

The Culmination of All Things

The Vision “To The End”

Daniel 10:21 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.

ESV Daniel 11:1 And as for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

² And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.

³ Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills.

⁴ And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.

⁵ "Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority.

⁶ After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported her in those times.

⁷ "And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.

⁸ He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north.

⁹ Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.

¹⁰ "His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress.

¹¹ Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand.

¹² And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail.

¹³ For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.

¹⁴ "In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail.

¹⁵ Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand.

¹⁶ But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hand.

¹⁷ He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.

¹⁸ Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him.

¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

²⁰ "Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle.

²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, **even the prince of the covenant.**

²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people.

²⁴ Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.

²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him.

²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.

²⁷ And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.

²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against **the holy covenant.** And he shall work his will and return to his own land.

²⁹ "At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before.

³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against **the holy covenant.** He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake **the holy covenant.**

³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.

³² He shall seduce with flattery **those who violate the covenant,** but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.

³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.

³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery,

³⁵ and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

³⁶ "And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done.

³⁷ He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all.

³⁸ He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.

³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.

⁴⁰ "At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through.

⁴¹ He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites.

⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

⁴³ He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train.

⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction.

⁴⁵ And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.

^{ESV} **Daniel 12:1** "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

(Daniel 11:1-45)

Telescoping the Future

The Psalms are full of references to an “anointed” one. It is often a reference to David. **Psalm 89:20** is a great example. “I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him...” The word “anointed” is the verb *mashach*. When you turn this into a noun you get *mashiach*. The English translation is *messiah*. The Greek translation is *christos* (*christ*). A well-known appearance of this word is in **Psalm 2:2**. “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying...”

The ESV capitalizes the word here, most likely because the NT quotes this as referring to Jesus—The Messiah. Curiously, the three Jewish Bibles I looked at do not capitalize it, and one of those is translated by a Messianic group. Why would they do that? It is because the most immediate context seems to be the king of Judah, of whom David was the prototype (Saul was the people’s choice; David was God’s choice). When it goes on to say, “I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill,” *David* is that anointed king (2Sa 5:17; 2Sa 22:50; etc.). Hence Jerusalem was called “the city of David” (2Sa 5:7).

We might ask then; do we have a contradiction? No. Contradictions only appear when two things are incompatible. David can be God’s anointed and Jesus can be God’s anointed because God made a covenant to make David’s descendants (Ps 89:3-4; cf. 2Sa 7:12-13). Hence, *Solomon* is the anointed (1Kg 1:39). *Josiah* was the anointed king (2Kg 23:30). But *Jesus* was The Anointed King because he was both the son of David (Matt 1:1) and the Son of God (John 3:16). In this way, Psalm 2 (or 89 for that matter) is not just about David or just about Jesus. It is about both.

Scholars have called this *telescoping*. It often refers to prophecy, though history because it can be typological can

also work this way. Longman explains, “The image conjured by this term is that of a collapsible telescope—one that looked like a short one-piece tube until extended, revealing [several] parts. In the same way, biblical prophecy was often presented as one event, but as we witness its fulfillment we see that it was really more complex than that.”¹ Baldwin says that in this way, “The more distant event appears to merge with the nearer so as to become indistinguishable from it.”²

Telescoping happens in the Bible on a regular basis. We see it with prophecies like [the virgin birth](#), which seems to have also had in mind king Ahaz’ son ([Isa 7:14](#)).³ We see it in prophecies about [the princes and kings of Babylon or Tyre](#) who are likened to the beings in the Garden of Eden ([Isa 14:4, 12-13; Ezek 28:2; 14-18](#)). I sort of argued this point in Daniel 10 when I suggested that the “prince of Persia” and the “prince of Greece” have both an [earthly](#) and a [heavenly](#) prince in mind at the same time.

The two authors I just quoted go on to talk about [Matthew 24 and Mark 13](#) as perhaps the best-known example

¹ [Tremper Longman III](#), *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 282.

² [Joyce G. Baldwin](#), *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 223.

³ [Anthony A. Hoekema](#), *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 209.

of this phenomena where Jesus predicts both [the fall of Jerusalem](#) and [the end of the age](#). These passages are confusing to many interpreters of prophecy, because we often have it set in our minds that prophecy can only have one fulfillment.⁴ Thus, it is common to read about how a passage either was fulfilled already with no future fulfillment or totally ignore what has already happened because the prophecy is only about our future. This a weakness of some forms of Preterism and Dispensationalism, which pitch their tents in opposite sides of the interpretation camp.

I believe the main reason God did this was [to obscure prophecy](#) from those who would seek to thwart it, had they known that its fulfillment was imminent. As Paul says, “[None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory](#)” ([1Co 2:8](#)). (By the way, the word “ruler” here is the same Greek word that translates the “prince” of Persia in [Daniel 10:13](#). I believe, like Daniel 10, that Paul has in mind both earthly and heavenly princes.)

