

ALEXANDER, ANTIOCHUS AND ANTICHRIST

Daniel 11

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

The last lesson on Daniel 10 was the introduction to the most detailed revelations of the future in the Bible. That can be said because much of it has already been fulfilled. The fulfillment of the first 35 verses of chapter 11 has been so exact that liberal scholars do not believe Daniel wrote it. They believe someone wrote it after it happened and put Daniel's name on it. But Daniel wrote what the angel told him just as he wrote what Gabriel told him in chapter 9. He wrote that Messiah would be cut off (His death) and have nothing (He would not be Israel's King) and it happened in A.D. 32, which was about 555 years after it was prophesied. He also wrote that Jerusalem would be destroyed and it happened in A.D. 70 almost 600 years after it was prophesied. So the liberals are wrong. God does know the future and He can reveal it to His prophets.

The final two chapters of Daniel give a prophecy from about 530 B.C. to the end of the Great Tribulation. This lesson will consider the events up to the introduction of Antichrist. Daniel 11:1-3 begins with a brief prophecy about the Persian kings, but then he gives an elaborate account of the Seleucid and Ptolemy kings in the Grecian Empire, primarily about the wars between them that would involve the Israelites (11:4-35). All of the prophecies about the Grecian kings continue to Antiochus Epiphanes, a king that persecuted Israel before the first coming of Christ. He is a type of Antichrist that will persecute Israel before the second coming of Christ. The prophecies in Daniel 11:1-35 were fulfilled from 331-164 B.C. during the 62 weeks of years mentioned in Daniel 9:25. The Grecian kings declined in power over the next hundred years while Rome gained strength and would be the next world empire that would rule Israel. Daniel 11:36-39 skips over Christ's first coming to earth to a future time just before Christ's second coming. This prophecy gives a brief description of Antichrist.

THE TRIALS OF ISRAEL DURING THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

I. Prophecies in the Vision – 11:1-12:4

The heavenly messenger told Daniel the future of Israel. In chapter 11 alone, it has been said that 135 prophecies have been fulfilled. Whatever the number is, It is a powerful testimony to the literal interpretation of prophecy. Some of these prophecies precede Christ's first coming and some precede His second coming. Daniel, of course, only conceived of one coming of Christ, but today we realize that there are two comings of Christ—the first to be our Savior and the second to be our King.

A. Rulers Preceding Christ's First Coming – 11:1-35

11:1-2 – The messenger set the stage for Daniel by briefly relating to him the past and future of the Persian Empire that was ruling at that time. He said that he stood up for Darius the Mede to encourage and strengthen him when the Persians first conquered Babylon (cf. 5:31). Then he mentioned that three kings were yet to follow (Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis and Darius I). A fourth would arise and become very rich. That was Xerxes, who is called Ahasuerus in Esther 1:1. His wars against Grecia agitated them until they destroyed the Persians.

\MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE –Three kings after Cyrus, Xerxes I was seated on the throne of Medo-Persia. He was the richest of the Persian kings. Before his attack on Greece, he energized his military men with a banquet that lasted for six months (Dan 11:2; Esth 1:3-8). His attack on Greece failed, but it succeeded in stirring up the anger of Alexander the Great 150 years later so that he conquered Medo-Persia.

