

# “THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD”

DANIEL 11:1-45

**Theme:** The struggle by men to resist the will of God is useless – it is far better to find comfort in the power of a Sovereign God.

## I. The Domination of the Weak – 11:1-20

### A. The Prophecy of the Struggle for Dominance – vv. 1-4

1. This portion of Scripture provides such a precise prediction of future events that the liberal “scholars” are incredulous – believing that someone very late had to have written this portion.
2. We begin with the angel *“tell[ing] you the truth”* – that is, what has been determined by God and is irrevocably *“inscribed in the writing of truth”* – cp. **10:31**.
3. He states: *“Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia”* – Cyrus was already ruling, so these must refer to:
  - a) Cambyses (530-522 BC)
  - b) Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521)
  - c) Darius (521-486)
4. *“Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them”* – a reference to Xerxes (486-465 BC) (Ahasuerus of Esther), who was indeed the most wealthy of the Persians.
5. *“As soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece,”* which happened as Xerxes raised an army of 2 ½ million to invade, but it did not result in any gain for Persia.
6. Then *“a mighty king will arise”* refers to Alexander the Great, who is very clearly described here.

### B. The Pattern of the Struggle for Dominance – vv. 5-20

1. Over the following several verses, a struggle is predicted that would come to pass exactly as it had been anticipated some 215 years before it even began and would cover a period of approximately 375 after it was predicted.
2. This is an incredible period that we cannot take time to examine but read through this section and understand that it is incredibly accurate.
3. The phrase *“king of the South”* refers to Egypt governed by the

Ptolemies, while the *“king of the North”* refers to Syria controlled by the Seleucids, two kingdoms that came out of the Empire of Alexander the Great.

4. The kings identified in this section are as follows:
  - a) **11:5** - *“king of the South”* = Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 BC)
  - b) **11:5** - *“king of the North”* = Antiochus II “Theos” (261-246 BC).
  - c) **11:6** - *“the daughter of the king of the South”* = Berenice.
  - d) **11:7** - *“one of the descendents of her line”* = Ptolemy III “Ergetes” (246-222 BC).
  - e) **11:8** - *“king of the North”* = Seleucus Callinicus (247-226 BC).
  - f) **11:10** - *“His sons”* - Seleucus III and Antiochus III (the Great) (224-187 BC).
  - g) **11:11** - *“king of the South”* = Ptolemy Philopater (222-205 BC).
  - h) **11:11** - *“king of the North”* = Antiochus the Great.
  - i) **11:17** - *“the daughter of women”* = Cleopatra given to the king of the South = Ptolemy Epiphanes.
  - j) **11:18** - *“commander”* - the Roman Lucius Scipio.
  - k) **11:20** - *“one who will arise”* - Seleucus Philopater (187-176 BC).
  - l) **11:20** - *“an oppressor”* - Heliodorus - a tax collector.
  - m) **11:21** - *“a despicable person”* = Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC).
5. The point of this entire section is to provide a general outline of history that would involve a season of unusual difficulty for the people of God sandwiched between the *“king of the North”* and the *“king of the South.”*
6. *“Nothing more was to be demonstrated than that God knew what would come to pass. That knowledge again constituted a sure proof that God could also control what He foreknew.”<sup>1</sup>*

## II. The Desecration of that Which Is Holy – **11:21-35**

### A. The Flagrancy of the Desecration – **vv. 21-31**

1. We now move to a *“king of the North”* whose reign is given far more treatment than any of the previous kings – primarily because he serves as a type of the ultimate enemy of God’s people – the

---

<sup>1</sup> Leupold, p. 492.

Antichrist.

