

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:1 “And as for me, **in the first year of Darius the Mede**, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

Dan 11:2 “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**.

Dan 11:3 Then **a mighty king shall arise**, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills.

Dan 11:4 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.

Dan 11:5 “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.

c. 539 BC, when Babylon is overthrown by Darius the Mede (Cyaxeres II?) and Cyrus the Persian defeat it.

After Cyrus, there were:

- * Cambyses II (reigned 530 BC - 522 BC)
- * Smerdis (522 BC);
- * Darius Hystaspes (522 BC - 486 BC).
- * The fourth is Xerxes the Great (486 BC - 465 BC). Xerxes invades Greece c. 480 BC and is defeated at Salamis and Platea, 479 BC)

Alexander the Great, c. 333 BC.

Alexander dies 323 BC. His vast kingdom is eventually divided into four:

- * Seleucids (Syria and the north)
- * Ptolemies (Egypt, Cilicia, and parts of Palestine - of the south)
- * Lysimachus (Asia Minor and Thrace)
- * Cassander (Greece and Macedon).
- * *None of Alexander's children reign.*

[Focus here on is between Seleucids and Ptolemies, the largest of the two, and most to do with Palestine)

Ptolemy Soter ruled the South first. “His” refers to Alexander the Great. The prince here is Seleucus Nicator, first to rule the North.

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:6 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.

Dan 11:7 “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.

Dan 11:8 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.

Dan 11:9 Then the **latter** shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.

Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus Theos make a treaty through the promised marriage of Ptolemy’s daughter, Berenice Phenophorous (“Dowry Bearer”). Around 252 BC, she married the Seleucid monarch Antiochus II Theos, who divorced his wife Laodice I and transferred the succession to Berenice's children.

In 246 BC, when Ptolemy died, Antiochus II took up again with his first wife, Laodice. Antiochus died shortly thereafter, many suspect from poisoning. Queen Berenice claimed the regency for her infant son Antiochus however, she and her son were both killed by Laodice.

Berenice's brother, **Ptolemy III Euergetes**, succeeded their father and set about to avenge his sister's murder by invading Syria and having Laodice killed.

As part of his victory, Ptolemy III Euergetes carried the idols of the North back to Egypt. This was thought to rid the North of their divine protection. After this, he settles back in Egypt and does not pursue the annihilation of the North or the Seleucids.

“Latter” = king of the North, now Seleucus Callinicus (reigns 246 - 225 BC). He invades Egypt, but is defeated (c. 240 BC).

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:10 “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.

Dan 11:11 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.

Dan 11:12 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.

Dan 11:13 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.

Dan 11:14 “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.

Seleucus Callinicus’ sons were Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great (223 - 187 BC). They invaded and conquered the whole Middle East, and parts of Asia Minor - even to Egypt. Ceraunus dies in battle in 221 BC.

Ptolemy IV Philopator (221 - 203 BC) raises an army to counterattack. Antiochus the Great raises the great multitude, but loses at the Battle of Raphia, 217 BC.

Ptolemy IV Philopator does not press the advantage he has gained, but returns to Egypt with the fame of the victory.

Antiochus the Great returns with another, greater army in 204 BC.

“Many” - Antiochus the Great is in treaty now with the king of Macedon; with rebels from Egypt; and with Jews rebelling against Ptolemy. The Jews’ aim seems to be to ‘fulfill the vision’ (Messianic prophecy?); but fail in their attempt. Six years later (c. 198 BC), Antiochus the Great invades Jerusalem and kills many whom he thought supportive of Egypt.

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:15 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.

Dan 11:16 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**.

Dan 11:17 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**.

Dan 11:18 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.

Dan 11:19 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.

The forces of Ptolemy V Epiphanes under the general Scopas took refuge in the city of Sidon, but were eventually forced to surrender an army of 10,000 after Antiochus' siege (c. 196 BC).

"He" still refers to Antiochus the Great.

See above re: invasion of Jerusalem, c. 198 BC.

Antiochus the Great decides to invade Greece (now under treaty with Rome). In concert with Hannibal of Carthage, he needs to pacify Egypt first. He sends his daughter Cleopatra (NOT "that" Cleopatra) to marry Ptolemy V Epiphanes in a treaty (c. 194 BC). His thinking is that Cleopatra will influence Ptolemy V to side with Antiochus. She does the opposite.

Antiochus the Great invades Greece, but is defeated soundly by the Roman general Scorpio Asiaticus at Magnesia in 190 BC. Rome places a heavy yearly tribute on Syria, including the holding as hostage the sons or relatives of Antiochus the Great.