Regarding Matthew and Mark, Baldwin is on point to say, “[Only after the former event had taken place did it](#)

⁴ Sometimes a single prophecy can have more than one fulfillment; sometimes a prophetic discourse can be telescoped in such a way that it moves from near to far events; and sometimes it can be a combination. I believe that Matt 24 is, for the most part, the second of these.

become possible to distinguish which passages applied to the events of ad 70, and which were predictions of the more distant future.”⁵ This hasn’t helped many interpreters who are still confused by this. What helps us more than anything is to make sure we are carefully reading what the text actually says. Because we will come back to Matthew 24 later, it is helpful to illustrate what I mean here.

This is the famous Olivet Discourse where Jesus gives his most detailed predictions about the future. Matthew begins by giving us the setting. “Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple” (Matt 24:1). Mark gives you the meaning. Like the tourists that they were, having come from Galilee, they are full of admiration of Herod’s Temple and one says, “Look, Teacher, what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!” (Mk 13:1).

Matthew continues, “But he answered them, ‘You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.’ As he sat on the Mount of Olives [just a short walk through the Eastern Gate, down through the Kidron Valley to the Mt. of Olives which has a stunning view of the temple], the disciples

⁵ Baldwin, 223.

came to him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?’” (Matt 24:1-3).

Most people assume that the disciples were asking just one question and perhaps they thought they were. Hence, if you read preterists, it is common to see them taking the entire Discourse as being fulfilled in 70 A.D. On the other hand, if you read Dispensationalists, it is common to hear them merge the whole thing into one long discussion about the Rapture, the Great Tribulation in our own future, all followed by the Return of Christ. Both views have problems. To solve them, R. T. France brilliantly notices that Jesus actually answers it as *two separate questions*. He argues that Matt 24:4-35 is (mostly) about the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. On the other hand, starting in vs. 36, Jesus changes the subject to begin talking about the Second Coming.⁶ While some of this remains a mystery, some of it isn't mysterious at all, as we have exact matching historical records to demonstrate that Jesus was right. Telescoping can happen like this or, sometimes, it happens like the word Messiah where there are

⁶ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co., 2007).

actually two fulfillments of the same prophecy. Either way, it is quite common and important.

Setting and Structure

We are moving now into **Daniel 11**. Recall that **chs. 10-12** form a single literary unit and take up the last ¼ of the book. There are **three distinct sections** making up what roughly correspond to the chapters. We have an **introduction**, the **vision**, and God's final **instructions** to Daniel. Technically speaking, the introduction goes through the first verse of ch. 11, while the vision goes through the third verse of ch. 12. This makes the chapter breaks rather unfortunate, because we need to take the entire vision into consideration when trying to interpret it.

1. Introduction to the Vision (10:1–11:1)
2. The Vision (11:2–12:3)
3. God's Instructions to Daniel (12:4–13)⁷

Last time I showed you a long chiasm for these three chapters. If we knock off the beginning and end of it, we can see the coherence of the vision section which is bookended as “**the book of truth**” and “**the scroll.**”

⁷ **Tremper Longman III**, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 245.

- A. “Book of truth” (10:21)
- B. Michael (21)
- C. The first year of Darius the Mede” (11:1)
- D. Persia, Greece (11:2)
- E. He will stir up everyone against Greece (11:2)
- F. Rule with great power (11:3)
- G. They will become allies (11:6)
- H. His fortress (11:7, 10)
- I. Seize their gods, silver and gold, into captivity (11:8)
- J. Filled with pride (11:12)
- K. Slaughter thousands (11:12)
- L. “will come” (11:15)
- M. “beautiful land (11:16)
- N. Tax collector for royal splendor (11:20)
- O. A contemptible person (11:21)
- P. Its people feel secure (11:21)
- Q. The prince of the covenant will be destroyed (11:22)**
- P¹. Time of peace (11:23)
- O¹. He will act deceitfully (11:23)
- N¹. Plunder, loot, and wealth (11:24)
- M¹. His own country (11:28)
- L¹. “Will invade” (11:29)
- K¹. His fury, fall by the sword, fall, stumble (30-35)
- J¹. Exalt himself (11:36)
- I¹. Captured, a god, gold and silver, costly gifts (11:33, 38, 43)
- H¹. Fortress (11:31, 38, 39)
- G¹. The covenant (11:30, 32, 39)
- F¹. Storm out against him with chariots and a great fleet of ships (11:40)
- E¹. The king will engage him in battle (11:40)
- D¹. Edom, Moab, Ammon, Egypt, Libyans, Nubians (11:41-43)
- C¹. He will come to his end” (11:45)
- B¹. “Michael, the great prince” (12:1)
- A¹. “The words of the scroll” (12:4)

