

History Foretold
Daniel 11:1-35

Introduction

Frequently in our study of Daniel I have emphasized the importance of fulfilled prophecy as proof of God's intervention into the affairs of man. Only God can know accurately what will occur in the future. He cites this ability in Isaiah 46:9-10 as proof that He is God saying, *"⁹ Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; [I am] God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰ Declaring 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.'"*

Isaiah 44:6-8 tells us that God would reveal to the prophets things that would occur in the future so that His word would be confirmed in their fulfillment. *"Isaiah 44:6-8 (LSB), ⁶ "Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts: 'I am the first, and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me. ⁷ 'Who is like Me? Let him call out and declare it; And let him tell it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient people. And let them declare to them the things that are to come And the events that are going to take place. ⁸ 'Do not be in dread and do not be afraid; Have I not long since caused it to be heard to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none.'"*

In Isaiah 41 the Lord rebukes the nations for their idolatry and false gods and compares their ability with His own. In verses 21-24 the Lord challenges them, *²¹ "Bring near your case," Yahweh says. "Bring forward your mighty arguments," The King of Jacob says. ²² Let them bring it forth and declare to us what is going to take place; As for the former events, declare what they were, That we may establish our heart on them and know their outcome. Or cause us to hear of what is coming; ²³ Declare the things that are to come afterward, That we may know that you are gods; Indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together. ²⁴ Behold, you are nothing, And your work is non-existent; He who chooses you is an abomination."*

Fulfillment of prophecy was set in the Mosaic Law as one of the tests of whether a prophet was true or false. If they were 100% accurate, they were from God. If they were anything less than that, they were false and were to be stoned (Deuteronomy 18:19-22).

This morning we come to Daniel 11 which is one of the most extensive sections of fulfilled prophecy that occurs in one passage in all of the Bible. In addition, the prophecies in this chapter are very detailed and not just general statements. One of the ways that fortune tellers are able to get people to believe them is by making general statements that can then be fulfilled in many different ways. For example, if someone prophesied that it was going to be a hard winter, that general statement could be applied to the weather, to health, to economics or even personal relationships. How could you really know if the prophecy was fulfilled if you are not sure what it was even about? If someone made a prophecy that this will be a harsh winter with 35 days of sustained sub-zero temperatures and a total accumulation of 15 feet of snow in Wappinger, New York, you could easily verify the veracity of the prophecy. The more detailed the prophecy, the more assurance there can be about its accuracy.

In the earlier chapters of Daniel, there have been previous visions and revelations concerning the future. Some were general and some had elements that were quite detailed, but even the general ones were clear enough to cause liberal scholars to deny that Daniel was written before the second century B.C. The chapter we begin to examine today has caused them great consternation so that they are

vehement in their denial that this event happened to Daniel in 536 B.C. Since they do not believe there is a God that knows and can control future events, they insist that this was all written after the fact.

Their god is impotent. Aren't you glad that our God, the Most High, is omniscient, omnipotent and sovereign?

The Coming of the Prophecy - Daniel 10

Last week we studied Daniel 10 and I emphasized the ministry that angels have to humans. While these spiritual beings, even the good ones, can be frightening, it is a comfort to know that God sends angels to minister to us. Just like Gabriel in Daniel 9, the angel that reveals this prophecy was sent to Daniel in answer to his prayer. This angel also strengthened Daniel as needed. We also saw last week that angels, both good and evil, are organized and have a hierarchy. While this angel had a personal ministry to Daniel, he also became involved with angelic ministry that occurs on a national scale. He had been delayed by the demon that was seeking to influence Persia until Michael, an archangel associated with the protection of Israel, came and assisted him.

While we learned a lot about angels in Daniel 10, the chapter itself is actually an introduction to this prophecy recorded in Daniel 11 and 12. This prophecy came from God through an angelic messenger. It is most important to point out Daniel 10:21 that though this angel will be returning to continue the battle against the demon over Persia, what this angel is going to tell Daniel is *"what is inscribed in the writing of truth."* This book contains God's decrees of what will occur in the future. Though the events had not yet been revealed by history, they would surely happen. Psalm 139:16 probably refers to the same book. It states, *"Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained [for me], When as yet there was not one of them."*

The future is unknown to us, but what will happen has already been written down by God, and history will unfold just as He has decreed. That is a comfort for those of us who have placed our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ because it means that we are safe in His hands. His promises will be kept because they are according to the Father's decree. Regardless of what happens between now and then, in the end He wins and therefore we do too. We can endure the tribulations of this present world just as Jesus did by setting our goal as the prize that is set on the other side (Hebrews 12:2; Philippians 3:14f).

