

Daniel

Chapter 11

The Kings of the South and the North

“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.

Ch 11 Luth: “Daniel prophesies to his people, the Jews [Judeans]—almost exactly as he does in the eighth chapter—concerning Alexander the Great and the two kingdoms, Syria and Egypt, chiefly on account of Antiochus (called the Noble) who is to plague the Jews. But he describes Antiochus in such a way that his words ultimately tend under the figure of Antiochus to portray the very Antichrist. And so Daniel is actually referring here to these last times of ours just before the Last Day. For all teachers are unanimously agreed that these prophecies about Antiochus point to the Antichrist” (AE 35:306). (TLSB)

11:1 *confirm and strengthen.* The messenger had helped Michael during the reign of Darius. (TLSB)

The divine man then goes on to tell Daniel that he “stood up to strengthen and protect” Michael in his battle already in “the first year of Darius the Mede” (11:1). This is a direct reference to 5:31 and the fall of Babylon, which was conquered by Darius/Cyrus. The heavenly war with the prince of Persia began at

that time. As soon as God moved Darius/Cyrus to fulfill his gracious promise to return his people to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, the devil and his angels began a war to impede God's plan. The heavenly war had been raging for almost three years at the time Daniel received this final vision. (CC)

11:2 *Three more kings.* Cambyses (530–522 B.C.), Pseudo-Smerdis or Gaumata (522) and Darius I (522–486). (CSB)

fourth. Xerxes I (486–465), who attempted to conquer Greece in 480. (CSB)

The fourth king was Xerxes (486–465), who by all accounts was very rich. He is called Ahasuerus in the book of Esther. The prophecy given Daniel states that Xerxes “will awaken everyone, [especially] the kingdom of Greece” (11:2), which is a reference to him arousing and enlisting people from all parts of his vast kingdom to join his army and invade Greece. However, Xerxes was unable to conquer Greece because the various Greek city-states managed to forge an effective coalition and repel his attacks. It has sometimes been noted that there was no “kingdom of Greece” in Xerxes’ day. However, the point of the revelation is that Xerxes will “awaken ... [especially] the kingdom of Greece.” That is, his invasion caused the Greeks to realize that they could be a unified force. This eventually led to a united Greece under Philip of Macedon, whose son was Alexander the Great, whose conquests made Greece a world empire. (CC)

11:3 *mighty king.* Alexander the Great (336–323). (CSB)

Alexander the Great invaded and conquered lands from modern Turkey to India and ruled the largest empire of the ancient world. (TLSB)

11:4 *four winds.* The demise of Alexander’s kingdom was also swift. He began his conquests in 334 BC and died in 323 BC at the age of thirty-two. The fourfold division of his kingdom matches the description of it in 7:6 and 8:8, 22. “The four winds of heaven” (11:4) signify the four cardinal compass points. Although the four parts into which the Greek Empire was divided did not exactly correspond to the compass points, that is not the intent of the text here. Instead, it emphasizes the breakup of the kingdom into four parts. However, the use of “the four winds” will enable two of the kingdoms resulting from this split to be referred to as “north” and “south.” These two were in fact geographically northern and southern (in Syria-Mesopotamia and in Egypt, respectively) in relation to each other. (CC)

nor to the authority – The last part of 11:4 makes two points. First, the kingdoms that succeed Alexander’s will not be as vast as his. Second, his descendants will not rule. Alexander’s deranged half-brother Philip Arrhidaeus and Alexander’s infant son Alexander IV were nominal rulers of his kingdom after his death, but they wielded no real power. Both were eventually murdered. Alexander’s generals fought over the kingdom and eventually split it into four parts: (1) Greece and Macedon, ruled by Antigonos and, later, Cassander; (2) Thrace and Asia Minor, ruled by Lysimachus; (3) Syria and Mesopotamia, ruled by Seleucus I Nicator; and (4) Egypt and Palestine, ruled by Ptolemy I Soter. (CC)

11:5 *king of the South.* Ptolemy I Soter (323–285 B.C.) of Egypt. (CSB)

Ptolemy I, ruler of Egypt. (TLSB)

one of his commanders. Seleucus I Nicator (311–280). (CSB)

one of his princes. Seleucus I, who established his kingdom in Syria. (TLSB)

Initially Babylonia, to which he then added extensive territories both east and west. (CSB)

Shortly after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, Ptolemy I was made satrap of Egypt and later took the title “king.” In 11:5 he is called “the king of the south.” In 321 BC, Seleucus I was designated the satrap of Babylon. But when attacked by Antigonus in 316 BC, Seleucus fled to Egypt, where Ptolemy made him one of his generals. In 312 Ptolemy and Seleucus defeated Antigonus at Gaza. Seleucus returned to Babylon and later took the title “king.” After Antigonus was killed in battle at Ipsus in 301, Seleucus gradually took control of Antigonus’ territory, which he expanded into a greater kingdom than Ptolemy’s. (CC)

