰ "His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. ¹¹ Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. ¹² And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. ¹³ For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.

The messenger tells Daniel that the next generation take up the fight again, this time with massive armies that overflow and rush through. The multiple sons ruling in the north try an invasion again and make it deep into the southern king's territory, but the southern king comes out in great rage and wins, even against the multitude from the north. Then, he goes beyond simple victory and is exalted in pride and casts down tens of thousands. However, the prophecy warns, this southern king may win momentarily but it does not last, because after some years the northern king comes back with an even greater army and more supplies to try again.

Now historically, Seleucus II in Syria had two sons, and so naturally since they were out of all the good names, he went with Seleucus III and Antiochus III (called Antiochus the Great, not to be confused with Antiochus Epiphanes that came up in chapter 8, who we'll talk about later). Seleucus III prepares for war, but was murdered and his brother, Antiochus took the throne and continued his brothers march south, deep into the Ptolemaic controlled area of Palestine⁴.

Meanwhile in the south, Ptolemy III has also been succeeded by his son. Anyone want to guess his name? Ptolemy IV Philopator. Now some records say that Ptolemy IV's personality was usually characterized by luxury and vices back at home, he generally did not have a desire to conquer, but when Antiochus III invaded deep into his territory he responded, just as the prophecy states, with great rage and fought back against Antiochus's forces, even though it's recorded that Antiochus had the greater number of soldiers and elephants, just like the prophecy describes.

Having won his defense over the northern invaders, Ptolemy IV chooses his old life of luxury over any sort of desire to conquer and he decides not to press forward into his enemy's territory, instead returning to Egypt. Antiochus the Great steps away from his invasion of Egypt for a time and goes back to some eastern campaigns he was waging before his brother died. He spends over a decade in the east, meanwhile Ptolemy IV dies and is succeeded by his son. Any guesses on his name? Ptolemy V Epiphane. 15 years go by and suddenly Antiochus the Great is ready for round two. He comes back south to Egypt with an even larger force, exactly as the prophecy describes. But we get a new detail in verse 14.

Daniel 11:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ "In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail."

This is like a sudden splash of water in your face reminding you that we're studying a prophecy about the future of God's people, Israel. We've had, like, 7 kings of Egypt and Syria warring back and forth and sending daughters and fighting with elephants and naming their kids the same thing over and over, and we probably lost focus of the main point. History has a whole lot of nations and wars, why are we talking about Syria and

⁴ The prophetic text has a grammatical oddity in verse 10. It mentions multiple "sons" waging war; however, the grammar of the "great forces" they lead implies a singular group. This proves true to the historical fulfillment of the prophecy as both sons did initially manage two separate armies but fought in different campaigns in different locations until Seleucus III's death when Antiochus III combined both forces into one before his attack on Egypt.

Egypt? Well, what's right between these two nations? Israel. When big nations go out in big wars the places they go are the warzones. What the angel is telling Daniel is that Israel's time in captivity under Babylon and now Medo-Persia is not the end of their oppression by foreign powers, it is in fact only the very beginning.

In this prophecy, the whole time, they've been right in the middle of the conflict and war between these two nations, and now they are specifically mentioned as participants. The violent people among the Jews will join in along with the king of the north's great army against the king of the south in order to fulfill this very prophecy, but it won't work right away.

Historically, when Antiochus III came back after those 15 years against Ptolemy V, he had aid from many places. A Macedonian king, named Philip V, was an ally in the war and yes, some Jews that were unhappy under Ptolemaic rule joined him as well as some insurrectionists in Egypt itself. Though Antiochus III was generally winning and gaining ground, it is true that the violent Jews did not succeed in what they wanted, because the general of the southern kingdom, Scopas, came down on them for their rebellion and actually killed many Jewish leaders before Antiochus III successfully pushed him out Israel.

