

GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

Expositional Study Of Daniel

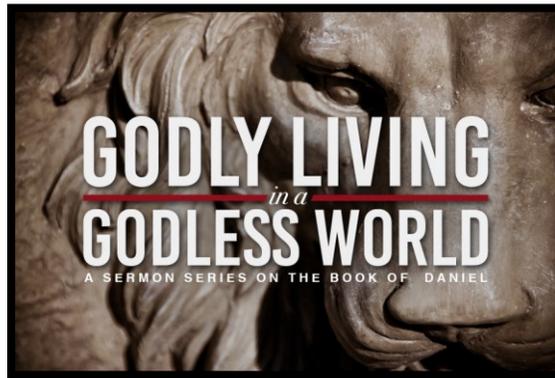
Daniel 11:5-45

Part 1

Written By

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If anything, God is a realist. Throughout the prophets, His words are a balance between the need for Him, who is holy, to judge His sinning, rebellious, stiff-necked people, followed by His inexorable promise to one day bless them, especially when the divine messianic king arrived (Zechariah 12-14). Isaiah, who prophesied in the tumultuous times of the divided kingdom some 150 years prior to the Babylonian captivity, spoke much of coming judgment for sinful actions (Isaiah 1:1-31; 2:5-22; 3:1-26; 5:1-30, et. al.); however, he also waxed eloquent about how one day the Messiah would rule and reign over His Davidic throne in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2, 9), logically resulting in the elevation of Israel among the nations.

Isaiah chapter 60 is one full of eschatological hope for those Israelites who, at the time, lived in godless times and who also experienced divine chastisement for sinful activity.

¹ Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ² For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you and His glory will appear upon you. ³ Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. . . . ¹⁵ Whereas you have been forsaken and hated With no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, a joy from generation to generation. . . . ¹⁸ Violence will not

be heard again in your land, nor devastation or destruction within your borders; but you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise.

Hope. That is what the living God gives His people. As a realist, whose intrinsic quality is holiness (Isaiah 6), He always clearly warns there will be discipline for sin and tough times as light fights against darkness. Knowing our frame, however, He also points us to what lies ahead so we can find strength and courage until He fulfills His magnificent and marvelous kingdom plan.

Daniel's book is structured much like Isaiah's. While God gives us the details about the rise and fall of the nations (Daniel 2, 7, 8), He's also careful to state how nothing will thwart His messianic kingdom plans (Daniel 2:44-45). He's also careful to weave into the historical narrative how His provision and deliverance of Daniel and his friends, in various situations, serves as a prototype of how He will providentially be there for Israel as they face opposition from the godless nations arrayed against them. Yet, as a realist, God minces no words in Daniel 11. Here He reveals, through an angel speaking to Daniel, the nitty gritty details of how Israel will, in fact, face many years of tragedy before there is ultimate triumph as the godless Gentile nations battle it out. As we have already demonstrated in our last study, God's purpose here is quite clear:

Precise Prophecies Give Saints Focus And Sinners Facts (Daniel 11:1-45)

Just as God's prophetic words here served to encourage a godly remnant in ancient Israel, regardless of the year in which they lived or who ruled in or over them, the same applies to us in our deviant, decadent day. Even Jesus, our Lord, prophesied times would be difficult prior to His glorious arrival (Matthew 24); therefore, we, too, should stay focused on the fact that we must be lights in the darkness. Non-Christ followers, on the other hand, should take note of these pin-pointed ancient prophecies and discern that it is, in fact, reasonable to believe in the living God who guides history toward its messianic consummation.

As we have articulated, God's proofs He is providentially at work to defeat evil and bring true peace to earth are fourfold in Daniel 11. We've already discussed the first two proofs:

- Proof #1: Prophecies About Persia (Daniel 11:2)
- Proof #2: Prophecies About Greece (Daniel 11:3-4)

God specifically told Daniel in 536 B.C. how the kingdoms of Persian and Greece would rise and fall over the next 213 years (536-323 B.C., with 323 being the year of Alexander the Great's death). Talk about hard evidence for belief God has, indeed, spoken! Either these words were spoken prophetically, as written in the sixth century B.C., or we have the most carefully crafted deception in all of the Bible. I ask you, was the angel lying that these prophetic words constituted "the Scripture of Truth" (Daniel 10:21)? I think not. This is why Josh McDowell

spends 126 pages in his book *Daniel in the Critic's Den: Historical Evidence for the Authenticity of the Book of Daniel* arguing effectively how massive amounts of evidence strongly supports a sixth century date of this jaw-dropping prophecy. The prophecy is precise for the living God's knowledge of past, present, and future time is, by definition, precise.

