

In 1968, a new comedy show made its debut on television. It was called “Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In”. One of the popular sketches on the show featured two news anchormen – one presenting the “News of the Present” while the other presented the “News from the Future” – and in regards to the news of the future, that anchorman would report these totally made-up and outlandish news stories to mock the political and social issues of the day. It was completely meant as a spoof and they tried to be as funny as possible; however, there were two things reported that actually came true!

In a 1969 sketch, the “News of the Future” anchorman jokingly reported that actor Ronald Reagan had been elected president of the U.S., and he also reported the Berlin Wall had fallen. Even in their attempt at humor, these two predictions came true many years later.

Someone once said, “Even a broken clock gets the time right twice a day” so it should be no surprise that some predictions are right some of the time – but as we shall see this morning, God’s prophets are right 100% of the time.

If you remember from last week, Daniel was burdened over his people because only a small number of the Jews left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem when given the opportunity. Most of the Jews decided to stay put in a land and in a culture not their own for that was all they knew. For those under seventy years of age, they had never been to the Promised Land. They had never worshipped at the temple, and so there was no real interest to return.

Well, Daniel was saddened by this, and he was also saddened by the news he was hearing about those who did return. They were supposed to be working hard towards rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem, but some of them had lost heart for the work, and on top of that, the locals in the area were giving the builders a hard time – bringing the project to a standstill.

All of this burdened Daniel, and so for three weeks he entered into a time of mourning where he fasted and prayed. He was concerned about the future of his people, and if you recall, an angel – who had been locked into battle with a demon, comes to Daniel to share a vision of what was in store for his people.

Now, that brings us to **Daniel 11**, where this angel explains the vision concerning the kings and kingdoms to come – and let me say we have already talked about many of these kings and kingdoms to some degree, so in many ways this is going to seem like a review – but it’s a review in a much greater detail.

So, if you have your Bible turn to **Daniel 11** and we will begin with **verse 1**. We are told,

¹“In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him. ²And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece.

Okay, I’m going to say something that might catch some of you off guard. This first verse fits better at the end of **Chapter 10** – not here, and before you chase me out as a heretic, I need to remind you that *chapter breaks* and *verse numbers* were not included in Scripture. They are not inspired by God. They were added much later in the thirteenth century by man to help us navigate through the Bible.

Anyway, in **verse 1**, the same angel who was going help the archangel Michael to battle the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece – these two demons, was also supporting **Darius the Mede**, who was appointed by King Cyrus of Persia to rule over Babylon. In 538 B.C., King Cyrus issued a decree to allow the Jews to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, and with that, Darius the Mede decreed that the full cost of the rebuilding project was to be funded by his royal treasury.

Now, in **verse 2**, we transition to Daniel’s vision. As you know, at this time, Cyrus is the king of Persia, and the angel says that **three more kings** will come after him, and then there will be a **fourth** in the Persian Empire who is richer and stronger than them all.

History tells us that *Cambyses* – the first son of Cyrus became the next king of Persia, and after him came *Pseudo-Smerdis*. That’s a weird name **isn’t it**, but it’s a fitting name that was given to him by historians. As you know, *pseudo* is another word for *fake*, and in this case, it refers to a person who pretends to be someone they are not, and this guy actually gained access to the royal household because he looked like *Cambyses*’ brother *Smerdis*, and he used his mistaken identity to become the king. *Pseudo-Smerdis* was an imposter who stayed on the throne for about seven months until he was overthrown by *Darius the Great*. *Darius the Great* – different from Darius the Mede, ruled for over thirty years, and after him came the fourth king – not the last king, but the fourth king – and one to take notice of.

The fourth mentioned by the angel, we know as *Xerxes* – whom the Jews called *Ahasuerus*, and you might remember him from the book of **Esther**. *Xerxes* did not like the Greeks, and after four years, with all of his riches, he amasses an army of over two million soldiers. He invades Greece and he has some victories, but he also stirs another who takes center stage and wants to make the Persians pay, and he too is a person we have already met. Let's continue beginning with **verse 3**.

³ And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. ⁴ But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.