Antiochus the Great returns to Syria to rebuild, but dies in 187 BC.

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:20 “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.

Dan 11:21 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.

Dan 11:22 Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant.

Dan 11:23 And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people.

Dan 11:24 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.

Seleucus IV Philopator, son of Antiochus the Great (reigned 187 BC - 175 BC). He sends one Heliodorus to seize the Temple treasury (c. 178 BC), but this plan is thwarted. In 177 BC he poisons Seleucus IV, but is overthrown by Seleucus' younger brother, **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**. [The rightful heir should have been Seleucus IV's heir, Demetrius, but he was in Rome as a hostage].

Either refers to the covenant with Ptolemy V Epiphanes; or to the Jewish High Priest, Onias III, whom he later deposed and replaced with a Hellenist named Jason (Joshua).

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (reigns 175 BC - 163 BC). He invades and conquers all of Palestine and Lower (northern) Egypt.

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12 The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:25 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.**

Dan 11:26 Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.

Dan 11:27 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.**

Dan 11:28 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.

Dan 11:29 “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before.

Ptolemy VI Philometor (reigned 181 - 164 BC). He had several plots against him.

Attempted and hollow treaties between Antiochus IV and Ptolemy of Egypt.

What kings decide doesn't matter. God has appointed an end of the Jews' desolation and captivity (through Christ's spiritual work).

Antiochus IV was raised at Rome and worshipped Mars (god of war); and Jupiter. He hated Judaism, and sought to exterminate it.

A third invasion of Egypt, c. 169 BC.

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:30 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.

Dan 11:31 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.

Dan 11:32 He shall seduce with flattery **those who violate the covenant**, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.

Dan 11:33 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.

“Ships of Kittim” - Kittim refers to the islands of the Mediterranean, esp. Cyprus. Rome sends Gaius Popilius Laenas as embassy. Popilius, by himself, walks in front of Antiochus IV’s army, tells him that to advance further means war with Rome. He draws a circle around Antiochus in the sand, and tells him that Antiochus has to make up his mind before leaving that circle. Antiochus returns back to Syria.

“Antiochus plundered the city, killed eighty thousand persons, men, women, and children, took forty thousand prisoners, and sold as many into slavery, 2 Macc. 5:5, 6, 11-14. As if this were not enough, under the guidance of the high priest Menelaus, he went into the sanctuary, uttering blasphemous language, took away all the gold and silver vessels he could find there, the golden table, altar, and candlestick, and all the great vessels, and that he might leave nothing behind, searched the subterranean vaults, and in this manner collected eighteen hundred talents of gold. He then sacrificed swine on the altar, boiled a piece of the flesh, and sprinkled the whole temple with the broth. [2 Macc. 5:15-21; 1 Macc. 1:21-28; Diodorus Siculus 34.1; Jahn, “Hebrew Commonwealth,” p. 264.]” - Albert Barnes’ *Notes*.

Antiochus IV outlaws Judaism on pain of death. Many Jews apostatized over to Greek ways and worship.

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:34 When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery,

Dan 11:35 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.

Dan 11:36 “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.

Dan 11:37 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.

Dan 11:38 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.

“Time of the end” = time when the wrath upon Israel and Jews ended; i.e. the time when Messiah appears.

Who is this king? Possibilities include:

1. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (*St. Jerome, S. R. Driver, et al.*)
2. Herod the Great (*Phillip Mauro*)
3. Constantine the Great (*Jewish interpretation of R. Ibn Ezra, contra Christianity*)
4. The Romans, collectively (*Calvin*).
5. = “the little horn” of Daniel 7, an apostate Christian (possibly the pope), who sets up a capitol in Jerusalem during the last 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation after the Rapture (*Walvoord, Pentecost, dispensationalism*)
6. The pope of Rome (*many reformed*)
7. Future Antichrist (*non-dispensationalists*)

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12 The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:39 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.

Dan 11:40 “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.

Dan 11:41 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.

Dan 11:42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

Dan 11:43 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.

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12 The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Dan 11:44 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.

Dan 11:45 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.

Dan 12:1 “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

Dan 12:2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Dan 12:3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

Dan 12:4 But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

The History Behind Daniel 11 & 12

The Seleucids and the Ptolemies

Daniel 12:5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream.

Dan 12:6 And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, "How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?"

Dan 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

Dan 12:8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?"

Dan 12:9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

Dan 12:10 Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.

Dan 12:11 And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.

Dan 12:12 Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.

Dan 12:13 But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days."