Our next section describes the rest of Antiochus the Great's campaign

Daniel 11:15–19 (ESV)

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. 16 But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hand. 17 He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage. 18 Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him. 19 Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

Daniel's told this northern king wins in a very specific way, taking a fortified city with siege tactics, and comes to "do as he pleases" in the land, taking control of the glorious land, which always refers to the promised land of Israel. The end of the war is described as a peace treaty where the northern king gives his daughter with an intent to destroy the southern kingdom, but it won't actually offer advantage. Then, with this war completed,

he is described as moving on to capture coastlands until some commander stops his rampage, after which he goes home and falls.

Remember as we look at history what our big picture is here, we want to be inspired with awe and faith at how well laid out God's plans for the world are and we want to notice what is happening to God's people, Israel.

Antiochus the Great pushes that southern general, Scopas, into a well-fortified city names Sidon, but does indeed capture it through a siege of the city, defeating the southern army and general. With that victory, the northern nation of Syria for the first time took control of the Palestinian region, including Israel, away from the southern, Ptolemaic kingdom. The glorious land was in his hands and the prophecy gives us a very ominous warning that this means the northern kingdom holds the potential for a lot of destruction, and we're going to see the effects of that later.

In the peace treaty the Egyptians were forced to sign, Antiochus the Great gives his daughter, Cleopatra, to Ptolemy V. He hoped that having his own relative in the court of Egypt would give him influence to undermine the southern kingdom and eventually take it entirely. But just as God described, his plan was fruitless because Cleopatra was actually a very honoring and faithful wife who served her husband well instead of obeying her father's wishes.

Where does Antiochus the Great go next? He turns his attention to the Mediterranean coast and begins conquering there, but a general eventually stops him. The nation of Rome was growing in power and the Roman general, Lucius Cornelius Scipio puts a stop to Antiochus's war and forces him to pay an enormous tribute to Rome, and now Syria is desperately in need of money.

Antiochus the Great returns home to his own land and now has to figure how to pay this tribute, but he doesn't make it very far and disappears from history. Some report he might have been killed by an angry mob after trying to loot the temple of Zeus for riches to help pay Rome. One last verse of our section:

Daniel 11:20 (ESV)

²⁰ *"Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle."*

How extremely specific, there'll be a new king who sends a tax man, then the king will die but not in anger or battle.⁵

Antiochus III was succeeded by his son, (any name guesses?) Seleucus IV Philopator, and now this guy has to figure out how to pay his dad's debt to Rome. One of the strategies he tried included sending out tax collectors and the one he sent to Israel was his prime minister, a now-famous man named Heliodorus. The historical books known as Maccabees actually describe this man's attempts at extracting wealth from the temple in Jerusalem and failing

Taking a step a back to review this section of **God's people surrounded by war (v2-20)**, we see a hyper detailed description of nearly constant war back and forth between the lands surrounding Israel for over 100, nearly 150 years. Daniel's people as he is receiving this message are just not getting back to their land after 70 years in exile. God's message to Daniel, similar to the prophecy of 70 weeks in chapter 9, is that Israel has more Gentile oppression ahead of it. We've seen in history at this point that they've had armies come through their land non-stop, they've had rebellions crushed and their temple was nearly raided, but all of this is only the beginning of the difficulty God has planned for Israel. Our next section is **God's people under attack (v21-35)**, and it focuses on one man and his intense persecution of Israel.

Daniel 11:21–27 (ESV)

²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. ²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant. ²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people. ²⁴ Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. ²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. ²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷ And as for the

⁵ On first reading, it might seem like the Heliodorus is the one killed outside of battle, but actually the "he" in "he shall be broken" is talking about the new northern king that arose, because Seleucus IV dies after a very short reign of only a couple years, and it wasn't in some grand battle, it was actually a mysterious death, most likely poisoning, and some people even blame Heliodorus as the murderer, because Seleucus IV's heir was held in captivity by an enemy nation and there was possibly a chance to seize the throne here.

two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.