Angelic Action - Daniel 11:1

The angel begins his revelation to Daniel by telling of his own ministry. *"I Now I, in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood to strengthen and to be a fortress for him."* This angel's ministry specifically concerned Darius the Mede beginning his first year, so the angel has already been doing this for over two years.

It is not hard to see both the angelic and demonic influences upon Darius in Daniel 6. When Darius came to power he soon recognized Daniel's qualities and quickly appointed him to an important position with plans for an even greater position. Evil enemies influenced Darius resulting in Daniel being thrown in the lions' den, but an angel shut the mouths of the lions. These evil men were then destroyed by being thrown into the lions' den in Daniel's place, and Darius made a new decree exalting God. If these various actions were influenced by demons and angels, and I believe they were, then we learn something about the influence and intervention that demons and angels can have upon man.

Daniel's enemies lead Darius astray by playing up to his pride. They were the direct source of influence and they persuaded him to sign the decree they had made up, but Darius alone was responsible for the decision and giving authority to that decree. The angel sent to encourage and protect him was apparently unable to stop this. The saying, *"the devil made me do it,"* is a lie. He can't make you do it. Demons can only influence. The same is true for good angels. People are responsible for their own decisions and actions.

At the same time, we see the direct intervention of the angel in shutting the mouths of the lions so that Daniel was not hurt by them. Though angels are spiritual beings, they can interact in the physical dimensions, and in this case the angel provided physical protection for Daniel.

While we do not know how angels and demons battle one another, we know that they do. The glimpses that we get into those conflicts between these spiritual beings are frightening to us. 1 Peter 5:8 describes the devil as a roaring lion prowling to see whom he may devour. Yet, we take comfort that God is greater and is in control. James 4:7 informs us that our plan of action in dealing with the demonic is simple. *“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”*

The Persian Empire - Daniel 11:2

The angel then tells Daniel about certain key events that will take place in the Persian empire.² *“So now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to stand 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 kingdom of Greece.”*

The angel tells Daniel what is written in the book of truth in 538 B.C., Cyrus' third year (Daniel 10:1). Cyrus died in 529 B.C. and was followed by Cambyses, called Ahasuerus in Ezra 4:6. He was followed in 522 B.C. by Psuedo-Smerdis, also known as Bardiya and Arataxerxes (Ezra 4:7). His reign was short and in 521 Darius I Hystaspes ascended the throne (Ezra 4:24). Those are the three kings referred to in this verse. Twenty-five years later in 486 B.C. the fourth king, Xerxes, takes the throne. This is the Ahasuerus in Esther. He used his great wealth to amass over a four year period a great army of perhaps up to 1 million men to invade Greece which he did in 480 B.C. He was defeated, but it was this invasion that stirred up Greece to form its own empire and the motivation for Alexander the Great to invade the Medo-Persian empire 150 years later. The rest of the kings that followed Xerxes are unimportant to the purpose of the prophecy and so are not mentioned and the attention turns to Greece in verse 3.

The Rise of the Greek Empire - Daniel 11:3-4

³ *“And a mighty king will stand, and he will dominate with great domination and do as he pleases.”*⁴ *“But as soon as he stands, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his own descendants, nor according to his domination with which he dominated, for his kingdom will be uprooted and given to others besides them.”*

Verse 3 describes the nature and power of Alexander the Great. He rose quickly and gained great authority to do as he pleased. We saw in our study of Daniel 8 how Alexander gained authority over Greece and Macedonia and then conquered territory south to Egypt and east to India in just 10 years.

Verse 4 succinctly describes the break up Alexander's kingdom. Remember that he died suddenly in 323 B.C. at the age of 33 when he was at the peak of his power. There were several years of contention among various factions that sought pieces of the empire, but by 308 B.C. all of Alexander's relatives had been murdered. By 301 B.C. the leading generals had divided the empire up into four kingdoms. Cassander took the West - Macedonia & Greece. Lysimachus took the North - Thrace and Western Asia Minor. Ptolemy took the South - Egypt. Seleucus took the central and East - from Syria to the boundaries of India. The prophecy was fulfilled. The kingdom was divided up to the four points of the compass; all of his descendants were dead, and it was not according to Alexander's authority.

The Kings of the South vs The Kings of the North - Daniel 11:5-20

Since the ultimate concern of this prophecy is Israel, the attention now turns to the two kingdoms that will have a direct impact on it. Throughout the rest of the chapter, the reference to the kingdom of the south is the Ptolemaic dynasty based in Egypt and the kingdom of the north is the Seleucid dynasty based in Syria. Israel was located between these two kingdom and so their battle with each other

necessarily included Israel which was alternately dominated by one or the other. I will only be including information about these two dynasties as they relate to this prophecy. That may become confusing enough to those not familiar with this period of history, and it would be overwhelming to include all of it.

