

# GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

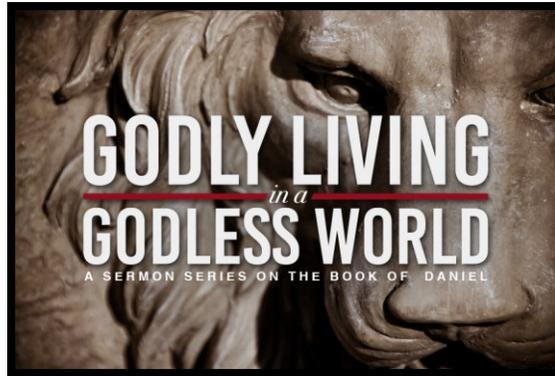
## Expositional Study Of Daniel

Daniel 8:8

Written By

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**W**hat is agnostic? First, let's look at the word. When you wed the first letter of the Greek alphabet, viz., alpha, to a word it negates its meaning. Hence, since *gnosis* means to have knowledge, when the alpha is stapled to the beginning of the term we have a word which means "no knowledge." Next, let's define the term agnostic. This is a person who holds one of two positions: One, they either believe God's existence and nature are not known, or, two, they hold that God's existence and nature are, in fact, not knowable. Ostensibly, we have, then, two forms of agnosticism: the weak form which posits that God is simply unknown, and the strong form which asserts that God cannot be known.

Which one are you?

If you are of the first order, then you should, by definition, be open to discussing logical evidence for how God just might be known and knowable. If you are of the second order, then any presentation of proofs regarding God would be an absolute waste of time for you, a real exercise of futility, because your *a priori* mindset is there can be no viable knowledge or proofs of an eternal being. If you are of this latter group, I do have a question. Do you realize your position is logically inconsistent? When you assert that you know enough about reality to know that nothing can be known about divine reality, you have just posited that you can know something about reality. Your view, by definition, falsifies itself . . . really it logically implodes. Concerning your untenable situation, Dr. Norman Geisler affirms, ". . . if one knows something about reality, then he surely cannot affirm in the same breath that all of reality is unknowable. And of course if one knows nothing whatsoever about reality, then he has no basis whatsoever for making a statement about reality."<sup>1</sup> Put differently, you cannot logically assume some

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<sup>1</sup>Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 20.

knowledge is knowable about reality in your quest to argue that some knowledge (of that which you really don't understand) cannot be known. If you're honest with yourself, you will see you have an epistemological dilemma.

While you, the strong agnostic are thinking about what we just talked about, let's circle back around and address the weak agnostic. He's the guy who is not sure knowledge about God can be known, but his mind is not completely sealed off to the notion. What does he need? What do you need if this is you? You need some facts to guide you to belief and faith. Where will you unearth those magnificent diamonds? In Daniel chapter 8.

## God Gives Proofs To The Skeptic And Plans To The Saint In Order to Eradicate And Educate (Daniel 8:1-27)

What kind of proofs would probably help guide you to the belief in a living God who wants to know and have a relationship with you? Prophetic proofs are what I believe He supplies. Why does He do this? The answer is simple. In order to verify His existence (and to demonstrate He is guiding history toward its glorious consummation), God chose to give precise prophetic information about the rise and fall of final five world empires so doubters, like you, would have empirical data to absolutely know He is knowable. All you have to do is ask yourself a couple of questions. One, when did the prophet give this prophecy? Two, is the prophecy exact and precise? Three, was the prophecy uttered with a large time span prior to its fulfillment in order to remove its fulfillment from the realm of pure luck and chance? Four, was the prophecy fulfilled precisely as given? When factors like this converge, you have, my undecided friend, some significant evidence to guide you toward knowing that God is knowable.

With these formative thoughts in mind, I can't wait to now pour over the prophetic proofs. As we work our way through these proofs, we'll continue to develop our pivotal supportive point.