Within this chapter, we have another smaller structure which takes place immediately after the center in vs. 22. This one goes into further details and focuses in on the evil religious actions of the “contemptible person” who happens to be the prince of this broken covenant:

- A. Wars with the king of the south (ultimate unsuccessful, opposes holy covenant) (11:25-30)
- B. Religious actions (profanes temple/fortress; removes that which is regular; sets up abomination (31)
- C. **Religious actions regarding people (seduces covenant violators; persecutes wise ones) (32-35)**
- B¹. Religious actions (blasphemous self-exaltation; honors god of fortresses) (36-39)
- A¹. War with king of the south in “time of the end” (includes entering “glorious land;” successful) (40-43)⁸

As for the chapter, the angel that has been speaking to Daniel is going to unfold one of the greatest, if not the single most precise prophecy in the OT and perhaps the entire Bible. It gives us a setting which may be slightly different from the previous chapter. “As for me, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him” (Dan 11:1). I say “may be” because this verse has some

⁸ In Roy Gane, “Methodology for Interpretation of Daniel 11:2-12:3,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 27/1-2 (2016): 299-301 294-343. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1547&context=jats>.

challenges. The LXX versions say “Cyrus” rather than Darius (cf. 10:1). It was sometimes thought that *Cyrus* was Darius, and this could be an attempt to harmonize them. I have said that Darius was the vassal of Cyrus who ruled for two years and then died. Going with the Hebrew text, this would recall Dan 9:1 and would probably therefore identify the angel as Gabriel, because he spoke to Daniel in that year.⁹

The bigger problem is who is being strengthened? The ESV seems to read *Michael* is being strengthened. If that is the case, and Michael is the Son of God as I have argued, then this is parallel to *Jesus being strengthened* after his temptation with Satan. This is certainly possible, because the Word of God did not merely put on a husk of an angelic body in the OT, nor merely “seem” to have been one when he really wasn’t. He didn’t poof in and out of existence, but the Angel of the LORD simply was the heavenly being that was always over Israel. He is Second Yahweh. But in the created form or an angel, he would have been subject to whatever weaknesses they have, just like when he took on human flesh.

However, other translations read as if it is *Gabriel* who is being strengthened by Michael (LXX: “He [Michael] told

⁹ This is Collin’s suggestion.

me [Gabriel] to be strong and to play the man”). In either case (I prefer the latter view), the purpose seems to be to reinforce the heavenly spiritual battle that has been waging. This in turn allows for a transition to this incredible series of prophetic predictions that unfold for some nearly 50 verses.

As we begin to look at the vision of the future, I’ll point out one more important feature of our chapter. In the overall chiasm of the second half of the book, remember that ch. 11 is parallel to ch. 8. This will become important to understanding why ch. 11 is here, because as you may recall, that chapter was a great prediction, through fantastic imagery, or the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greek ruler who desecrated the temple. He is the focal but not end point ch. 11.

An Incredible Future Prophecy

Persia

Gabriel now unfolds the vision. “Now I will show you the truth...” (Dan 11:2). Rather than speaking through the language of fantastic beasts with many horns or heads, as we have seen in chs. 7 and 8, we get a straightforward explanation of a future that is very much like what we have already seen,

though much more detailed. In what follows, I'm going to get rather **tedious** about this and will explain why later.

“Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece” (2). As before, we begin with *the Persians*. Though there is slight disagreement on the exact kings, these are probably **Cambyses** the son of Cyrus (530-522 BC) who was causing the initial trouble that caused Gabriel to be delayed in the previous chapter, **Smerdia Magus** (522 BC), and **Darius the son of Hystaspes** (521-486 BC).¹⁰ The fourth king would be **Xerxes the Great** (486-65 BC) who was depicted just this way in the movie *300*.

In that movie, Xerxes also becomes the forerunner who stirs up the Greeks, first through Leonidas I (d. 480 BC) in the great Battle of Thermopylae and eventually, through the continued poking of a great sleeping wild animal Greece

¹⁰ I'm using the outline of **Jay Rogers** here. https://www.forerunner.com/daniel/X0009_Interpretation_of_Da.html. This follows **Jerome Collins** goes with the four Persians named in the Bible: Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes (**Ezra 4:5-7**). **Going Deeper:** The fact that this is disagreed upon is important. Collins and many critical scholars opt for a late date, perhaps as precise as 165-64 BC for the writing of Daniel and they do so based on the accuracy of the predictions which they believe do not continue after this moment. Yet, ironically, they can't even agree with ancient interpreters on the “precision” of the kings that supposedly already come. To me, this is a strong argument for an early date of the book, because why would we have disagreement over the Persian kings if everyone so obviously knew what he was talking about after-the-fact?

and one who would come from it—Alexander the Great (356-323 BC).

