

Detailed Prophecies That Have Been Fulfilled Quite Literally

Daniel 11:1-35

Daniel 11:1-35 - *“Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.)”*² *And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.*³ *Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.*⁴ *And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.*⁵ *“Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion.”*⁶ *And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority,^[a] and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.*⁷ *But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail.*⁸ *And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North.*⁹ *“Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land.”*¹⁰ *However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife.*¹¹ *“And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy.”*¹² *When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail.*¹³ *For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.*¹⁴ *“Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall.”*¹⁵ *So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces^l of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist.*¹⁶ *But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.*¹⁷ *“He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him.”*¹⁸ *After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him.*¹⁹ *Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.*²⁰ *“There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.”*²¹ *And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.*²² *With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.*²³ *And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people.*²⁴ *He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall*

disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.

²⁵ “He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. ²⁶ Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. ²⁷ Both these kings’ hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time. ²⁸ While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land. ²⁹ “At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. ³⁰ For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. “So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹ And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation. ³² Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits. ³³ And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. ³⁴ Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. ³⁵ And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.”

Background Notes

Critics of the Bible don't like fulfilled prophecy because it shows the accuracy of the Bible and supports the fact that the Bible is the Word of God! So what do the critics do with the Book of Daniel, since it has so many detailed prophecies that have already been fulfilled, as we've seen? Answer: they try to move the date for the writing of Daniel forward so (from critic's point of view) the author (or authors) of the Book of Daniel were writing history -- not prophecy! But, the critics say, these authors were writing the book in such a way that it **sounds** like prophecy written earlier by Daniel!

The problem with this entirely incorrect view, of course, is that the Book of Daniel was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are dated conservatively to at least 150BC. These manuscripts were copies, which indicates that the original writing of the Book of Daniel was much earlier.

We've already seen in our studies of Daniel that many of the prophecies of this book were fulfilled after the time of the Dead Sea Scroll copies - prophecies concerning the Roman Empire, for example, and of course the coming of the Messiah, including the Messiah being cut off. Even the most radical critics of the Bible must logically acknowledge that the prophecies of Daniel that have already been fulfilled support the claim of the Bible to be of divine origin.

In verse 1 we read that the angel who came to give Daniel the message had given encouragement and service to Darius the Mede from his first year – that would be 539BC. (Remember that Darius the Mede **may** be another name for Cyrus the Persian.) In any case, we know from Daniel 10:1 that the year of this final vision was 536BC. So the point of Daniel 11:1 is that God had been at work behind the international scene to bring His people back to Jerusalem –just as He promised! In Daniel 11 the angel gave Daniel further detailed prophetic information as to what was to take place on the international scene in the near future, as well as the far future.

Doctrinal Points

1. Daniel's final vision revealed the coming Persian and Greek kings.

In verse 2 Daniel was told that three more Persian kings would rise after Cyrus. We know from history that these three kings were Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Darius I of Persia. Then a fourth Persian king would arise who would be rich and powerful. This was Xerxes I, another name for the "Ahasuerus" of the Book of Esther. Xerxes I was indeed rich and powerful, but eventually he was defeated by the Greeks.

This led to the rise of Alexander the Great, the mighty king of the Greek Empire (v3). He not only brought down the Persian Empire, but he conquered most of the ancient world. However, Alexander reigned for only a few years because of his untimely death in 323BC. We see in verse 4 that his kingdom would be divided into four divisions (east, west, north and south). In line with this prophecy, the Greek Empire was not passed on to Alexander's sons (who both were murdered), but was eventually divided between four of Alexander's military generals.

Remember the four heads of the leopard in Daniel 7 and the four horns of the goat in Daniel 8? Two of these divisions, the Seleucid kingdom to the north of Israel and the Ptolemaic kingdom to the south of Israel, became very significant in reference to Israel, as we see in the following verses.

2. Daniel's final vision revealed the coming Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings.

In verses 5-35 we read of the kings of the north and the kings in the south. The kings of the north or Syria would be the Seleucid kings, and the kings of the south or Egypt would be the Ptolemaic kings. These verses are very detailed about the conflicts between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms.

It can be shown that all of these very involved prophecies concerning the conflicts between the Ptolemaic kingdom and the Seleucid kingdom were **fulfilled in history, right down to the last detail**. The daughter of the king of the south (v6), for example, was Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II of Egypt, who married Antiochus II of Syria in an arranged political marriage. But the marriage was short-lived because they both were murdered within a few years. Israel was under the control of the Ptolemies, but when Antiochus III came to the throne, he eventually brought Israel under the control of the Seleucid kingdom. Antiochus the III was called "Antiochus the Great," and he is the king of the north referred to from the end of verse 10 through verse 19. The fortified city that he captured (v15) and where the Egyptian forces surrendered was Sidon, which is on the coast of Lebanon today.

Antiochus the Great was welcomed into Jerusalem as their deliverer from the Ptolemies (v16): *"But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power. ¹⁷ "He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him."*

In an attempt to come to peace with the Ptolemies, Antiochus the III gave his daughter, Cleopatra, to the boy king Ptolemy the V of Egypt, but she sided with her husband against her own father (v17). (By the way, this Cleopatra was not the better-known Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, who came later.)

The further expansion campaigns of Antiochus were cut short by Roman forces (v18) and Antiochus III died back in his home base of Antioch in Syria (v19). His son, Seleucus the IV, ruled for a short time but was poisoned by his own tax collector after he sent an oppressor to collect taxes from Israel, the jewel of his kingdom (v20).

From verse 21 through verse 35, we have the predicted details of the reign of wicked Antiochus IV of the Seleucid kingdom, and later years of the Inter-testamental Period. Remember that Antiochus IV was the “Antiochus Epiphanes” (the “little horn” of Daniel 8) who persecuted the Jews horribly. In 172BC he killed the high priest Onias III, called the Prince of the Covenant (v22). In 168BC he entered Jerusalem, killed 80,000 Jewish men and desecrated the Temple (v28).

The ships of the western coastland, or Cyprus (v30), were Roman forces that turned Antiochus back from his latest attack on Egypt. Antiochus then vented his wrath on Israel by again desecrating the sanctuary, sacrificing a pig on the altar and erecting an image and altar to Zeus (v31). In verse 32 we see that some of the Jewish people participated in this idolatry imposed by Antiochus, but the godly Jews rose up and took action – this was the Maccabean revolt. Many were killed in this struggle, and not every Jew was committed to this godly cause (v33-35), but finally in 165BC the Temple was cleansed and Israel gained a measure of independence. The Jewish people still celebrate that cleansing and rededication of the Temple to this day, during the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah. Antiochus Epiphanes died, insane, in 163BC.

Practical Application

God knows and cares about all the future details of your life!

First question: If God knew well ahead of time all the intricate and involved details of the Inter-testamental Period, right down to marriages, movements, and military results, does God **know** all the intricate details of your future? The obvious answer is: of course He does! Aren't you glad that He knows and you don't?

Second question: Does God **care** about all the future details of your life? Again, the obvious answer is: of course He does! Aren't you glad that He not only knows your future, but He **cares** about your future?

Look again at verse 35: *“And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.”* As God was using (and continues to use) all of the intricate and involved details of history to refine, purge, and purify His people Israel, so in the words of Romans 8:28-29, *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*

God is working all the details of your life (including future details) together for a purpose: to sanctify you, and to make you become more like Christ.

Remember, God **knows** and **cares** about all the future details of your life!