

## **WORLD HISTORY FROM DARIUS TO THE ANTICHRIST, Part 1**

### **TEXT: DANIEL 11:1-5**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Daniel 10 is an introduction to the final vision given to Daniel in chapters 11 and 12.
2. This prophecy beginning here in chapter 11 contains many important events beginning with Darius the Mede (539 BC) and extending to the future reign of the antichrist (11:1, 36-45).
3. The first part of Daniel 11, verses 1 through 20, describe the Persian and Greek world, and especially the wars between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, between Egypt and Syria, as well as the nation Israel that was caught in between those warring kingdoms.
4. In fact, it should be noted that all Bible prophecy deals with individuals and nations that interact with Israel.
5. For example, Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to many times in the prophecies of Daniel. But Antiochus Epiphanes was not a major personage in world history.
6. Why then does this obscure Syrian dictator occupy so large a space in Bible prophecy? The answer is plain and simple. The reason for the detailed picture of Antiochus Epiphanes is because he persecuted Israel, God's chosen people, and because he is picture and type of the coming antichrist.
7. Bible prophecy deals with individuals and nations that interact with Israel. For example, China is not mentioned in the Old Testament because there was no conflicts between China and Israel.
8. However, Isaiah 49:12 does seem to refer to China -- "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim."
9. By the way, China is referred to in the book of Revelation. In Revelation 16:12 there is a prophecy about "the kings of the east" crossing the great river Euphrates on their way to the battle of Armageddon.
10. The first section of Daniel 11 gives us important details of some of the major events of the Grecian empire following Alexander the Great, concluding with Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC).
11. Daniel 11:21-35 is another prophecy of Antiochus Epiphanes (cf. 8:9-12), who is a prototype of the ultimate, final great dictator of the world, the antichrist.

12. Like we saw in our study of Daniel 8, as the prophecy continues, the picture of Antiochus Epiphanes fades into a portrayal of the antichrist.
13. The period from the death of Antiochus Epiphanes to the time of the end is skipped over with no reference to events of the present church age.
14. The church age is not mentioned by any of the Old Testament prophets. They saw the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ, but like a man seeing two great mountain peaks from faraway, did not see the valley in between.
15. The church age (dispensation of grace) is like that "valley."
16. The final section of Daniel 11 (vss. 36-45) deals with the antichrist, the Satan-controlled dictator who will be in power at the second coming of Christ.
17. Verses 36 through 45 predict the destruction and doom of the antichrist, which coincides with the end of history and what is generally referred to as "the end of the world."

## **I. THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE PROPHECY**

1. John Walvoord said, "Probably no other portion of Scripture presents more minute prophecy than Daniel 11:1-35, and this has prompted the sharpest attack of critics seeking to discredit this prophetic portion" (*Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation*).
2. The Bible teaches us that God is able to foresee and foreknow and foretell the future. Prophecy is often defined as "history prewritten" and that is exactly what we have in the book of Daniel.
3. This is why the book of Daniel has been viciously attacked by unbelieving scholars. But our Lord set His approval on the prophecies of Daniel, when He said in Matthew 24:15, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet..."
4. If God is able to foretell coming events and bring them to pass, it is positive proof of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. But unbelieving, unregenerate, unsaved liberal critics do not believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. They are spiritually blind.
5. Bible prophecy should serve to encourage God's people regarding God's faithfulness in fulfilling and performing His Word; and it should serve as a warning to all those who reject the Bible and walk in unbelief.
6. The Bible is a story of the redemptive purpose and plan of God through the nation Israel. Therefore, Bible prophecy centers around Israel.

7. All of the whole Old Testament prophecies center around Israel, and when we come to the New Testament, we see the same emphasis.
8. The battle of Armageddon will be in Israel. Christ will return to Israel, etc.
9. Despite what some confused people say, God is not finished with Israel, and God is not finished with the Jewish people.
10. W.A. Criswell said, "If you want to know what time it is on God's clock, look at the Jew."
11. One Sunday morning, Pastor Criswell finished preaching a prophetic message from the book of Daniel, and a man approached him, and wanted to talk to him.
12. The man was a Muslim from the Middle East, and he had visited the FBC of Dallas and he listened to the preaching. And he asked Pastor Criswell, "Are you a Jew?"
13. Dr. Criswell said "No, I am not a Jew."
14. "Well," the man said, "I listened to you preach this morning, and from what I heard, I thought you must be a Jew."
15. He thought W.A. Criswell was a Jew because he heard him preach a message from the book of Daniel, and the prophecies in the book of Daniel concern the Jewish people (cf. Daniel 12:1).
16. And they concern the Gentile nations only insofar as these Gentile nations interact with the Jewish people. Two of these Gentile nations are very prominent in the book of Daniel -- Persia and Greece.

## **II. PERSIA AND GREECE (11:2-4)**

1. The historical outline provided here in the opening verses of chapter 11 fixes the prophecy as dealing with a period later than Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2, and in Daniel's vision of the four beasts in chapter 7.
2. These prophecies in chapter 11 coincide with the prophecy of chapter 8 of the ram (Media-Persia) and the goat (Greece).
3. Daniel 11 has been described as an "amplification in detail" of the prophecies of Daniel 8 (N. W. Porteous).
4. John Walvoord said, "Like Macbeth in the witches' cave, Daniel is supposedly permitted to see king after king appearing on the stage of history, strutting out his part and making way for his successor" (*Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation*).
5. Daniel 11:2 describes the breast and arms of silver from King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:32) -- Persia.