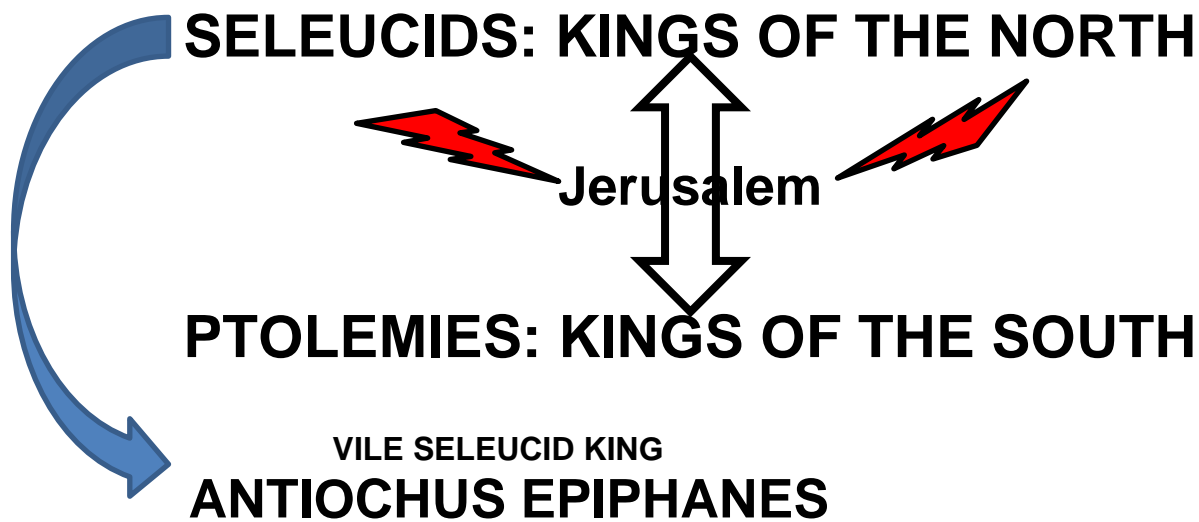
CYRUS  **THREE KINGS**  **XERXES**

GRECIAN EMPIRE – Alexander the Great defeated Persia and founded/ the Grecian Empire.

11:3-20 – The “mighty king” was Alexander the Great made a world empire of Greece in 8 years (331 – 323 BC), but he died prematurely and his kingdom was divided between his four generals (cf. 7:6). Of the four divisions only the kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucids were of importance to Israel. The Ptolemies were the kings to the south of Israel that ruled Egypt, and the Seleucids were the kings to the north of Israel that ruled Syria and Mesopotamia. These kings to the north and south of Israel had many wars between them and Israel was caught in the middle of their battles. They were ruled by one of these kingdoms or the other for better or for worse. Out of the Seleucids would come a vile king, Antiochus Epiphanes, who would treat them like Antichrist in the distant future.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

PTOLEMY **SELEUCUS** **LYSIMACHUS** **CASSANDER**



Antiochus Epiphanes was a Seleucid king of Syria-Babylon. He followed several principles that made him a vile person. **(1)** He won the kingdom by flatteries (intrigues) – 11:21. **(2)** He attacked the Jews – see references to the “covenant” in 11:22, 28, 32. **(3)** He attacked wealthy communities suddenly that were at peace with him – 11:24. **(4)** He divided the booty from these attacks among the people to win their loyalty – 11:24. **(5)** He weakened the places of strength in his kingdom so they could not oppose his evil activities –11:24. He is the type of Antichrist that is described next (11:36-39).

11:21-22 – These verses begin the prophecy about the final “king of the north,” Antiochus Epiphanes. He was a younger brother of Seleucus IV, and seized the throne at his brother’s death. The rightful heir, Demetrius Soter, was a hostage in Rome at the time. Antiochus gained the throne by making many promises to key figures in Syria (11:21). He eventually put to death Onias III, the “prince of the covenant,” who was high priest in Israel (11:22).

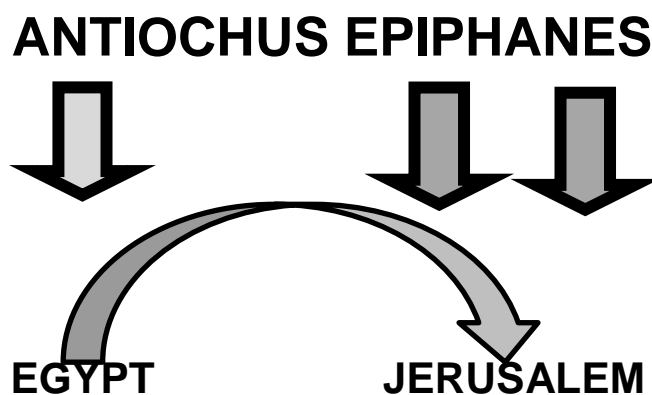
11:23-24 – His first actions as king were against Egypt’s richest provinces. These he deceived by treaties, then came against them without warning and confiscated their riches. Then he took the booty and scattered it, apparently giving wealth to the poorer provinces to gain their support. In so doing, he made his throne more secure.