Alexander is “a mighty king” who arises to, “rule with great dominion and do as he wills” (Dan 11:3). Alexander’s biographer Quintus Curtius said almost this when he wrote, “He seemed to the nations to do whatever pleased him.” But not even the mighty Alexander could really do that. For “as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided...” (Dan 11:4). By whom? By God, of course. His unsurpassed empire in life was matched only by his inexplicable death at such a young age. And God, as we have seen twice now, divided it into four. We’ve seen a leopard with four heads (7:5) and a goat with four horns (8:7) and now a divided kingdom to the “four winds of heaven” (11:4). Alexander was nothing to God, who scattered his empire to the four winds. If that is how the most powerful man in human history is to God, what do you think he thinks about politicians and dictators today?

The Long Wars Between the Greeks

These winds represent the four generals of Alexander who took control of his empire. These are “not his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his

kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these” (4). With those words, we are ushered into a great battle between the two most powerful of the four.



The first is “the king of the south” (5), that is south of Israel. This is **Ptolemy I Soter** (367-282 BC), general of Alexander, and the son of Lagus, king of **Egypt**. It is from his line that the famous **Cleopatra** (69-30 BC) was descended. The other is called here “one of his princes” and in **vs. 6**, “the king of the north.” This is another of Alexander’s princes or rulers, that is his general **Seleucus I Nicator** (358-281 BC). His was by far the largest of the four

territories, to the north and east of Israel. Gabriel explains he “shall be stronger ... and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority.”

He skips some history by saying, “After some years they shall make an alliance...” (6). He then gets very specific. “The daughter of the king of the south” will come to the king of the north and make an agreement. This is **Berenice Phernopherus** (275-46 BC),¹¹ the daughter of **Ptolemy II Philadelphus** (309-246 BC), son of Ptolemy I. Gabriel predicts her **wedding** to **Antiochus II Theos** (286-246 BC), grandson of Seleucus. The two had a **child**. This displeased his *other* wife, Laodice, who apparently poisoned him, and he **died**. Later, Bernice was **murdered**, along with many of her Egyptian entourage, and the child.

Next, “From a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place.” This is **Ptolemy III Euergetes** (246-222 BC), brother of Bernice. “He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail” (7). Euergetes conducted a campaign against Seleucus II and overran nearly all of Asia, creating the maximum extent of the Ptolemaic Empire. In this campaign, he in fact “**carried off to Egypt their gods ...**

¹¹ Seemingly named after her grandmother, Berenice I (340-268 BC), wife of Ptolemy I Soter.

precious vessels of silver and gold” (8). This seems a fascinating parallel to the princes of heaven fighting in ch. 10. The spiritual war has never gone away.

His victory didn't last long. The same king he overran, **Seleucus II Callinicus** (265-225 BC) quickly recaptured his lost territory. Gabriel predicts that he would make his way down into Egypt but would not be successful (9). After him, “His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces...” (10). They will fight and fight and fight all the way to his fortress (*maoz*). The sons refer to **Seleucus II Ceraunus** (243-23 BC) and **Antiochus III the Great** (241-187 BC).

Seleucus II was murdered after only three years, but Antiochus ruled the entire region for over three decades. He is the one who “shall keep coming and overflow and pass through...” (10). But “the king of the south” would be moved with rage and fight against the king of the north (11). **Ptolemy IV Philopator** (244-204 BC), king and pharaoh raised “a great multitude,” seventy thousand infantry, five thousand horses, seventy-three elephants. Antiochus III had sixty-two thousand infantry, six thousand cavalry, and 102 elephants. It was one of the largest battles of the ancient world, fought in southern Gaza. Antiochus lost.

This caused Ptolemy IV's heart to swell with pride. Nevertheless, though he inflicted heavy casualties (12) and even made peace with Antiochus, he did not press his advantage. In fact, one ancient historian said, "He gave up all honorable pursuits and turned to a life of abandonment" (Polybius 14.12.3–4).

In response, "the king of the north" rose again with a multitude, even larger than the first (13). In 212-205 BC, Antiochus earned his title "The Great." Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-180 BC), only six years old, came to power and Antiochus moved against Egypt. The battle was fought at Paneas (Caesarea Philippi) at the foot of Mt. Hermon in 200 BC. I point this out because the reason all of this is predicted is because Israel is right between the north and south's wars of the Greeks. Paneas is in northern Israel. They are always right in the middle; they can't escape their geography. It was at this moment that it finally passed from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids once and for all.

Next, "Many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail" (14). Judea was split into factions, some supporting the Ptolemies, others the

Seleucids. The violent ones may be a messianic party who tried to usher in The End. They failed.

The **king of the north** would throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city (15). Antiochus besieged **Sidon** and the garrison of Scopas in **Jerusalem**. Josephus tells us that the Jews freely followed Antiochus and joined forces in besieging Jerusalem (*Histories* 12.3.3). And Gabriel agrees. “He shall stand in the glorious land (Israel), with destruction in his hand” (16).

