



Daniel

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Lesson 13

DANIEL 11:2-11:45

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“The shining stranger in linen (the pre-incarnate Christ) continues to reveal details of the future to Daniel.”

REVIEW

It seems each succeeding chapter in Daniel's book unpeels a bit more of the story like layers of an onion. We got a glimpse of God's overall plan in chapter 2 with the description and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, starting with the gold head (Babylonia), chest of silver (Medo-Persia), belly of bronze (Greece), legs of iron (Rome), feet and toes of clay (Roman emperors), and finally ending with the stone kingdom that would crush everyone and remain victorious forever (the Church). More details were given of the fourth beast (Rome) in chapter 7 and further mysteries were unveiled in chapter 8 of the previous Medo-Persian/Greek conflict (Ram & Goat). We wrestled with end-times prophecies in chapters 9 & 10, and now in Daniel chapter 11 we back up again to see even greater details of the rise and fall of the Persian and Greek empires. It's like a spiral that revisits each point in history, but revealing more with each passing.

What is troubling for some critics in this latest visitation is the sheer amount of details. Critical/liberal scholars claim that the preponderance of so much specific detail forces us to conclude that the author was writing *ex eventu* (post eventum), that is, after the fact. How else, they argue, would the writer know so much? Conservative scholars counter that this is precisely the nature of predictive prophecy. What we see in chapter 11 (and both sides concur) is a remarkably detailed history of the Persian, Greek, and Roman power struggle.

PERSIAN RULERS

The shining stranger in linen (the pre-incarnate Christ) continues to reveal details of the future to Daniel. He speaks of four Persian kings (11:2). These correspond to the historical rulers following Cyrus the Great (550-529 B.C.), namely: Cambyses (529-523 B.C.); Smerdis, the imposter (523-522 B.C.);

Darius the Great (522-486 B.C.) and Xerxes I (485-464 B.C.). Darius invaded Greece but in so doing rallied the independent princes of Macedonia and Greece to form a coalition who defeated Darius at Marathon. Later, his successor, Xerxes continued the war, but also experienced several defeats most notably at Thermopylae (480-478 B.C.). Xerxes, also known as Ahasuerus, is the same king mentioned in the story of Esther who invited her to be his next queen (Esther 1:1-3, 2:16-18). We continually see how God intertwines history for the purpose of the survival and eventual prosperity of his chosen people.

There were six subsequent kings of Medo-Persia which are not mentioned who ruled from Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.) to Darius III (335-330 B.C.).

GREEK RULERS

Darius III would be defeated by the rising star in the west, Alexander the Great, bringing the dominance of the Medo-Persian empire to an end, although minor kings would continue to rule under the Greek and later Seleucid dynasties. Alexander the Great (11:3) conquered a vast part of the known world but would die young. As we saw in earlier visions (2:39b; 7:6; 8:21-22) and accompanying narratives, Alexander's empire would be divided into four sections and distributed to his generals (11:4). You will recall from the narrative of chapter 8 that:

Seleucus took Persia, Mesopotamia and Syria. Lysimachus assumed control of Asia Minor and Thrace. Cassander grabbed Macedonia, and Ptolemy secured Palestine and Egypt. But infighting and dissension eventually caused Macedonian unity to collapse. Forty years of war between the Diadochi ("Successors") ensued before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks: the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, the Seleucid Empire in the east, the Kingdom of Pergamum in Asia Minor, and the Macedon Kingdom in Greece.

However, most of Chapter 11 deals only with the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms because those geo-political dynasties (Syria and Egypt) directly impacted the future and fortunes of the Holy Land.

SELEUCID AND PTOLEMAIC RULERS

The Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties, rulers over Syria and Egypt respectively, both wished to control Palestine. Ptolemy was the "king of the south," Seleucus was "king of the north." However, Seleucus, after losing Babylon to Antigonus, lost his throne and sought refuge in Egypt, where Ptolemy made him a general, strong commander (11:5). But after winning several battles for Ptolemy he reclaimed his throne in the north (Syria and Mesopotamia), and once again became a competitor against Ptolemy vying over the Holy land.