11:25-27 – Then he took further action against Egypt, invading the land of Ptolemy IV, his nephew, in 170 B.C. With the aid of traitors in Egypt, Antiochus succeeded in defeating Ptolemy. He then professed great love for him, and the two kings made an agreement which neither intended to keep. Ptolemy’s brother, meanwhile, had taken the southern half of Egypt. Antiochus promised aid to Ptolemy against him, and Ptolemy promised to defeat his brother. But Antiochus never gave any aid, and Ptolemy and his brother made an agreement to stand together against Antiochus.

11:28 – Antiochus left Egypt with much wealth and attacked the Jews on his return, establishing Menelaus as high priest. Menelaus then catered to Syrian interests.

11:29-30 – Two years later Antiochus came against Egypt a third time, angry that Ptolemy and his brother had formed an alliance. But this time Egypt had the help of Rome and a Roman fleet (“ships of Chittim”) met Antiochus at Alexandria (11:30a). Antiochus was ordered to leave Egypt or face war with Rome. Humiliated, Antiochus withdrew his forces.

11:30-35 – On his return from Egypt he took out his rage upon the Jews (11:30b). It was at this time that he forced Greek customs upon them and defiled the Temple. His officers went throughout the land forcing prominent Jews to sacrifice to a pagan god. Those who resisted were killed. It was at this time that the Maccabees arose and resisted the king (11:32b), but the Jews would suffer much persecution. This persecution prefigured the Tribulation persecutions mentioned in verses 11:36ff. God’s reason for this persecution was to purify the Jews (11:35).



The prophecy of Daniel 11:1-35 is truly remarkable. Its historical accuracy, though prophesied more than two hundred years before the events took place, is astounding. Such fulfilled prophecy can be an encouragement to those who read the Bible and look ahead to the times to come, knowing that they have a sure guide. All of these events preceded the first coming of Christ.

FULFILLED PROHECIES OF THE GREEK KINGS IN EGYPT AND SYRIA (Daniel 11:3-35)

Alexander the Great – (331 – 323 BC (Dan 11:3-4))

EGYPT – Ptolemaic Kings of the South

Ptolemy I Soter – 323-285 BC (Dan 11:5)

Soter was strong along with Seleucus Nicator, "one of his princes." Soter protected Nicator from Antigonus, a general of Alexander, until he died in 312. Then Nicator left Soter and became the governor of Babylon. Soter ruled Egypt as governor from 323-304, and then proclaimed himself as the king of Egypt.

Ptolemy II Philadelphus – 285-246 (Dan 11:6)

After bitter conflict with Theos, he gave Berenice, his daughter, to Theos in marriage to make peace, but he demanded that Theos divorce Laodice, his wife. When Philadelphus died two years later, Theos left Berenice and took back Laodice. However, Laodice took revenge on all involved in her divorce by poisoning her husband and killing Berenice and their infant son. She also had Berenice's attendants from Egypt killed.

Ptolemy III Euergetes – 246- 221 (Dan 11:7-8)

He was the brother of Berenice and attacked Syria when Theos had rejected his sister after his father's death. He was too late to rescue his sister, but he defeated Syria, took much wealth back to Egypt and put Laodice to death.

Ptolemy IV Philopater–221-204 (Dan 11:11-12)

He lived in ease until Antiochus attacked in 219. In 217, he was victorious and became proud. He returned to ease and did not protect his country.

Ptolemy V Epiphanes–204-181 (Dan 11:13-17)

He became king at age 4, when his parents died. When he was young, Antiochus attacked Egypt, took Palestine but later gave him his daughter, Cleopatra, in marriage, hoping to use her to get control of all Egypt, but she helped her husband.

