

An Historical Key for Daniel 11¹

Daniel 11:2–5 – 535 BC – 320s BC

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.

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

Kings of the South

Ptolemy I Soter (323–285)
 Ptolemy II (285–246)
 Ptolemy III (246–221)
 Ptolemy IV Philopater (221–204)
 Ptolemy V (204–181)
 Ptolemy VI (181–145)

Kings of the North

Seleucus I Nicator (312–280) BC
 Antiochus I (280–261)
 Antiochus II (261–246)
 Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226)
 Seleucus III (226–223)
 Antiochus III (223–187)
 Seleucus IV (187–175)
Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164)

Introduction

Three . . . and a fourth. This follows the pattern of three kings and four. 2:21–45; 7:1–8; 8:1–14

The next four kings: [1] Cambyses (530–522 BC); [2] Gaumata (522 BC); [3] Darius I Hystaspes (522–486 BC); [4] Xerxes / Ahasuerus (486–465 BC) . . .

“There were actually more than four kings between Cyrus and Darius III [the king Alexander deposed] (c. 336–331 BC). As before, the point of the four-part scheme is to summarize history, not count kings.” (Paul House, *Daniel*, 171)

Richer than all of them. Darius III, the one deposed by Alexander

he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. Darius III would provoke Philip of Macedon (359–336 BC) and his son Alexander the Great (336–323 BC). The latter would depose Darius III.

Mighty king. Alexander the Great

Broken and divided. No heirs when he died.

Four winds of heaven. Alexander’s kingdom split

- Cassander (Macedonia and Greece)
- Lysimachus (Thrace and Asia Minor)
- Seleucus (Syria)
- Ptolemy (Egypt)

King of the south, shall be strong. Ptolemy

The King of the South: The Ptolemies

The King of the North: The Seleucids

¹ Historical dates and names sourced from the commentaries of Paul House, *Daniel* (2018) and Mitchell Chase, *Daniel* in ESV Expository Commentary (2018). Quotes cited below.

Daniel 11:6–13 – 249 BC – 200 BC

⁶ After some years . . . they shall make an alliance,

and the daughter of the king of the south [Berenice] shall come to the king of the north [Antiochus II] 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.

⁷ “And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He [Ptolemy III] shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.

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 [Seleucus II?].

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

¹⁰ “His sons [Seleucus’s 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.

¹¹ Then the king of the south [Ptolemy III], moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north [Antiochus III]. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. 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.

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.

After some years . . . 320–249 BC.

Make alliance. A marriage alliance.

Daughter of the king of the south . . . king of the north. In 249 BC, Antiochus II marries Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II.

Shall not endure. Berenice and her child were murdered. Her father [Ptolemy II] also died that year.

A branch from here roots . . . Ptolemy III, Berenice’s brother, who sought to avenge his sisters murder.

. . . enter the fortress of the king of the north. Ptolemy III waged war from 246–241 BC.

He shall carry off to Egypt . . . the South proves more powerful for a time.

For some years . . . there is pause in the warfare.

Then the latter shall come into the realm. Seleucus II pump fakes.

Raise up a great multitude. Battle of Raphia, an Egyptian outpost on the frontier of Palestine in 217.

Exalted . . . but not prevail. Ptolemy III will win the battle, but in his pride he will not prevail.

The king of the north will invade with a great army. Antiochus III (220–187 BC) responded well to the threat of Ptolemy IV. By 200 BC, the Seleucids were on top again.

Daniel 11:14–20 – 200 BC – 175 BC

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.

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. 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.

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.

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 [Rome] shall turn his insolence back upon him.

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.

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.

The violent among your own people. These are Jews who support the Seleucids. They supported the Seleucids, because of the corrupt connections between Ptolemies and the Priests.²

He shall stand in the glorious land. As a result of partnering with Seleucids, the priests and Ptolemies will be overthrown, and the Seleucids will enter Jerusalem and capture the city.

Bring terms of agreement. After winning the city of Jerusalem, for the sake of securing his kingdom, the king of the North (Antiochus III) will make an agreement with the Ptolemies.

Coastlands. In seeking to expand his territory, Antiochus III offended the Romans.

He shall turn back his insolence. Rome defeated him in 191 and 189 BC.

Exactor of tribute. In need of money, after a costly war, Seleucid IV replaced Antiochus III, but he was probably assassinated in 175 BC.

This led to Antiochus IV.

² “High priests of Jerusalem ruled civic and religious affairs by 200 BC. Charles (1929: 288) notes that the Ptolemies bolstered a corrupt, greedy high priest in Jerusalem, which led some Jews to support the Seleucid side. If so, the angel reveals that some Jews will invite the help of a dynasty that will eventually defile the temple and city.” (Paul House, *Daniel*, 173)

Daniel 11:21–28 – 175 BC – 169 BC

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.

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

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.

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. ²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south [Ptolemy VI] 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. ²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.

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.

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.

