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Daniel 11 - The King of the North



By Dan Maines

The King of the North - Daniel 11

Daniel 11:1-4

† Daniel records the angel's message that after the Persian kings, a mighty Greek king would rise. History identifies this as Alexander the Great. After his death, his empire was divided into four parts, not to his descendants but to his generals, fulfilling the prophecy exactly.

† Historical sources such as Josephus and secular historians confirm that Alexander's empire was split between Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, aligning with Daniel's fourfold division.

† Isaiah 46:10 reminds us that God declares the end from the beginning, showing His sovereignty over these events.

† Daniel 2:44 reinforces this certainty, declaring that God's kingdom "will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."

Daniel 11:5-20

† The text moves to the conflicts between the Ptolemies (kings of the South, Egypt) and the Seleucids (kings of the North, Syria). Verses 5-19 detail centuries of warfare, alliances, and betrayals. This is precisely mirrored in the wars recorded by historians like Josephus and Polybius.

† Antiochus III (the Great) is a key King of the North during this section, rising in power and even defeating Egypt at times. Yet he ultimately dies, fulfilling the word that "he shall stumble and fall and not be found."

† Proverbs 21:1 reminds us that "the king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes," demonstrating God's rule over these ancient struggles.

† Psalm 33:10-11 shows that the Lord nullifies the plans of nations, but His counsel stands forever, perfectly matching the rise and fall of these empires.

Daniel 11:21-35

† Here Antiochus IV Epiphanes emerges, a Seleucid ruler who fits the King of the North perfectly. He seized the throne by intrigue, persecuted the Jews, and desecrated the Temple by offering swine and setting up an idol of Zeus. The "abomination of desolation" (v. 31) matches this period. Josephus and 1 Maccabees record these events in detail.

† Verse 32 speaks of those who "know their God" taking action. This points to the faithful Maccabees and those who resisted

Antiochus, showing that even in severe persecution, God's people remained steadfast.

† Hebrews 11:33-34 speaks of those who "shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword," echoing the courage of these faithful ones.

† Jesus later refers to this same "abomination of desolation" in Matthew 24:15, connecting Daniel's prophecy to events His first-century audience would recognize.

† Revelation 6:9-11 gives another picture of faithful witnesses enduring persecution yet resting in God's justice.

Daniel 11:36-39

† Some see a transition here, but the context still fits Antiochus. He exalted himself above all gods, speaking blasphemies, and honored a foreign god of war. His arrogance and idolatry match the historical record.

† Psalm 2:2-4 reminds us that earthly rulers who oppose God only fulfill His divine plan, and He laughs at their rebellion.

† Isaiah 14:24-27 declares that the Lord of hosts has sworn that His plan will stand, no matter the schemes of men.

Daniel 11:40-45

† The final movements of the King of the North describe his campaigns and ultimate end. Antiochus led a final assault into the south but was turned back. He died in Persia, not in battle but of disease, with none to help him, just as the prophecy foretells.

† This precise fulfillment strengthens our faith that God's word never fails (Numbers 23:19).

† Daniel 7:27 assures that the kingdom and dominion are given to the saints of the Most High, showing the triumph of God's people even as earthly rulers fall.

Fulfillment Perspective

† Daniel 11 is a stunning prophecy fulfilled in precise historical detail. From Persian kings to Alexander's rise and fall, through the wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucids, and culminating in

Antiochus IV, history verifies the vision. This is not future, it is fulfilled history that strengthens our confidence in God's sovereignty.

† Luke 21:22 declares, "these are days of vengeance, so that all things which are written will be fulfilled," confirming that prophecy has reached completion.

† Revelation 11:15 proclaims that "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever," showing Christ's present reign.

How It Applies To Us Today

† God rules over the kingdoms of men. The rise and fall of empires, the schemes of powerful rulers, and the trials of the faithful all unfold under His hand. Just as He preserved His people through Antiochus's persecution, He keeps His covenant people today. We stand in the finished victory of Christ, knowing no earthly power can overturn His kingdom.

† Philippians 2:9-11 assures that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, reinforcing the victory already accomplished.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus - Antiquities of the Jews, Book 12

† 1 Maccabees 1-4

† Polybius, Histories

† Daniel 11 full chapter (NASB)

† Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 21:1; Psalm 33:10-11; Hebrews 11:33-34; Matthew 24:15; Revelation 6:9-11; Psalm 2:2-4; Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 14:24-27; Daniel 7:27; Luke 21:22; Revelation 11:15; Philippians 2:9-11

Optional Preface (for readers or listeners)

† Daniel 11 stands as one of the clearest demonstrations that biblical prophecy is rooted in verifiable history. Every major

empire and ruler mentioned is confirmed by ancient records. This sermon explores how the Lord revealed detailed events centuries before they occurred, proving His sovereignty and the certainty of His covenant promises.

Optional Historical Timeline

† 539 BC - Persian Empire rises under Cyrus.

† 333 BC - Alexander the Great defeats Persia.

† 323 BC - Alexander dies; empire divided among Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, Ptolemy.

† 301-168 BC - Ptolemaic and Seleucid conflicts dominate the Near East.

† 175-164 BC - Antiochus IV Epiphanes reigns; desecration of the Jerusalem Temple (167 BC).

Precise Primary-Source References

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 12.5.4-12.7.6

† 1 Maccabees 1:10-4:61

† Polybius, Histories 5.67-8.23

† Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica fragments on the Seleucid wars

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