6. The three kings were Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes, and Darius Hystaspes (referred to in Ezra 5 & 6 as "Darius the king").
7. All three of these kings are referred to in Ezra 4:6-24.
8. The fourth king -- the rich one (11:2) -- is Xerxes, referred to in Ezra 4:6 and in the book of Esther as "Ahasuerus."
9. This fourth king Xerxes was very rich (11:2). Daniel 11:2 predicts that it is this fourth ruler that contends against Greece.
10. According to secular history, Xerxes ("Ahasuerus") used his great riches to gather a huge army amounting to hundreds of thousands, one of the largest armies in the ancient world.
11. Lehman Strauss said he "spent four years gathering together and training more than two million men from every part of his empire" (*Daniel*).
12. Xerxes attacked Greece in 480 BC. However, his expedition proved disastrous, and Xerxes never recovered.
13. The King Ahasuerus in the book of Esther is King Xerxes. John Walvoord said, "Details on the Persian Empire are not given here because these are covered adequately in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, insofar as they related to the people of Israel and the plan of God, and these records are supplemented by the prophetic books Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The revelation turns immediately to details of the third empire not given elsewhere in the Word of God" (*Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation*).
14. The attack on Greece by King Xerxes and the Persian army incurred the wrath of Greece, especially Alexander the Great, referred to in Daniel 11:3 as "a mighty king" (cf. 8:5-8, 20-22).
15. Greece is represented by the belly and thighs of brass in King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:32).
16. In Daniel's vision in chapter 7, Media-Persia is pictured as a ferocious beast, like to a bear, with three ribs in his mouth (7:5).
17. In Daniel's vision in chapter 7, Greece is pictured as a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl (7:6), signifying the great speed of Alexander the Great and his army.
18. Daniel 7:6 says, "the beast had also four heads" (cf. 11:4).
19. Daniel 8:8 and 8:22 predict that Alexander the Great would die prematurely. The expression in Daniel 11:4, "when he shall stand up," means "while he was still ascending in power."

20. Alexander the Great died a drunkard, not quite 33 years old. "His kingdom shall be broken" (11:4) reminds us of the brief duration of his reign.
21. The angel told Daniel that Alexander's kingdom would be broken and "divided toward the four winds of heaven" (11:4; cf. 8:8, 22). These are the "four heads" of Daniel's vision in 7:6.
22. This was literally fulfilled when Alexander died. His kingdom was shattered after his death. It was divided to the four winds, and divided among his four generals, the "four heads."
23. Alexander's empire was not given to his posterity (11:4). Both of Alexander's sons were murdered before they reached adulthood.
24. The empire of Alexander the Great, after it fell into the hands of his four generals, did not preserve the glory and power it had in Alexander's day.
25. The strong central rule which had characterized the Grecian Empire ended with the death of Alexander the Great. This prophecy was written about 539 B.C., and was fulfilled when Alexander died in 323 B.C., over 200 years later.

### **III. THE KING OF THE SOUTH AND THE KING OF THE NORTH**

1. From Daniel 11, verse 5 to verse 35 we have a detailed prophecy of some of the conflicts between Egypt (the king of the south) and Syria (the king of the north).
2. In verse 8, the king of the south is identified as Egypt. After the death of Alexander, we are told of a long struggle between the various kings of the south (Egypt) and the kings of the north (Syria).
3. The rulers of Egypt and Syria are called "king of the south" and "king of the north" because of their geographical location from Palestine.
4. In the Bible, Israel is considered the center of the earth geographically. Bible prophecy centers around Israel.
5. Israel is also the center of the earth spiritually, and Jerusalem is the city chosen of God as the place where He would reveal His power and His glory.
6. Therefore, the city of Jerusalem and the land of Palestine are central in God's plans and purposes both for the present and future.

7. Psalm 48:2 says, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."
8. During the millennial kingdom, "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3).
9. Psalm 122:6 says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."
10. Daniel traces the struggle between Egypt and Syria up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC), a period of about 150 years.
11. Verse 6 carries us forward in secular history to about 250 BC. It describes how an effort was made between the king of the south and the king of the north to make peace with each other.
12. The alliance between them was effected by the marriage of the daughter of the king of the south to the king of the north.
13. It was a wicked scheme and it ended in failure. Lord willing, we will pick up at this point next week.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. In the book of Daniel, we have been able to see how God made these incredible prophecies known to Daniel, and how they have come to pass and were literally fulfilled as confirmed by both sacred and secular history.
2. Fulfilled prophecy is the strongest possible argument to prove that the Scriptures were divinely inspired and that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.
3. We may rest assured, therefore, that if these things were prophesied and came to pass and are now a matter of history, the other things which are prophesied in the Bible concerning the present and the future will also come to pass and will be just as literally fulfilled.
4. The Lord is coming back! Therefore, those of us who believe the Word of God should be encouraged by these things.
5. On the other hand, those who are in spiritual darkness, and who walk in sin, should be warned by them (cf. 12:2).