Daniel is told about a new man, this “contemptible person”. He’s described as stealing the kingdom, sweeping away others who stand against him in his power⁶. He will act deceitfully and cunningly regarding an alliance, and he acts in new ways that his fathers never did, plundering and scattering and devising plans, but all of this is being allowed by God for a limited time which He has set in His sovereignty. It’s said specifically, that he will raise a great army, he will reignite a war with the south, and the king of the south will bring an even greater army against him but shall not succeed because of devious plots and betrayal by those who share his table. The deception continues after the battle where the warring kings continue to try and deceive each other back and forth but to no avail.

In the Seleucid kingdom, remember that after Antiochus the Great died, Seleucus IV reigned for a relatively quick time before his death and his son was held in captivity, not available to take the throne. But Antiochus the Great had a second son who was more than willing to take advantage of the power vacuum and seize the throne from his nephew, and he did so without battle or bloodshed but through flattery, empty promises and deception. This second son was named (what could it be?) Antiochus. But this man is a man we’ve studied before from chapter 8, Antiochus Epiphanes, “the little horn” of Daniel 8. By all accounts the prophetic description that we’re given here of this man could not be more accurate, everything he did (including seizing the throne) was done with arrogance, deception, scheming, flattery and brutality. He was a “contemptible person.” He titled himself “Epiphanes,” meaning “illustrious one,” but behind his back people changed it to “Antiochus Epimanes,” meaning “Madman.” That was his reputation.

Remember, Antiochus’s sister, Cleopatra, was given to the Egyptian king Ptolemy V. Around this time, as Antiochus is consolidating power, Cleopatra and Ptolemy’s son, (can you guess it this time?) Ptolemy VI Philometor, comes to the throne. Because of the connection with Cleopatra, Ptolemy VI and Antiochus Epiphanes are actually nephew and uncle.

⁶ There is no clear and obvious earthly meaning on who the “prince of the covenant” is being overpowered in verse 22. In the previous chapter, many “princes” were mentioned in the spiritual warfare surrounding God’s people so this could be a description of a spiritual event not recorded in history, like some defeat of the prince over Israel, Michael. Alternatively, it has been suggested to describe either the death of the high priest early in Antiochus’s reign or perhaps even that the covenant referred to here is unrelated to Israel and the prince is a ruler holding an agreement with Antiochus like his nephew later on.

Ptolemy starts a campaign against Antiochus⁷, and war breaks out once again between these two nations. The north raises a mighty army and the south raises an even greater one, but against superior forces, Antiochus still wins. Unlike the last time we saw a king win over superior forces through sheer wrath, this time Ptolemy's army actually struggles from within because of the deceptive plots and empty promises of Antiochus causing betrayal among even the southern king's closest councilors. Antiochus wins definitively, a huge number of forces are killed and Ptolemy VI is actually taken prisoner under his uncle's control, and his younger brother, Ptolemy VII, begins to reign in Egypt.

It doesn't do a lot of good to hold a king captive who isn't king anymore. So, for years, Antiochus tries to convince his nephew that they're really allies against his brother and that Antiochus will help put Ptolemy VI back on the throne, but it's all empty promises as Antiochus really wants to own Egypt for himself. Meanwhile, Ptolemy VI convinces Antiochus that they are really allies against his brother so then Antiochus invades Egypt again, but this was a ruse because Ptolemy VI wants to defect and join his brother, Ptolemy VII against Antiochus. Both kings, bent on doing evil, speaking lies at the same table but to no avail. The Lord says he will not let Antiochus conquer this nation because "the end is yet to be at the time appointed."

Just as it's spoken, Antiochus Epiphanes' plots were to no avail as he was barely able to make any inroads into Egypt during his invasion. In what little land he did succeed in taking he installed his nephew, Ptolemy VI, based on this perceived alliance, and he returned home with his battle-loot, defeated.

Daniel 11:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.

Daniel's told the contemptible king will turn against the Holy Covenant of God's people and work out his will before he goes home.