11:6 *daughter of the king of the South.* Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 B.C.) of Egypt. (CSB)

Ptolemy II of Egypt gave his daughter Berenice in marriage to Antiochus II, ruler in Syria, who divorced his first wife, Laodice. (TLSB)

king of the North. Antiochus II Theos (261–246) of Syria. (CSB)

agreement. A treaty cemented by the marriage of Berenice to Antiochus. (CSB)

she will not retain the strength of her arm. Antiochus’s former wife, Laodice, conspired to have Berenice and Antiochus put to death. (CSB)

Laodice regained power and killed Berenice regained power and killed Berenice.(TLSB)

he who supported her. Antiochus II, who was also killed. (TLSB)

fathered her. Berenice’s father Ptolemy died at about the same time. (CSB)

Succeeding Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings fought each other in attempts to expand and defend their kingdoms. About 250 BC, Ptolemy II agreed to a peace treaty with Antiochus II. Part of the treaty involved a marriage alliance: Berenice, Ptolemy’s daughter, married Antiochus, who thereby was forced to leave his first wife, Laodice. Berenice’s offspring was to become the next Seleucid ruler. However, in 246 BC, Antiochus took back Laodice, but died shortly thereafter, allegedly poisoned by Laodice. She also arranged for the murder of Berenice and her child to insure her son’s succession to the throne as Seleucus II. Many of Berenice’s attendants who came from Egypt also perished, and her father died that same year. This is all accurately predicted by 11:6: “She [Berenice] will be given up—she, those who brought her [her attendants], the one who fathered her [Ptolemy II], and the one who strengthened/supported her during the times [Antiochus II].” Since the Hiphil (H) of בָּרָא usually means “to bring,” the Hiphil participle בָּרָאֵיהָ literally means “those who brought her” (BKJV) but some translations render it as “her attendants” (RSV, ESV) or “her royal escort” (NIV) to link the wording of the prediction more closely to its fulfillment. (CC)

11:7 *from a branch from her roots.* Berenice’s brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 B.C.) of Egypt, who did away with Laodice. (CSB)

King of the North. Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226 B.C.) of Syria. (CSB)

his fortress. Either (1) Seleucia (see Ac 13:4), which was the port of Antioch, or (2) Antioch itself. (CSB)

Berenice’s brother Ptolemy III succeeded their father, Ptolemy II. To retaliate for the murder of his sister Berenice, Ptolemy III invaded Syria, captured the Syrian capital of Antioch, and campaigned far to the

east (11:7). He captured Laodice and executed her. Ptolemy captured many spoils of war, including the idols that the Persian king Cambyses had carried off from Egypt to Persia in 525 BC. (CC)

11:8 *their gods*. Images of Syrian deities, and also of Egyptian gods that the Persian Cambyses had carried off after conquering Egypt in 525 B.C. (CSB)

carry off to Egypt. Ptolemy III plundered Syria, a sign of his superior power. (TLSB)

Thus he took “captive to Egypt their gods” (11:8). The mention of Egypt as the destination of the spoils identifies the king of the south as a Ptolemaic king. The Egyptians gave Ptolemy the name Euergetes, “benefactor,” because he returned their idols. However, Ptolemy was unable to solidify his control over Seleucid territory because he had to return to Egypt to deal with a rebellion. Therefore, Seleucus II was able to reestablish his authority. (CC)

11:9 *will retreat* – Two years later, in 242 BC, Seleucus attempted to invade Egypt, but was unsuccessful (11:9). (CC)

11:10–13 Seleucus II was succeeded by his sons, Seleucus III and Antiochus III. A large part of Israel was captured. In response, Ptolemy IV of Egypt went to war against Antiochus III. After Antiochus lost 7,000 men in a battle at Raphia in 217 BC, he raised an even larger army to invade the Ptolemaic Kingdom. (TLSB)

11:10 *His sons*. Seleucus III Ceraunus (226–223 B.C.) and Antiochus III (the Great) (223–187), sons of Seleucus II. (CSB)

his fortress. Ptolemy’s fortress at Raphia in southern Palestine. (CSB)

Seleucus II was succeeded by his son Seleucus III, who reigned only three years before being murdered during a military campaign in 223 BC. He was succeeded by his brother Antiochus III, who became known as “the Great” because of his military success. At first he had to suppress rebellions in Media and Asia Minor. When the weak Ptolemy IV became the southern king in 221, Antiochus saw an opportunity to regain territory in Syria that his father had lost to the southern kingdom. In 219–218, Antiochus campaigned in Syria and Palestine. Palestine had been under the control of Egypt until this time. This is probably what is meant that Antiochus was “stirred up as far as his [the king of the south’s] fortress” (cf. “the temple fortress” in 11:31). (CC)