## The Skeptic Possesses Proofs To Validate Belief (Daniel 8:2-14, 20-26)

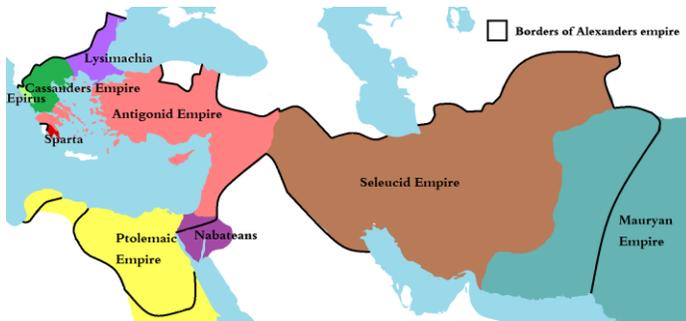
In 547 B.C., or the third year of the Babylonian king, Belshazzar, God gave precise prophesies about the rise and fall of two future countries: Medo-Persia and Greece. These, in my estimation, stand of Proof #1 and #2 for the reality of God's existence because the first one was fulfilled starting in 539 B.C. (or eight years after the initial prophecy) with the rise of Cyrus, King of Persia (Daniel 8:2-4, 20), and the second one was fulfilled when Alexander the Great destroyed the Medo-Persians as prophesied and went on to conquer the known world as prophesied, and when he abruptly passed from the world scene as prophesied some two hundred years BEFORE the fact (Daniel 8:5-8, 21). To these outstanding, jaw dropping proofs, we now add a third:

*The prophecy of the division of Greece is proof #3 (Daniel 3:8, 22). Watch how Daniel records this powerful prophecy given 224 years BEFORE the fact (subtracting 323 B.C. . . . the year of Alexander's death in Babylon from 547 B.C., or the year of Daniel's prophecy):*

<sup>8</sup> Then the male goat magnified *himself* exceedingly. But as soon as he was mighty, the large horn was broken; and in its place there came up four conspicuous *horns* toward the four winds of heaven.

As death cast its dark shadow over Alexander (the large horn) in Babylon at the age of 32, his men asked him who he wanted to rule in his place. According to Durant's *The Life of Greece*, he replied "To the strongest."<sup>2</sup> The strongest didn't let him down. Originally, the kingdom was divided into twenty satrapies; however, this didn't last long for everyone wanted a piece of the power pie. Over the next twenty years, his four generals, who were called the Diadochi (or successors), violently vied for the power of the world's greatest kingdom. Eventually, they divided it up into four distinct areas and none of them got along with each other.

- General Cassander ruled over Greece and Macedonia.
- General Lysimachus ruled over Thrace and most of Asia Minor (Turkey)
- General Seleucus ruled over Syria and large swaths of the East (Iraq & Iran).
- General Ptolemy ruled over Egypt.



True, a fifth leader, Antigonus Monophthalmus attempted to carve out his rule in central and southern Asia; however, the four generals united and crushed his ambitions at the battle of Ipsus, Phrygia in 301 B.C.). With this defeat the four generals were left to establish their own totalitarian, brutal regimes, and they did, as precisely prophesied.

Statistically it is impossible for a mere man, viz., Daniel, to foretell this geo-political incline and decline with such laser beam accuracy a total of 431 years BEFORE the fact (counting from 547 B.C., the year of the prophecy to the demise of the Grecian empire of the Diadochi in 143 B.C.). Liberal biblical scholars, who deny miraculous revelation like this, state the author of Daniel (not Daniel) wrote this book during the final stages of the Grecian kingdom in order to explain away the precise prophecy. They still have a huge problem with the exact prophecy of the rise of Rome and the dating of the coming ministry and death of the Messiah (Daniel 9:24-27). Funny how people will hold to their shaky skepticism no matter what. Are you seeing why you just might need to trade your agnosticism for the logical nature of faith in the living God? These three proofs speak for themselves, and there still one more.

*The rise of the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes is proof #4 (Daniel 8:9-14, 23-26).* The historical contours of the latter end and activity of the Seleucids are brought into clear focus in this next precise prophecy. Why? Because of the relationship of this final king to the nation of Israel and his pre-figurement of the Anti-christ, who is still yet to come. More on that in a moment. For now, join me in listening to this next facet of Daniel's divine vision of the geo-political future:

<sup>9</sup> Out of one of them came forth a rather small horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Beautiful Land. <sup>10</sup> It grew up to

<sup>2</sup> Will Durant, *The Life of Greece* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), 551.

the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. <sup>11</sup> It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. <sup>12</sup> And on account of transgression the host will be given over *to the horn* along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform *its will* and prosper. <sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, “How long will the vision *about* the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?” <sup>14</sup> He said to me, “For 2,300 evenings *and* mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored.”

