

# The Book of Daniel

## Week 9: Chapter 11:1-35

### **Chapter 11:**

#### **Verses 1-4:**

Verse 1 is actually a continuation of chapter 10. For some reason it was included in chapter 11 instead, but is supposed to coincide with “But I will tell you what is inscribed in the book of truth: there is none who contends by my side against these except Michael, your prince... And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.” The “him” refers to Michael, not Darius. If the Son of Man is strengthening Michael (who serves Israel as their guardian in exile) in the first year of Darius the Mede, what event in Daniel takes place during that time? The lions’ den. Daniel remarks that God sent “his angel” to protect him. It wasn’t “an angel”. It was a specific angel. Seeing as how we’re told that Michael is Israel’s special guardian, it very well might have been him, and the Son of Man confirming and strengthening Michael probably coincided with the Medo-Persian empire taking over Babylon and God’s people having to adjust to new leadership.

In verse 2, God prepares to tell Daniel another prophecy. He starts with a brief overview of the situation leading up to a specific line of kings.

1. Four kings (the last being the richest) will arise in Persia.
2. The kingdom of Greece will be stirred up to attack.
3. A mighty king will arise and spread far and wide.
4. His kingdom will be broken and split between two.

Most of these details are insignificant to the book of Daniel, because the focus is on what happens next, but we will briefly stop and talk about the “mighty king”. Does anyone have any idea who is being referred to here and what split will occur to his kingdom?

Here we see Alexander the Great being referenced, a king who would spread his kingdom far and wide, but leave it weak, die, and have the kingdom split between the Seleucid Empire (Syria/Mesopotamia) and Ptolemaic Empire (Egypt).

*Note: When previously referenced, the kingdom of Greece was divided into four parts, matching the “four winds” here. However, the phrase “four winds” can be used to mean “multiple parts/ways”. Daniel/the Son of Man uses this Hebrew idiom so that his prophecy can both line up with previous prophecies, but also allow the next part to be divided between “north” and “south”, two ways instead of the literal four.*

#### **Verses 5-35:**

In these verses, the Son of Man gives Daniel a road map to the coming three hundred years. Ready?

Verse 5: The king in the south is Ptolemy I who took over Egypt and named himself king after the death of Alexander. Shortly after being promoted to general and right hand man, Seleucus I claimed the title of king (in the north), setting up in Babylon and took far greater masses of land than Ptolemy I.

Verse 6: Ptolemy II's daughter Bernice is married to Antiochus II in an attempt to treaty a peace between the two Greek nations. However, after taking back his first wife, Laodice, Antiochus II is poisoned and Bernice, her father, and many their servants are killed.

Verses 7-9: In retaliation, Ptolemy III, brother to Bernice, took the throne, invaded Syria, took it's capital Antioch, and executed Laodice. He sent much plunder from Antioch back to Egypt. Shortly after, he had to return to Egypt to quell a rebellion, thus loosening his control over the northern territories. The Seleucids re-established authority and attempted to attack Egypt when they were weak, but failed.

Verse 10: After rebuilding, Antiochus III took over from his brother Seleucus III, and created a strong empire. They took over Asia minor and even went as far as taking a good portion of Palestine toward Egypt, which previously belonged to the Ptolemaic Empire.

Verses 11-12: Angry, Ptolemy IV launched a counter attack. Antiochus raised a great army to fight off Ptolemy, but in the end had to sound retreat, after losing almost 20,000 soldiers. Ptolemy regained Palestine and part of Syria, but did not press his victory too far.

Verses 13-19: After years of campaigning in the East, Ptolemy IV and his wife died, leaving a five year old Ptolemy V on the throne. Sensing the weakness, Antiochus attacked and took back Syria and Palestine, which would remain in Ptolemaic control for the rest of the campaign. Because Rome was gaining strength in the west, Antiochus didn't invade as far as Egypt but instead gave his daughter, Cleopatra, to wed Ptolemy V in an attempt to charter peace and undermine Ptolemaic power, but unfortunately Cleopatra became loyal to Ptolemy V, even above her father. Antiochus turned west to continue his campaign, but came up against a joint Roman-Greek front. He was defeated and forced to sign a treaty. From there he went east to conquer more land near Syria, but was ultimately killed when he tried to plunder a temple to pay Rome, and the local population rose up against him.

Verse 20: Seleucus IV came to the throne after the death of his father. In order to get money to pay Rome, he sent his financial minister, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem, but Heliodorus was turned back and went back empty handed to Seleucus. Shortly after, Heliodorus posioned Seleucus and his brother Antiochus IV took the throne.

Verses 21-24: In these verses we find the story of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the one who retook Syrian and Palestinian land and began to fight religious law in Jewish lands. One of the ways he set to undermine Jewish laws was by deposing the current high priest and promoting one that was more open to his plans. Through the new high priest, Antiochus would begin to wield great power in the small nation of Judea.

Verses 25-28: Finally the Seleucid Empire decided to pressure Egypt again. After the death of Cleopatra, Ptolemy V took advice from two advisors, but the information was bad and led to his downfall. After being captured and deposed, Antiochus set up his son Ptolemy VI against his brother Ptolemy VII. Antiochus and VI led together, but both constantly plotted against the other for full control of Egypt. Eventually VI and VII were reconciled, leading to Antiochus retreated to Syria, sacking Jerusalem for goods along the way.

Verses 29-30a: Antiochus tried to invade Egypt again, but this time was stopped by a Roman fleet from Kittim, causing him to retreat back to Syria.

Verses 30b-32: After retreating, Antiochus sacked Jerusalem a second time, this time more forcefully and violently, killing any who opposed him. He came under the guise of peace, sending a tribute collector with guards into the city, but quickly utilized them to attack from within.

Verses 33-35: After being attacked, faithful Jews in the city (with the help of the Maccabeans) resisted the Seleucids and through the unity of the people, many would be led back to faithfulness in God's covenant. They would not yet regain control of the city, but they were able to stop any more measures from the Seleucids from passing.