11:11 *king of the South*. Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–203 B.C.) of Egypt. (CSB)

king of the North. Antiochus III. (CSB)

given into his hand. At Raphia in 217. (CSB)

In 217 BC, in response to Antiochus’ military actions, Ptolemy launched a counterattack. The decisive battle was fought at Raphia in Palestine. Polybius reports that the Egyptian forces numbered “seventy thousand infantry, five thousand cavalry, and seventy-three elephants” while the Syrians had “sixty-two thousand infantry, six thousand cavalry, and one hundred and two elephants.” Despite the “great army” (11:11) raised by Antiochus, he was soundly defeated, losing seventeen thousand troops as opposed to Ptolemy’s loss of twenty-two hundred troops. Thus “he [the king of the north] will raise up a great army, but the army will be given into his [the king of the south’s] hand” (11:11). Ptolemy regained Palestine and southern Syria, but did not press his advantage. (CC)

11:12 *cast down tens of thousands.* The historian Polybius records that Antiochus lost nearly 10,000 infantrymen at Raphia. (CSB)

Ptolemy returned to Egypt where he “abandoned all noble pursuits and gave himself up to the life of debauchery,” fulfilling the prophecy that “his heart will become arrogant” (11:12). (CC)

11:13 *king of the north* – Antiochus campaigned in the eastern part of his empire from 212 to 205 BC. Then in 204, Ptolemy IV and his queen died under mysterious circumstances. Sensing an opportunity to wrest territory away from the young Ptolemy V, who was only five years old, Antiochus attacked Egypt and took back southern Syria. The Egyptian general Scopas managed to drive Antiochus back for awhile. However, in a decisive battle at Paneas (called Caesarea Philippi in the NT) in 200, Antiochus gained control of southern Syria and Palestine. Neither would again come under Ptolemaic control. (CC)

11:14 Judean men would join the fight against Egypt. (TLSB)

king of the South. Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203–181 B.C.) of Egypt. (CSB)

violent men among your own people. Jews who joined the forces of Antiochus. (CSB)

they shall fail. The Ptolemaic general Scopas crushed the rebellion in 200. (CSB)

During the last years of Ptolemy IV and the early years of Ptolemy V, many provinces of the Egyptian kingdom rebelled or otherwise asserted a measure of independence (11:14). However, commentators disagree about which exact circumstances are described by the “violent men” who “lift themselves up to fulfill [this] vision.” It is known that during this time there were pro-Ptolemaic and pro-Seleucid parties among the elite Jews in Jerusalem. Perhaps the “violent men” are one or both of these parties as they vied for power during this time of transition. “They will stumble” may refer either to the conquest of Jerusalem by Antiochus, which would have brought punishment against the pro-Ptolemaic party of Jews, or to the previous subduing of the Jewish nation by Scopas, who may have punished the pro-Seleucid party. The “vision” to which 11:14 refers is this part of the last vision of Daniel (chapters 10–12). (CC)

11:15 *fortified city.* The Mediterranean port of Sidon. (CSB)

After being defeated at Paneas, Scopas retreated to the city of Sidon, where Antiochus besieged him and forced his surrender in 198 BC (11:15). The phrase “his best troops” probably refers to Scopas’ Aeolian mercenaries. “There will be no strength to stand” may refer to the famine caused by the siege; the famine forced Scopas to surrender. (CC)

11:16 *he who comes against.* Antiochus, who was in control of Palestine by 197 B.C. (CSB)

shall do as he wills – Antiochus, like Alexander (11:3), “will do as he pleases” (11:16) since he is now in complete control, having bested his enemies. This arrogance would lead to his downfall. His victory over Scopas led to permanent Seleucid control of all of Palestine, “the beautiful land” (11:16). He also seized coastal areas in Asia Minor and some of the Greek islands. (CC)

11:17 *he shall give him the daughter.* Antiochus gave his daughter Cleopatra I in marriage to Ptolemy V in 194 B.C. (CSB)

Antiochus III gave his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V, hoping she would influence Egyptian policy in favor of Syria. But she was loyal to her husband and Egypt. (TLSB)

Since Rome's power was beginning to assert itself from the west, Antiochus did not invade Egypt. Instead, he entered into a marriage alliance by giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V as his wife. Apparently, he hoped she would undermine Ptolemy's realm from within; thus "he will give him a daughter of men to destroy it [the southern kingdom]" (11:17). However, Cleopatra became steadfastly loyal to her husband, so that Antiochus' scheme was thwarted; thus "it [his plan] will not stand or be to his advantage" (11:17). (CC)

11:18 *he*. Antiochus. (CSB)

coastlands. Asia Minor and perhaps also mainland Greece. (CSB)

commander. The Roman consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, who defeated Antiochus at Magnesia in Asia Minor in 190 B.C. (CSB)