The next generation attempted a truce. Ptolemy II proposed a marriage of his daughter, Berenice, to the next Seleucid king, Antiochus II (252 BC). The only problem was that Antiochus II already had a wife, Laodice. Although she had been banished, she didn't take it lying down. She arranged a coup (247 BC) in which both Berenice and her infant son (by Antiochus) were assassinated and she had Antiochus poisoned (11:6). Ptolemy II, Berenice's father, died shortly after. Laodice was now queen regent over Syria along with her son, Seleucus II.

And so it went, there was one political intrigue after another. Most scholars (liberal and conservative) agree on the subsequent history as it corresponds to Daniel 11:5-20. The following is a brief summary of that history by Professor Daniel Lewis in his commentary on Daniel (© 1998 Diakonos, Inc.).

Ptolemy III, newly ascended to the throne of Egypt after his father's death, determined to avenge the assassination of his sister in the north. He mustered a large army and attacked Syria in an extended campaign, 246-241 B.C., managing to capture both Damascus and Antioch before returning successfully to Egypt with great booty (11:7-8). After Seleucus II failed in a counter-attack, the two warring factions agreed to a ten-year truce (11:9). Seleucus III and Antiochus III (the Great), the sons of Seleucus II who ruled successively, continued to build the Syrian army after their father's death (11:10). In 219-218 B.C., Antiochus III marched south to attack Egypt, where he was defeated by the smaller army of Ptolemy IV and was compelled

to cede Palestine back to Egypt (11:11-12). When Ptolemy IV died, however, Antiochus III, who had been rebuilding the Syrian army, marched southward once again in 202-201 B.C. (11:13). The pro-Seleucid Jews of Palestine also mobilized to break away from Egyptian rule, but they were defeated by the Egyptian General Scopas (11:14). Antiochus III would not be thwarted, however, and in the end he defeated Scopas, captured Sidon on the Palestinian coast, and brought Palestine firmly and permanently under Syrian control (11:15). When he entered Jerusalem in 198 B.C., he was welcomed as a liberator, though as history would bear out, his sovereignty over the Holy Land would open the door to terrible oppression, since now he would “have the power to destroy it” (11:16). To secure his gains, Antiochus III married his daughter, Cleopatra I, to Ptolemy V, hoping that she would work behind the scenes to add all Egypt to his territory, but Cleopatra was loyal to her husband, so the ruse failed (11:17). Redirecting his attention to the coastlands of western Anatolia, Antiochus III was initially successful, though in the end he was turned back by the Roman Scipio at Magnesia in 190 B.C., after which he was compelled to sign severe peace terms in 188 B.C. (11:18). Unable to meet the required indemnity forced on him by Scipio, Antiochus III resorted to pillaging temples to raise funds. The locals near Susa were so angry that they stormed his forces and killed him in 187 B.C. (11:19).

The successor to Antiochus III was Seleucus IV, his son. The “tax collector” he sent out to raise funds was Heliodorus, the agent described in 2 Maccabees 3 (11:20a). Later, Heliodorus engineered the assassination of Seleucus IV so that he died “not in anger or in battle” in 175 B.C. (11:20b). His death paved the way for the most invasive oppressor the Jews had known to this point, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES

You may recall the description of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the narrative on chapter 8. It is repeated here:

Antiochus, with his adopted name “God Manifest” (Epiphanes), ascended to the Seleucid throne in 175 B.C. with the intent to abolish Jewish ceremonialism and force the Jews to conform to Hellenistic culture. He looted the temple in Jerusalem, sacked the city, forbade Sabbath-keeping, outlawed circumcision on pain of death, set up pagan sacrifices within the temple, and burned the Torah scrolls. Finally in 167 B.C., he erected an idol of Zeus and defiled the temple altar (1 Macc. 1:54-61; 2 Macc. 6:1-6). His attack on the “stars of heaven” (the Jewish people), and upon the altar as “God Manifest” were direct assaults on God himself (“hosts of heaven”) predicted by Gabriel.