⁵ *“Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with one of his princes who will grow strong over him and obtain dominion; indeed, his domain will be a great dominion.”*

This is Ptolemy I (Soter) who declared himself king of Egypt in 323 B.C. He protected Seleucus Nicator from Antigonus, a fifth general under Alexander, that tried to gain power. They defeated Antigonus at Ispis in 301 B.C. which enabled Seleucus to successively gain control of southern Asia Minor and east all the way to India. As the years went by, his domain became greater than what Ptolemy had in Egypt thus fulfilling this prophecy.

⁶ *“And after some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out an equitable arrangement. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he continue to stand with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who fathered her as well as he who strengthened her in those times.”*

This describes a political marriage that was supposed to bring a peaceful alliance between the two dynasties. Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.) forced this upon the Selucid king, Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.) by making him divorce his wife, Laodice (or Laodiceia), and marry his daughter, Berenice, about 252 B.C. However, when Ptolemy II died a few years later in 246 B.C., Antiochus put Berenice away and brought back Laodice as his queen. However, Laodice feared her husband's fickleness and took revenge by poisoning Antiochus. She then murdered Berenice, Berenice's son and her Egyptian servants. As Scripture had predicted, she did not retain power but was given up along with those who had been with her and supported her.

⁷ *“But one of the descendants of her line will stand in his place, and he will come against their military force and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display strength.”* ⁸ *“And also their gods with their metal images and their desirable vessels of silver and gold he will bring into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will stand back from attacking the king of the North for some years.”*

Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.), had succeeded their father and was heading north to protect her, but she was murdered before he arrived. He attacked and defeated Seleucus Callinicus (246-226 B.C.) conquering Syria, Cilicia and Mesopotamia to the Tigris river. He returned to Egypt with great booty. Jerome says this included 40,000 talents of silver, and 2,500 precious vessels and idols including some that had been taken from Egypt by Cambyses nearly 300 years earlier. The idolatrous Egyptians named him Euergetes, meaning benefactor, because of that. Ptolemy III made a truce with Seleucus Callinicus and gave the lands he conquered to friends to govern. He then remained himself in Egypt. The end of verse 8 is probably better translated as in the NKJV *“as he shall continue [more] years than the king of the North.”* Ptolemy III outlived Seleucus Callinicus by four years.

⁹ *“Then the latter will enter the kingdom of the king of the South, but will return to his own land.”* Sometime between 240 & 235 B.C. Seleucus Callinicus attempted an invasion of Egypt. However his fleet is destroyed in a storm and he was defeated and returned home humiliated.

¹⁰ *“And his sons will wage war. So they will gather 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.”* Seleucus Callinicus fell off his horse and died and was succeeded by his sons. First, the elder one,

Seleucus III Ceranus (226-223 B.C.) raised an army to retake the lands that had been conquered by Egypt previously, but he died in an early battle in Asia Minor. This left the army and throne to his 15 year old brother, Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B.C.). His large army then flooded through conquering territory including parts of Israel and the trans-Jordan by 219 B.C. He let up and then went on the offensive again in 217 B.C. conquering up to the Egyptian fortress at Raphia in lower Gaza.

¹¹ “And the king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will cause a great multitude to stand, but that multitude will be given into the hand of the former. ¹² “Then the multitude will be carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail. ¹³ “And the king of the North will again cause a much greater multitude than the former to stand, and at the end of the times of those years, he will keep on coming with a great military force and much equipment. ”

Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-203 B.C.) had been nearly inactive while Antiochus the Great recaptured the northern lands. He and his wife, Arsinoe, were more interested in enjoying a life of ease. However, this action of threatening Egypt itself enraged him. The two armies met at Raphia. Ptolemy had 70,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry and 73 elephants to meet Antiochus' slightly larger force of 72,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and 102 elephants. Jerome states that “*Antiochus lost his entire army and was almost captured as he fled to the desert.*” Though cities in Palestine and Syria quickly swore allegiance to him, Ptolemy did not follow up on his victory and he made peace with Antiochus. Ptolemy's victory was not good for the Jews for he profaned the Temple in Jerusalem but was struck speechless when he tried to enter the Holy of Holies. When he returned to Egypt, he murdered 40,000 Jews who refused to embrace Egyptian idolatry.