“He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage” (17). Antiochus made an alliance with Ptolemy through a betrothal of his daughter (an earlier) **Cleopatra** (204-176 BC) to Ptolemy V. It didn't work, because Cleopatra seems to have loved her new husband more than her father!

So Antiochus “**turns his face to the coastlands**” and captures many of them until a commander puts an end to his insolence and turns it back upon him (18). Capturing the Greek Islands, he reached Thrace in 196 BC, but ignored Roman warnings to stay out and was defeated by the Romans at Thermopylae in 191 BC, who then drove him out of Asia Minor in a defeat at Magnesia in 190. The commander is **Lucius Cornelius Scipio** (228-183 BC).

Antiochus could never get enough of war, however. So, he turns his face back toward the fortresses of his own land (Asia Minor). But he stumbled and fell (19), meeting a [fameless death](#) at Elymais in 187 BC as he attempted to take the temple of Bel to pay tribute to Rome. More supernatural interplay.

In his place arise “one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom, but in a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle” (20). This refers to [Seleucus IV Philopator](#) (187-175 BC) who sent Heliodorus to plunder the Temple at Jerusalem but was then slain by his own general.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

We are coming next to the center of the prophecy. “In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries” (21). This is the biblically infamous type of antichrist—[Antiochus IV Epiphanes](#) (215-164 BC), the son of Antiochus the Great. He took out Heliodorus without bloodshed but was not at first received as king.

The South (Ptolemies—Egypt)	The North (Seleucids—Syria)
Ptolemy I (Soter) 323–285	Seleucus I (Nicator) 312–280
Ptolemy II (Philadelphus) 285–246	Antiochus I (Soter) 280–261
Ptolemy III (Euergetes) 246–221	Antiochus II (Theos) 261–246
Ptolemy IV (Philopator) 221–204	Seleucus II (Callinicus) 246–226
Ptolemy V (Epiphanes) 204–181	Seleucus III (Ceraunus) 226–223
Ptolemy VI (Philometor) 181–145	Antiochus III (the Great) 223–187
	Seleucus IV (Philopator) 187–175
	Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) 175–164

The center of the chapter, structurally speaking, is vs. 22. “Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant” (22). This prince of the covenant is the high priest of Israel, Onias III, who was murdered by Antiochus. This is a type of Christ himself, hence the center. After that moment, alliances were made with Antiochus which allowed him to begin to gain power (23). The “small people” may refer to Jason, Onias’ brother, who promptly gave a bribe to Antiochus in order to give him the priesthood, which he received in 175 BC.

It returns to Antiochus. “He shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his father’s fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time” (24). Antiochus is consolidating his power, biding his time until he shall strike Egypt. “And he shall stir up his power and his heart against

the king of the south with a great army” (25). This is his first invasion of Egypt in 170 BC. Though they had superior numbers (25b), Egypt lost. Gabriel predicted it, “He shall not stand ... Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain” (26).

Then two kings, the one still Antiochus and the other Ptolemy VI Philometor (186-145 BC), will have their hearts bent on doing evil. They will speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed (27). It is God who determines the end from the beginning, not warring kings.

Antiochus “shall return to his land [from Egypt] with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land” (28). In 169 BC, on the way back to home in the north, he went through Judea and ransacked the temple, taking huge amounts of gold and setting a garrison in the citadel. Antiochus has just attacked the God of gods.

“At the appointed time he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before” (29). The appointed time means that God has this all under his sovereign control! It has been predestined. It all has. This

happened in 168 BC. But “Ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant” (30). These ships are the islands of the Mediterranean and are probably the ships of the Romans. Antiochus returned to Jerusalem in 168 BC, when he made deals with Jewish renegades as he “paid attention to those who forsake the holy covenant.”

In 167, Antiochus earned his infamy. “Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate” (31). This was essentially predicted back in ch. 8 as well. He seduced with flattery those Jewish rebels who violated the covenant, with all the blasphemous things we saw them do in that chapter. 1 Maccabees said, “Then you and your sons will be numbered among the friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honored with silver and gold and many gifts” (1Ma 2:18). He himself set up an altar to Zeus and sacrificed a pig on it. More cosmic battles! But “the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action” (32). This refers to Judas Maccabees and it talks about him as someone who

knew his God. He was no Saturday-only Jew. He was a believer in Christ.

Judas and the priests of Israel were the “wise among the people” and made many understand, even though there were dark and dangerous days of war and persecution (“sword and flame, by captivity and plunder”) (33). Some proved faithful. Some not. Some fell and were killed (34-35). 4 Macc 8-12 gives an exceptionally vivid account of one woman’s seven sons who were, one by one, taken before the Antiochus and made to recant their faith. Each one remained faithful and the mother was made to watch as each was in turn brutally martyred in front of her. This kind of stuff happens “until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time” (35).