Antiochus turned to campaign in the west, taking islands in the Aegean and campaigning in Thrace in 196 BC, fulfilling 11:18. Rome warned him not to attack Greece itself, but Antiochus did not listen and did as he pleased, invading Greece in 192 BC. The Romans and their Greek allies defeated him at Thermopylae in 191. The Romans then drove him eastward and defeated him soundly at the Battle of Magnesia in 190. By this act, the Roman commander Lucius Cornelius Scipio fulfilled "a commander will put an end to his insolence. Moreover, he will repay him for his insolence" (11:18). In 188 BC, Antiochus was forced to accept the Treaty of Apamea in which he became a Roman vassal and was forced to send twenty hostages, including his son Antiochus IV, to Rome. (CC)

11:19 *stumble and fall*. Antiochus died in 187 B.C. while attempting to plunder a temple in the province of Elymais. (CSB)

Having no options to campaign in the west, he turned eastward to Syria, Mesopotamia, and beyond (11:19). In 187, desperate for funds to pay his tribute to Rome, he attempted to pillage the temple of Zeus/Bel in Elymais. The local population rose up in indignation to defend the sanctuary, killing Antiochus and many of his followers. (CC)

11:20 *then shall arise in his place*. Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175 B.C.), son and successor of Antiochus the Great. (CSB)

exacter of tribute. Seleucus's finance minister, Heliodorus. (CSB)

Seleucus IV succeeded his father and sent Heliodorus to seize the temple treasury in Jerusalem. Cf 2Macc 3:7–40. (TLSB)

he shall be broken. Seleucus was the victim of a conspiracy engineered by Heliodorus. (CSB)

Antiochus III was followed on the throne by his son Seleucus IV. In order to secure more funds to pay the obligation to Rome inherited from his father, Seleucus IV sent his finance minister, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem in order to seize the wealth of the temple treasury. Thus Heliodorus is the "exacter of tribute" (11:20). 2 Maccabees 3 reports that Heliodorus was turned back by an attack of God's angelic forces. Seleucus IV's inconsequential reign ended in 175. He did not die in an angry attack of the populace, as had his father, nor in battle (11:20). Instead, he was poisoned by Heliodorus, who may have been in league with Seleucus IV's brother, Antiochus IV. Antiochus IV was returning to Syria from Rome when his brother was killed. (CC)

11:21 *contemptible person*. Seleucus's younger brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.). (CSB)

The “contemptible person” (11:21) who took the place of Seleucus IV was his brother Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Antiochus had been a prisoner in Rome as required by the terms of the Treaty of Apamea. However, in late 176 or early 175, he was released in exchange for Seleucus IV’s elder son Demetrius. Antiochus IV was in Athens when his brother was murdered. With the assistance of Eumenes II of Pergamum, he acquired an army and marched eastward to Babylon. After the death of Seleucus IV, Heliodorus had briefly seized the throne even though Demetrius was the rightful heir. When Antiochus IV and his army arrived, Heliodorus fled. Antiochus took the throne, ostensibly as regent in place of his nephew Demetrius, and with his younger nephew Antiochus (an infant) as coregent. (The younger nephew was murdered in 170.) Thus “the majesty of the kingdom” was not rightfully conferred on Antiochus IV. Instead, he seized the throne “through intrigue” (11:21). (CC)

contemptible person. Antiochus seized power while the rightful heir to the throne, the son of Seleucus (later to become Demetrius I), was still very young. (CSB)

kingdom. Syro-Palestine. (CSB)

11:22 *prince of the covenant.* Either the high priest Onias III, who was murdered in 170 B.C., or, if the Hebrew for this phrase is translated “confederate prince,” Ptolemy VI Philometor (181–146) of Egypt. (CSB)

“A leader of a covenant” (11:22) refers to the Jewish high priest, the liturgical leader of God’s covenant people. However, the text leaves ambiguous which high priest is being described. The one who is “broken” in 11:22 is usually understood to be the high priest Onias III. Antiochus III had confirmed the Jewish right to internal self-government according to traditional Jewish laws. This meant that the high priest was the local ruler in Jerusalem. Antiochus IV, however, was at odds with Onias III because this high priest was opposed to the growing influence of Hellenism in Palestine. Soon after Antiochus IV took the throne, Onias’ brother Jason offered to Antiochus IV a large bribe along with the promise that he would pursue the Hellenization of Jerusalem. Antiochus accepted Jason’s offer, deposed Onias, and named Jason to be the high priest (2 Macc 4:7–10). In 172 BC, Menelaus, who was not from the traditional high-priestly family, offered Antiochus IV an even larger bribe and was made high priest instead of Jason (2 Macc 4:23–26). When Onias learned that Menelaus had stolen some of the gold vessels from the temple, he made a public protest (2 Macc 4:32–33). Then Onias took refuge in the sanctuary at Daphne near Antioch, but he was lured out of the sanctuary and murdered (2 Macc 4:34). Dan 11:22b–23 may refer to this incident. (CC)