In this particular prophetic panel, God drills down into a king who would rise from one of the four horns. Is this little horn the same one we encountered in chapter 7, the Anti-christ? No. The Anti-christ arises from the fourth kingdom, viz., revived Rome, while this one comes from the Grecian kingdom. Further, the Anti-christ is the eleventh horn, while this horn is the fifth. The Anti-christ persecutes the people of God and Jews for 3 ½ years, while, as we shall see, this particular Grecian king persecutes them for over 6 years. This is not to say the little horn, king, of this passage does not contain characteristics of the Anti-christ, which he does; however, he is not the Anti-christ but a prefigurement of what he will be like. Having near and far fulfillment in prophecy is quite common in the Old Testament, as we know from passages like Isaiah 61:1-2, which Jesus applied just the first part of the prophecy (vv. 1-2a) to His earthly ministry (Luke 4:18-19), while leaving the latter for His Second Coming.

Who, then, is this particular Hellenized, brutal, and completely godless leader? The majority of scholars are in agreement it is none other than Antiochus Epiphanes IV, the vile ruler of the Seleucid Empire from 175-164 B.C. Does he fit the prophetic description of one who would come, as prophesied, “in the latter period of their rule [the rule of the four Generals] (Daniel 8:23)? Indeed. Let’s work our way systematically through God’s description of this mean-spirited, maniacal anti-Semite.

Verse 9 says this particular Seleucid king would come out of nowhere, and this is exactly what happened in the case of Antiochus Epiphanes IV. His brother, Seleucus Philopator was the king; however he was assassinated (has anything changed in the Middle East?). His son, Demetrius, should have ascended to the throne in his father’s place, but the Roman’s, their dreaded enemy, held him. Not wanting to let a national dilemma go to waste, Antiochus stepped in and flattered and bribed all the right people to assume the coveted throne (as prophesied in Daniel 11:21, by the way). Once on the throne, this unrightful, nobody of a heir immediately added the name Epiphanes to his title which means “Illustrious,” in order to showcase his intrinsic greatness. Right. The prophecy was fulfilled precisely.

Also according to verse 9, this king would also expand his kingdom to the south, east, and toward the Beautiful land. Did Antiochus do this? Indeed. To the letter. In his day, the Seleucid Empire had lost much of its land, so the power hungry king used his menacing military to attempt to regain this territory to, you guessed it, the south (Egypt), the east (Asia Minor), and toward the Beautiful land, or Israel.<sup>3</sup> The Parthians (Persia/Iran region) posed a constant

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<sup>3</sup> The word land is left out of the original Hebrew text by means of ellipsis in order to draw strict attention to this particular land. From the fact that Israel was/is God’s land (Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy ), it is no wonder God left

threat to his advances in the east, as prophesied. To the south, Antiochus was interested in seizing Egypt from the Ptolemys. The Seleucid's, prior to Antiochus' day had launched five wars with the Ptolemaic Greeks who ruled over Egypt and Israel (1<sup>st</sup> Syrian War, 274-271 B.C.; 2<sup>nd</sup> Syrian War, 260-253 B.C.; 3<sup>rd</sup> Syrian War, 246-241 B.C.; 4<sup>th</sup> Syrian War, 219-217 B.C.; 5<sup>th</sup> Syrian War, 198 B.C.). Antiochus III, interestingly enough, defeated Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-180 B.C.) at Caesarea Philippi in the fifth war in 198 B.C., which is the exact location where Jesus would later tell the disciples that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church (Matthew 16:18). When Antiochus Epiphanes came to power in 175 B.C., he immediately launched the 6<sup>th</sup> Syrian War with Egypt (170-168 B.C.). He immediately had an interest in warfare to his south, as precisely prophesied. Kept from seizing Alexandria, the capital, because of the presence of the up surging Roman's, he went back to Syria, and while on his way through Israel, the Beautiful Land, he plundered Israel's temple to God of its vast and sacred treasures. Once more, the prophetic Scripture couldn't have been any closer to a perfect prophetic bulls-eye.