Of course, we know the angel is talking about *Alexander the Great* of Greece who defeats Persia. If you remember in a previous vision, he was described as a leopard who conquered the known world with cunning and speed, but at the height of his power, at the age of 33, Alexander dies, his sons are murdered, and without a living heir, the Grecian Empire is eventually divided by his four generals who make themselves kings over their new kingdoms.

One of these kings was *Ptolemy* who ruled over the region of Egypt – which is to the **south** of Israel, while another named *Seleucus* ruled over a vast territory to include modern day Syria which is to the **north** of Israel. These two kings, and their successors, had many skirmishes and fought six major wars, and in doing so, they made life miserable for those in Israel who were geographically caught in the middle between them.

Now, in this next portion, beginning with **verse 5**, we will continue with the history between these two Grecian kingdoms – a history of conflict that spans nearly 150 years and sounds much like an over-the-top soap opera.

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. 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 he who supported her in those times.

In those days, when kingdoms were in conflict, one way to bring peace between enemies was to marry off a daughter to the opposing king. The Ptolemaics to the **south** in Egypt and the Seleucids to the **north** in Syria had been engaged in ongoing hostilities, but after some thirty years, there came a time where these two kingdoms tried to **form an alliance** through marriage. Antiochus II – the king from the north, who called himself *Antiochus Theos*, planned to marry the daughter of King Ptolemy II from the south – and his daughter’s name was *Berenice*. Peace by marriage was the plan, but there was a problem. King Ptolemy II wanted Berenice to be the “*one and only*” and her son to be the next heir to the throne. Well, that’s a problem because Antiochus Theos was married to *Laodiceia*.

So, what’s a guy to do? Well, he divorces Laodiceia and marries the younger Berenice, but after two years in this new marriage, Berenice’s father dies back in Egypt, so Antiochus Theos remarries Laodiceia – *who seems like a very forgiving and understanding lady*, and he makes Berenice a concubine. He’s got this all figured out – he gets his cake and his ice cream too, but soon after their remarriage, Laodiceia poisons him.

The king is dead, and a dispute about succession breaks out. Laodiceia – who’s got some power, proclaims her eldest son *Seleucus II* as the new king and they head to Turkey, but Berenice claimed that her son should be the heir to the throne – and she asks for help. Well, back in Egypt, the new king *Ptolemy III* receives the request from his sister Berenice to come north to help place her son on the throne. He quickly travels north with an army, through Israel, and invades Syria to help place his sister’s son on the throne, but when he gets to the palace in Antioch – *consistent with prophecy*, he learns that his sister Berenice, and her son, and her royal attendants were murdered by Laodiceia. He’s enraged and it’s all-out war, and that brings us to **verse 7**.

⁷ But 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. ⁸ Also 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.

This is a reference to the Laodicean War – which is a very fitting name for this war, and it’s also a total disaster for the North. Ptolemy III has too much rage and too much strength and he soundly defeats the army of Seleucus II.

Eventually, Ptolemy III returns to Egypt, and he does so with the death of Laodiceia, and many spoils of war – to include thousands of idols – idols which apparently did not help the North, 4000 talents of gold, 40,000 talents of silver, and he gains new territories on the northern coast of Syria. Now, after a few years, Seleucus II does try to make a comeback, and he invades Egypt, but he's turned back in shame and he's later killed after falling off his horse.

So, there's peace for a few years, but "*spoiler alert*" it doesn't last. Let's continue beginning with verse 10.

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. ¹¹ The 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. ²⁰ “Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle.

Here we are told about this next king from the North named *Antiochus III* – who was also known as *Antiochus the Great*. He assumed the throne in 223 B.C., after his brother was killed, and like those before him, he had a goal of uniting the

kingdoms of the North and the South. He built a mighty army of soldiers, and cavalry, and war elephants and engaged the Egyptians, whose army was very similar, and on Israel's soil, the Egyptians won the battle this time.

For some fifteen years, it went back and forth between these two kingdoms, but eventually, with the help of mercenaries – to include some Jews, Antiochus the Great eventually gets the upper hand over the Egyptians, and he gains control of Israel.

With the upper hand, Antiochus the Great forced terms of peace on Egypt, and **so what does he do?** Look up at **verse 17** again. We are told,

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.