11:23 *he.* Antiochus. (CSB)

small people. Only a small number of people supported Antiochus IV at first. (TLSB)

Thus “an alliance is made with him” (11:23) probably refers to either Jason or Menelaus (or both) making an agreement with Antiochus IV. “He will act deceitfully” (11:23) refers to Antiochus, whose treachery was evident in his dealings with three high priests: he deposed Onias, then deposed Jason, and wrongfully installed Menelaus. Then 11:23b–24 goes on to describe further outrages by Antiochus, who “will rise up and become powerful with a small nation.” The “small nation” consists of those Jewish people in Jerusalem and Judea who apostatized from God and the true faith, and aided and abetted Antiochus. (CC)

11:24 *richest parts of the province.* Either of Palestine or of Egypt. (CSB)

strongholds. In Egypt. (CSB)

Antiochus also devised “plans against strongholds, but [only] until a time” (11:24), which is probably a reference to his campaigns against Egypt, which are treated in more detail in the text that follows. (CC)

11:25 *king of the South.* Ptolemy VI. (CSB)

Ptolemy VI was taken prisoner when Antiochus IV occupied Egypt. (TLSB)

11:26 *his army.* That of Ptolemy. (CSB)

those who eat his food. Ptolemy’s advisers Eulaeus and Linaeus foolishly counseled him to attack Antiochus. (TLSB)

Antiochus undertook his first campaign against Egypt in 169 BC, probably provoked by aggression on the part of Ptolemy VI. While Ptolemy was a youth, his mother, Cleopatra, who was also Antiochus’ sister, acted as regent. When she died, Ptolemy came under the influence of two advisors, Eulaeus and Linaeus. They gave him bad advice and encouraged him to attempt to wrest Palestine back from Seleucid power. Antiochus learned of the plan and prepared for battle at Pelusium on the Egyptian border. Ptolemy was captured as he attempted to flee, following the advice of his courtiers. Thus Ptolemy was not able to succeed, since word of his plans was leaked to his opponent. Counterplots were “plotted against him,” and in Antiochus’ victory over him “many slain people” fell (11:25–26). (CC)

11:27 *two kings.* Antiochus and Ptolemy, who was living in Antiochus’s custody. (CSB)

Speak lies at the same table. Both kings were committed to serving their own interests. (TLSB)

Time appointed. The Lord controls the time when evil will be defeated. (TLSB)

Antiochus now controlled most of Egypt, except Alexandria, where the leaders declared Ptolemy’s younger brother Ptolemy VII to be king. Under the guise of support for Ptolemy VI’s rightful claim to the throne, Antiochus made an alliance with him, setting Ptolemy VI up as king in Memphis. Yet neither of these “two kings,” Ptolemy and Antiochus, intended to observe the terms of the treaty they made “at one table” (11:27). Each was using the other in an attempt to enhance his own control over Egypt. The alliance between Ptolemy VI and Antiochus unraveled when Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VII were reconciled through the efforts of their sister Cleopatra II, and they became joint rulers of Egypt. Thus the “lie” between Ptolemy and Antiochus did “not succeed” (11:27). (CC)

11:28 *against the holy covenant.* In 169 B.C. Antiochus plundered the temple in Jerusalem, set up a garrison there and massacred many Jews in the city. (CSB)

Antiochus would enact laws and take actions opposing God’s holy will. (TLSB)

Antiochus was unable to capture Alexandria, so he stationed a garrison at Pelusium and returned to Syria (11:28). On his way, he stopped at Jerusalem, sacked the temple, and seized its valuables. (CC)

11:29 Second campaign of Antiochus against Egypt. (TLSB)

11:30 *Ships of Kittim.* Roman vessels under the command of Popilius Laenas. (CSB)

Kittim. Originally referred to the island of Cyprus but came to mean generally the coastlands of the Great Sea. A Roman fleet came to Egypt and ordered Antiochus not to attack. (TLSB)

God's "appointed time" for the "end" (11:27) of Antiochus' campaigns against Egypt came in 168 BC with Antiochus' second invasion of Egypt. This invasion was not successful because of the intervention of a Roman fleet ("ships from Kittim," 11:30), a hint of the fourth kingdom that will dominate the world. As Antiochus moved to attack Alexandria, a Roman delegation arrived in response to Egypt's request for help. (CC)

The phrase "ships from Kittim" (11:30) is a deliberate reference to Balaam's prophecy in Numbers 24. The phrasing is similar, and these are two of only four OT passages with this particular rare Hebrew noun (סִפִּי) for "ship" (see the first textual note on 11:30). These are the only two passages in the Scriptures to connect "ships" with "Kittim": (CC)

- וַיָּבֹאוּ בָּוֹצְיִים מִכִּיִּתִּים, "ships from Kittim will come against him" (Dan 11:30).
- וַיָּצֵי־מִן־מִנְדַּי כִּיִּתִּים, "ships [will come] from beside Kittim" (Num 24:24).