Ptolemy VI Philometer–181-145 (Dan 11:25-27)

Antiochus Epiphanes, the brother of Cleopatra, attacked him and took most of Egypt. Traitors in his army caused his defeat and he was taken captive. But Egypt made his brother their king in Alexandria. To capture Alexandria, Antiochus restored him as king in Memphis. They promised to help each other, but when Antiochus left, the two brothers joined together against him.

of his death in Egypt (28). When he returned to conquer Egypt, a Roman consul from Cyprus told him to leave Egypt or prepare to fight Rome. He left, but took his wrath out on the Jews. He demanded they worship Zeus, his god, sacrificing a sow on the altar of their temple. They had to forsake their holy days and God's laws or die (29-32). Many joined the Maccabees in a bloody conflict, but they finally drove him from Palestine (33-35).

SYRIA – Seleucid Kings of the North

Seleucus I Nicator – 312-281 BC (Dan 11:5)

Antigonus died in 312 and Nicator became governor of Babylon. Eventually he gained control of Syria and Media. He made himself king of this vast area in 304. Since he ruled the largest part of Alexander's Empire, he could be considered the strongest ruler.

Antiochus I Soter – 281-262

He is not mentioned in Daniel

Antiochus II Theos – 262-246 (Dan 11:6)

Theos divorced Laodice and married Berenice to make peace with Philadelphus. Laodice poisoned him for this and put her son, Callinicus, on the throne.

Seleucus II Callinicus – 246-227 (Dan 11:9)

He counter-attacked Euergetes in 240, but was badly defeated. He stirred his sons to expand the Syrian kingdom. Ceraunus died early, fighting in Asia Minor. Antiochus the Great, lived long, gaining much land.

Seleucus III Ceraunus – 227-223 (Dan 11:10)

Antiochus the Great–223-187 (Dan 11:10-19)

He took upper Palestine from Egypt in 219, but was defeated in lower Palestine in 217. 14 years later he returned and took all of Palestine. He had help from others, including some violent Jews that hoped Syria would give them peace, but instead Syria later would treat them worse. Antiochus boasted that Rome was no threat to him. He conquered Asia Minor and then Greece, but soon Rome took these lands from him.

Seleucus IV Philopater–187-176 (Dan 11:20)

Romans taxed him heavily each year. He paid Rome by taxing the people and from the Temple treasury.

Antiochus Epiphanes–175-164 (Dn 11:21-32)

He was vile. He became king of Syria by flatteries, by attacks on peaceful people and by giving his booty to others to keep their loyalty. He overcame repeated attacks, even removing the high priest, who opposed him (11:21-24). His victory over Ptolemy VI gave him great riches, but not Egypt (25-27). Jews were killed when he heard that they rejoiced over the false report

ROMAN EMPIRE – Nothing is said about it in Daniel 11.

ROMAN EMPIRE REVIVED – Antichrist is its king and he is the subject of Daniel 11:36-12:1, 7.

B. Rebel King Preceding Christ's Second Coming – 11:36-39

A break in the prophecy occurs between verses 35-36. The events of verses 1-35 are left behind and the prophecy jumps ahead to a day far into the future. The preceding trials (cf. v. 35) had the purpose of purifying of the Jews. Then a time element is introduced in v. 35: "the time of the end" and "a time appointed." Both of these terms draw the reader's attention to the period of the Tribulation (cf. 8:17, 19; 9:26-27; 11:40; 12:1).

1. Introduction to Antichrist – 11:36-39

11:36 – With the new time period, a new "king" is introduced. He is like Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of the preceding verses, yet he has a far different role as a king in God's plan. This "king" is the Antichrist. His *actions* are prefigured by Antiochus, the Grecian little horn of chapter 8:9-14 (cf. 11:31-32), but his lineage is far different, for the Antichrist is a Roman little horn (cf. 7:8, 23-26). Antichrist will put an end to Jewish temple worship as Antiochus Epiphanes did (cf. Dan. 9:27 with Dan. 11:31). However, Antichrist is not the king of the north as Antiochus Epiphanes was (cf. notes on 8:23 and 11:40). God simply employed the *actions* of Antiochus Epiphanes in Daniel 11:21-35 to draw attention to a future "king," who is Antichrist (11:36-39). Antichrist will function in a manner similar to that of Antiochus, even though his background will be different.

