

Mid Week • Daniel 10-11:35

INTRODUCTION

Chapters 10-12 gives us the story of Daniel's 4th and final vision. They contain some of the most *detailed* prophecies in the Bible, and most of what we find here has already been fulfilled.

Ch. 11 contains some 135 specific prophecies that have already come to pass. This precision is what provokes the skeptics and critics to conclude it had to have been written *after* the events and only made to *look* like it was written before.

It's fun to read these critics because on one hand, they claim it can't be genuine prophecy because it's too accurate, then they turn right around and say that it isn't genuine scripture because it isn't as accurate as it appears.

But the arguments of the critics and skeptics have been silenced as archaeology and ancient studies have uncovered a vast body of evidence that the biblical record is accurate in amazing detail.

Let me set the scene of these chapters:

Daniel is now in retirement and has his 4th and final vision.

It's so troubling to him that he gets physically ill.

This vision spans the not-too far off future of Israel and the Jews who are back in their land after the Babylonian exile.

Then, there's a leap in time out to the end and the final battle between the rebellious kingdoms of man and the Kingdom of God.

Tonight we will cover all Daniel saw up to that leap in time.

We'll take a look at everything he saw for Israel's nearer future.

If you've been with us through these studies in Daniel, then you know Daniel was given visions, not just of things pertaining to Israel but of Gentile world powers as well.

One specific figure keep popping up – the last days world ruler who will exalt himself over all.

We refer to him as the antichrist, though in Daniel he's represented as a *horn*, a *mouth*, the *one who brings the abomination of desolation*, and a prince *who is yet to come*.

In these chapters, Daniel sees the career of a man in Israel's nearer future which serves as a picture of the last days antichrist.

DANIEL 10

¹ **In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.**

In Ch. 1:21 we learn that Daniel served in the court of Babylon until the *first* year

of Cyrus.

This takes place in Cyrus' 3rd year, so at this point Daniel is in *retirement* and about 85 years old.

Cyrus had already passed an edict allowing the Jews to return to their homes and rebuild their land.

Specifically, he gave them permission to rebuild the *temple* and reinstate the *worship* of Yahweh.

But Daniel had not been a part of this return because he was too old.

There in Babylon, he had his final vision that spelled out some of the details of both the impending and long-range future of his people.

Daniel may have hoped that with the return of the Jews to their land, there would be a time of peace.

This vision showed him it would not be *peace* they enjoyed – instead, they would see battle after battle, and some of the bloodiest and most brutal days of their national existence.

²In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. ³I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

Daniel was so overwhelmed by the vision and the turmoil it foretold, he was unable to eat the sumptuous food that was set before him as an honored dignitary.

In v. 4 we learn that his was during Nisan, the first month of the Jewish year, the month in which the Jews celebrated their joyous holidays of Passover and Unleavened Bread.

Anointing one's self was part of the *rejoicing* that went along with these holidays, but Daniel was so overcome by grief, he didn't even participate in the festivities.

⁴ Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, ⁵I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! ⁶His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

The Tigris is north of the city of Babylon and it seems that Daniel, who's now in retirement, has moved away from the big city and is living near the river in a smaller settlement.

Or maybe this is a place of retreat had gone to after having the disturbing vision.

In any case, after 3 weeks of fasting from normal food, and praying earnestly to the Lord, a heavenly visitor appears.

What's interesting is that the description Daniel gives of this visitor is strikingly similar to the one John gives in Revelation 1 of the Lord Jesus.

Check out the comparison in your notes:

Daniel 10	Revelation 1
a certain man clothed in linen,	One like the Son of Man, clothed

	with a garment down to the feet.
whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz	and girded about the chest with a golden band
His body was like beryl,	His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow,
his face like the appearance of lightning,	His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength
his eyes like torches of fire,	His eyes like a flame of fire
his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color,	His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace
and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.	His voice as the sound of many waters

Because of the closeness of these two visions, most commentators believe that this is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ.

Theologians call these OT appearances of Christ – *Christophanies*.

- 7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. ⁸Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. ⁹Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.**

Daniel's companions didn't see what Daniel saw, but apparently they saw *something* because it scared the *bejeebers* out of them and they ran.

Only Daniel was left, and what he encountered was so incredible, it overwhelmed his physical strength and he swooned.

The prophet was able to hold on to consciousness until the visitor spoke, then it was just too much for him and he fainted.

