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**C1239 – November 14, 2012 – Daniel 11:2-20**  
**The Persians & Greeks**

Tonight we come to Daniel 11, and to introduce the vision remember there are four successive Gentile kingdoms during the times of the Gentiles: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. After the four have run their course they will all be destroyed simultaneously and the kingdom of God will come upon the earth. That's the general prophetic picture laid out by Daniel 2 and 7 which is fundamental to the more specific prophecies in Daniel 8 which goes into Medo-Persia and Greece and Daniel 9 the seventy sevens and Daniel 11, the Medo-Persians again and especially the Greeks. Tonight we're going to look at tremendous details involving the Greek empire.

Now these kingdoms of Medo-Persia and Greece occur during the intertestamental period, what is sometimes called the years of silence because there were no living prophets and that is why the OT canon ends with Malachi and the NT canon doesn't open until Matthew. There are 400 years in there where God was silent. No Scripture was being written. However, Daniel 8 and especially Daniel 11 prophecy things that were fulfilled in that 400 years. So the fulfillment of much of Daniel 8 and 11 occurred between the two testaments and you can find this in secular histories and in the history of the Jews such as is recorded 1 and 2 Maccabees and later Josephus.

Very interestingly I received the current issue of *Israel My Glory* yesterday and the main focus of the issue was the 400 years of silence between the testaments, and yet there was only one reference to Daniel 11 which is by far the most exhaustive prophecy of this period. So that was a little frustrating.

Maybe it's because some conservative scholars consider this the most difficult prophecy in the entire Bible, even more difficult than the Revelation.

Knowing this, what I tried to do last week is prepare you by giving a fairly detailed examination of Daniel 10. Daniel 10:1 gives us a key by telling us it's a vision of "great warfare;" so we know this period is going to be characterized by tumultuous conflict. Daniel 10:14 tells us the conflict which concerns the people of Israel. So Israel is going to go through an extensive period of conflict under a few Persian monarchs and then many, many Greek monarchs. So rather than the kingdom of God coming anytime soon Israel was going to remain under divine discipline for many, many years and face tremendous suffering and destruction at the hands of the Gentiles. This is what caused Daniel to become speechless and weak. But the angel strengthened him and encouraged him and told him to take courage. At that point Daniel was prepared to hear and understand the vision of great conflict coming for Israel, the bulk of which tonight will be during the Medo-Persian and Greek empires, kingdoms two and three in Daniel's framework.

The year was 536BC so Babylon had already risen and fallen. Daniel was serving in the administration of Medo-Persia and was probably instrumental in influencing Cyrus the Persian to make a decree allowing the Jews to return to their land and rebuild the temple. Not many returned because so many of them had established a life in Babylon. Those who did began to rebuild the temple. Things were looking up for Israel but then Daniel saw this vision of great warfare and it starts in Medo-Persia there in Daniel 11:2 giving a brief synopsis of things to come in Persia. In Daniel 11:3 he moves quickly on to Greece and he stays with Greece until verse 35. So the focus will be the Greek empire and especially one of its rulers, the contemptible Antiochus Epiphanes who foreshadows the anti-Christ who I hold is the subject of verses 36-45. And then Daniel 12 announces that after the anti-Christ has completed his career the times of the Gentiles will come to a close and the time of Israel's kingdom will come.

So it's very simple in one sense but in another sense it's not so simple because there are so many minute details regarding the Grecian empire. So stupendous are the details that the liberal critics of the Bible say Daniel could not possibly be writing prophecy; he must be writing history. He must be writing after the fact.

In particular the angel gives details concerning two of the four branches of the Greek Empire. After Alexander died his kingdom broke into four

kingdoms. The two of interest are referred to in Daniel 11:5 and 6 as the king of the South and the king of the North. In verse 8 the South is called Egypt. We're not told the name of the North but it was Syria. They didn't have a Syria then so that would be meaningless in Daniel's time. But since Daniel's time that region has come to be called Syria. So the South refers to the Ptolemaic branch of Alexander's kingdom in Egypt and the North refers to the Seleucid branch of Alexander's kingdom in Syria and to the east in Babylon. Now smack dab in between Syria and Egypt lays what very important property? Israel. Why is it so important? Because it's a major trade route between three continents. And therefore whoever controls Israel controls the trade, controls the business and controls the economics. So Israel became a bone of contention between the kings of the South and the kings of the North.