According to verses 10 through 12, the activity of Antiochus Epiphanes would be godless beyond measure, in fact, he would be the first man in recorded history to attack people, viz., the Jews, simply for their faith. Interesting. Check out Daniel's prophecy about the prophesied activity of this man and note how he is called an "it," underscoring his animalistic behavior:

<sup>10</sup> It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall to the earth, and it trampled them down. <sup>11</sup> It even magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. <sup>12</sup> And on account of transgression the host will be given over *to the horn* along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform *its will* and prosper.

Verse 10 says, 377 years BEFORE the fact (computing 547 B.C. minus 170 B.C.) that this king would attack "the host of heaven." This exact phrase is employed fifteen times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Its first lexical meaning denotes the stars of the heaven (Deuteronomy 4:19). A second lexical meaning weds this term to angelic beings (2 Chronicles 18:8; 1 Kings 22:19). A third applies it directly to Israel, God's chosen people (Jeremiah 33:22; Deuteronomy 7). Who does this prophecy denote in Daniel 8? The first lexical meaning is out because you cannot persecute stars. The second is out as well because there is no way Antiochus, an earthly king, could possibly persecute and dominate angelic beings who are infinitely greater (Hebrews 2:5-8). We are logically and contextually left with Israel as the object of his scorn and hatred, just like with the Anti-christ, whom he prefigures. Did Antiochus dominate and destroy the Jews? Read the historical record of his activities in the second book of Maccabees; namely, chapter 7. I include the entire entry for your consideration, although I will not present it during our teaching time for sake of time:

<sup>1</sup>It came to pass also, that seven brethren with their mother were taken, and compelled by the king against the law to taste swine's flesh, and were tormented with scourges and whips. <sup>2</sup>But one of them that spake first said thus, What

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out the word land. He forces the reader to contemplate the glorious nature of His chosen land for His chosen people and kingdom. The word is also fully spelled out in Daniel 11:16, 41 thereby underscoring its relation to Israel.

wouldest thou ask or learn of us? we are ready to die, rather than to transgress the laws of our fathers.

<sup>3</sup>Then the king, being in a rage, commanded pans and caldrons to be made hot: <sup>4</sup>Which forthwith being heated, he commanded to cut out the tongue of him that spake first, and to cut off the utmost parts of his body, the rest of his brethren and his mother looking on. <sup>5</sup>Now when he was thus maimed in all his members, he commanded him being yet alive to be brought to the fire, and to be fried in the pan: and as the vapour of the pan was for a good space dispersed, they exhorted one another with the mother to die manfully, saying thus, <sup>6</sup>The Lord God looketh upon us, and in truth hath comfort in us, as Moses in his song, which witnessed to their faces, declared, saying, And he shall be comforted in his servants.

<sup>7</sup>So when the first was dead after this number, they brought the second to make him a mocking stock: and when they had pulled off the skin of his head with the hair, they asked him, Wilt thou eat, before thou be punished throughout every member of thy body? <sup>8</sup>But he answered in his own language, and said, No. Wherefore he also received the next torment in order, as the former did. <sup>9</sup>And when he was at the last gasp, he said, Thou like a fury takest us out of this present life, but the King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life.

<sup>10</sup>After him was the third made a mocking stock: and when he was required, he put out his tongue, and that right soon, holding forth his hands manfully. <sup>11</sup>And said courageously, These I had from heaven; and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again. <sup>12</sup>Insomuch that the king, and they that were with him, marvelled at the young man's courage, for that he nothing regarded the pains.

<sup>13</sup>Now when this man was dead also, they tormented and mangled the fourth in like manner. <sup>14</sup>So when he was ready to die he said thus, It is good, being put to death by men, to look for hope from God to be raised up again by him: as for thee, thou shalt have no resurrection to life.

<sup>15</sup>Afterward they brought the fifth also, and mangled him. <sup>16</sup>Then looked he unto the king, and said, Thou hast power over men, thou art corruptible, thou doest what thou wilt; yet think not that our nation is forsaken of God; <sup>17</sup>But abide a while, and behold his great power, how he will torment thee and thy seed.