Isn't it interesting that this is consistently what we see happening when human beings come face to face with the glory of the spiritual realm?

An angel appears, and people faint and fall.

The Lord is revealed in His glory, and people plunge to the earth.

We speak so glibly about wishing we could see Jesus, or being allowed to gaze in to heaven.

We think it would be a boost to our faith and forever settle any of our doubts if we could just see an angel.

Oh, it would certainly do that!

But it might do way *more* than that – it might stagger and stretch us so far that we'd never recover.

Seeing heaven might fry some mental circuits!

Encountering an angel in it's unveiled glory might overwhelm us so completely there would be no way we could function in this life or world.

And to see the Lord in His glory would kill us.
Over and over, when men and women encounter an angel or have a vision of just a portion of the Lord's glory, it's so overwhelming, they faint, pass out, tremble, or are brought to a place of the most profound humility and self-loathing that it defies description.
Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John; all were shaken to their cores and left profoundly changed by what they'd seen.
These fleshly vessels are not made to endure the weight of glory.
These minds as they are now, are not capable of handling the piercing quality of unrestrained truth.
So when we're confronted with the purely *spiritual*, the weakness of our material flesh is revealed and we fall, faint, stagger, become prostrate. We are overwhelmed!
Such was the case with Daniel – that holy man who was so well acquainted with the touch of the spiritual through all of the visions and encounters he had previously had.
He had talked with *Gabriel* face to face.
He had seen the whole panorama of human history laid out before him.
But in the face of this new encounter with the Lord of Glory, he is undone.

Daniel's reaction here reminds us that when Christ comes, the people of the earth will indeed *bow* before Him. Even those who opposed Him will bow!
Many people have the mistaken idea that if they ever *do* have to stand before God in judgment, they are going to tell *Him* a thing or two.
They picture themselves defiantly walking up to God and laying the blame for their sin and failure at His feet.
They picture themselves arguing or bargaining with God.
But think of it – if godly, holy and righteous *Daniel* was wiped out when he saw the Lord, what will be the reaction of the *ungodly*?
If righteous Daniel was overcome by his own weakness and fleshly frailty – what of them?

Let's say the only vehicle you own is a child's bike with training wheels.
I tell you we're taking an off-road trip through Death Valley and over the Black Mountains.
The rest of us are driving Humvees – and you tell us you are coming along on your bike.
Buddy – you can't come - You need a new vehicle!
These bodies as they are now are not fit vehicles to handle the glory of heaven – that's why we're getting new bodies – ones that will be perfectly fit to enjoy all that heaven has to offer.

10 Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands. ¹¹And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

It seems from what follows that the one who touched Daniel here and then goes on to speak to him is not the same person he saw in vs. 5 & 6.

The reason we can draw that conclusion is that while it's pretty clear the person Daniel saw in vs. 5 & 6 is the Lord, the one who's speaking to him here has been *opposed* and *hindered* by demonic activity.

It's hard to imagine that could be true of the Lord Himself.

This is an angel who comes from the Lord to restore and renew the prophet's strength and to give him understanding of the vision he's had. The reason it all begins with a vision of the Lord of Glory is because Daniel needs to be reminded of the theme of his whole life and ministry – God is *sovereign* over the affairs of Earth.

Remember, Daniel was heartsick and grieving over the vision he had of Israel's future.

He needed to be reminded that God is still on His throne and everything is still under His control.

And this is a lesson we all need to remember – regardless of the outcome of this election.

God raises one up and puts another down.

The popular vote may select one and the electoral vote another – but ultimately, the choice is the Lord's.

Listen – God will put in office the person He ordains to accomplish His purposes for not only this nation but for history!

We need a vision of the Lord tonight!

We need to see with our inner person that God is still on His throne and sovereign over the affairs of Earth.

Now an angel comes, touches Daniel and he is wakened – but he's still weak and all he can do is get to his hands and knees.

In that posture, while trembling, the angel gives him words of comfort – he calls him a *man greatly beloved*.

While God loves all people, there are *some* who are so tender toward God, whose hearts are so completely captured by the Lord, that His love is free to be enjoyed by them in a way most people never know this side of heaven.

Daniel was one of those people- as were David and the Apostle John.

Picture it this way:

A man has 2 children – he dearly loves them *both* and provides for them equally.

But one is a bit of a rebel and frequently disobeys him.

To this child he has to show frequent discipline and correction.