Contemptible person. Antiochus Epiphanes.
No royal majesty . . . flatteries. Fourth in line to the throne, he claimed throne through intrigue, flattery, murder.

Prince of the covenant. There is uncertainty here.

1. A secular king with whom A. E. is in alliance
2. More likely, a high priest appointed within term of God's covenant. Probably, Onias III, the high priest Antiochus IV dislodged in 175 BC and killed in 171 BC (House, 174)

He shall act deceitfully. After deposing Onias III, he sold HP to the highest bidder – this started with Jason (2 *Macc.* 4:7–8) and led to Menelaus (2 *Macc.* 4:23–26)

He shall devise plans . . . he shall stir up his power . . .

Verses 24–27 may predict Antiochus IV's victories over Egypt in 169 and 168 BC. In 169 BC he was successful enough that he established a puppet king in Egypt. Of course, some Egyptians had to collaborate for this plan to succeed. Very quickly, however, the divided Egyptian royal household reunited . . . and his plans for ruling through his intermediary fell apart. In 168 BC Antiochus IV defeated Egypt, only to have Rome force him to go home (cf. Dan 8:22–25). (House, 175)

Two kings . . . speaking lies. *In a plan to expand his Egyptian control, Antiochus decided to collude with the defeated Ptolemy VI. The "two kings" planned "on doing evil," sitting at the same table and speaking lies to each other regarding agreements they had no intention of keeping (v. 27). Antiochus IV's plans fell through when Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VII were unexpectedly reconciled and became coregents in Egypt [marshalling their forces against Antiochus]. (Chase, 151)*

He shall return . . . Antiochus plundered Egypt without capturing Alexandria. So he returned to his land.

His heart shall be set against the holy covenant. On the way, he set to put down an insurrection in Jerusalem, led by Jason, seeking to reclaim the priesthood. Antiochus reacted violently, killing 80,000 Jews (2 *Macc.* 5:12–14)

Daniel 11:29–35 – 168 BC – 161 BC

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

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.

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

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

At the time appointed he shall return . . . the south.

Antiochus returns to war against Ptolemy in 168 BC, because he needed funds (House, 176). But this would be his undoing.

The ships of Kittim [LXX: Romans]. The Romans attack him and he returns home.

Take action against the holy covenant . . . pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant. The holy covenant is the covenant of God’s people. Starting in 167 BC until 164 BC, Antiochus reigns down terror on Jerusalem.

The Abomination of Desolation. *Antiochus “forbade the Scriptures, circumcision, Jewish festivals, and sacrifices, all upon penalty of death (cf. 1 Macc. 1:41–51, 56–67). On December 6, 167, the “abomination” was set up in the temple (1 Macc 1:54). This was probably an idol of Zeus (2 Macc. 6:1–2). Ten days later, on December 16, sacrifices—including pigs—were offered on the altar (1 Macc. 1:47, 59; 2 Macc 6:4) (Chase, 152)*

Those who violate the covenant . . . the wise.

Persecution divided the people into 2 groups.

A Little help. The Maccabees have often been identified here. That is not certain, but possible.

These writers consider the Maccabees as ‘the little help’ because they revolted against Antiochus IV, and were able to restore proper temple worship by 167 BC. However, they could not secure purity and safety for long. By 161 BC they sought help from Rome, and battles with external and internal foes continued for decades. Though they recovered the temple, the Maccabeans hardly solved all the problems that Antiochus IV had caused. (House, 177)

Key resistance came from the priest Mattathias and his five sons: John, Simon, Judas (sometimes called Maccabees, which may mean ‘the hammer’), Elazar and Jonathan. They headed the Maccabean rebellion (166-164 BC), which resulted in Jerusalem’s recapture by the Jews and the temple’s reestablishment. The recaptured temple was cleansed and then rededicated on December 14, 164—an event that became known as Hanukkah. (Chase, 152)

An Comparison of Daniel 11:21–35 and Daniel 11:36–12:4

While some (e.g., Gleason Archer, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*) argue for seeing only the Antichrist in Daniel 11:36–45, there are others who argue for Antiochus IV. This stands on the use of Hebrew parallelism in Daniel, as well as many textual connections between verses 21–35 and verses 36–45. In the interest of helping you see what’s in the text, so that you can make a decision on this difficult passage, I have included two lists of textual connections. These connections along with commentary can be found in Mitchell Chase’s commentary on Daniel, in the *ESV Expository Commentary*.

Here is an outline of the section, which sees Daniel 11:36–12:4 as depicting Antiochus Epiphanes Writ Large. In my view, he is both an historical figure and a type of all antichrists, including a final Antichrist.