11:36-39 – Antichrist expresses the very essence of sin in his selfishness.

a. Selfishly Proud – 11:36

He shall function according to his own will (cf. 8:4; 11:3, 16) and he shall exalt himself above all gods and even challenge the true God (speak blasphemies against God). God will allow him to prosper until His determined indignation against the Jews and Gentiles is fulfilled (cf. Isa. 10:25; 26:20; Dan. 8:19).

b. Selfishly Abnormal – 11:37

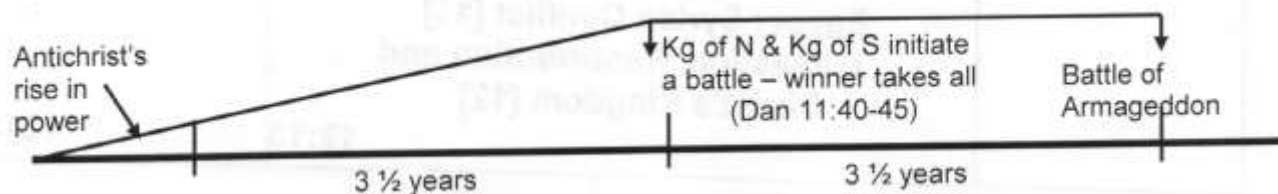
He shall not follow normal human tendencies. He shall act in an unnatural manner by rejecting the God of his fathers (some believe this indicates that he will be an apostate Jew). The normal desire of a man toward women will be repressed by his selfishness. And, man's basic sense of belief in some kind of a Supreme Being will also have no part in this king's life.

c. Selfishly Militaristic – 11:38

Instead of faith in a Supreme Being, his faith will be in the might of his military. All of his financial resources will be employed in building a powerful army.

d. Selfishly Political – 11:39

He shall employ his military muscles to bring others into his political camp. Those who bow to his desires shall be given puppet positions over lands allotted by bribery and graft.



2. Information about Antichrist – Daniel 7, 8, 11

a. Irreverence of Antichrist – 7:25

He will blaspheme God in his oratory. He will wear out the saints by harassing them for 3½ years during the last half of the Tribulation. He will try to change the "times and laws" that is, he will try to alter God's prophecies and laws.

b. Antitype of Antichrist – 8:23-25

8:23 – He will be like Antiochus Epiphanes who had a "fierce countenance," that is, a he had a hard face and an unyielding will. He will understand difficult problems and riddles like Antiochus.

8:24 – He will receive power from Satan like Antiochus (Rev 13:2) to destroy much and be very successful. He will attack and destroy God's people as Antiochus did.

8:25 – He will be shrewd and cunning and use deceit to prosper like Antiochus. He will consider himself to be great. He will destroy many when they think that they are secure. He will oppose God, the prince of princes (angels). He will be broken without a human hand. An examination of Antiochus Epiphanes will tell us much about Antichrist.

c. Character of Antichrist – 11:36

11:36 – He will be self-willed, an absolute dictator and a man of lawlessness (cf 2 Th 2:3). He will exalt himself above all gods and demand that all people worship him or be executed (Rev 13:4, 8, 14, 15). Again, he will speak against God and blaspheme Him (Dan 7:25; Rev 13:5-6).

d. Values of Antichrist – 11:37-38

11:37- He will reject the "gods of his fathers" – "*elohim*" could be translated "God," but "gods" is parallel with "god" [*eloah*], which is used later in this verse. Also, Jews probably would use "*Yahweh*," not "*Elohim*," to call him "the LORD of his fathers." He will reject the desire of women – may refer to Messiah, the desire of Jewish women. He will reject all gods – opposes the worship of any god, except himself (2 Th 2:4).

11:38 – He will honor the "god of fortresses," which refers to his army. He will support his "god" with hard currency and valuables; he will build a strong military machine.

e. Deeds of Antichrist – 11:39

11:39- He will attack the strongest military strongholds by his "god" with success. He will honor wicked men by giving leadership positions to those he conquers, if they follow him and obey his evil commands. He will give land to his followers as a reward according to their obedience and usefulness.

The next lesson will focus on the war against Antichrist, his death and resurrection, his satanic treatment of believers and his final state in the Lake of Fire. It also will conclude with the triumph of Christ for Israel, the Church and all believers when He establishes His Kingdom on earth.