The other child is constantly and consistently attentive to the father.

There is nothing he enjoys more than just being with dad.

He's cautious and concerned about being obedient and more than that, being a source of pride and joy to his father.

To the first child, the father has to show a certain level of suspicion and the child isn't nearly as concerned to spend time with the father – he prefers to be off doing his own thing most of the time.

The second child would rather be with his father than anything else.

Again, the father loves both children – but which one is going to *enjoy* more of that father's affection?

Which one is going to understand the father's heart better?
Which one is going to be more in tune with the father's plans and business?
Who will know the father best?

Daniel was that second child – and as a result, God shared more with about His business and plans than any other man, save one, has ever known.

Isn't it curious that the two men who received the most vivid visions of the future were the only two men whom the scriptures call the *beloved of God* – Daniel and John?

It seems that God reveals His heart and plans to those who give themselves completely to Him.

The angel then told Daniel to stand, which he did, but still trembling.

12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."

This angel was come to impart understanding to Daniel on the vision he had had some three weeks before.

In fact, he had come hard on the heels of the vision and Daniel's first requests for understanding.

But someone had hindered his arrival – the prince of Persia.

For three full weeks, this prince had keep the angel from arriving.

But then the angel had received assistance from Michael who seems to have removed the hindrance offered by the prince of Persia and allowed the arrival of the angel there to speak to Daniel.

Okay – this is pretty strange –what does it all mean?

How can an angel be hindered – who would hinder him?

Well, that really isn't too tough a question.

Can humans hinder angels?

When we consider that 1 angel destroyed all the firstborn of Egypt in the 10th plague and that 1 angel killed 185,000 enemy soldiers in 1 night, it seems unlikely the hindering agent here is a man.

No, the only one who can hinder an angel is another spiritual being.

And what spiritual being would seek to hinder a messenger of God? A demon.

What we're seeing in this passage is an example of what Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6;

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the spiritual realm.

Indeed, Paul refers to these spiritual hosts as being ranked into *principalities* and *powers*.

The one who hindered this angelic messenger is called the *prince* of Persia.

Take a look at 12:1 . . .

"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons

of your people;

Just as the demonic realm is ordered into different ranks, so the angels of God are as well.

And God has assigned certain angels to oversee the care of different groups.

Israel's chief angelic protector is Michael.

Well, Satan has assigned his demonic hosts their assignments and over the realm of Persia he assigned a spirit-prince.

As the angel was dispatched by God to speak with Daniel, this spiritual prince of Persia attempted to hinder him.

For three weeks this kept up until Michael came and forced the passage of the heavenly messenger.

What we might want to take consideration of is what *role* Daniel's prayers and fasting played in the final outcome of this spiritual contest.

Did Daniel only pray for three weeks because the angel came and brought an end to his prayer, or did Daniel's three weeks of prayer and fasting *secure* the spiritual victory?

It seems the later is the correct way to see things because Daniel says in v. 2 that he mourned, fasted and prayed for 3 weeks, as though this was a time he *set* for this fast.

What would have happened if he had given up after 15 or 18 or even 20 days?

When the Spirit of God moves us to prayer, we need to pray until we get an answer.

"Yes," or "No."

15 When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶And suddenly, *one* having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, ///

Daniel uses the title "My lord" in the same way we say "Sir."

"My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

While one angel stands before him to give him understanding, another comes and touches his lips to allow him to speak.

The idea we're to glean from all this is that when the veil between the spiritual and the earthly realms is drawn aside and human beings are allowed to encounter the spiritual, we are horribly ill-equipped.

Daniel is left weak and panting for air.

18 Then again, *the one* having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. ¹⁹And he said, "O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace *be* to you; be strong, yes, be strong!"

So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

In and of himself all Daniel could do was express his weakness – even breathing was difficult.

But then he was given strength and became ready to receive what the Lord had for him.

20 Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. ²¹But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

Chapter 10 is the introduction to ch. 11 which gives us the interpretation of Daniel’s vision.

Here the angel who’s going to give the interpretation tells Daniel what’s going to happen after he gives it to Daniel.

He’s going to return to heaven, and will once again be hindered by the spiritual prince of Persia.

After the prince of Persia has been overcome, then battle will have to be done with the spiritual prince of *Greece*.