<sup>18</sup>After him also they brought the sixth, who being ready to die said, Be not deceived without cause: for we suffer these things for ourselves, having sinned against our God: therefore marvellous things are done unto us. <sup>19</sup>But think not thou, that takest in hand to strive against God, that thou shalt escape unpunished.

<sup>20</sup> But the mother was marvellous above all, and worthy of honourable memory: for when she saw her seven sons slain within the space of one day, she bare it with a good courage, because of the hope that she had in the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Yea, she exhorted every one of them in her own language, filled with courageous spirits; and stirring up her womanish thoughts with a manly stomach, she said unto them, <sup>22</sup> I cannot tell how ye came into my womb: for I neither gave you breath nor life, neither was it I that formed the members of every one of you; <sup>23</sup> But doubtless the Creator of the world, who formed the generation of man, and found out the beginning of all things, will also of his own mercy give you breath and life again, as ye now regard not your own selves for his laws' sake.

<sup>24</sup> Now Antiochus, thinking himself despised, and suspecting it to be a reproachful speech, whilst the youngest was yet alive, did not only exhort him by words, but also assured him with oaths, that he would make him both a rich and a happy man, if he would turn from the laws of his fathers; and that also he would take him for his friend, and trust him with affairs. <sup>25</sup> But when the young man would in no case hearken unto him, the king called his mother, and exhorted her that she would counsel the young man to save his life. <sup>26</sup> And when he had exhorted her with many words, she promised him that she would counsel her son. <sup>27</sup> But she bowing herself toward him, laughing the cruel tyrant to scorn, spake in her country language on this manner; O my son, have pity upon me that bare thee nine months in my womb, and gave thee such three years, and nourished thee, and brought thee up unto this age, and endured the troubles of education. <sup>28</sup> I beseech thee, my son, look upon the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, and consider that God made them of things that were not; and so was mankind made likewise. <sup>29</sup> Fear not this tormentor, but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren. <sup>30</sup> Whiles she was yet speaking these words, the young man said, Whom wait ye for? I will not obey the king's commandment: but I will obey the commandment of the law that was given unto our fathers by Moses. <sup>31</sup> And thou, that hast been the author of all mischief against the Hebrews, shalt not escape the hands of God. <sup>32</sup> For we suffer because of our sins. <sup>33</sup> And though the living Lord be angry with us a little while for our chastening and correction, yet shall he be at one again with his servants. <sup>34</sup> But thou, O godless man, and of all other most wicked, be not lifted up without a cause, nor puffed up with uncertain hopes, lifting up thy hand against the servants of God: <sup>35</sup> For thou hast not yet escaped the judgment of Almighty God, who seeth all things. <sup>36</sup> For our brethren, who now have suffered a short pain, are dead under God's covenant of everlasting life: but thou, through the judgment of God, shalt receive just punishment for thy pride. <sup>37</sup> But I, as my brethren, offer up my body and life for the laws of our fathers, beseeching God that he would speedily be merciful unto our nation; and that thou by torments and plagues mayest confess, that he alone is God; <sup>38</sup> And that in me and my brethren the wrath of the Almighty, which is justly brought upon our nation, may cease.

<sup>39</sup> Than the king' being in a rage, handed him worse than all the rest, and took it grievously that he was mocked. <sup>40</sup> So this man died undefiled, and put his whole trust in the Lord.

<sup>41</sup> Last of all after the sons the mother died.

<sup>42</sup> Let this be enough now to have spoken concerning the idolatrous feasts, and the extreme tortures. <sup>4</sup>

This is one of many recorded atrocities the madman Antiochus Epiphanes launched mercilessly against the Jews. There is no doubt he fulfilled the ferocity prophesied, especially since on one attack against Jerusalem he is said to have killed eighty thousand Jews, while selling another forty thousand into abject slavery in the Middle East. Sounds like the aim of ISIS, doesn't it? Such is the flavor of the coming prophesied Anti-christ.