Both of these branches of Alexander's kingdom had great aspirations of re-consolidating the Greek empire and becoming the next Alexander the Great. So they are going to war back and forth with one another and Israel gets caught up in the misery of warfare. That is what distressed Daniel so greatly.

Alright, if you look at Daniel 11:1 remember it's a continuation of Daniel 10; so don't put hard and fast lines between Daniel 10 and 11 because Daniel 10, 11 and 12 all go together as a single unit. Since in Daniel 10:21 the angel that spoke to Daniel was talking about his relationship to another angel, Michael, the prince of Israel then in Daniel 11:1 the angel is still talking about this relationship and so when he says **I arose to be an encouragement and protection for him**, he's saying I arose to be an encouragement and protection for Michael. It shows that these two angels had worked with one another in the past as they engaged in the angelic conflict behind nations that is raging in the atmosphere above nations. Now I hope this opened your eyes to the complexity of history. History is much more than humans and nations coming up with ideas and trying to implement them. Behind them is a great heavenly conflict going on, unseen to us in the normal affairs of life but made visible to us by Daniel 10. And so we get a little peak into how angels influence political rulers and nations. We saw for example the angel reveal that he was dispatched to answer Daniel's prayer the very day Daniel started praying but that he got tied up in the air space over Persia fighting a demonic prince of Persia for twenty-one days until Michael came and helped him.

Now I believe the fuller picture of history is that angels are highly involved and I think we learn this as early as Genesis 3 when Satan comes in the form of a serpent and he deceives Eve into eating the forbidden fruit and who in turn gives it to her husband who was the lord of the earth. And when he ate he gave up his lordship over the earth to Satan and ever since Satan has been known as the god of this world and the prince of the power of the air. He is manipulating and deceiving the nations so as to build his kingdom. To do this he has strategically assigned demons to each nation in order to influence them toward evil and to guard them against good angels entering to influence nations for the good. And this will go on until a Son related to mankind comes and regains dominion by defeating Satan and the fallen angels. So history is much more complex than human motion. It involves an unseen angelic motion going on all the time. And this is where I link Ephesians 6 into the picture because it says that we can enter into the angelic conflict in the heavenly places by putting on the instruments of warfare daily with prayer. Many commentators point out that prayer is the means by which we take up our arms and put on our armor so that we can stand against the forces of darkness that persist. So prayer takes a pre-eminent place in the life of the Christian warrior.

Now Daniel had been praying for twenty-one days and finally the angel has broken through and in Daniel 11:2 he begins to explain to him the vision. **And 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.** Alright, three more kings are going to arise in the dominant branch of Medo-Persia known simply as **Persia**. This kingdom was already represented by the chest and arms of silver in Daniel 2 and the bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth of Daniel 7 to depict one branch stronger than the other branch. And Daniel is told that **three more kings are going to arise in Persia**. Who are these three kings? Cyrus was already king so he is not one of the **three**. History reports that the first of the three, which you can see on your chart there is Cambyses II, son of Cyrus, who reigned from 530-522BC. He is prophesied to come and rule and he did. Now while he was away from the capital waging war against Egypt, trying to expand his kingdom, a second king came and usurped the throne, he was named Darius and he posed as

Cambyses II brother, Smerdis. So he seized the throne and took it briefly in 522BC. Cambyses II committed suicide and we don't know why. Then the third king was Darius son of Hystaspes, different from Darius the Mede we met earlier in the book because this one is Persian. And he easily removed Guamata and took the throne from 521-486BC. So the **three more kings** are Cambyses II, Guamata and Darius, son of Hystaspes and you have their years on the chart so you can see this prophecy spans 44 years so far.