Telescoping the Future

It is at this point that interpretations begin to vary greatly. Some confine the rest of the chapter to the days of Antiochus. Preterists move us into the days of the Caesars. Futurists see things moving to the days of Islam, the Papacy, even a still-future Antichrist. The starting point for why, I believe, is because of the language of “the end” and “the appointed time.”

It begins, “And king shall do as he wills.” What king? It *seems as if* it is still Antiochus. There is no transitional language.¹² “He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done” (36). It sounds like the same person. Certainly, Antiochus did this to some degree.

“He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts” (37-38). This simply *doesn't describe Antiochus*.¹³ Think of the Greeks. For centuries they had worshiped the Olympians. These are the gods of his fathers (the god “beloved by women” is perhaps Adonis).¹⁴ But Antiochus actually went into Egypt and offered sacrifices to basically all of the gods! When he

¹² We have a waw consecutive (“and...”) along with the definite article (“the king”, seemingly the same king). On the surface, these both seem to point to the same figure grammatically.

¹³ Nor do later verses such as the last verse. Antiochus did not die when he “pitched his royal tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain” (45). He died in Armenia on a completely different field of battle.

¹⁴ This is a better translation than, “the desire/lust of women” (NAS, KJV, Latin). The idea is not that he won't like women, but that there is also a god that women desire.

went into God's temple, he even set up an altar to Zeus (who many think is the “god of the fortresses” [*maozin*]). But Zeus was already worshiped in Greece as the God of gods!¹⁵

Instead of seeing Daniel as being mistaken, that he didn't know the future, only the past, and using it as proof that he wrote the book right when Judas Maccabees had retaken the temple, as some Liberal scholars propose, some try to harmonize this with slightly later history. Many (including Calvin) have understood this to be a prophecy not of Antiochus, but of the Caesars. For example, Caesar Augustus was considered, “The Son of God” or “Savior of the World.” After his death, he was proclaimed *Divus Augustus*—God Augustus. The “new worship” they were ushering in was of themselves, we are told. That does fit the idea of this being a god his fathers did not know. Vs. 37 (“He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these”) is given as proof. Who is this “strong” deity? Themselves! By force they extended and maintained their power. Thus, some see the last several verses extending to the birth of Christ.

¹⁵ For that matter, he was also worshiped (as Jupiter) by the Romans. This includes Julius Caesar. On the very night preceding his assassination, Caesar was said to have dreamed that he “clasped the hand of Jupiter” and “on the morning of the Ides, Caesar sacrificed...” (Michael Koortbojian, *The Divinization of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequences, Implications* [Princeton, NJ: Cambridge University Press, 2013], 25). See below for implications.

Julius Caesar (100-44 BC) is sometimes said to fulfill the prophecies. And there is some reason to think so. Julius took his army to Egypt and defeated Ptolemy XIII (62-47 BC) in the Battle of the Nile (42). He extended his empire to Arabia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon (43). While he was conquering, he got news from the east and north (of Egypt) that a rebellion had broken out in Pontus in Asia Minor. The Battle of Zela (47 BC) which ensued was no minor skirmish of history, but rather Caesar uttered perhaps his most famous line *Veni, vidi, vici* (“I came, I saw, I conquered”) after a swift victory. On his way to Pontus, he passed through Judea and Syria and entered into an alliance with the Jews who helped him at Zela (“he shall pitch his royal tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain”). But his end was very much like the last part of vs. 45, “He shall come to his end, with none to help him.” Julius was assassinated by those closest to him. In this way, the “time of the end” (44) is, for some, not the end of all things, but the end of prophesied period, which they see at the birth of Christ.¹⁶

There are problems with this, however. While it is popular to claim that Julius proclaimed himself as a living

¹⁶ Rogers.

god, this is much **debated**. Even if he did, this is not the same thing as saying you are magnifying yourself *above every god*, which Julius never did. In fact, a good case can be made that the worship of Julius was as much imposed from without as it could be argued came from him. What God of gods would **refuse the royal crown** the Lupercalia just a month before he is assassinated?¹⁷

Some have looked, in various ways, to 70 AD, either to someone like Caesar **Titus**¹⁸ or the much less known **John of Giscala**,¹⁹ both who lived during the destruction of the temple. There is some good reason for this as well. Jesus himself clearly saw the events of this and the next chapter as being in his own future. Let's return to the Olivet Discourse for a moment. “**So when you see the abomination of desolation**²⁰ spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)...” (**Matt 24:15**).²¹

¹⁷ **Koortbojian**, 23. The first couple chapters are very helpful in trying to make sense of what was actually going on in the deification of Julius.

¹⁸ A preterist view. See “Daniel Chapter 11:35-45 Commentary, *Revelationrevolution*, <https://www.revelationrevolution.org/daniel-chapter-11-35-45-commentary-every-prophecy-miraculously-fulfilled/>.