Interpreters are uncertain if the angel means that these two spiritual rulers will *both* hinder his return to heaven *now* – or if the price of Greece refers to the *future* opposition of the Jews by the Greeks under the leadership of Alexander and the spiritual forces that inspired him.

In light of what we read next, it makes sense to see the later as what the angel is referring to.

At the moment Daniel received this vision, it was *Persia* that exercised authority and dominion over Israel.

As God continued to move history forward according to His plan, His angelic forces which focused their assistance on the Jews and Israel did battle with the demonic forces that were inspiring the pagan nations around them.

First Babylon, then Persia, and soon it would be Greece and finally Rome.

The reason Greece is identified here in v. 20 is because the contents of Chapter 11 center on Greece.

Now the angel winds up to give the interpretation of the vision Daniel has had.

This interpretation comes out of God’s heavenly record – here called the Scripture of Truth.

DANIEL 11

1 “Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)

Most commentators are agreed that the last part of 10:21 and 11:1 go together so that we ought to read it thus . . .

(No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince. Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)

In fact, if you have a NKJ notice the parentheses that frames these two sentences.

Understood this way, the “him” of 11:1 does not refer to *Darius*, but to *Michael*.

The word “*stood*” is a *military* term and refers to taking a strategic position in

a conflict– “digging in,” if you will.
Some bible teachers see the angelic being who’s speaking with Daniel here as *Gabriel*, an angel who seems to be given special messages regarding the plan of God for Israel.
He’s already appeared to Daniel in ch. 8 and given him an understanding of his 2nd vision.
He appeared to the father of John the Baptist to announce the birth of his special son.
He appeared to Mary to announce the conception and birth of Christ.
He comes now to give Daniel understanding of the future of Israel.
He and Michael have a joint ministry on behalf of the nation.
Gabriel is messenger, Michael - Enforcer.
Gabriel lends *assistance* when Michael encounters opposition.
Such opposition came about in the 1st year of Darius.
Darius was the first Persian King of Babylon and in the very first year of his reign, there was an attempt to bring the Jews into disfavor with him.
Remember the plot to condemn Daniel by forbidding prayer to anyone but Darius?
But what happened? – Daniel was thrown into the lion’s den, and the next morning he said that the Lord *sent His angel* to shut the lions’ mouths.
The result was Darius’ issuing a proclamation *honoring* Israel’s God.
Michael and Gabriel had turned the attempt of Israel’s spiritual enemies to destroy them into a cause of blessing.
This is likely what the angel was referring to here.
So it seems there ‘s a kind of angelic tag-team who fight for and assist Israel – Michael and Gabriel.

²And now I will tell you the truth:

Okay, so here goes – now comes the interpretation of the vision.

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.

Four more rulers would arise over Persia.

From history we know that after Cyrus, his son Cambyses ruled.

He was followed by Pseudo-Smerdis, then came Darius I, *not* the same Darius we read about in the Book of Daniel.

After Darius I came Xerxes, known in the Book of Esther as Ahasuerus, who ruled from 485 to 465 B.C.

Xerxes was the most powerful, influential, and wealthy of the four.

The Persians reached their climax and showed their greatest power under Xerxes’s rule when they invaded Greece in 480 B.C.

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

It was as a *result* of the brutal Persian treatment of the Greeks in their invasion of Greek lands that Alexander moved to take *vengeance* on Persia.

Between 334 and 330 b.c., in just 4 years, Alexander conquered Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and the land of the Medo-Persian Empire!

⁴And 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.

When Alexander died at the age of 32, the vast territory he had conquered fell not to his children, but to his four main generals.

But the area was too large even for the 4 of them to hold and many of the border lands reverted to their national peoples.

The generals held on to only the core of the empire.

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.

The Ptolemies who ruled over Egypt, were called the kings “of the South” while the Seleucids, ruling over Syria, were called the kings “of the North.”

They were in continual conflict with one another and since Israel lies between them, was the scene of many of these conflicts and much of the intrigue that washed back and forth for several generations.

Vs. 6-20 gives many details of the continuous conflict between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids.

⁶And 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.

The first rulers of the north and south were bitter enemies but eventually forged a truce.

This alliance was sealed by the marriage of southern king’s daughter, Berenice to the northern king.

This marriage, however, didn’t last.

Laodice, whom the northern king had divorced in order to marry Berenice, had Berenice assassinated; as it says in v. 6, she was “given up.”

Berenice’s whole retinue, including her son who was the crown-prince of the northern kingdom, were also executed.