According to verse 11, Daniel prophesied this evil king would seek to elevate himself to the Commander of the host. The Hebrew is most emphatic since a waw disjunctive, formed by wedding the coordinating conjunction to the preposition, appears at the head of this alarming clause ( **וְעַר שַׂר־הַצֶּבָא הַגָּדֹל** ). While this military term (1 Samuel 17:55; 1 Chronicles 27:5) never directly denotes God in the Old Testament, God is called repeated the "LORD of hosts," which is the Hebrew term for armies (Psalm 46:11; 84:13; Isaiah 5:7, 9, 16). Further, it does not make any sense to say he sought to raise himself up beyond the High Priest Onias III, a Zadokite (legitimate priestly line and lover of the Torah), for he simply deposed him by merely selling the high Priestly position to his fully Hellenized brother, Jeshua/Joshua (isn't this in an interesting historical note in light of the name of Jesus being the same in Hebrew?), not long after he came to power in 175 B.C. It does seem logical to conclude this is the Jewish God, Yahweh, and in verse 25 of Daniel 8 this person is called the "Prince of Princes," which can only be God/Jesus, the Messianic King (Isaiah 9:6; Ezekiel 45-48; Daniel 9:25-26).

Did Antiochus seek to make himself out to be God? Absolutely, just as God prophesied he would. His coinage tells us this much. The Greek in uncial format (upper case) reads:



ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ  
 ΝΙΚΗΦΟΡΟΥ (lower case for new Greek students:  
 basilews antiocou qeou epifahous  
 nikjjhforou)

Translated: King Antiochus, God Manifest (or the image of God), bearer of victory. He believed he was the incarnate manifestation of

the Olympian god, Zeus. He also claimed he was the Canaanite god, Baal. Right. Talk about the ultimate narcissist and humanist. On December 25, 167 B.C., he took his god-worship to a whole new level when he dedicated the temple in Jerusalem to Zeus, or namely, himself, and demanded all worship should flow in his direction. Right. As before, the prophecy was fulfilled exactly as God said it would be in the lurid life of this Seleucid king.

<sup>4</sup> The Apocrypha: King James Version (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995), 2 Mac 7:1-42.

Verses 11 and 12 prophesied this king would also stop the daily temple sacrifices and dominate the Temple of God. Antiochus did this, as prophesied. 2 Maccabees chapter 6 gives us this historical fulfillment:

<sup>1</sup> Not long after this the king sent an old man of Athens to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers, and not to live after the laws of God: <sup>2</sup> And to pollute also the temple in Jerusalem, and to call it the temple of Jupiter Olympius; and that in Garizim, of Jupiter the Defender of strangers, as they did desire that dwelt in the place.

<sup>3</sup> The coming in of this mischief was sore and grievous to the people: <sup>4</sup> For the temple was filled with riot and revelling by the Gentiles, who dallied with harlots, and had to do with women within the circuit of the holy places, and besides that brought in things that were not lawful. <sup>5</sup> The altar also was filled with profane things, which the law forbiddeth. <sup>6</sup> Neither was it lawful for a man to keep sabbath days or ancient fasts, or to profess himself at all to be a Jew.

<sup>7</sup> And in the day of the king's birth every month they were brought by bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices; and when the fast of Bacchus was kept, the Jews were compelled to go in procession to Bacchus, carrying ivy. <sup>8</sup> Moreover there went out a decree to the neighbour cities of the heathen, by the suggestion of Ptolemee, against the Jews, that they should observe the same fashions, and be partakers of their sacrifices: <sup>9</sup> And whoso would not conform themselves to the manners of the Gentiles should be put to death. Then might a man have seen the present misery. <sup>10</sup> For there were two women brought, who had circumcised their children; whom when they had openly led round about the city, the babes handing at their breasts, they cast them down headlong from the wall. <sup>11</sup> And others, that had run together into caves near by, to keep the sabbath day secretly, being discovered by Philip, were all burnt together, because they made a conscience to help themselves for the honour of the most sacred day. <sup>5</sup>

Antiochus completely stopped the offering of the daily Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1), an offering which secured cleansing from sin for God's people as the day started. Was the Scripture prophecy fulfilled? It was fulfilled exactly as stated by a man who claimed divine status. At one point he even erected a statue of Jupiter in the temple precincts. Here's a relief of Jupiter. Don't you find it interesting it has horns?