<b>History under Persia (11:2)</b>				
Daniel 11:2	Cambyses II (530-522BC)			
	Guamata (pseudo Smerdis, 522BC)			
	Darius Hystaspes (521-486BC)			
	Xerxes the Great (486-465BC)			
<b>History under Greece (11:3-35)</b>				
Daniel 11:3-4	Alexander the Great (336-323BC)			
Daniel 11:4	<b>Ptolemy (Egypt, South)</b>	Casander (Greece and Macedonia)	Lysimachus (Thrace and Asia Minor)	<b>Seleucus (Syria, North)</b>
	<b>Ptolemies (south, Egypt)</b>		<b>Seleucids (north, Syria)</b>	
Daniel 11:5	Ptolemy I Soter (323-285BC)		Seleucus I Nicator (312-281BC) Antiochus I Soter (281-262BC)	
Daniel 11:6	Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246BC)		Antiochus II Theos (262-246BC)	
Daniel 11:7-9	Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221BC)		Seleucus II Callinicus (246-227BC)	
Daniel 11:10			Seleucus III Soter (227-223BC)	
Daniel 11:10-11,13, 15-19			Antiochus III the Great (223-187BC)	
Daniel 11:11-	Ptolemy IV Philopator			

12, 14-15	(221-204BC)	
Daniel 11:17	Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-181BC)	
Daniel 11:20		Seleucus IV Philopater (187-176BC)
Daniel 11:21-32		Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163BC)
Daniel 11:25	Ptolemy VI Philometer (181-145BC)	

Chart 8: Detailed kings the Jews will suffer discipline under prophesied in Daniel 11:2-35

**Then a fourth** the angel says, **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.** And the rich fourth ruler of Persia is none other than Xerxes the Great, also known as Ahaseurus. He's the king in the Book of Esther who chooses her to replace Vashti as queen. He's a very famous king. You know him from secular history as the one who waged the famous battle at Thermopylae against the renowned Spartans who served under Leonidas of Sparta. At Thermopylae the Spartans guarded a pass through the mountains and were therefore able to bring heavy casualties to the much larger Persian forces. However, Xerxes eventually discovered another pass around the mountains and this led to his victory over the Spartans. He went all the way to Athens, captured the city and burned it, forcing the Greeks to retreat to the Isthmus of Corinth. Xerxes there was **arousing his whole empire against Greece.** And of course the Greeks didn't like it too much. They hated the Persians. And it's that hatred that you see in Daniel 11:3 with Alexander the Great, the **mighty king.** This was about 40 years later but the hatred had festered and so when Alexander came against the Persians one of his great motivators was hot anger and that is why in Daniel 8 Alexander is portrayed as rapidly shattering Persia and then trampling it down. The Greeks utterly hated them.

So verse 3, **And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases. 4But 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.** Alright we already identified this **mighty king** as the first and greatest ruler of the Greeks, Alexander the Great. The Greek empire itself has already been depicted in Daniel 2 by the waist and thighs of bronze. And Alexander the Great Himself has been depicted in Daniel 7 as the leopard with four wings and in Daniel 8 as the buck-goat with one giant horn between his eyes that utterly defeated Medo-Persia. So there's no doubt the **mighty king** is Alexander. It says **he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.** And nobody was able to stop Alexander. It's really a marvel of history that this 21 year old king could wage a continual eleven year campaign and utterly destroy the Persians. In his conquest he conquered more territory than any kingdom had ever conquered. It stretched from Greece in the north to Egypt in the south and all the way to India in the east.

**But, verse 4, 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.** Alexander died when he was just 32 or 33. He had conquered and conquered and just **as soon as he had** maximized his kingdom he was in Babylon and caught a fever and died. He died so fast he did not have time to confer kingship on any one of **his own descendants.** There were three possible descendants that would have been in line for receiving the kingdom. His half brother, Philip Arrhidaeus but he was murdered in 317BC. His son Alexander but he was murdered in 310BC. And his illegitimate son, Hercules but he was murdered in 309BC. So the kingdom was not given to any of **his own descendants** as the text says. Rather there was a twenty-two year period of struggle between Alexander's four generals for power. Eventually the kingdom was divided up into four according to **the four points of the compass.**

Now we should already know this from the Daniel 7 where the leopard with four wings had four heads and that also signified the four divisions of Alexander's kingdom. And this is well-known from history. Casander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy were the four generals. So Alexander's dynasty came to a rapid end and sovereignty came to his four generals, none of which was his blood relative and none of which had the kind of authority he had. All these guys wanted to be Alexander but nobody in history was

Alexander. He was a one man dynasty, a powerful but short dynasty that was uprooted and **given to others** besides his descendants.