Laodice then poisoned the northern king who had divorced her and made her son, Seleucus II, king.

All of this is spelled out in v. 6!

⁷But 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.

⁸And 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.

Berenice had a brother named Ptolemy III.

He succeeded to the throne of the South and set out to avenge the death of his sister Berenice.

He was victorious over the Syrian army, put Laodice to death, and returned to Egypt with many spoils.

- 9 **“Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land. ¹⁰However 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.**

After this humiliating defeat at the hands of Ptolemy III, Seleucus II (the king of the North) tried to invade Egypt but was unsuccessful.

He was succeeded by his son, Seleucus III but he was quickly killed by conspirators.

His brother, Antiochus III, became the ruler of the North at 18 years of age and reigned for 36 years.

The two **sons** of Seleucus II (Seleucus III & Antiochus III) tried to restore the prestige of Syria lost to Ptolemy III.

Egypt had controlled *all* the territory north to the borders of Syria, including the land of Israel.

Antiochus III succeeded in driving the Egyptians back to the northern borders of Egypt.

- 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. ¹²When 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. ¹³For 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.**

The king of the South in this verse was Ptolemy IV - He was the one driven back by Antiochus.

Once Antiochus had the Egyptians pressed back to their own borders, he decided to then stage a massive invasion of Egypt and paused on the border to amass more troops.

He already had a vast force, but knew he would need far more to invade Egypt itself.

While he waited to increase his troop strength, Ptolemy counterattacked!

He was initially successful and slaughtered thousands of the Syrian forces.

But after a time Antiochus returned with another army, much larger this time and turned back the Egyptians.

- 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. ¹⁵So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand *him*. Even his choice troops *shall have* no strength to resist. ¹⁶But 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.**

Syria was not Egypt's only enemy; the king of Macedonia joined with Antiochus III against Egypt.

Many Jews also joined Antiochus against Egypt, hoping to gain independence

from both Egypt and Syria by seeing the two powers ruin themselves against each other, but their hopes never materialized.

Antiochus sought to consolidate control over Israel from which he had expelled the Egyptians. The fortified city of v. 15 refers to Sidon which Antiochus captured in 203 b.c.

He continued his occupation and 4 years later had established himself firmly in control of Israel.

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.

Antiochus sought to bring peace between Egypt and Syria by giving his daughter to marry Ptolemy V of Egypt.

But this attempt to bring a peaceful alliance between the two nations didn't succeed.

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

Antiochus then turned his attention to Asia Minor and Greece.

It's then that the Romans enter the picture in the form of *Cornelius Scipio*, a Roman general who was dispatched from Rome to turn Antiochus back.

Antiochus returned to his own country in 188 and died a year later.

Antiochus III had carried on the most vigorous military campaigns of any of Alexander's successors, **but** his dream of reuniting Alexander's empire under his authority was never realized.

20 “There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.

Antiochus III's son Seleucus IV heavily taxed his people to pay tribute to Rome, and was poisoned by his treasurer who thought his policies of appeasement demeaning.

Now we're introduced to a colossal bad-boy!

This guy is so foul, and his actions so abominable, they prefigure the career of the antichrist.

In fact, as we will see, his career is described and then blended right in to that of the last great world ruler who will follow the example of his rise to power and his reign of terror.

These verses describe Antiochus IV, called Antiochus *Epiphanes*, a son of Antiochus III the Great.

This one Seleucid who ruled from 175-163 B.C. is given as much attention as all the others before him combined.

A long section (11:21-35) is devoted to him not only because of the effects of his invasion on the land of Israel, but more so because he foreshadows the little horn of 7:8 who in a future day will desecrate and destroy the land of Israel.

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. **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.

Antiochus IV is called as a **vile person** because of the deceit he will practice and the terrible crimes he will commit.

He took to himself the name *Epiphanes* which means “the Illustrious One” because he demanded that people recognize he was the *manifestation of deity*.

The throne rightly belonged to Seleucus IV’s son, Demetrius but Antiochus seized the throne from his nephew and had himself proclaimed king.

He didn’t come to the throne by rightful succession; he seized **it through intrigue**, spreading rumors about Demetrius and offering special rewards to those who would support him.

V. 22 speaks of the fact that this king will have a big impact on the Jews.

He will sweep through the land like a flood and change everything, including the high priest, here called the **prince of the covenant**.