Verse 12 also states that spiritual truth from God would be trampled by the Seleucid ruler, and that is exactly what Antiochus did. 1 Maccabees 1 tells us what he did:

<sup>54</sup> Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side; <sup>55</sup> And burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets. <sup>56</sup> And when they had rent in pieces the books of

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<sup>5</sup> *The Apocrypha: King James Version* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995), 2 Mac 6:1-11.

the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. <sup>57</sup> And whosoever was found with any the book of the testament, or if any committed to the law, the king's commandment was, that they should put him to death.<sup>6</sup>

No wonder the Jews called him **ANTIOCHUS EPIMANES**, which is a play on words in a highly derogatory fashion. It literally means, "**ANTIOCHUS THE MADMAN,**" and, indeed, he was. Anyway, the prophetic evidence is incontrovertible, is it not? Talk about powerful proof to believe.

How long was this prophesied and divinely permitted insanity and hatred of Israel to last? The angelic conversation gave the much needed answer:

<sup>13</sup> Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one that spoke, "For how long is this vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled?" <sup>14</sup> And he answered him, "For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

Some conclude this time parameter is tied to the evening and morning sacrifice, thereby giving us 1,150 days, or three years of devilish domination by Antiochus. It is probably better to see this as one part of each day within a 24 hour period, thereby giving us 2,300 days, or six years. I say this because in verse 11 demonstrates that all sacrifices were withheld, not just the morning and evening ones. Further, this fits with what occurred historically. The Jews reclaimed their Temple under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus on December 25, 165 B.C. Figuring backward we arrive at September 6, 171, the date when Antiochus commenced his anti-Jewish activities. And it was all fulfilled as prophesied.

Skipping over to verse 23, we discover more prophetic insights into this particular Grecian king.

<sup>23</sup> "In the latter period of their rule, when the transgressors have run *their course*, a king will arise, insolent and skilled in intrigue. <sup>24</sup> His power will be mighty, but not by his *own* power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree and prosper and perform *his will*; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people. <sup>25</sup> And through his shrewdness he will cause deceit to succeed by his influence; and he will magnify *himself* in his heart, and he will destroy many while *they are* at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, but he will be broken without human agency. <sup>26</sup> The vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true; but keep the vision secret, for *it* pertains to many days *in the future*."

While this does apply directly to Antiochus insofar as he was insolent, a skilled and clever politician, powerful, persecutor of men who stood in his way and Jews, deceitful (1 Maccabees 1:41-50 shows how he deceived one Jewish city into thinking he was about peace and then he attacked them mercilessly); however, all of this contextually points back to the Anti-christ of chapter 7:24-26. Antiochus was to be but a human representation on a small scale of the evil

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<sup>6</sup> *The Apocrypha: King James Version* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995), 1 Maccabees 1:54-57.

king/ruler of the future Tribulation. His power will be beyond anything Antiochus achieved, as worldwide focus will be his prize (Daniel 7:8, 23; Revelation 17:12-13). His cunning and shrewd leadership will be off the charts (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; Revelation 13:12-14). Verse 25 really shows how Antiochus merges with the prophesied Anti-christ insofar as he will oppose the Prince of Princes, Jesus, he will be the one who will desecrate the Tribulation Temple per Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:15, and he will most certainly be the godless one who will be broken without human agency when the Lord deals with him at his Second Coming (Revelation 19).

The point shouldn't be missed in our discussion of the precise nature of Daniel's prophecy. Since these geo-political proofs regarding Greece's rise and fall were literally fulfilled hundreds of years after they were prophesied, we should, as God suggests, be looking for the rest to be precisely fulfilled too. Antiochus came and performed as God said he would, but there is yet another godless king who will take evil much further than he did, and he will be the Anti-christ. However, just as Antiochus' reign of terror was limited, so, too, will be the reign of the Anti-christ. God has spoken and thus it shall be. His King, His Son is coming as prophesied and all the prophetic proofs point in this undeniable direction.

Are you prepared for what lies ahead? One thing is for sure, your agnosticism will not prepare you to meet the evil times which lie ahead, nor will it prepare you to stand before the coming Messiah. Only a faith relationship with Christ, the Savior, will accomplish that. And if you came in here with a low view of faith, now perhaps God has spoken to show you through these proofs that, well, belief in Him isn't just warranted, it's the most logical thing you could ever do. Really, it is the best decision you could ever make, and will all be based on the foundation of the facts of fulfilled prophecy.