Shifting from the breakup of the Grecian Empire related to Alexander the Great's death, the angel turns to give Daniel more proofs to bolster his faith in God's providence.

Proof 3: Prophecies About Egypt & Syria (Daniel 11:5-35)

Keep the following points in mind as we sail into these deep waters:

- God is showing how prior to the kingdom's arrival Israel would experience years of trouble with world powers.
- God focuses here upon the constant wars between Syria (the northern kingdom) and Egypt (the southern kingdom) to highlight Israel's helpless, hard struggle until His glorious arrival.
- God shows how the Seleucid kingdom would eventually give rise to the great Anti-Christ-type, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164). The prophetic, historical chapter, then, climaxes with the revelation of this false world leader (Daniel 11:40-45).
- God demonstrates how the warfare and expansionistic tendencies of Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria eventually brought Roman power into the region, a power which would directly impact the Messiah.
- Don't forget the details concerning the exploits of these two nations against each other are prophetically revealed 372 BEFORE THE FACT! (536 B.C., the time of the revelation, to the demise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 164 B.C.). God gives what these nations would do before they did it in order to give saints in godless days focus and sinners facts to believe.

With these foundational concepts in mind, let's launch out into this third profound proof. Structurally, we will follow the five periods God discloses here regarding the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Empires.

Period #1 (Daniel 11:5-6). Verse 5 introduces us to the rise of the Ptolemaic Empire after the breakup of Alexander's Empire at his death.

⁵ Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with *one* of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain *will be* a great dominion *indeed*.

“South” comes from the Hebrew *negeb* (נֶגֶב), which typically denotes the desert on Israel’s southern border. Here the reference is clearly to the kingdom on Israel’s southern border, viz., Egypt. The king prophetically mentioned here is *Ptolemy I Soter* (323-283/2 B.C.). *Soter*, being from the Greek for *Savior*, right. I guess humility wasn’t one of his traits. Here the angel says this first Ptolemaic king “will” grow strong, which this former general did, in fact, do as he eventually declared himself king in 304 B.C.

The “prince” prophesied to gain “ascendency” over *Ptolemy I Soter* (the “p” is silent giving us the reading of *To-le-may*) was, as history shows, *Seleucus I Nicator*. In 321, he was appointed as a satrap (i.e., governor of a province) of Babylon; however, he, a weaker general of Alexander, was forced to run for his life when General *Antigonos* invaded this area. Until *Antigonos* (pronounced An-tig-o-nus) was defeated in 312 in Gaza, *Nicator* (pronounced, knee-cah-tor) served under the leadership of *Ptolemy I Soter*, as the Scripture said he would. With *Antigonos* out of the way, *Nicator* headed back to Babylon and turned it into a massive Empire (comprising Babylonian, Syria, and Media), larger and more powerful than the Egyptian Empire, just as Scripture had prophesied. In short eight years, he declared himself king of the Seleucid Empire the same time *Soter* did the same thing in Egypt 304 B.C.). Again, God’s word was literally fulfilled to the letter.

The first period of Seleucid and Ptolemaic times is followed with more prophetic details in verse 6.

⁶ After some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful arrangement. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who sired her as well as him who supported her in *those* times.

Ancient history validates that several years after *Ptolemy* and *Seleucus* passed from the world scene (283 and 281 respectively), their two antagonistic countries did, in fact, “form an alliance.” *Ptolemy I Philadelphus* (283/2-246 B.C.), the son of *Ptolemy*, fought with *Antiochus II Theos* (The divine one, go figure. What is with politicians thinking they are more than they are as men?), the grandson of *Seleucus*, at the beginning of his reign; however, he eventually thought it strategically wise to make peace by offering his daughter, *Berenice*, to be the wife of *Antiochus* (pronounced An-ti-o-chus). You can follow the ancient reasoning. It’s hard to fight with, well, your in-laws, right? Sounded like a great plan, however, *Antiochus* was already married to *Laodice*. So, what did he do? He divorced her and married Bernice. I’m sure that didn’t sit well with the scorned *Laodice*.

Within two years, however, *Ptolemy I Philadelphus* died and so did the alliance, as prophesied. What did *Antiochus* do? He immediately went back to *Laodice*, thus taking away the “position of power” from *Berenice*, as prophesied. *Laodice*, who was not happy with being divorced for the likes the other woman, and an Egyptian at that, poisoned her husband, thereby removing his power, as prophesied. I guess *Laodice* had forgiveness issues. She, also, had

kingdom plans because she quickly turned and made her son, *Seleucus II Calinicus* (246-225 B.C.) the new king. She was also a very vengeful, ruthless woman. In short order, the Queen, drunk with her new power, had *Berenice* and her child with *Antiochus*, along with the attendants who had brought her to Syria, hunted down and eliminated . . . exactly as God prophesied through the angel. Specificity of this nature naturally underscores the power of the Bible as the Word of the living God of all of time and space.