Antiochus did just that – he removed the high priest and set up a puppet in his place.

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*.

Antiochus Epiphanes was a man blessed with a huge amount of good luck.

Though he never really enjoyed the support of the majority, he did win the favor of the few who held power.

He did what no other Syrian king had done before; once again, through intrigue, he managed to take control of all of Egypt in a clever way described in vs. 25-27.

All the wealth Ptolemy had earlier taken from the north, Antiochus reclaimed and took north.

Then he used it as bribes spread far and wide among the people.

By this means he secured their favor and *bought* himself popularity.

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 started making great plans on how to consolidate his kingdom by building Syrian fortresses in the borderlands and Egypt, but before he could carry out his plans, the native rulers of Egypt threw off the Syrian yoke.

Too weak to deal with the Syrians themselves, the Egyptians appealed to the emerging Roman power for assistance.

The Romans were only too willing to respond as they knew this would give them access to the rich land and power of Egypt.

The Romans then forced Antiochus to retreat.

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. ²⁶Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷Both 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.*

These verses give background on *how* Antiochus came to rule of Egypt for a short time.

He brought a vast army against Egypt and defeated them.

He had subversives working for him in the Egyptian court who betrayed the Egyptian king whom Antiochus then captured in battle.

When the Egyptians put his brother on the throne, Antiochus then feigned friendship with the captive king and offered to put him back on the throne of Egypt if he would only allow Antiochus to be the real yet secret ruler of the south.

The Egyptian king agreed, intending full well to break the agreement as soon as he could persuade his brother to ally with him.

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.**

Even though his bid to control the south had failed, Antiochus carried **great wealth** back to his homeland from his conquest of Egypt.

On his return he of course had to pass through the land of Israel.

After his disappointment in losing control of Egypt, he took out his frustrations on the Jews by desecrating the temple in Jerusalem.

At this point, Antiochus Epiphanes began to pose a serious threat to the Jews and their religion.

He ousted the legitimate and godly high priest, Onias, and replaced him with corrupt men who promised to do his bidding and further the Greek cause among the Jews.

With the help of one of these corrupt high priests, Antiochus entered the temple and took the gold and silver dishes used for the holy sacrifices.

But this was only the beginning of his violation of the temple.

It would get much worse than this a bit later.

²⁹**“At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. ³⁰For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do *damage*.**

Now, we need to stop right there in the middle of v. 30. The people who made the verse break ought to have ended v. 30 at this point.

Two years later after the events of vs. 25-28, in 168 BC, Antiochus moved against Egypt again.

But as he began this new campaign, the Romans, who had been keeping a close eye on things in the East, sent a stern letter to Antiochus from the Roman Senate warning him not to invade Egypt, who was now Rome's ally.

They also sent a fleet of ships to back up their threat.

When Antiochus asked for time to consider, the Roman emissary drew a circle

in the sand around Antiochus and demanded that he give his answer before he stepped out of the circle.

Antiochus submitted to Rome's demands because to resist would be to declare war on Rome.

This was a *humiliating* defeat for Antiochus, and as it says in v. 30, he was *grieved*, but he had no alternative except to return to his own land.

An aggrieved ruler often vents by showing rage, and such was Antiochus' outlet now.

“So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹And 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. ³²Those 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*.”

Antiochus was like a bully who's backed down by someone his own size, so as he returns to his home, he beats up on some poor, innocent bystanders – in this case, as before, it's the Jews who bear the brunt of his rage.

For a second time Antiochus took out his frustration on the Jews and their temple.

Antiochus was determined to force the Greek culture on all his lands and he absolutely hated the stubborn Jews who refused his Hellenizing reforms of their culture and religion.

The Jews had learned their lesson against idolatry so well in the Babylonians' exile that they would not yield to Antiochus' demands that they worship the Greek gods.

So he persecuted the religious Jews with glee.

Of course, there were a few Jews who were all for the Greek way of life and religion.

Antiochus favored these renegade Jews and put them in positions of power. Then, in an attempt to force Jewish compliance, he desecrated the temple and abolished the daily sacrifices.

He sent his general Apollonius with 22,000 soldiers into Jerusalem on what was supposed to be a mission of peace between those Jews who supported him and the orthodox Jews who were battling it out for control of the Temple and Jerusalem.

Instead, they attacked Jerusalem on the Sabbath, killed many people, took many women and children as slaves, and plundered and burned the city.