In 192 B.C., to seal the peace deal, Antiochus the Great gives his daughter *Cleopatra* to the young king of the South named *Ptolemy V*. Now, this Cleopatra is not the same one in the movie – this is the first of many Cleopatras. Anyway, these two kids are forced into marriage and here's the kicker – they actually fall in love. Antiochus the Great had hoped his daughter Cleopatra would become a spy for him and influence her young king, *but just as prophesied* – she changes sides, she betrays her dad, and she becomes a supporter of Egypt.

Well, that angers dear old dad, so Antiochus the Great goes on a rampage. He heads towards the **coastlands** of the Mediterranean, and there he is confronted by the new bully on the block – the Romans. Antiochus the Great is defeated, and on top of that, the Romans demand tribute. Antiochus the Great goes back to his own land and as he sought to pillage the temple of Jupiter for tribute, he's killed by an angry mob, and just as **verse 19** reads, **“he will stumble and fall and be seen no more.”**

Antiochus the Great was killed and forgotten, and later, after a lot of intrigue and some murderous in-fighting – in 175 B.C, another takes the throne in the North. Let's continue beginning with **verse 21**.

²¹ In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. ²² The overflowing forces will be flooded away before

him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant. ²³ After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people. ²⁴ In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time. ²⁵ He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. ²⁶ Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. ²⁷ As for both kings, their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time. ²⁸ Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant, and he will take action and then return to his own land.

Antiochus IV seized the throne in the North. This is the king who called himself *Epiphanes* – claiming to be a revelation of God, and if you recall, he is the prototype of the Antichrist still yet to come. Epiphanes plotted his way into power, and when he became king, he robbed people of their riches, and he launched a campaign against Egypt and eventually wins by brute force, and more so it seems through deceptive schemes he devises to undermine the Egyptians.

Eventually, the kings of the North and the South come to the table to discuss peace, but it's a ruse by both of them. In 170 B.C., Epiphanes returns to his own land with riches from Egypt, and in Israel he finds a Jewish rebellion in progress. His heart is set against the Jews, and he kills thousands, murders the high priest *Onias* – identified here as the **prince of the covenant**, and he loots the temple.

So, there's no peace in Israel. There is some semblance of peace between the North and the South, but Epiphanes is only buying time, for he still plans to conquer Egypt and that brings us to **verse 29**.

²⁹ “At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. ³⁰ For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹ Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. ³² By smooth words he will turn

to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. ³³ Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. ³⁴ Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. ³⁵ Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.

Two years later, Epiphanes invades Egypt again, but on this occasion, the Egyptians had help from the Romans. General *Gaius Popillius Laenas* arrived with a Roman legion in ships referred to here as the “**ships of Kittim**” and he presents Epiphanes with a letter from the Roman Senate which read *either you return to your own land and keep the peace, or you will face the might of Rome*.

Well, Epiphanes *man’s up* and tells the Roman general he wants to think about it, so as he is standing there, the Roman general draws a circle around him in the sand and said take as long as you want, but don’t step outside the circle until you make up your mind or else. Epiphanes gives in and agrees to turn back and keep the peace, but on his return, in his humiliation, he vents his fury on the Jews.

Again, he slaughters thousands of Jews, and under the penalty of death, he prohibits observing the Sabbath, he puts a stop to Scripture reading, he outlaws circumcision, he declares dietary restrictions invalid, and then the worst – he sets up an idol to Jupiter in the middle of the temple of Jerusalem and sacrifices a pig on the altar – sprinkling the pig’s blood all over the sanctuary. It was such a horrific act that **regular sacrifices** were stopped and the temple was left desolate. According to the angel, some of the Jews would give into the pressure and compromise their faith, but for the **people who know their God** – at a heavy cost, a revival and a revolt would break out, and liberation would come.

There are 135 prophecies in this chapter that have been fulfilled and historically confirmed, and they are given with such detail and accuracy that Bible critics claim this must have been written *after the fact* by someone else. That’s the only way critics can explain away this chapter. They hate this chapter – but I love this chapter because we know that what happened occurred exactly as God said it would happen hundreds of years in advance, and therefore, we can be assured – without any doubt, that the fulfillment of prophecy still yet to come will be just as accurate because God **appointed** it so.

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