

## Daniel 11

For a good portion of the chapter, we see Daniel being told what will take place in the future. When I was young and growing up in the Bible, this was the kind of material that might have bored me, but it has now become a point of inspiration and encouragement in my life. One thing I don't like to do is speak definitively about the future, because I understand that once I do, it becomes an objective and external standard that hangs over me. It makes me think of the Chinese idiom 一言既出, 驷马难追, which means, "The words one speaks cannot be dragged back by even four horses," highlighting the irreversible and binding nature of spoken words.

When God makes claims about the future, He is binding His reputation to seeing them through. If what He says does not happen, then He is not who He claims to be. I know that He is all-powerful and will indeed see it through, but that should not cause us to overlook the stakes that are on the line every time He speaks.

Despite these high stakes, God has continually spoken many words to many people and has proven Himself to be true and powerful. This means that if God can speak truthfully about massive realities—such as the geopolitics of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean—then the things He has claimed about me and my future are also true. So when He says that "[He] will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5, ESV), we know that God not only intends to do this, but also has the power to ensure that it happens.

One thing you could do with your group is to go to passages such as Romans 8, Psalm 23, or John 10:27–30 (perhaps the best option, since it is the shortest of the three) and have the students identify the promises of God found there. Then remind them that God has spoken these words and is willing to put His name and reputation on the line, because He fully intends to keep them.

When it comes to understanding the historical events described in this passage, we can see over time that what was spoken of did in fact come to pass. The chart below is meant to help us see how these events unfolded, but there are two important things we need to keep in mind.

First, you'll notice that the chart stops at verse 35. This is because, beginning at that point, there is a significant loss of consensus regarding who the figures are, and the passage becomes much more open to interpretation. Many also believe that this section is describing events that are still future and have not yet been fulfilled, unlike what we see in the first two-thirds of the chapter.

Second, there is a strong case to be made that this passage functions as a kind of *double prophecy*. In other words, much (or all) of it was fulfilled in one historical sense, but may also play out again in a greater or fuller way in the end times. This pattern is consistent with other

prophecies from Scripture that spoke both to events happening in their own time—such as the rebuilding of the temple—and to the coming of Christ, often without clearly separating the two.

### Daniel 11 – Key People and Figures

<b><i>Daniel 11 Reference</i></b>	<b><i>Title / Description</i></b>	<b><i>Historical Identification</i></b>	<b><i>Notes</i></b>
11:2	Kings of Persia	Cambyses II, Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius I, Xerxes I	Xerxes launches campaign against Greece
11:3	Mighty King	Alexander the Great	Rapid conquest of Greek empire
11:4	Divided Kingdom	Ptolemy I and Seleucus I	Empire divided after Alexander's death
Throughout	King of the South	Ptolemaic Dynasty (Egypt)	Repeated opposition with Northern kings
Throughout	King of the North	Seleucid Dynasty (Syria)	Major oppressor of Israel
11:6	Daughter of the King of the South	Berenice	Political marriage, later murdered
11:7	Branch from Her Roots	Ptolemy III	Avenges Berenice's death
11:21	Contemptible Person	Antiochus IV Epiphanes	Desecrates the temple
11:22	Prince of the Covenant	Onias III (High Priest)	Removed and murdered
11:31	Those Who Profane the Sanctuary	Forces of Antiochus IV	Abomination of desolation (167 BC)
11:32	People Who Know Their God	Faithful Jews / Maccabees	Resist persecution
11:33–35	The Wise	Teachers and faithful leaders	Suffering refines God's people