Alright there were four others but verses 5-32 are only interested in two of the four. The kings of the South in Egypt which are the Ptolemies and the kings of the North in Syria who are the Seleucids. And all this was fulfilled during the intertestamental times. So don't get lost, I know it's very detailed, but certainly it gives you a precedent for literal interpretation of prophecy. These details are not just flowery, symbolic language but literal and now historical events.

To help you understand I've broken this down into three sections. First, in Daniel 11:5-20, a series of wars are fought between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings. The Jews get caught up in those wars because they lived right in between them. And that's why Daniel was disturbed by the vision; it was a vision of great conflict involving his people. Second, in Daniel 11:21-32 a Seleucid king arises who is known as the contemptible Antiochus Epiphanes IV. He is really nasty and becomes a foreshadowing of the anti-Christ. And thirdly, Daniel 11:36-45, should be no surprise, it moves ahead all the way to the anti-Christ himself who was foreshadowed by Antiochus. So there are your three divisions and we'll now move into the first division which happens to be the most detailed; a series of battles between the Ptolemaic kings in the South and the Seleucid kings in the North over the course of more than a century.

Verse 5, starting in 323BC. **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 dominion will be a great dominion indeed.** On your chart **the king of the South** was Ptolemy I Soter. He was one of Alexander the Great's generals and after twenty-two years of fighting he became king in 304BC over Egypt. That was the period during which he **grew strong**. Then we have one of **his princes**. This is Seleucus I Nicator and during that twenty-two years of struggle he was satrap over Babylon. But Antigonus, one of Alexander's generals came and took over Babylon. Seleucus I fled to Egypt and served as one of the **princes of** Ptolemy I. But as soon as Antigonus was defeated he went back to Babylon where he set out to increase his strength. In fact the verse says he **will gain ascendancy over him**, that is, over Ptolemy...**and obtain dominion; his domain will**

**be a great dominion indeed.** What it's saying is his kingdom grew much greater than Ptolemy's and in fact, Seleucus I added Media and Syria to Babylon. So the stage is set for Israel to get caught up in the fray because it's located right between Syria to the North of Israel and Egypt to the South of Israel.

Then verse 6 and you see the passing of some time. **After some years they will form an alliance.** These are other kings and this alliance was attempted about 250BC. So what happened was Ptolemy I Soter died in 285BC and his son Ptolemy II Philadelphus came to rule in the south. He's the king of the South who is involved in the **alliance**. Whereas in the North Seleucus I Nicator died. Then his son Antiochus I Soter came to rule but he died too and so the throne came to Antiochus II Theos. He's the king of the North that made an **alliance** with Ptolemy II. Now apparently these two kings hated one another but after several years they formed **an alliance**.

Now, in the ancient world the way you formed these alliances was by marriage. One king would send his daughter to another king to marry him. That forms a pretty strong alliance because if the king's daughter is mistreated you know what that means. War. And so the leverage in these alliances was a daughter. How would you like to be the daughter? I don't think a lot of these daughters liked it so much. But that's what they did here in verse 6, **and the daughter of the king of the south will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful arrangement.** How did this work out? Apparently not so good according to the rest of the verse. It's a little vague but obviously the short story is it was a failure. **But she will not retain her 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.** A lot of people get the raw end of the deal on this one. The long story is that the daughter sent to marry Antiochus II was named Berenice. But before Antiochus could marry her he had to divorce his former wife, Laodice. And Laodice didn't like that so much. She turned out to be a woman you didn't cross. So the first thing she did was have Berenice murdered. That's what it means where it says **but she will not retain her power.** The second thing she did was poison her ex-husband the king, Antiochus II. That's what it means where it says **nor will he remain with his power.** The third thing she did was make her son king in his place, his name was Seleucus II Callinicus. The

fourth thing she did was kill all the attendants of Berenice. That's what it means where it says **she will be given up, along with those who brought her in**. And the fifth thing she did was have **the one who was sired from her**, that is the one infant child of Berenice murdered. And the sixth she did was have the one who supported Berenice murdered. He's the one referred to as **he who supported her in those times**. So this Laodice was not a woman you crossed, she sort of cleaned house there and needless to say the peace alliance didn't work. This fueled a disaster in verse 7.