¹⁹ See the interesting paper **Jason Thomas Parry**, “Desolation of the Temple and Messianic Enthronement in Daniel 11:36-12:3,” *JETS* 54.3 (Sept 2011): 485-526. https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/54/54-3/JETS_54-3_485-526_Parry.pdf.

²⁰ See **Dan 11:31 and 12:11**, but not in my opinion **9:26-28**, which refer to Jesus on the cross.

²¹ An important observation has been made about Jesus' discourse in both Mark 13 and Matthew 24 which is that it is almost a midrash on Daniel 11. As such, we have to take seriously the relationship between the two to properly understand both. See **G. K. Beale**, “The Influence of Daniel Upon the Structure and Theology of John's Apocalypse,” *JETS*

I believe very strongly that what Jesus says here predicts to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. And yet, this quotation is found in the earlier part of Daniel 11 (later also in 12), which seems obviously to be about *Antiochus desecrating the temple in 167 BC*. In other words, there is a double fulfillment!

But there are a couple of problems seeing what we are looking in the last part of Daniel 11 as being only about 70 AD. **First**, most of our earliest commentators (Hippolytus, Jerome, Theodoret)²² all see a future (for them) **Antichrist** here. Why would they do that? Did they have no idea about what happened to Jerusalem? Of course they did.

Second, and more importantly, the vision does not end at the end of ch. 11. It continues for a couple more verses. We read, “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered,

27/4 (Dec 1984): 413-23 especially 421ff. https://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/27/27-4/27-4-pp413-423_JETS.pdf. Beale gives two further studies on this in n. 42.

²² **Theodoret** said, “**Antiochus happened to be a type of the antichrist**” (Commentary on Dan 11:40). Notice also how in vv. 41-43, this person delivers Edom and Moab and the Ammonites, but crushes Egypt, the Libyans and the Cushites. **Jerome** explains, “**We read that Antiochus partially accomplished this. But as for the added detail, ‘He shall pass through the Libyans and the Ethiopians,’ our school insists that this is more appropriate to the antichrist**” (Commentary on Dan 11:42-43).

everyone whose name shall be found written in the book” (Dan 12:1). This is actually not that difficult to see being fulfilled in the first century. Michael arising could be seen as the coming of the incarnate Christ and the time of trouble could just as easily be seen as the terrors of the Roman army surrounding Jerusalem. The names of those written in the book would refer to Christians, all of whom escaped the destruction of the city precisely because they believed Jesus’ prophecy 40 years earlier!

But it’s the next verse that is the real problem. “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (2-3). This is talking about resurrection. Preterists have to either spiritualize this resurrection²³ or go back 40 years to Jesus’ resurrection and those in Jerusalem on the same day,²⁴ which doesn’t seem to fit the best. I think that the NT passages that

²³ For example the quite bad interpretation of saints 40 years after Jesus’ resurrection still awaiting their spiritual resurrection to heaven in the *Preterist Bible Commentary* at <http://www.revelationrevolution.org/daniel-chapter-12-a-preterist-commentary/>, or the better but still quite spiritual interpretation of the “new birth” by Rogers at https://www.forerunner.com/daniel/X0010_Interpretation_of_Da.html. Rogers does see a double-fulfillment still in our future!

²⁴ Parry, 523.

Speak of a bodily resurrection get it from Daniel! And therefore, it seems to me that what makes sense the most here is in fact the telescoping of prophecy from **11:36-12:3**. It has **multiple fulfillments: Antiochus, the Caesars, 70 AD, Islam, the papacy, and even into our own future, which lies in shadow and mist.** And why not? If past prophecy was that way to thwart people from trying to stop it, wouldn't it make sense that future prophecy is the same as well?

Application

Does God Really Know the Future?

As we think about this incredible chapter, I have **a few thoughts for us**. First, I've bogged you down with a ton of information that neither you nor I will remember for long about the Ptolemys, the Seleucids, dates, battles, and other things. I did this on purpose. Back in 2001, during my last year in seminary, I attended the **Evangelical Theological Society** national meetings in Colorado Springs. The theme that year was on a raging debate taking place at the time on something called Open Theology.

Open Theology has been around in one form or another for a very long time. But I happened to be at its modern

seismic epicenter in my old association of churches when my pastor John [Piper](#) called out my professor Greg [Boyd](#) for teaching heresy. The heresy was this idea that God knows all things *that are knowable*. The future is not knowable—to anyone. Therefore, God does not know the future. Rather, it is (mostly) “open” to the freewill decisions of humans and though God decrees a few things to happen (such as the death of Christ), when it comes to events that will actually take place, he has to make guesses, albeit very very [educated guesses](#).