You may also want to review the selections from Maccabees 1 and 4 that were included with the Application questions on chapter 8.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes is “*the contemptible person*” described in 11:21a. He was not the legitimate heir to the Seleucid throne (it should have been Demetrius, the son of Seleucus IV, but he was in prison in Rome). So Antiochus IV usurped the throne and because his advancement was by devious means, he was “*not given the honor of royalty*,” (11:21a). The verses 11:22-24 refer to the “*prince of the covenant*” who is thought to be Onias III, the high priest in Jerusalem, who was deposed in 175 B.C. and assassinated in 171 B.C.

Although Palestine was now under Seleucid control, Egypt continued its attempt to win it back (11:25-26). A truce was proposed, but at the negotiating table they lied to each other and failed to make an accord, mainly because God was in control and “*an end will still come at the appointed time*” (11:27, 35). So, Antiochus IV renewed his fighting against Egypt, but the invasion was thwarted by the intervention of Roman (Kittim) warships protecting Egypt (11:30). In his fury, during his return to Syria in 167 B.C., he sacked Jerusalem and the temple and began a pogrom of persecution, culminating in the desecrating sacrilege described in chapter 8 and repeated here in 11:28-35. Only Hellenistic Jews (i.e., pro-Seleucids) were shown favor (11:30b). But the faithful (Hassidim=pious ones) would resist (v. 32) suffering persecution and the desecration of the temple which would last for 3 years.

At its end (“appointed time”), Mattathias’ son, Judas Maccabees, would succeed in restoring the pure temple worship (although that is not described here in chapter 11; see chapter 8 and 1 Maccabees 4).

THE ARROGANT KING – DANIEL 11:36-45

While there is general agreement over the interpretation of Daniel 11:2-35 by most scholars from the major perspectives, opinions about the rest of the chapter are not as ecumenical. Those subscribing to the Maccabean viewpoint see the subsequent verses still referring to Antiochus IV. Certainly 11:26-39 could describe his atrocious behavior, but verses 40-45 present significant problems. There are no historical counterparts for the scenario presented. Therefore, the Maccabean theorists see this as proof that the writer of the book of Daniel finished his scroll prior to 164 BC because what is predicted after that period didn’t come true. That is, we know that Antiochus IV died in 164 BC and the prediction of a rigorous campaign against Palestine (but sparing Edom, Moab and Ammon), then successfully sacking Egypt (11:40-43), did not happen. (See pg. 75 & 76)

On the other hand, conservatives contend that Daniel 11:36-45 is about some other tyrant further into the future. While Antiochus IV may be the antitype (foreshadowing) of this ruler, these verses are about someone worse. Many interpreters regard 11:36-45 as referring to the eschatological antichrist. Perhaps this is the one to whom Paul refers in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 *“Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that [judgment]day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”* Jesus said that “the abomination that causes desolation” would come after him (Matthew 24:14-16). As we opined earlier that fits with Titus Vespasian in 70 AD. But this “man of lawlessness” seems to be even further into the future since the Apostle John, in writing down the Revelation he received, recorded it later, perhaps 90 AD. The angel in Revelation predicted that Satan would send a beast from the sea who would open *“his mouth to blaspheme God...”* and *“all inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life...”* (Revelation 13:6, 8).

Dispensationalists place this monster into what they call the Great Tribulation. They speculate this horror will last a 1000 years (pointing to Rev. 20:1-3). More recently Dispensationalists interpret the beast to be Russia, China, Islamic nations, or even the European Union. They also claim that the tribulation will come upon the Jews, not Christians, because the faithful will have been already raptured.

Luther, in his time, equated the antichrist with the Pope in Rome. The similarities are uncanny. The office of the Pope had become corrupt and avaricious, the message of the Gospel obscured, and most egregiously, the Pope would speak *ex cathedra*, (“from the chair,” i.e., by his divine authority) proclaiming doctrine as the word of God, infallible and immutable (Papal Bull *Unam Sanctam*, 1303, *Ineffabilis Deus* 1854). Luther’s Treatise on the *Primacy and Power of the Pope* was not the only polemic against the papacy and the Pope’s apparent similarities to the antichrist; many Catholics for centuries had been saying the same thing.