Berenice's brother back in Egypt gets the news and he's angry so he's going to get revenge. Observe, **But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place**, that is, in her father's place; he will become king after Ptolemy II who tried to broker the alliance. So now Berenice's brother Ptolemy III Euergetes comes to the throne of Egypt, and he wants revenge for what this Laodice did to his sister and everyone else. So the verse says **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. Also their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt**. So Ptolemy II defeated armies of the south, he put Laodice to death and took the spoils of war back to Egypt. He shut that problem down. Now the power pendulum is swinging to the south, the Ptolemies are gaining the upper hand.

The end of verse 8 indicates they had a temporary cease fire, as always in the Middle East, it's only temporary. **And he on his part will refrain from attacking the king of the North for some years**. So a temporary peace. The North couldn't do anything at the time because they had to regain their composure and rebuild the army. But they had plans.

Now I know this is really hairy and it's hard to keep up, it's really hard for me to keep up and write this, but this detail is precisely why the critics say Daniel could never have written this in advance, Daniel isn't writing prophecy, Daniel is writing history. But all that criticism tells me is that their basic presupposition is that there is no personal God outside of history with a plan. And I cannot buy that presupposition because if there is no personal God outside of history with a plan then all that's left is impersonal chance. And I do not see how impersonal chance can account for the reality we live in. I do not see how it can account for love, for morals, for ethics, for

anything. So it's a faulty presupposition. The Christian presupposition can account for reality. What's our presupposition? That there is a personal God outside of history who has a plan for history. And looked at from that perspective this is not too much detail. This is actually very little detail when you consider that God knows all things and therefore could have revealed much more detail. So when you look at this prophecy up against God's omniscience you realize it really isn't all that detailed. It is just a tiny, tiny glimpse of all that God already knows.

Now verse 9, Ptolemy III in Egypt has gained power but the Seleucus II is bent so verse 9, **Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his own land.** Seleucus II tried to invade Egypt to regain power but he failed. He goes on to fall off his horse and die. So verse 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.** Now Seleucus II had two sons, the first to rule was Seleucus III Soter. He mobilized his army and went into Asia Minor trying to extend the kingdom but he was conspired against and killed. So his second son, Antiochus III the Great came to rule at the age of just 18 and he mobilized the army, assembled a great force and went after the Ptolemies. Now he was up against the wall, the Ptolemies had extended their borders all the way to Syria now and thus controlled the land of Israel. Antiochus III wants to push them back because whoever controlled the land of Israel controlled the trade routes. So he mobilized his army, a great force and he went after them and he kept on going after them and he overwhelmed them all the way to the southern border of Israel. So Antiochus III took charge of the land of Israel. And the Jews are getting caught up in all this, back and forth the power struggle, all these wars, all this intrigue, all this conflict.

Now this obviously angered the Ptolemaic king who was Ptolemy IV at the time. So verse 11 he's going to do something about it. **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.** Alright, so Ptolemy IV goes up to wage war against Antiochus III. And they waged war right at the southern border of Israel. But despite Antiochus III's coming to war with a **great multitude...that multitude** was given into the hand of Ptolemy IV. So it

seems the power is shifting to Ptolemy in the South but verse 12, **When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up**, he gets arrogant, like so many Gentile kings he gets prideful, **and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail**. Pride cometh before the fall and verse 13 recounts the fall. **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**. So the **king of the North** is going to retain the upper hand, the pendulum of power stays with the Seleucids.

Now again, I know this is detailed and I don't expect you to remember it all. What I expect is you to be impressed with God. That He would reveal all this out of His omniscience. This isn't just generalities; it involves marriages, intrigue, wars, very detailed stuff. God is the Lord of history. God is ultimately the one behind these kingdom clashes.

Now verse 14, and here we see that the Ptolemies had many enemies, not just the Seleucids, they'd formed a lot of enemies over the years. **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**. Observe the **violent ones among Daniel's people**. Obviously these are Jews who are sick and tired of this and they want independence probably from both the Seleucids and the Ptolemies, so they join the Seleucids to fight off the Ptolemies hoping for some reprisals, but **they will fall down**. That plan won't work. See Israel is always trying to team up with some country so they can get security. It never has worked, it never will work, the only one they can team up with and get security is God. And until they team up with Him and stop trying to rely on gimmick nations like the United States, they will not get true and lasting security.