I’m not going to get much into that here other than to say I distinctly remember one of the papers I heard read that year. It was on Daniel 11. I don’t remember the author, but he basically went through this chapter in a painfully tedious way to prove that God couldn’t possibly “guess” about the things in it. It is statistically utterly impossible given the precision, the detail, and the accuracy of the predictions. This is [precisely why some liberals hate this chapter](#) so much and why they have to date Daniel to the second century BC.

I strongly believe that Daniel wrote this book and Gabriel gave this prophecy to him in the sixth century. It is absurd to think that a nameless Jew could foist this kind of a forgery upon the population that they would immediately

accept it as an ancient book and then considered sacred Scripture.

The simple fact is, perhaps more than any other chapter in the OT, Daniel 11 ought to give us **unshakable confidence that God both knows and controls the future of the human race**. Kings are nothing to him. Time is meaningless to him. Plans and schemes to overthrow him and his people are perfectly in his sovereign and omnipotent hand. I can't think of a better chapter to meditate on in days when our own civilization seems so fragile and its future up for grabs. This is where the rubber meets the road. Either God is who he says he is and you must believe him and trust him about the future, turning to his Son Jesus and resting in him, or you need to give up the pretense of being a Christian and walk away. Just know that if you do, that doesn't change who he is or what he tells you about your own future if you do that.

Double Prophecy

Second, I've told you about this whole idea of **telescoping** the future because in my opinion, this makes the most sense of the difficulties in the passage as well as such a climactic end to the book. Why has there been so much disagreement after vs. 36 and much less before it? Because

we have **multiple fulfilments**. Why does the language change from very descript and fairly obvious (after the fact) fulfillment to almost mythopoetic, larger-than-life language such as you find in Isaiah or Ezekiel that can be more broadly interpreted? ²⁵ Because God is making it intentionally confusing and, to paraphrase Clifford, it appears the prophecy sees the ultimate enemy of the Most High God and his people not as Antiochus IV *or any human empire*, but as **a more radical power persisting among the succession of empires with the most radical evil being that of death itself**.

Why do we have not one, not two, not three, but at least **four entirely different chapters** dealing with much of the same history? Because they do not all deal with *precisely* the same history and because they look at what overlaps with *different points of view*. **Chapter 2** saw four great kingdoms, but the kingdom of Christ ruling them in the *already* of Christ's first coming. **Chapter 7** saw four great kingdoms but focused on the destruction of the temple in 70 AD in order that the Jews might listen to their Messiah's words when he told them about such things. **Chapter 8** told us

²⁵ Clifford makes this point and it is valid, though I disagree with his more liberal conclusions. **Richard J. Clifford**, "History and Myth in Daniel 10–12," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 220 (1975): 23–26. https://www.academia.edu/9062766/_History_and_Myth_in_Daniel_10_12_BASOR_220_21_1975_76_23_25. Also **Longman**, Daniel, 281.

about three great kingdoms, and put the emphasis on Antiochus Epiphanes, because this man would serve as a type of a great evil to come. **Chapter 11** puts it all together, reminds us of all these things, but takes our minds further along into a history that we will see next time culminates in **the resurrection of the dead**. Hence, the scope of the last prophecy is greater than the rest. Now that's a way to write a story!

Prayer from Ferguson

Finally, let me conclude by returning to **a theme of the last two weeks**. I'm not going to go any deeper into what all it might mean for The Antichrist to fulfill these chapters, because in all honesty, I don't think I really understand it. It is confusing to me and I won't pretend that it isn't. I do believe an end-times figure is probably in view even as I certainly believe **many antichrists** are in view, starting with Antiochus, moving to Julius, going down to Nero and Titus and Jews who betrayed their own people. The papacy and Islam have long been discussed for how antichrist they have been, and some kind of a last days figure has been the speculation not only of Christianity, but of many other world religions as well. Indeed, there has hardly been a

figure more discussed in world history other than Jesus Christ than the Antichrist.

But what is Antichrist if not **the spiritual foe** of God and his people? Is he not the culmination and physical embodiment not only of human wickedness but of satanic evil in heavenly places? As such, what must we do? We must do what Daniel did and **humble ourselves and pray diligently** about these matters. We must do as Paul did when discussing the spiritual battle and concluded, **“Praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”**

In the midst of what feels like overwhelming hopeless spiritual evil all around, the temptation is to give up or give in. But Sinclair Ferguson rightly concludes for us, **“We [must] not lose sight of the fact that [the] whole function [of this prophecy] was to encourage Daniel to faithfulness in prayer. By showing him that the real conflict lying behind world events is spiritual (cf. ch. 10), the Lord was teaching Daniel that the real weapon of the church is prayer. Fail in the work of prayer, and we fail to understand this great vision.”**²⁶

²⁶ **Sinclair B. Ferguson** and Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *Daniel*, vol. 21, The Preacher’s Commentary Series (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1988), 222.

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