2. His reign was filled with the following characteristics of governing:
  - (1) *“Intrigue”* – v. 21
  - (2) *“deception”* – v. 23
  - (3) *“bribery”* – v. 24
  - (4) *“schemes”* – v. 25
  - (5) *“a heart . . . set against the holy covenant”* – vv. 28-31
3. The culmination of this man’s antagonism against God is seen in the *“abomination of desolation”* – mentioned later by Christ as typifying the action of the Antichrist – cp. **Matthew 24:15**.
4. Josephus describes these abominations as follows: *“And when the king had built an idol altar upon God’s altar, he slew swine upon it, and so offered a sacrifice neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to forsake the worship which they paid their own God, and to adore those whom he took to be gods; and made them build temples, and raise idol altars, in every city and village, and offer swine upon them every day. He also commanded them not to circumcise their sons, and threatened to punish any that should be found to have transgressed his injunction. And indeed many Jews there were who complied with the king’s commands, either voluntarily, or out of fear of the penalty that was denounced; but the best men, and those of the noblest souls, did not regard him, but did pay a greater respect to the customs of their country than concern as to the punishment which he threatened to the disobedient; on which account they every day underwent great miseries and bitter torments; for they were whipped with rods and their bodies were torn to pieces, and were crucified while they were still alive and breathed: they also strangled those women and their sons whom they had circumcised, as the king had appointed, hanging their sons about their necks as they were upon the crosses. And if there were any sacred book of the law found, it was destroyed; and those with whom they were found miserably perished also.”*<sup>2</sup>

## **B. The Fortitude of the Devout – vv. 32-35**

1. As in any era, some faithful men withstood the pressure of persecution to remain faithful to their God – *“but the people who*

---

<sup>2</sup>Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Box XII, 4)

*know their God will display strength and take action.”*

2. The *“action”* they took was to teach people the word of God – *“those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many.”*
3. However, the cost was dear – *“yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days.”*
4. A reference is made that God will not abandon them, *“when they fall they will be granted a little help”* – most likely a reference to the work of the Maccabees, described by God as *“little”* for it was not a work that looked to God but in the arm of the flesh.
5. Finally, a transition indicates that the peril faced by God’s people will continue *“in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.”*
6. This is a catch-all phrase that describes the perpetual peril faced by the people of God from the days of Antiochus Epiphanes to the era of the Antichrist, who is still future.<sup>3</sup>

### III. **The Defiance of the Will of God – 11:36-45**

#### A. **The Pomposity by the Antichrist – vv.36-39**

1. Although great even today, the ultimate defiance of God will climax in the attitude of the Antichrist, whose policies and efforts are here briefly described.
2. He is described as follows: *“Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods.”*
3. His time is short, however, limited by the will of God that he so blatantly defies: *“and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.”*
4. His defiance of God follows the pattern of Romans chapter one and results in an unnatural character in several areas:
  - a) Unnatural attitude toward religion – *“He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers.”*
  - b) Unnatural attitude toward sexual orientation – *“or for the*

---

<sup>3</sup> The anti-Semitism seen throughout the world – even the US – during this most recent war in Israel is an continued unfolding of this prophecy.

*desire of women.”*

- (1) Another possibility is that this is a reference to the fact that he will have no regard for that which was the desire of all women – the right to be the mother of the Messiah.
  - (2) If *“desire”* is viewed as subjective instead of objective, it would mean that he will have no regard for God or the Son of God.
- c) Unnatural attitude toward himself – *“nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all.”*
5. Instead, he will be viewed as worshiping warfare and force – cp. **vv. 38-39.**

**B. The Problems of the Antichrist – vv. 40-45**

1. However, his career will not be without problems. When God so determines, *“at the end of time,”* he will see groups of people revolt against him, and he’ll have to busy himself “putting out the fires” of rebellion.
2. *“The king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him.”*
3. *“He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall”* - this may be the opening hostilities resulting in the Battle of Armageddon – **Zechariah 14:2.**
4. Despite temporary victories, things will continue to degenerate for him until *“rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.”*
5. Having reached the zenith of his power with Israel prostrate at his feet, *“he will pitch his tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.”* – an end that is swift and certain.
6. Christ will come in power against the Antichrist and his army, as his forces are spread through the valley of Jehoshaphat (**Joel 3:2, 12.**), east of Jerusalem – cp. **Revelation 19:11-21.**

**The struggle by men to resist the will of God is useless – it is far better to find comfort in the power of a Sovereign God.**