The **History** of Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21–35)

- A The Attitude of Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21–24)
- B The Abomination of Antiochus Epiphanes (11:25–35)

The **Typology** of Antiochus Epiphanes (11:36–12:4)

- A’ THE ATTITUDE OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES (11:36–39)
- B’ THE ABOMINATION OF ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES (11:40–12:3)

A Comparison between Daniel 11:21–24 and Daniel 1:36–39

1. The verses begin by referring to a king (vv. 21, 36) who is not explicitly called the ‘king of the north.’	
<p>Daniel 11:21 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.</p>	<p>Daniel 11:36 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.</p>
2. The king will be contemptible and seek his reign selfishly (v. 21) and will be self-exalting (vv. 36–37).	
<p>Daniel 11:21 ²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and <u>obtain the kingdom by flatteries.</u></p>	<p>Daniel 11:36–37 (ESV) ³⁶ “And the king shall do as he wills. <u>He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god,</u> 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. 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 <u>he shall magnify himself above all.</u></p>

3. The king will exhibit military might (v. 22) and will honor a god of fortresses (vv. 37–38).	
Daniel 11:22 ²² <u>Armies shall be utterly swept away</u> before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant.	Daniel 11:37–38 (ESV) 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. ³⁸ <u>He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these.</u> A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.
4. The king will break the prince of the covenant (v. 22) and will speak against the God of gods (v. 36).	
Daniel 11:22 ²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the <u>prince of the covenant</u> .	Daniel 11:36 ³⁶ “And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall <u>speak astonishing things against the God of gods</u> . He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done.
5. The king will enter into agreements that will aid his plans and spread his power (vv. 23, 39).	
Daniel 11:23 ²³ And from the time that <u>an alliance is made</u> with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people.	Daniel 11:39 ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses <u>with the help of a foreign god</u> . Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonic power exalts human rulers, or the help of God’s people (Chase) • 2 Kings 3:26–27
6. The king will scatter plunder and goods (v. 24), and will load with honor those who side with him (v. 39).	
Daniel 11:24 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, <u>scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods</u> . He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.	Daniel 11:39 ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. <u>He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.</u>
7. The king will devise plans against strongholds (v. 24) and deal with the strongest fortresses (v. 39).	
Daniel 11:24 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 <u>strongholds</u> , but only for a time.	Daniel 11:39 ³⁹ He shall deal with the <u>strongest fortresses</u> 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.

A Comparison between Daniel 11:25–35 and Daniel 11:40–12:4

1 The opening verse(s) refer(s) to the king of the south engaging in conflict with the king of the north.	
Daniel 11:25–27 ²⁵ And he [<u>the king of the north</u>] shall stir up his power and his heart against the <u>king of the south</u> with a great army. And the <u>king of the south</u> shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. ²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷ <u>And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil.</u> They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.	Daniel 11:40 ⁴⁰ “At the time of the end, the <u>king of the south</u> shall attack him, but the <u>king of the north</u> 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.
2 The king of the north shall come against the Jews.	
Daniel 11:28 ²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but <u>his heart shall be set against the holy covenant.</u> And he shall work his will and return to his own land.	Daniel 11:41 ⁴¹ He shall come into <u>the glorious land</u> [Israel]. 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.
3 The king of the north shall go against the king of the south again.	
Daniel 11:29 ²⁹ “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before.	Daniel 11:42–43 ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. 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.
4 The plans of the king of the north shall be interrupted by intervening news and/or forces, and he shall leave in fear.	
Daniel 11:30 ³⁰ For <u>ships of Kittim</u> shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, <u>and shall</u> 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.	Daniel 11:44 (ESV) ⁴⁴ But news <u>from the east</u> and the north shall <u>alarm him</u> , and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction.

5 The king of the north shall again come against the Jewish people, this time with even greater fury.	
<p>Daniel 11:30–31</p> <p>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. ³¹ <u>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.</u></p>	<p>Daniel 11:44–45</p> <p>⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and <u>he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction.</u> 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.</p>
6 Many people of Israel shall perish in the wake of the destruction imposed by the king of the north.	
<p>Daniel 11:32–35 (ESV)</p> <p>³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. ³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, <u>though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.</u> ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery, 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.</p>	<p>Daniel 11:44–45</p> <p>⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury <u>to destroy and devote many to destruction.</u> 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.</p>
7 During the tribulation caused by the king of the north, the Jewish people shall experience deliverance.	
<p>Daniel 11:32–34</p> <p>³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. 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. ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery,.</p>	<p>Daniel 12:1</p> <p>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.</p>
8 Some Jews shall have compromised hearts that do not worship Yahweh, and these wicked shall be judged.	
<p>Daniel 11:32–34</p> <p>³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. 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. ³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery,</p>	<p>Daniel 12:2</p> <p>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.</p>

9 A group of 'wise' Jews shall instruct others in faithfulness and righteousness.	
<p>Daniel 11:32–33</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Daniel 12:3</p> <p>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.</p>
10 God shall ensure a good and glorious outcome for this persecuted people and the 'wise.'	
<p>Daniel 11:35</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Daniel 12:2–3</p> <p>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. 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.</p>