Right when Antiochus was returning from his failed invasion of Egypt, he encounters a rebellion going on in Israel against Syrian control and absolutely crushes it. It's reported that Antiochus kills 80,000 Jews at this time and then loots the temple. This is that destructive power over God's people that has been held in the hand of

⁷ Ptolemy VI's campaign against Antiochus Epiphanes was likely motivated by the dowry promised by Antiochus III to Ptolemy V when Cleopatra was given in marriage. The dowry supposedly contained two pieces of land in Palestine, including Israel, but the land was never really given to the Ptolemaic kingdom. Rather than respecting the agreement, Antiochus Epiphanes parked armies in these lands as a show of force that he did not intend to give them up peacefully, prompting Ptolemy VI's campaign.

the northern kingdom ever since Syria took control of the land from Egypt. This is also just a beginning, because it gets even worse. Antiochus is not satisfied with failure and tries against Egypt again.

Daniel 11:29–30 (ESV)

²⁹ “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before. ³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant.

Daniel is told the same man will try again and fail, but this time there is no battle loot and his failure is much more significant. The contemptible man is now afraid and enraged and he takes it out against the Holy people of God.

When Antiochus understood that his nephew did not plan on overthrowing his brother, but instead was working with his brother and their mother against Antiochus he began to march once more on Egypt, but it does not go “this time as it was before”. What the Bible refers to as Kittim is the region of land northwest of the Mediterranean Sea, and during Antiochus’s day that land contained the growing superpower of a nation, Rome. When Antiochus was just about to enter Egypt to attack, he encountered a fleet of Roman ships led by the Roman commander, Gaius Popilius Laenas. The story of this meeting is amazing because Gaius interrupts Antiochus’s army with a letter from the Roman senate ordering him to leave Egypt immediately or else face war with Rome, which is not a war Antiochus could win. Then, anticipating that this man would try some sneaky or deceptive practice to get out of the order from the Roman senate, the commander reportedly drew a circle in the dirt around Antiochus and humiliated him by forcing him to give his response to the letter before he was allowed to leave the circle. Forced to retreat before his war even began, Antiochus was “afraid and withdrew” and he “turned back and was enraged” and he “took action against the holy covenant.” Feeling humiliated and angry, and with a full army ready for war with no one to attack, Antiochus turns back to the Jewish people yet again.

Reports of Antiochus’s lifestyle indicate he was pretty obsessed with Greek culture and religious practice and he hated the religious worship of the Jews. He made it his mission at this time to stamp out Jewish worship completely.

Daniel 11:31–35 (ESV)

³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. ³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. ³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder. ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, ³⁵ and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

Daniel is given a most horrific vision, where this contemptible man defiles the temple grounds, stops sacrificial worship and then performs an abomination that defiles the temple altar itself, making true worship and sacrifice to God impossible until the temple is cleansed. This man will seek out Jews that don't follow God and bring them to his side, but those who worship and know the true God stand firm and take action against him. Those who are wise and know their God will even begin to convince rally together others and convince them to stand against him, but it will not be easy for them. They will go through sword and flame and captivity and plunder, losing everything for their faith in the true God. Even as they fall, their sacrifice will inspire more faith in others to help them and this persecution has the effect of refining and purifying the people until the time of the end that they're waiting for.

Now we can start to understand why the visions in Daniel's head made him so terribly upset earlier. Because God is showing him things that are terrible to go through.

The truth of history is just as bad, if not worse with the details. On his way to Jerusalem, Antiochus sends a mercenary leader from his army, named Apollonius, in the guise of peace, but the man waits for the Sabbath when the Jews are most at peace and obeying God in rest and then suddenly begins a massacre and plunder of the city. As Antiochus himself arrived and the attacked worsened, the rebellious Jews that favored Antiochus over their religious leaders were won over to his side and rewarded with positions of power. All Jewish religious practice, feast days and worship were all banned. The temple was indeed desecrated as Antiochus, obsessed with Greek culture if you remember, planted an idol to Zeus in the holy temple and sacrificed an unclean animal to it.