Ptolemy Philopater and his wife mysteriously died in 203 B.C. leaving their four year old son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes on the throne. This was Antiochus' opportunity. In the 14 years since his defeat at Raphia, he had grown strong and wealthy by conquering lands in the east. He formed an even larger army than his previous one to attack Egypt again.

¹⁴ “Now in those times many will stand against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to cause the vision to stand, but they will fall down.”

This was also an opportune time for other nations to get involved and for insurrection. Even the Jews sought relief from Egyptian rule and some of the violent ones got involved in a conspiracy that may have been motivated by visions recorded in Daniel 8 & 9. They were thwarted by Ptolemy's prime minister. At the same time other nations such as Philip V of Macedonia made alliances with Antiochus seeking the downfall of Egypt.

¹⁵ “Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp, and capture a well-fortified city; and the might of the South will not stand, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. ¹⁶ “But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will be able to stand in opposition to him; he will also stand for a time in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand.”

Antiochus the Great attacked in 198 B.C. and he defeated Egyptian general Scopas at Paneas near the headwaters of the Jordan river. Scopas retreated to the well fortified city of Sidon. A choice army under three Egyptian leaders, Eropas, Menacles and Damoyenus, tried to break the siege and rescue Scopas but failed. Sidon fell to Antiochus the Great and he gained control of everything south to Gaza including the “Beautiful Land” - Israel. This was not good news for those Jews that had supported Egyptian power, for Antiochus slew many of them.

¹⁷ “And he will set his face to come with the authority of his whole kingdom, bringing with him an equitable proposal which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to destroy it. But she will not take a stand for him or be on his side.”

Antiochus had planned to invade Egypt itself but had been too busy with wars in other places. With the rise of Roman power and his conflict with them he decided that it was best to make an alliance with Egypt which he did by arranging for his daughter, Cleopatra, to marry Ptolemy V Epiphanes who was then 13 years old. With her came a dowry of Coelo-Cyria, Samaria, Judea and Phoenicia, and so Ptolemy agreed and they were married in 193 B.C. The plan was for Cleopatra to bring a controlling Syrian influence upon Egypt, but the plan was thwarted because Cleopatra consistently sided with her husband against her father.

¹⁸ *“Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a ruler will make his reproach against him cease; moreover, he will repay him for his reproach.”*

Antiochus also had other troubles. He had thought of himself as another Alexander the Great and had earlier conquered several Aegean islands and some portions of Greece, but this brought him into conflict with Roman interests. He was scornful to the Roman ambassador that had met him in Lysimachia saying that Asia did not concern the Romans and he was not subject to their orders.

Roman General Lucius Cornelius Scipio (Scipio Asiaticus) defeated him at Thermopylae in 191 B.C. and drove him out of Greece. He then soundly defeated him in 189 B.C. in the Battle of Magnesia on the Maeander river near Ephesus and then forced him to surrender all his lands in Asia Minor. Rome then boasted about what they were now doing to Antiochus' interests. His scorn had been returned upon his own head.

¹⁹ *“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 returned to his own land defeated and broken. He was now subjugated to the Romans and had to pay them a 1,000 talent tribute each year. He came to an end in 187 B.C. when he tried to rob a temple in Elam to replenish his treasury. He and his guards were all killed in the insurrection it incited.

²⁰ *“Then in his place one will stand who will have an oppressor pass through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be broken, though not in anger nor in battle.”*

Seleucus IV Philopator came to the throne next. Though he was the Syrian king, he was also in reality a Roman vassal. The required annual tribute to Rome only added to the heavy taxes he required throughout his kingdom. He sent a man named Heliodorus to collect special taxes from the Jews. He was the oppressor sent through the “*Jewel of his kingdom.*” Heliodorus plundered the treasures from the Temple at Jerusalem. Soon after this Seleucus Philopater died, not from anger or in battle, but from poisoning, possibly at the hands of Heliodorus.

Conclusions

The prophecy continues in great detail in verses 21-35 about Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the next man to take power in Syria. He is correctly described in verse 21 as a vile or despicable person. We have met him before in our study of the “*little horn*” in Daniel 8:9-14, 23-26. There is so much written about him here we will have to wait until our next study in Daniel to have enough time to examine it.

We have already seen so much detail in the verses we studied today that we have to remind ourselves that this was given as prophecy and not history. It is a great confirmation about both the nature and power of God and His revelation of truth to us. The Lord indeed does know the end from the beginning, and He will bring to pass what He promises. That is a comfort to us in the present time as we see such evil arise around us in our own state and nation and around the world. God has not lost control. Everything is moving forward to fulfill prophecies that were given long ago but are just as sure as those already fulfilled as seen in this study. More importantly, our hope of forgiveness of sins by God's grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ and of spending eternity in heaven with Him is dependent on God having the power and ability to control the future. Fulfilled prophecy demonstrates that He does.