Balaam's prophecy concerns a star rising out of Jacob and a scepter rising out of Israel (Num 24:17), a vision of the Messiah. In this prophecy uttered in 1407 BC, before mentioning the ships that will come from Kittim, Balaam asks the question "Who will be alive when God does this?" (Num 24:23), implying that from his standpoint it is in the distant future. Num 24:24 itself predicts that the ships from Kittim will afflict Assyria, a chief enemy of Israel during the first half of the first millennium BC, and the Kittim will also afflict the Hebrew people themselves, but the Kittim people will eventually be destroyed. By including the arrival of ships from Kittim, the divine man speaking to Daniel is hinting that the demise of the Greek domination of the Near East will be near its end when Antiochus IV reigns. He is also implying that the Messiah foreseen by Balaam will come shortly thereafter (in the era of the Kittim, the Roman era). This is the only hint of the Messiah in Daniel 11. (CC)

take action against the holy covenant. Apostate Jews (see also v. 32). (CSB)

11:31 Antiochus made every effort to obliterate the religion of God's people and introduce pagan practices. (TLSB)

abomination that causes desolation.† See 9:27; 12:11; an altar to the pagan god Zeus Olympius was set up in 168 B.C. by Antiochus Epiphanes. (CSB)

A "desolating sacrilege" was erected in the temple on the altar of burnt offering, and pagan sacrifices were offered (1Macc 1:41–64). (TLSB)

Thus Antiochus began his suppression of the Jewish religion. Circumcision, possession of the Scriptures, sacrifices, feast days, and other practices were forbidden on penalty of death (1 Macc 1:41–51, 56–57). The ultimate act of desecration is described by the divine man as "the detested thing causing desolation" (Dan 11:31). 1 Maccabees describes the fulfillment of this prophecy: On 15 Kislev 167 (December 6, 167), "a detested thing of desolation" (βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως) was erected on the altar of the temple (1 Macc 1:54). Most likely this was an idol of Olympian Zeus (cf. 2 Macc 6:1–2). On 25 Kislev (December 16), sacrifices, probably including pigs, were offered on the altar (1 Macc 1:47, 59; 2 Macc 6:4). (CC)

11:32 *who violate the covenant* – "He will defile wicked men of a covenant" (Dan 11:32) refers to the high priest Menelaus and his followers who readily acquiesced to the abominable policies imposed by Antiochus. However, many Jews resisted this forced Hellenization. So the divine man says, "A people who know their God will be strong and take action" (11:32). The writer of 1 Maccabees understood the fulfillment of this prophecy as the resistance offered by many Jews: "But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die" (1 Macc 1:62–63 NRSV). (CC)

people who know their God. Opponents of Antiochus, led by the Maccabees (Hasmoneans), resisted his orders (167 BC). Hus: “Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has hidden the way of truth from the wise and prudent and revealed it unto simple laymen and little priests who choose rather to obey God than men, who in acts generically good and acts neutral have the life of Christ before their eyes” (*The Church*, p 254). (TLSB)

11:33 *The wise among the people.* † Those who refused to violate the covenant God made with Israel (v. 32). (CSB)

Faithful religious teachers who would instruct the people. (TLSB)

stumble by sword and flame. See Heb 11:36–38. (CSB)

11:34 *a little help.* The early successes of the guerrilla uprising (168 B.C.) that originated in Modein, 17 miles northwest of Jerusalem, under the leadership of Mattathias and his son Judas Maccabeus. In December, 165, the altar of the temple was rededicated. (CSB)

11:35 *refined, purified, and made white.* Figurative expressions indicating that the wise would be made clean by their sufferings (cf 12:10). (TLSB)

time of the end. Daniel concludes his predictions about Antiochus Epiphanes and begins to prophesy concerning the more distant future. (CSB)

When the period of oppression seen in the vision would come to an end. Cf 12:4, 9. (TLSB)

The divine man’s words also give an indication as to God’s purpose in allowing the persecution: it will refine and purify the faithful with an eye to the true end that God has appointed for a future time (11:35). This future is ultimately the resurrection of all flesh (12:2–3). These people will be made white (11:35) like Christ himself (Rev 1:14) and God the Father (Dan 7:9). This imagery is taken up again in John’s vision of those who survive great tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:9, 13–14; cf. Rev 3:4–5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 19:14). Thus the persecution of Antiochus ultimately served God’s purpose as it refined among the Jewish people those who would faithfully cling to his promise of deliverance in the Messiah, so that many would be looking for his coming (Mk 15:43; Lk 2:25–38; 3:15; 23:50–51; Jn 6:14) even as we look for his return (Titus 2:13; Jude 21). (CC)