While the faithless were attaching themselves to this horrific man, the faithful in Israel began to rally and fight back, led in particular by one family of priests that have become known as the Maccabees, forming what we call the Maccabean revolt. This family and the revolt they inspired did bring a large number of Jews together to fight back but they were forced into a years long persecution full of everything we saw described, death and

plunder and captivity. Some of the Maccabean family themselves were killed. Many of these unfaithful Jews that supported Antiochus tried to infiltrate the revolt and the revolt eventually responded by putting to death anyone in their midst that dared to support Antiochus, purging and cleansing themselves of those who claim to be God's people but do not serve Him faithfully. God's people were indeed purified, "waiting for the time of the end that awaits its appointed time."

Daniel 11:36–37 (ESV)

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. ³⁷ He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all."

Daniel is next told of a king that once again does whatever he wills, only this time he magnifies himself to be above everyone and everything and every god. He worships no one else but himself for he considers himself above all else. He prospers until his time of indignation in the face of God is over.

If we look to history yet again.... we don't find anything like this. We have just changed from the people studying a prophecy after it is fulfilled to those awaiting its fulfillment. Just like Daniel chapter 2, and just like Daniel 7, and just like Daniel 8 and just like Daniel 9, God's prophecy to Daniel is not fully filled in our day, but there is still yet more to come.

This new king, as you'll see in the rest of our verses tonight, is not someone that I can show you in a history book. This is the same coming king that has been described in Daniel 7 and in Daniel 9, the man we refer to as the Antichrist who reigns at the end of our age just before Christ's second coming. This may seem surprising because it doesn't seem like the verses changed who we were talking about to anyone different than it was talking about before.

God fully intended for it to be difficult to distinguish on the surface between the man Antiochus Epiphanes and the coming Antichrist. These two men are not the same, but they share a lot of similarities. God has purposely crafted the path of history to allow Antiochus's evil life to serve as a type or an image of the coming, much greater evil of Antichrist. This is similar to how in many ways a king like David can be a type of the coming Christ, representing a king from the tribe of Judah, or self-sacrificial nature or his just rule, while also David is not Christ, he is full of sin and falls short in many ways. Antiochus's sudden rise to power, claiming of a throne,

his deceptive and dishonest and manipulative tactics, his ability to conquer and thwart great armies and nations for as long as God allows him to, and most importantly, his hatred and intense persecution of the Jews and defilement of God's temple all point forward to a much greater enemy of God's people. For this reason, it makes sense that it's hard to distinguish one from the other in this prophecy. How then do we know we talking about someone new?

There are several things in the prophecy that help us see the transition. The previous verse just told us that the Jewish people would be refined, not until the end of the king but until the time of the end, meaning that we are moving from the moment of the Maccabean revolt to the end of the age. Also, Antiochus Epiphanes in this chapter has so far been referred to as the contemptible person but not "the king."⁸

The last and most important clue that this is no longer referring to Antiochus Epiphanes is that the details start to split wildly. If this passage is still talking about Antiochus, then it is both wrong and confusing. You'll see more examples as we go through the text but the easiest one up front is that Antiochus did not magnify himself above every god, nor did he refuse to worship gods. In fact, as we've already stated, the man had an obsession with the Greek pantheon and sacrificed to an idol of Zeus in the temple.

We'll see even more clear indicators as we go, but we have entered our third section for the night, **God's people and their greatest enemy** (v.36-45) and **with this last section we have to recognize that we are not sitting after the scripture is fulfilled, piecing together exactly how God's plan will work, but instead we are in the same position as Daniel. We have been given some details by God on what He plans to do in the future, even when those things are difficult to hear. But if we know God is in control and we have faith that He loves us then these words should bring us strength, joy and encouragement that God has things under control. What can we learn about this coming king, the Antichrist, the enemy of God's people?**

From what we've already read, he will magnify himself above every other God. This makes total sense for a person with the express desire to counterfeit and replace the true Christ and king, Jesus. He will not worship any gods that you are or I have ever heard of, nor will he seek relationship with women but he will solely exalt himself as if he is the Christ and deserved all worship in the creation. Now, that is not to say that the man does not respect any higher power, as we're about to see in the next verses, but it is to say to he does give attention or worship to any god publicly because how can you claim to be the Christ yourself while giving deference to another god?