Period #2 (Daniel 11:7-9). God foretold to Daniel how the death of *Berenice* would go over with her descendants, literally “one from the branch of her roots” (וְעֶמְדָּה מִנְצֵר שְׂרָשִׁיחַהּ פִּנּוּ), *netser*, being the word for root or branch. Historically, the reference is to her brother, *Ptolmey III Euergetes* (the “e” is silent, giving us Ur-ge-tes), who reigned from 246-222/221 B.C. Verses 7 through 9 detail the explosive response by *Euergetes* regarding the murder of his sister:

⁷But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against *their* army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display *great* strength. ⁸Also their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from *attacking* the king of the North for *some* years. ⁹ Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his *own* land.

Euergetes wreaked havoc on the Seleucids under the weak rule of *Calinicus*. His forces put the Syrians on the run. He quickly had *Laodice* killed, he defeated their fortress structure, and took his troops all the way to the Tigris River to the East. *Calinicus* saved himself by fleeing west to Asia Minor; however, *Euergetes* merely did as he pleased, resulting in an over-all pillaging of the Seleucid Empire, just as prophesied. According to the ancient historian named *Jerome*, he seized 40,000 talents of silver (With a talent being around 75 pounds in the Second Temple period¹, this is a lot of silver: 40,000 x 75=3,000,000 pounds; 3m x 16 oz=48,000,000 oz. 48m oz x \$17.58 per oz equals \$843,840,000.00 in today’s dollars.) and 2,500 priceless vessels and religious objects which had been looted from Egypt by the Persian, *Cambyeses*, years earlier. A temporary

¹ Norwood E. Thames III, “Weights and Measures,” edited by John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). *Talent*: כִּקְרָר (*kikkar*). The talent is the heaviest unit of weight measurement. “Talent” is the English translation of the Hebrew term כִּקְרָר (*kikkar*, “a round [weight]”). The talent is one of the most common metrology terms in the Old Testament, often used to describe the weight of gold or silver offerings and tribute (e.g., Exod 25:39; 2 Kgs 5:22; 2 Chr 36:3). One talent was the equivalent of 3,000 shekels (Exod 38:25, 26; Sternberg, “Weights and Measures,” 703). Talents with a range of weights have been found, indicating that different systems were used throughout Israel’s history, but the weight of a talent was set at about 75 pounds (34 kilograms) during the Second Temple period (*NIDOTTE* 2:636).¹

peace did ensue (about two years), as prophesied, but eventually *Seleucus II Calinicus* attempted to deliver some payback by sailing his navy toward Egypt. The ships, however, sank in a storm, forcing him to return back to Syria without a victory over his foe, just as prophesied.

Period #3 (Daniel 11:10-19). The next movement of history is just as detailed. Let's start by first reading the text and then making some comments:

¹⁰ His sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his very fortress.

The sons of *Calinicus* were *Seleucus III Ceraunus* (226-223 B.C.) and *Antiochus III the Great* (223-187 B.C.). Both sons did assemble large armies and attack surrounding nations, as God said they would. *Ceraunus* died while fighting in Asia Minor, leaving *Antiochus III the Great* to “keep on coming” against the Ptolemaic Empire. The Egyptians controlled all of Palestine at the time, and because of the exploits of *Euergetes* the even controlled the port city of Antioch . . . right smack dab in the face of *Antiochus*. He moved to fix this problem and create a bigger buffer zone by moving his troops west and south in 219 B.C. When he was through, he had accomplished his militaristic goals and had also spilled over and seized a large portion of Palestine, as prophesied.

In typical fashion, the Ptolemaic Empire responded with vengeance.

¹¹The king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but *that* multitude will be given into the hand of the *former*.¹² When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail..

The first king mentioned here is *Ptolemy IV Philopator* (222/1-204 B.C.), the son of *Euergetes* the former victorious king. Known, historically, as a playboy figure, fighting was not too much to his liking, however, an incursion of this size had to be met, so he mustered his troops as God said he would. He assembled 70,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry, and a shocking 73 elephants. *Antiochus* had 62,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 elephants. The forces collided at the ancient city of Raphia in 217.² Thousands did fall, as God said they would, and *Antiochus* did not win this battle and was forced to retreat back to Syria, leaving the Egyptians in control of Palestine, again.