Because we can see the antichrist (Satan’s agent) operating in every age, it causes some to believe that the 1000 years is a figurative number representing the whole Christian era, and that the antichrist will continue to plague the life of the Church until judgment day; that is, we are now in, and will continue to be in, the “end-times.” As to the final days of the antichrist and his last horrific fury we cannot date (Mark 13:31-33). But we do know that Christ the Lamb has already been victorious (Revelation 7:10) and he calls on us to endure whatever attacks we suffer in our day and age (Revelation 2:10), and to proclaim his message of the Gospel with faithfulness and assurance (1 Peter 3:15, Hebrews 13:20-21), knowing the victory is ours in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Revelation 7:13-17).

PTOLEMIES & SELEUCIDS***Ptolemies***

(Rulers in Egypt) mentioned in the Bible (including the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books):

- Ptolemy I “Soter” (a.k.a. Ptolemy Lagi) – one of the Greek generals who fought each other in the Wars of the Diadochi (not directly named, but alluded to in the dreams and visions of Daniel 2:3, 41-43; 7:20a, 24a; 8:8, 22); founder of the dynasty that rules Egypt and surrounding territories for most of the three centuries before Christ; founded the famous library of Alexandria.
- [Ptolemy II “Philadelphus” – advanced the hellenization of Egypt and the prominence of Alexandria; had the Septuagint (LXX) translated; not mentioned in the Bible]
- [Ptolemy III “Euergetes” – not mentioned in the Bible]
- Ptolemy IV “Philopator” – the entire book called 3 Maccabees deals with three episodes during his reign in Egypt, 221-204 BCE; he is mentioned as “Philopator” in 3 Maccabees 1:1; as “Ptolemy” in 1:2, 6; and as “Ptolemy Philopator” in 3 Maccabees 3:12, 7:1;
- [Ptolemy V “Epiphanes” – his crowning is commemorated on the Rosetta Stone; not mentioned in the Bible]
- Ptolemy VI “Philometor” – his armies are defeated when Antiochus IV Epiphanes invades Egypt (1 Maccabees 1:16-19); he agrees to an alliance through the marriage of his daughter Cleopatra II with Alexander Balas (10:51-66); he attempts to take over the Seleucid territories, which ends in his own death and that of Alexander Balas (11:1-19); one of his teachers was the Jewish priest Aristobulus (2 Maccabees 1:10); his territory provided refuge for people fleeing from the Seleucids (2 Maccabees 9:29, explicitly names him “Ptolemy Philometor”; see also 2 Maccabees 4:21; 10:13; and 4 Maccabees 4:22); he is probably also the one mentioned, along with his wife Cleopatra, in the postscript to Esther (11:1; addition F), but several other Ptolemies were also married to women named Cleopatra.

- [Ptolemy VII “Neos Philopator” – not mentioned in the Bible]

- Ptolemy VIII “Euergetes II” or “Physcon” – receives a letter from Roman consul Lucius (1 Maccabees 15:15-21)

Seleucids

- (Rulers in Syria) mentioned in the Bible (Deuterocanonical books) and Apocrypha:

- Antiochus III “the Great” – mentioned only indirectly in 1 Maccabees 1:10, when Antiochus IV is introduced as “son of King Antiochus.”

- Seleucus IV “Philopator” – son of Antiochus III; ruler during the events of 2 Maccabees 3:1-4:6; at his death, his brother Antiochus IV succeeds to the throne (2 Maccabees 4:7); later, Demetrius I Soter is also introduced as the “son of Seleucus” (1 Maccabees 7:1).

- Antiochus IV “Epiphanes” – another son of Antiochus III; mentioned often throughout 1 & 2 Maccabees; also alluded to in the visions of the Book of Daniel (7:8, 20-25; 8:9-14, 23-25); in 167 BC he installs a pagan statue in the Jerusalem Temple, referred to as a “desolating sacrilege” (1 Maccabees 1:54; cf. Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Mark 13:14; Matthew 24:15).