Then, Antiochus instituted a policy that made illegal virtually every observance of the Mosaic Law!

The Jews were forbidden from keeping any of the feasts, circumcising their children, observing the Sabbath, and or keeping any copies of the law – all had to be burned!

Then, at the height of his atrocities, on December 16, 167 B.C. he erected an altar to Zeus on top of the altar of burnt offering outside the temple, and had a *pig* offered on the altar.

The Jews were compelled to offer a pig on the 25th of *each month* to celebrate

Antiochus Epiphanes' birthday.
Antiochus promised apostate Jews great reward if they would set aside the God of Israel and worship Zeus, the god of Greece.
Many in Israel were persuaded by his promises, in v. 32 referred to as "flattery" and worshiped the false god.
Through all this, a large remnant remained faithful to **God**, refusing to engage in these abominations.
These dissenters fled from Jerusalem and lived in the outlying territories where the Syrian presence was less strong.
Antiochus Epiphanes ended up dying insane in Persia years later.

33And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet *for many days* they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. **34**Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. **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.

The Jews who *refused* to submit to Antiochus' false religious system were persecuted and martyred for their faith.
The word "**fall**" in vs. 33 & 34 means "to stumble due to adversity."
It refers to suffering so severe that it causes people to stagger.
Picture a person who is so beaten up he can't walk straight, that's the idea.
The persecution under Antiochus will be so severe it will cause the faithful to stumble and stagger.
But then assistance will arise for them and they shall rally and be renewed in their strength!

This foretells the Maccabean revolt which rose up at this time to repel the Syrian presence and Greek influence.

Mattathias, a priest, was the father of five sons.

In 166, Mattathias, who had fled Jerusalem and was living in an outlying village, was commanded to show allegiance to the Syrians by offering a profane sacrifice.

But Mattathias had had enough and refused to comply.

The Syrians were shocked, and Mattathias' sons decided to take the initiative and attacked the Syrians.

They won some minor skirmishes with the Syrians and this fueled their belief that they were being led of God to raise a revolution.

At first only a few Jews joined them. But as their movement became more widely known, many joined them, some out of a sincere desire for reform, others out of a desire to secure positions of power once the Syrians and their Jewish lackeys were removed.

One of Mattathias' 5 sons was named *Judas*.

He became well-known as the leader of the revolt and led the armies of Israel in a successful campaign of ousting the Syrians from the land.

He then refurbished and restored the temple, and cleansed it of the defilement introduced by Antiochus.

He was called Judas Maccabeus, “the Hammer.”
Mattathias’s family went on to become the ruling family in Israel right up through the time of Herod the Great.

Known as the *Hasmoneans*, even during Herod’s life they exerted great power over affairs in Israel and Herod tried to gain legitimacy for his throne by marrying into the Hasmonean dynasty.

V. 32 is going to be my text for this Sunday’s message so we’ll be taking a little closer look at this period of Israel’s history then.

It’s at this point that the picture changes and Antiochus Epiphanes, who’s been the subject of the last 15 verses, drops from sight.

A *new* king is introduced, but he’s cut from the same cloth as Antiochus and that’s why these verses run in to one another in the prophecy of Daniel. Virtually all commentators are agreed that the phrase “*until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the appointed time” at the end of v. 35 points to a conclusion to what has come before and the introduction of something new – so that the king of v. 36 is someone other than Antiochus.

CONCLUSION

In the first 35 verses of ch. 11, there are 135 *specific* prophecies, all of which have been literally fulfilled.

But with v. 36, we’re introduced to the rest of Daniel’s vision and it’s interpretation by the angel, which historians are unable to find specific fulfillment of.

The reason why, is because this is yet future, and it’s to this that we will return next Wednesday!

But let’s take careful note of how in this prophecy the career of the last day’s antichrist is linked to Antiochus IV.

The former sets the scene for the later.

And what have we learned about Antiochus Epiphanes?

- He gains his position through deceit and bribery
- He demonstrates brutal military power that comes in alike a flood
- He gains control over other nations through deceit
- When his plans are disappointed, he gets enraged and takes it out on the people of God
- He uses flattery to win popular support
- He attempts to do away with the Word of God and prohibits obedience to the Lord
- He defiles the temple and sets up an abomination so utterly corrupt it is beyond description
- Finally, he takes the title, “the Illustrious,” or “Manifested One”

These are all portents of what the antichrist will do in the last days.