What did *Antiochus* do? Exactly what God said he would:

² If you want to read about this massive elephant battle please see the following site: http://www.arsbellica.it/pagine/antica/Raphia/Raphia_eng.html.

¹³ For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment

For the next several years, viz., 212-204 B.C., *Antiochus* attacked neighbors north and east of him, and then in 203, after Ptolemy Philopater died, leaving his four-year-old son, *Ptolemy V Epiphanes* in charge (203-181 B.C.), he seized the moment to attack his foe, again.

Verse 14 tells us things would not go well within the kingdom of Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

¹⁴ Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down.

Jews, tired of Ptolemaic rule, seized the moment and (unfortunately) sided with Antiochus the Great. By 198 B.C., Antiochus defeated the Egyptian General Scopus (the Seleucid cavalry used cataphracts, *κατάφρακτος*, or a form of heavy armor for their horses and riders) at the Battle of Paneas in the Golan Heights (this was the location known as the gate of hell according to Christ, and it is where He, as the true king, would many years later tell His disciples that these gates would not prevail against the Church, Matthew 16:18), and according to Josephus, the Jews welcomed him and his troops into Jerusalem and gave him material support as he pursued the evasive, fleeing Scopus.³ Again, just as prophesied.



Scopus eventually took refuge in the fortress of Sidon. Scripture foretold 338 years before the fact how this defensive maneuver would go:

¹⁵ Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand *their ground*, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. ¹⁶ But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will *be able to* withstand him; he will also stay *for a time* in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand.

³ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XII, 3, 3.

Fortress Sidon, located on the coast of Israel, just south of modern day Beirut, fell by means of siege warfare, and the best soldiers in the Egyptian army could not withstand the onslaught of Antiochus. Three generals came to help Scopus, viz., Eropas, Menacles, and Damoyenus, however, even they could not stop the Syrian king and his more powerful troops. Sidon fell as prophesied.

With four of Egypt's generals out of the way, God said what would transpire next with Antiochus the Great:

¹⁷ He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand *for him* or be on his side.

With his enemy on the proverbial ropes but still respecting the power and size of Egypt, Antiochus took his power position to the Egyptians and attempted to establish a peace with them. What did he do? He offered his daughter, Cleopatra to *Ptolemy Epiphanes* as a bride. Once more, you can easily follow the ancient thinking regarding how to create a good alliance. Just marry your daughter off to your enemy, and then hope she will turn out to be one of your best spies and spokespeople. The leaders agreed to this alliance in 197 B.C, and the marriage didn't happen until 193 when *Ptolemy Epiphanes* was 14 years old. With his daughter helping to guard his southern flank, Antiochus thought he would be freed up to focus his sites on the up and coming threat from the Roman Empire. He thought wrong. As prophesied, Cleopatra fell in real love with Epiphanes, resulting in Egypt siding with Rome. God's Word was, once more, fulfilled to the letter.

Antiochus, according to God, would waste no time seeking to work against the Romans.

¹⁸ Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. ¹⁹ So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.

Antiochus took his troops on land and sea and seized many islands in the Aegean Sea in 197 B.C., and in 196 B.C. he attacked Thrace, a country located northeast of Greece, in what is now modern day Bulgaria. Hannibal of Carthage joined him in his quest to defeat Greece proper; however, the Roman general, a "commander," *Lucius Cornelius Scipio*, was called, by the powerful Senate, to drive this Syrian out of Greece, which he did. First, he drove *Antiochus* from his military base in 191 B.C. located in the mountain pass city of Thermopylae in northern Greece just south of the sea, and about 100 miles northwest of Athens. Second, in 190 B.C., he defeated *Antiochus* at Magnesia in Lydia, which is located in Asia Minor. Third, in 188 B.C., *Antiochus* was forced to accept terms of peace in Apamea, Syria, located on the banks of the Orontes River. He who had scorned others now stood scorned, as God had said. A year later the great Antiochus

the Great was dead, and now Rome stood as power within the region for the first time. God's Word could not be more exact, could it?

And you say you need proof there is a God who has spoken. I think you have found your proof. And you say you need evidence God is in control as we walk through dark days? I think you have that evidence to stand courageously, knowing He is with us and He will bring the nations of the world to an end so the Messiah can rule and reign, as prophesied (Psalm 2, 89). These prophetic data points, I mean the fulfillment of these precise prophesies, should also move the most hardened heart toward the God who calls out to them through the facts that, to use Francis Schaeffer's words, "*He is there and He is not silent!*"