- Antiochus V “Eupator” – son and successor of Antiochus IV (1 Maccabees 6:17); overthrown and killed by his cousin Demetrius I Soter in 162 BC (1 Maccabees 7:2).

- Demetrius I “Soter” – son of Seleucus IV Philopator; nephew of Antiochus IV; overthrows his cousin Antiochus V (1 Maccabees 7:1-7; 2 Maccabees 14:1-14); his armies fight but are defeated by Judas Maccabeus (1 Maccabees 7-8); he fights Alexander Epiphanes “Balas” for control of Syria, but is defeated and killed (1 Maccabees 10:1-53).

- Alexander Epiphanes “Balas” – claimed to be another son of Antiochus IV (1 Maccabees 10:1); ruled in Syria 150-145 BC; defeated Demetrius I (1 Maccabees 10:1-54), and later battles with Demetrius II (1 Maccabees 10:67-89).

- Demetrius II “Nicator” – son of Demetrius I; fights against Alexander Balas for the throne, later also battles against Antiochus VI and Trypho; makes an alliance with Ptolemy VI of Egypt (1 Maccabees 10:67-15:22).
- Antiochus VI “Epiphanes Dionysius” – a young boy made king through Trypho’s influence, but killed by the same Trypho three years later (1 Maccabees 11:39-13:31).
- Trypho – a supporter of Alexander Balas, after whose death he initially supports young King Antiochus VI (against Demetrius II), but later kills Antiochus VI and usurps the kingship for himself; he invaded Israel and fought Jonathan, Simon, and the Maccabees several times; he is eventually defeated by Antiochus VII (1 Maccabees 11:38-15:39).
- Antiochus VII “Sidetes” – son of Demetrius II (or Demetrius I?); also fights the Maccabees, and eventually overthrows Trypho (1 Maccabees 15:1-39).

HELLENISTIC (GREEK) RULERS

Ptolemaic Rulers (in Egypt):

- Ptolemy I “Soter” (305-282; a.k.a. Ptolemy Lagi)
- Ptolemy II “Philadelphus” (282-246)
- Ptolemy III “Euergetes” (246-221)
- Ptolemy IV “Philopator” (221-204)
- Ptolemy V “Epiphanes” (204-180)
 - Cleopatra I (180-176)
- Ptolemy VI “Philometor” (180-145)
 - Cleopatra II (175-116)
- Ptolemy VII “Neos Philopator” (145)
- Ptolemy VIII “Euergetes II Physcon” (145-116)
 - Cleopatra III (116-101)
- Ptolemy IX “Soter II Lathyrus” (116-107, 88-80)
- Ptolemy X “Alexander I” (107-88)
 - Cleopatra Berenice (101-88)
- Ptolemy XI “Alexander II” (80)
- Ptolemy XII “Auletes” (80-59, 55-51)
 - Cleopatra VII (51-30)
- Ptolemy XIII (51-47)
- Ptolemy XIV (47-44)

After Alexander the Great

Seleucid Rulers (in Syria):

- Seleucus I “Nicator” (312-281)
- Antiochus I “Soter” (281-261)
- Antiochus II “Theos” (261-246)
- Seleucus II “Callinicus” (246-225)
- Seleucus III “Soter Ceraunos” (225-223)
- Antiochus III “the Great” (223-187)
- Seleucus IV “Philopator” (187-175)
- Antiochus IV “Epiphanes” (175-164)
- Antiochus V “Eupator” (164-162)
- Demetrius I “Soter” (162-150)
- Alexander “Epiphanes” (Balas; 150-145)
- Demetrius II “Nicator” (145-141, 129-125)
- Antiochus VI “Epiphanes Dionysius” (145-142)
- Trypho (142-138)
- Antiochus VII “Sidetes” (138-129)

