

## **WORLD HISTORY FROM DARIUS TO THE ANTICHRIST, Part 2**

### **TEXT: DANIEL 11:4-20**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. 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 ("the king of the south") and Syria ("the king of the north"), as well as the nation Israel that was caught in between those warring kingdoms.
2. I mentioned last time that all Bible prophecy deals with individuals and nations that interact with Israel.
3. That is why an obscure Syrian ruler like Antiochus Epiphanes occupies such a large space in Bible prophecy.
4. We understand why several of Daniel's prophecies predict the rise and fall of Alexander the Great, who is mentioned several times in the book of Daniel (8:5-8, 21, 22; 11:3, 4),
5. This is not surprising since Alexander is widely considered one of the greatest military geniuses of all times. But Antiochus Epiphanes was not a famous king like Alexander the Great.
6. Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to many times in the prophecies of Daniel, but he was not a major personage in world history.
7. 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.
8. Daniel 11:6 carries us forward in secular history to about 250 BC. It shows how a plan was made between the ruler of Egypt and the ruler of Syria, referred to here as the king of the south and the king of the north, to make peace with each other.
9. The alliance between them was effected by the marriage of the daughter of the king of the south, an Egyptian princess named Berenice, to the king of the north, Antiochus II Theos.
10. In order to bring this about the king of the north agreed to divorce his wife Laodicea, and marry this Egyptian princess Berenice.
11. The city in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) was named by Antiochus II Theos, in honor of his wife Laodicea. He named a city after her, but he divorced her to make peace with Egypt!
12. This was a wicked scheme, and like all wicked schemes it ended in failure. When Ptolemy, the king of the south died, Antiochus II Theos, the king of the north called back his former wife Laodicea.

13. Contrary to what Antiochus Theos had promised Egypt, the son of his first wife Laodicea was placed upon the throne. All this was accurately prophesied by Daniel over 200 years before it happened.

### **I. AN UNSUCCESSFUL UNION AND A MURDEROUS OUTCOME**

1. Daniel 11:6 indicates that the union was not successful in that “she shall not retain the power (strength) of the arm,” that is, military or political power.
2. "Neither shall he (Ptolemy) stand" (11:6). The king of the south's plan failed. His ambitious scheme was to bring Syria under his control. This was the sole purpose for the marriage.
3. "But she shall be given up" (11:6) means, she shall be given up to death. By the command of Laodicea, Berenice was poisoned.
4. “He that strengthened her” (11:6) means, “he that obtained her in marriage.” Within a few years of the marriage, Ptolemy, the king of the south, died; and Antiochus II Theos, the king of the north, then took back his wife, Laodicea.
5. To gain revenge, however, Laodicea murdered her husband Antiochus II Theos by poison. She also murdered his Egyptian wife, Berenice, and the infant son of Antiochus and Berenice.
6. The reference to “he that begat her” (11:6) is to Ptolemy, whose death precipitated the murders which followed. He that strengthened her,” means, “he that obtained her in marriage,” and refers to the murder of Antiochus II Theos.

### **II. THE EVIL REVENGED (11:7, 8).**

1. Verses 7 and 8 predict the retaliation which was brought to pass by the king of the south (the king of Egypt) upon the king of the north (the king of Syria) for the murder of Berenice and her baby, as well all of the other wickedness which had been done.
2. "But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate" (11:7). Berenice, the Egyptian princess who had been slain by Laodicea, had a brother named Ptolemy Euergetes, who avenged her death.
3. When he came into power in Egypt, Ptolemy Euergetes conquered Syria and carried away captives into Egypt. These captives took their "gods" (idols) with them. He also returned to Egypt with silver and gold and much spoil (11:7, 8).

4. Ptolemy Euergetes had the murderous Laodicea put to death, in revenge for murdering his sister Berenice and her young son.

### III. THE CONFLICTS CONTINUED (11:9-20).

1. The king of the south (Egypt) came into "his own land" (11:9), that is, into the kingdom of the north, Syria, which he had conquered.
2. He came, on account of the wrongs done to his sister, into the kingdom of the north, and then returned again to his own land (11:9).
3. But his sons were "stirred up" (11:10). This verse predicts the continued strife between the successive rulers of Syria and Egypt, all of which is now a matter of history.
4. Verse 11 predicts that the victory would be won by the king of the south (Egypt).
5. Verse 12 is an unusual prophecy. We are told the king of the south will take away the multitude (a "great multitude" -- 11:11), "and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it."
6. "But he shall not be strengthened by it" (11:12b) means he shall not prevail. The same Hebrew word is often translated "prevail." Judges 6:2 says, "And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel."
7. The key to his failure -- "his heart shall be lifted up" (11:12). As a result of his great victory, Ptolemy's heart was "lifted up" with pride.
8. Historians tell us Ptolemy lived an immoral life of dissolution and orgies, and this weakened him. He married his own sister, and he was controlled by his mistress.
9. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says, "Classical writers depict Ptolemy as a drunken, debauched reveler, completely under the influence of his disreputable associates, among whom Sosibius was the most prominent. At their instigation, Ptolemy arranged the murder of his mother, uncle, and brother."