Alright verse 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**. Look at the detail of this. The king of the North will come up and capture a well-fortified city. We have a good idea this is Sidon up along the coast of Phoenicia, north of modern Beirut in Lebanon. The year this was fulfilled was 203BC. And it's at that point that

you see Antiochus is beginning to expand his territory. He has dreams of becoming the next Alexander the Great.

Verse 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. The one coming** is Antiochus and he went against several Egyptian generals, most notably Scopas, but three others and none of them could do anything to stop Antiochus. At this time he took his stand in **the Beautiful Land** which is the land of Israel. He took firm control of Israel and from this time on the land of Israel remained under Seleucid control and authority.

Verse 17, having taken control of the land of Israel he now tries to broker a peace deal with Egypt so that he can control it too and keep his southern border peaceful so he can turn his attention to Rome. The king at the time was a new Egyptian king, a young boy of just ten named Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Verse 17 says, **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.** In other words here we have another attempt at a marriage alliance that goes south. Antiochus had two reasons for this. First, to have peace on the southern border so he could turn his attention to conquering Asia Minor and Greece and in doing so hopefully have Egypt's favor and secondly, to try to get his hand into the Ptolemy family with his daughter and eventually take over Egypt himself. The daughter at the center of this plan was Cleopatra but the verse says, **she will not take a stand for him or be on his side.** In other words, she would not remain loyal to her father and his plan but became a loyal wife to her Egyptian husband. So the peace alliance was unsuccessful and this hindered Antiochus III plans.

Nevertheless, verse 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.** When Antiochus the Great turned his attention to Asia Minor in 197BC and Greece in 192BC he did not succeed because a commander by the name of Cornelius Scipio was dispatched from Rome to stop him. And stop him he did. Antiochus returned in 188BC. Verse 19 records his death in 187BC. **So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall**

**and be found no more.** Antiochus the Great was a great conquering ruler, the greatest since Alexander the Great, but his dream of recapturing Alexander's empire was never realized.

So verse 20, he has two sons that come to rule, the first of which is Seleucus IV Philopater. He's mentioned in verse 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.** What happened was Seleucus IV owed a lot of money for his father's expensive wars. So he sent out his treasurer Heliodorus to tax people heavily, in particular mention is made of the Jewel of his kingdom which refers to the Temple in Jerusalem. So Heliodorus went to take the riches of the Temple treasury. It was not long after that he was killed, quite mysteriously. It appears that his treasurer Heliodorus aspired to the throne and poisoned him. Actually this man was poisoned by his treasurer. He was an oppressor, heavily taxing the people to pay Rome but he didn't last long, he died in 176BC.

Alright, so vv 5-20 the big idea is wars, wars, wars between the Ptolemies and Seleucids; the Jews getting caught up in the middle of these wars. For over 100 years the Jews had to suffer under this situation.

In verse 21 we come to the second son of Antiochus the Great, Antiochus IV Epiphanes and he will be the subject of next week's lesson. He is the most despicable person and forerunner of the anti-Christ.

But this week what can we learn? First, that Israel would remain under divine discipline for an extended period of time. Israel's exile would span for centuries and would be characterized by Gentile powers fighting for world rule. War is one of the chief characteristics in the times of the Gentiles. Second, I think we need to learn to interpret prophecy literally. These many, many prophetic details were all fulfilled quite literally. Therefore there is no justification for interpreting prophecies in a non-literal or allegorical manner. Clearly then we are given precedent for literal interpretation of yet to be fulfilled prophecy. Third, God is sovereign over all of history, not just broadly but specifically. He declares people and alliances and all these people do exactly what the text says they will do and yet at the same time they were doing exactly what they wanted to do. This shows you the proper

understanding of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. God sovereignly planned for these men to do all that they did and yet each of these men (and women) were doing exactly as they wanted to do. God did not merely foresee what they would do, He foreordained it. Isaiah says He declares the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done saying, "My purpose will be established and I will accomplish all my good pleasure." Since the wars between the Ptolemies and Seleucids were purposed by God to discipline Israel according to His good pleasure, then it should be clear that these things happened by God's sovereign declaration. And yet that does not remove human responsibility for such actions.

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