Jewish High Priests

- Jaddua (ca. 350-320 BCE)
- Onias I (ca. 320-290)
- Simon I (ca. 290-275)
- ?Eleazar (ca. 275-260?)
- ?Manasseh (ca. 260-245?)
- Onias II (ca. 245-220)
- Simon II “The Righteous” (ca. 220-198)
- Onias III (ca. 198-174)
- Jason (174-171)
- Menelaus (171-161)
- Alcimus (161-159)
 - [No high priest in Jerusalem, 159-152]
- Jonathan Maccabeus (152-142)
- Simon Maccabeus (142-135)
- John Hyrcanus (135-104)
- Aristobulus (104-103)
- Alexander Jannaeus (103-76)
 - [Alexandra Salome ruled 76-67; with son Hyrcanus II as high priest]
- Aristobulus II (67-63)
- Hyrcanus II (63-40)
- Antigonus (40-37)

PERSONAL APPLICATION – DANIEL 12

Heavenly Father, time again, we see you work in and through history to accomplish your will, most particularly, the revelation of the mystery of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior. Help us to see our time in this world as an opportunity to live under your grace and to share that word with the next generation, until you come again. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. Starting in chapter 10, Daniel's 4th vision continues to the end of chapter 12.
Who is still speaking? (10:5-6, 9-14)

What did we learn about his identity from the lesson on chapter 10? (Revelation 1:12-18)

2. The resplendent Man reveals some mysteries concerning the end-time in verse 1.
Who will still be fighting for God's people?

How intense will the battle be?

Who will survive?

3. What major doctrine is clearly articulated in verse 2?

How is it expressed in the last two lines in the Apostles' Creed?

List the circumstances in these other parts of the O.T. where this doctrine is found.

1 Kings 17:17-24

2 Kings 4:8-37

Job 19:25-27

Psalm 49:12-15

Isaiah 26:19

Ezekiel 37:4-6, 12-14

What was Abraham's understanding of the resurrection? (Hebrews 11:17-19)

4. What distinctive dichotomy concerning the resurrection is illustrated in verse 2?
That is, what two directions will the resurrection go? (v. 2)

In the N.T. the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. What did Jesus say to them?
Matthew 22:29-32

Matthew 13:36-43

Matthew 25:32-34, 41, 46

5. How did Jesus describe himself and how did he prove it? (John 11:25-26, 41-44)

6. What blessing awaits those who share the message of forgiveness of sins and resurrection? (v. 3, James 5:19-20)

7. Daniel was ordered to close the book until when? (v. 4a)

8. What will many people attempt to do? (v.4b) [compare GNT or TEV with other translations]

9. What two entities suddenly appear? (v. 5)

What did one of them say to the resplendent Man?

Where was the resplendent Man? (See NIV, ESV or KJV)

What did the Man reply? (v. 7)

10. Compare v. 7 with Revelation 10:1-11. Does it sound like Daniel's old scroll is being opened, or a new scroll is being revealed? Explain.

11. How is "time, times, and half a time" used in Revelation 12:13-14?

Who is the woman? (Revelation 12:1-17, 19:7, Galatians 4:24-31)

Some scholars interpret “time, times, half a time” to mean 3 1/2 years, equating it with Jesus’ ministry. Some interpret the number to be figurative, meaning an indeterminate period. What do you think?

12. How did Daniel respond? (v. 8)

What reply did he get? (v. 9)

What assurance was he given? (v. 10)

How would you relate this to Ephesians 5:25-27?

13. What enigmatic numbers were revealed to Daniel? (v. 11-12)

Several theories are postulated. Which of those below resonates with you?

- Count-down theory: 1335 starts at Cross; 1290 at 70 AD; 1260 after Revelation in 100 AD.
- Symbolic theory: from Daniel 1335, from Antiochus 1290, from Jesus’ birth 1260.
- An indeterminate time using multiples of 42 weeks, 43 weeks, etc., to fit 70 weeks scenario.
- An indeterminate period like “70 sevens” ($7 \times 7 \times 10 = 490$) meaning “in God’s time.”
- Not sure.

14. The last words to Daniel from the resplendent Man in linen offered him hope and resurrection.

Is that hope based on Daniel’s goodness or God’s gift of inheritance? (v. 13 NIV)

What do these passages say to us about inheritance?

Matthew 25:34

Ephesians 1:13-14

Hebrews 9:15

1 Peter 1:3-5

Revelation 21:6-7