10. For about thirteen years there were no open hostilities between the king of the south and the king of the north. But Antiochus, the king of the north was busy assembling a large army, and after fourteen years he came up against Egypt a second time (11:13).
11. "The robbers of thy people" (11:14) refers to violent robbers, wicked Jewish renegades who assisted Antiochus in his effort to destroy Egypt.
12. There were defeats and victories on both sides. These conflicts between Egypt and Syria continued for about 130 years.
13. There were many kings who fought and died, but Daniel merely refers to them as "the king of the south and the king of the north" in view of their geographical relations to the land of Israel.
14. Their conflicts are outlined because of their impact on Israel, located directly between them. The king of the north, Seleucus, eventually became stronger than Ptolemy.
15. Each line, Syria and Egypt, continued through many successors, but only the more important kings are mentioned in this prophecy.
16. A number of generations are ignored, but the major developments and trends are clearly outlined.
17. Antiochus the Great came and cast up a mount, and took the most fenced cities (11:15). The refers to the invasion of the land of Palestine, resulting in Syrian occupation of "the glorious land" (cf. 11:16, 41).
18. The "arms of the south" were unsuccessful. Even the king of the south's best troops ("chosen people") were unable to stop Syria (11:15).
19. The struggle continued, and Antiochus the Great (the king of the north) was determined to gain complete control of Egypt (11:17).
20. In order to do this, he arranged for his daughter Cleopatra, when she was only eleven years old, to marry Ptolemy, the king of Egypt (11:17).

21. This was not the famous Cleopatra, who married Marc Antony (69--30 BC). The Cleopatra referred to here died in 176 BC.
22. Antiochus the Great "corrupted" his daughter (11:17), by instructing her to be a spy for him in the Egyptian court.
23. Nevertheless, verse 17 says, "But she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him." In other words, when she was married to Ptolemy in Egypt, she sided with him against the purposes of her own father.
24. Antiochus the Great next turned his face unto the isles of Greece (11:18). These islands and coastlands were controlled by Rome. Antiochus succeeded in "taking many" of them (11:18).
25. But a prince (a Roman consul) would bring the reproach against them to an end (11:18). The reproach was lifted from off Rome and placed on Antiochus the Great.
26. "The reproach offered by him" (11:18) refers to Antiochus' scornful treatment of the Roman consul and the other ambassadors. They "turned the tables" on Antiochus the Great.
27. According to history, Antiochus the Great returned home and plundered the temple of Jupiter. The heathen worshippers were so enraged by this that they killed him. Thus "he stumbled and fell" as Daniel prophesied (11:19).
28. Antiochus' son, Seluceus Philopater, succeeded him to the throne. He was "a raiser of taxes" (11:20).
29. He sent his tax-collector Heliodorus to Jerusalem to plunder the temple, but Heliodorus poisoned him. And so he was slain "neither in anger, nor in battle" (11:20).
30. His death is recorded in the book of II Maccabees 3:24, 25 (Apocrypha).
31. Antiochus the Great was followed by Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 BC), who in turn was succeeded by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164

BC), the notorious persecutor of the Jews described in detail in Daniel 11:21-35.

32. In these fascinating prophecies we have an accurate prophetic picture of this period, "which would be remarkable even if it was history. As prophecy, it bears the unmistakable imprint of divine inspiration" (John Walvoord, *Daniel the Key to Prophetic Revelation*).
33. This brings us up to the infamous Antiochus Epiphanes, the prototype of the coming antichrist (11:21).

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. S. Lewis Johnson said, "It has been estimated that there are 135 prophecies in this first part of Daniel chapter 11 which have come to pass exactly as Daniel wrote them in history."
2. Dr. Johnson has said that the historical facts in Daniel's prophecies are so minutely accurate "that rationalists have been utterly unable to discredit their correspondence with the facts," and have hopelessly attempted to prove that the prophecy must have been written after the events.
3. When we read Daniel chapter 11, we see that after the death of Alexander the Great, there were constant conflicts between the king of the north and the king of the south.
4. The purpose of Daniel in this is to narrow down the identity and the place and origin of the coming antichrist.
5. In chapter 7, Daniel has already revealed that the "little horn" (the antichrist) will come from the fourth of the great world empires, i.e., the revived Roman Empire.
6. Daniel 11 traces world history up to Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21), and then on to the antichrist (11:36), which we will look at next week, Lord willing.