⁸ Antiochus Epiphanes was referred to within a group of "the two kings" verse 27, but the title used in verse 36, simply "the king" has not been used at any time before, this is a new title in the chapter.

Daniel 11:38–39 (ESV)

³⁸ He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.

See, this man, the Antichrist, does indeed honor a god, but it's a strange god, one over fortresses who his fathers haven't known, a foreign god. How can he worship no god, yet honor this foreign god?⁹ In the New Testament prophecy of Revelation, this same man that rules the earth and persecutes God's people shortly before Christ's return is given a new title, he's called "The Beast." Likewise, the great fallen angel, the enemy of God, Satan is given a title of "The Dragon," and in Revelation 13 we're told specifically that the Beast is given power and authority by the Dragon and that he is able to use the Dragon's power to sway the world into worshipping him. This is the relationship that the Antichrist has with a foreign god, in that he publicly proclaims himself to be god, yet honors and serves Satan as his source of power, and through that power he conquers and rules for the time God has allotted.

Next, Daniel is told some specific details about this evil king's life.

Daniel 11:40–43 (ESV)

⁴⁰ "At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. ⁴¹ He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train.

⁹ Several scholars I sourced sought to explain this "god of fortresses" as not really any entity or god at all (because the prior verses stating he does not worship a god) but instead they describe the Antichrist's god as a love of and worship of military force as a concept. I find no incompatibility that needs explanation between "paying no attention to any other god" and "honoring a god of fortresses" when you consider the nature of the false trinity described in Revelation when Satan, the Beast and the False Prophet perversely emulate the true Trinity.

Suddenly, we're back to talking about the kings of the south and the north. To be consistent with how these terms were used previously, we have to still to be talking about leaders who rule over the same general Syrian and Egyptian areas north and south of Israel, only this is a future time and a political landscape we don't even know yet. Depending on how you choose to translate verse 40, it's entirely possible that the king, Antichrist, is the king of the north, matching the type given by Antiochus Epiphanes, but it's also possible that both of these kings mentioned are new individuals who are both jointly attacking the Antichrist. Either way, it's clear that God allows the Antichrist to conquer and reign for a time and this attack against him fails. He conquers the same area we've been talking about all night including Israel all the way down southwest into Egypt.¹⁰

It's specifically mentioned that Edom, Moab and a part of the Ammonite country are spared from the Antichrist's attack, and these are all located south east of Israel, so it could have significance we don't yet understand or it could simply be showing that the Antichrist's campaign southwest into Egypt was so fast that these lands were the only ones not affected as they weren't in the warpath.

Ultimately, during the time God has allotted for the Antichrist's indignation and blasphemy, he is allowed to conquer, to win, pillage and bring the world under his command¹¹. But that little phrase, "during the time God has allotted" could not be any more important, because as fast as this king entered the prophecy, he finds his end.

Daniel 11:44–45 (ESV)

⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. ⁴⁵ And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

In the midst of the Antichrist's conquering, he hears alarming news all at once from multiple places, and this news causes him to dedicated himself to the destruction of many. We're told he sets up his war tents between

¹⁰ The verse has a specific mention of warhorses and chariots in the attack. When you and I consider that this battle waits yet to happen in the future even to us in our day we might think that's odd, because our modern day doesn't have any significant warfare depending on horses, but instead have war implements far greater. On the one hand, the descriptions of places and events in prophecy always use names and terminology that are relevant at the time the prophecy is given so it is entirely likely that these are simply allusions to whatever the time-appropriate equivalent weapons of war will be at the time this battle is fought. However, following the description in Revelation of God's judgments, you find terrifying and devastating judgments being poured out across the whole globe. The types of things that would have immediate and permanent impact on our modern infrastructure. It is entirely possible that at the point of history where this war occurs, that these weapons from antiquity have returned to being the primary tools of warfare.