Sermon Notes - 10/22/2023
History Foretold - Daniel 11:1-20

Introduction

Only God can know accurately what will occur in the _____ - Isaiah 46:9-10; 44:6-8; 41:21-24

A prophet had to be _____ accurate or he was to be stoned - Deuteronomy 18:19-22

Daniel 11 is the most extensive section of detailed and _____ prophecy in the Bible

The more _____ a prophecy, the more assurance there can be about its accuracy

The god of the liberals is not _____ of revealing the future, but the God of the Bible has done so

The Coming of the Prophecy - Daniel 10

It is a comfort to know that God sends angels to give personal _____ to us.

Angels, good and bad, are organized and have a hierarchy - some of them have _____ influence.

The angel is revealing to Daniel “*what is inscribed in the writing of _____.*”

The future is unknown to us, yet is already _____ down to some degree

We can endure the present for God’s sovereignty assures us He can fulfill His promises for the _____

Angelic Action - Daniel 11:1

The angel began a ministry of encouragement and protection of _____ the Mede in his first year

The angelic battle for influence of Darius can be seen in what takes place in _____

Angels and demons can _____, but they cannot force a human to do something against their will

Angels can interact in the physical dimensions and provided physical _____ for Daniel

Angelic warfare is beyond us, so _____ to God and resist the devil causing him to flee (James 4:7)

The Persian Empire - Daniel 11:2

The fourth king, _____ (Ahasuerus) was very wealthy and stirred up Greece by invading in 480 B.C.

The Rise of the Greek Empire - Daniel 11:3-4

Verse 3 describes the nature and power of _____ the Great

Verse 4 succinctly describes the break up of _____ kingdom

The Kings of the South vs The Kings of the North - Daniel 11:5-20

These are the Ptolemaic dynasty based in _____ and the Seleucid dynasty based in Syria

_____ is the ultimate focus of the prophecy, so what is mentioned is what has bearing on that nation

Verse 5 - This is fulfilled in Ptolemy I (Soter) and Seleucus Nicator whose kingdom becomes _____

Verse 6 - Ptolemy II forces Antiochus II to marry his daughter, Berenice, but they are _____.

Verses 7-8 - Ptolemy III Euergetes conquers most of Syrian empire and brings back great _____

Verse 9 - Seleucus II tries to invade Egypt, but a storm wrecks his fleet, he is _____ and returns home

Verse 10 - Seleucus III raises an army, but dies. His brother, Antiochus III _____ to border of Egypt

Verse 11f - Ptolemy IV Philopater _____ Antiochus III, but does not solidify gains and persecutes Jews

Verse 13 - Ptolemy IV dies 14 years later and Antiochus III (the Great) _____ with a larger army

Verse 14 - A coalition joins Antiochus III, but an insurrection of _____ seeking an overthrow is defeated

Verse 15,16 - Antiochus III _____ Ptolemy's armies and occupied Israel and slew many Jews

Verse 17 - Antiochus III has his daughter, _____, marry Ptolemy V, but she sides with her husband

Verse 18 - Antiochus III captures Aegean Islands & parts of Greece, but _____ Asiaticus defeats him

Verse 19 - Antiochus III returns to his own land defeated, and then is _____ while robbing a temple

Verse 20 - Seleucus IV sends Heliodorus to collect heavy _____ from the Jews. He is killed by poisoning

Conclusions

The fulfillment of such detailed prophecy is _____ of the nature and power of God

Our hope in God's promises are dependent on His ability to control the _____.

KIDS CORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children**

- draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch.

Older Children - Count how many times each of the following names occur: Ptolemy, Seleucus, Antiochus.

Discuss with your parents the importance of fulfilled prophecy.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What evidence is there that only God can accurately know the future? Why is this important? What does this tell us about prophecy? What was the purpose of the angel coming to Daniel? What will the angel do after he leaves Daniel? What is the source of the angel's information? What do we learn about what angels and demons can do / not do from Daniel 6? The rest of the questions concern the details in Daniel 11:2-20. What is the importance of the 4th king in verse 2? How are verses 3-4 fulfilled in the rise Alexander the Great and the breakup of his empire? What dynasty is referred to by the "king of the South"? By the "king of the North"? Who are the people referred to in verse 6 and why does the plan fail? How does Ptolemy III Euergetes fulfill verses 7-8? How does Antiochus III the Great fulfill verses 10-19? Who is referred to in verse 20? What must be true for us to have a hope in God's promises?