11:36–12:13 The description turns from Antiochus IV to the Antichrist; the reign of the former wicked ruler foreshadows that of the latter. Cf 2Th 2:3–4, 8–12. Hipp: “The prophet set forth these things concerning the Antichrist, who shall be shameless, a war-maker, and despot.... Him the impious will worship as God, and will bend to him the knee, thinking him to be the Christ” (*ANF* 5:184). (TLSB)

1:36† From here to the end of ch. 11 the antichrist is in view. The details of this section do not fit what is known of Antiochus Epiphanes. What he would do to destroy God’s kingdom would in turn be prophetic of the raging of the antichrist at “the time of the end” (v. 35). See 2Th 2:4; cf. Rev 13:5–8. (CSB)

magnify himself above every god. Antiochus called himself “god manifest.” The Antichrist will make similar bold claims. (TLSB)

God of gods. The true God, above all other gods. (TLSB)

An ominous note is sounded by the opening sentence, “the king will do as he pleases” (11:36). The identical wording for this arrogance (הַעֲשֶׂה, “do,” and כְּרָצוֹנוֹ, literally, “according to his pleasure”) was also used for the characteristic arrogance of the kingdom of Persia, represented by the ram (8:4), of Alexander the Great (11:3), and of Antiochus III (11:16). However, those statements came within the descriptions, but this is the very first statement about the eschatological king. He is chiefly characterized by his willful arrogance. Unlike those other kings, his arrogance is characterized as primarily religious in nature (11:36–39). This king will be a religious figure, and his power will be exercised in ways that pervert and profane what is godly, instead of challenging the geopolitical order as the other kings’ actions did. Antiochus IV was a foreshadowing of this eschatological king because Antiochus IV was the only one of the Hellenistic kings whose actions directly corrupted and prevented the biblically based worship of the God of Israel. However, the other acts of Antiochus IV mentioned in 8:9–14, 23–25 and 11:21–35 were primarily geopolitical in nature. (CC)

The main characteristic of this end-time king is that he elevates himself over every other god. To usurp the one true God, he speaks “wonderful things” (תְּפִלֵּי־וֹתֵר)—ostensibly divine words—against God (11:36), making him the same as the little horn in the vision in Daniel 7 (7:25). This Niphal (N) participle occurs in Daniel only in 8:24 and 11:36. The Niphal feminine plural participle occurs a total of forty-four times in the OT. In thirty-nine of these instances, it is used as a noun for the wonderful, miraculous, salvific acts of God. In 8:24 it refers to God’s salvific actions through his OT means of grace, the temple and its liturgical rites. But here it refers to the Antichrist’s deceptive words, which are crafted to supplant God’s Word, through which salvation comes to his believing people. Clearly, this figure’s words against the true God are designed to replace the wonderful acts of God that redeem his people and which are God’s alone. (CC)

11:37 *gods of his fathers.* Or, “God of his fathers.” (TLSB)

the one desired by women. † Usually interpreted as Tammuz. A more literal translation is “the desire of women,” i.e., the attraction men feel towards women. This “king” (v. 36) of the end time would be devoid of normal human sensibilities. (CSB)

Lit, “the desire of women.” He will suppress natural affection that leads to marriage. (TLSB)

The king will not favor normal human marital relations nor any god because he will make himself greater than all (11:37). His arrogance renders him incapable of the loving devotion that is required by both marriage and true piety. He personally is not married and does not rightly honor the one true God, and as a king, he imposes this disdain for marriage and this dishonorable view of God upon his subjects. (CC)

11:38 *gold ... costly gifts.* “The true adornment of the churches is godly, useful, and clear doctrine, the devout use of the Sacraments, fervent prayer, and the like. Candles, golden vessels, and similar adornments are fitting, but they are not the specifically unique adornment belonging to the Church. If the adversaries make these things the focus of worship, and not the preaching of the Gospel, in faith (and the struggles of faith) they are to be numbered among those whom Daniel describes as worshiping their god with gold and silver” (Ap XXIV 51). (TLSB)

11:39 *foreign god.* Directing people away from the true God. (TLSB)

Those who acknowledge him. He will honor his supporters, some of whom were Judeans. (TLSB)

divide the land for a price. Reward for those who follow his false religion. (TLSB)

Therefore, this eschatological king will deal with other temporal threats (“fortified fortresses”) with the help of “a foreign god” (11:39), which is the “god of fortresses,” the god whom his fathers did not know (11:38). That is, instead of relying on God and his Word as a fortress to protect him—the means of grace, through which Christians find security and victory—he will rely upon temporal power to deal with the powers of this world. Therefore, he will honor those who acknowledge him and his power, and for that price he will give them power in this world over people and territory (11:39). (CC)