¹¹ Further evidence that this king cannot represent Antiochus Epiphanes because he did none of these things.

the holy mountain, which always refers to Mount Zion in Israel, and the sea, which could only mean the Mediterranean. The Antichrist's final assault begins from the west of Israel. Some news that this man is going to hear causes him to rush against Israel one last time.¹² Ultimately, this man meets his end with no one to help him. Daniel is given a promise that this man's appointed time to rule and cause terror does have an end. Not only an end, but a shameful end alone with none to help him. How does the Antichrist meet his end alone? A quick look at Revelation chapter 19 gives us the final prophetic details God has given us about this moment.

Revelation 19:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

Revelation 19:19–20a (ESV)

¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ²⁰ And the beast was captured

The reason this Antichrist, the great and final enemy of God's people, comes to his end suddenly and with no one to help him is because he encounters the true Christ, the warrior king we saw in chapter 10, who has spoken to Daniel and who slays all the armies of the nations under the Antichrist with the sword from his mouth, the Word of God. That is the end of the greatest enemy of God's people, and it just as certain as all the things we studied that have been a part of history for over two thousand years.

After forty-five verses of prophecy and history and the Antichrist, it can be easy to forget what the point of all of this was. Why did God send this angel to Daniel with this prophecy? Why am I up here telling you about it and why are you sitting here listening to me? What's the point? What is different in your life when you walk out these doors?

For Daniel, it was message about the future of his people. Sitting at the beginning of the Medo-Persian empire, Israel was not finished, not even close, with oppression and suffering and persecution at the hands of their

¹² Miller suggests the alarming news involves more attacks from foreign kings and their allies, similar to those described in verse 40. Wood makes several suggestions including insurrection within Jerusalem itself. Whatever the news is, its effect is to cause the Antichrist to begin his final assault on the city of Jerusalem just before Christ's return and I believe this is consistent with the timing and direction (east) of the seventh bowl judgment including the destruction of the great city, Babylon.

enemies. God gave Daniel a 150-year preview of things to come, plus a look at their greatest and final persecution. Yet, every single hardship that God's people go through was in God's plan, it was set for an allotted time, and it had its purpose and effect of purifying and making holy His people.

If you haven't caught on, this isn't just true for the nation of Israel but it's also true for all of God's people.

Every hardship is in God's plan for only its allotted time and Every hardship results in our purity and righteousness. As the apostle James puts it:

James 1:2–4 (ESV)

² Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

That's the reason for this prophecy to Daniel back then, but what else can we learn looking back at the awe-inspiring specificity and accuracy of the prophecy? That has an easy answer, this prophecy testifies to power and faithfulness of our Lord. He speaks only what is exactly true and his promises are steadfast forever. Promises from God are something you and I have a lot of, even a lot more than Daniel did. Here's a favorite you've likely heard quoted often:

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

What an amazing and powerful promise from God. Yet, how can we be really sure that this is true, because it certainly doesn't feel true at times. What do you mean that if I love God, then He works all things together for my good? Does God really work a lifetime of chronic pain or a battle with cancer for my good? Does God really work abuse or betrayal or loss of a loved one for my good? What about addiction or repeated sin?

Yes, as sure as every detail of tonight's prophecy is true, also **every promise God makes is trustworthy.**

This is the reason why learning about a dozen ancient kings tonight can help us when we're struggling in pain or sin. Because God's word has proven to be absolutely, 100%, without deviation correct and true in a way that can only be explained by understanding God is sovereign over all things. God's word also promises that anyone

who has put their faith in Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross for their sin will be forgiven of their sin and also raised to eternal life like Him in paradise with Him, and that there is no force on this earth including the evil of others or the sin in your own heart that can separate you from the love of Christ.

Just in case you leave this room with any doubt left that Jesus Christ is your only salvation, may I remind you of that final moment coming, that is as surely coming as if it were already history, where the warrior king returns and shows us there are only two kinds of people. There are the enemies of God who fall down, pleading to Him in repentance and receive forgiveness, and there are the enemies of God who continue in their rebellion and are crushed by the Word of His mouth. Consider carefully which one describes you. Hallelujah, praise the Lord for his magnificent Son, Jesus Christ.

References

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