11:40–45† Conflicts to be waged between the antichrist and his enemies. He will meet his end at the “beautiful holy mountain” (v. 45), Jerusalem’s temple mount (see Eze 38–39; Joel 3:2, 12–16; Zec 14:3, 12). (CSB)

“The time of the end” is an expression that occurs four times in this vision (11:35, 40; 12:4, 9). Just as it was used in 8:17 to signify the time when the period prophesied in that vision would end, so it is also used here to indicate the end of the period covered by the divine man’s words. In the case of this vision, it is the end of the world at the return of Christ, since the timeframe of this vision ends with the resurrection (12:1–3). Therefore, 11:40–45 speaks of the end of the eschatological king immediately before the parousia of Christ, to be followed by the bodily resurrection. Thus Dan 11:40–45 is parallel to Rev 20:7–10, and Dan 12:1–3 is parallel to Rev 20:11–15. (CC)

The end is played out as a great military conflict. However, the words here are symbolic. There are several indications of this. First of all, Moab (11:41) had ceased to be an independent nation with a distinct identity after its conquest by Tiglath-pileser III in 733 BC. Already in Daniel’s day it no longer existed. Instead, it, along with Ammon and Edom, represents enemies of God’s people. Second, with the coming of the Roman Empire (the fourth kingdom predicted in Daniel, during whose era is the first advent of the Messiah), the kings of the north and the south, the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties, ceased to exist. The rise of this fourth kingdom is hinted at in 11:30. Here in 11:40–45, the eschatological king assumes the identity of the king of the north, and his main rival is the king of the south. This is appropriate, since the last king of the north discussed in Daniel 11 was Antiochus IV, who foreshadows this eschatological king. (CC)

The final acts of the eschatological king are difficult to interpret in detail. Here we find ourselves in the same situation as Daniel himself (12:8): looking at a prophecy of the future and seeking to understand its interpretation. We must keep in mind that there are several indications that the words of the divine man in 11:40–45 are symbolic and metaphorical. Nevertheless, the general picture drawn in the revelation is clear:

1. The king will engage in a power struggle with a rival power and overcome him, appearing to be on the verge of a sweeping victory (11:40, 42–43).
2. This power struggle will affect God’s people. “The beautiful land” (11:41) is a metaphor for God’s people, the Christian church, the new Israel, residents of the “Jerusalem above” (Gal 4:26; see also Heb 12:22). Many will “stumble” (Dan 11:41). This verb was used earlier in Daniel 11 to refer to believers who were persecuted even to the point of martyrdom (see the third textual note on 11:14). Here these Christian believers will be willing to suffer death rather than fall away from the faith or the visible church because of the king’s actions. However, the king will spare enemies of the Gospel. “Edom, Moab, and the chief part of the Ammonites” (11:41) are metaphors for the theological enemies of Christ who contribute to the persecution of God’s people.
3. Something will alarm him, and he will turn to persecute many while strengthening his position as a religious figure among God’s people; “he will pitch his royal tents between the seas [the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea] toward the beautiful holy mountain” (11:44–45).
4. This final act will not save him, and in the end, he will have no aid since no one can stand against God’s judgment (11:45; cf. 2 Thess 2:8). (CC)

More than this cannot be reliably determined because searching for a future fulfillment of a prophecy is not as easy as determining the way a prophecy was fulfilled after it has come to pass (cf. 1 Pet 1:10–12). (CC)

11:41 *glorious land*. Israel, the Promised Land. (TLSB)

Edom and Moab ... Ammonites. Countries east and south of Israel. Emblematic of Israel's enduring enemies. (TLSB)

11:43 *Libyans and the Cushites*. Countries west and south of Egypt. (TLSB)

follow in his train. Submit to him. (TLSB)

11:44 *devote many to destruction*. Planned further conquests. (TLSB)

11:45 *palatial tents*. Large tents were commonly used by royalty when they traveled. (TLSB)

sea. Lit, "the waters," perhaps the Great Sea and Salt Sea. (TLSB)

he shall come to his end. Cf 2Th 2:8. (TLSB)

Ch 11 The Lord's messenger reveals to Daniel the coming conflicts between Persia and Greece, Egypt and Syria, culminating in the wicked reign of that "contemptible person," King Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 BC). War and violence have never been absent from human history. At times, evil rulers have persecuted the people of God, bringing great affliction on them. But such suffering will be only for the time appointed by the Lord. Even in the midst of turmoil and tribulation, believers have the peace that the world cannot give, the peace that is in Jesus Christ, our deliverer (Jn 14:27; 2Th 3:16). • Gracious heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Grant me steadfast faith amid all troubles. Amen. (TLSB)