

World History From Darius to the Time of the End

by John F. Walvoord

The book of Daniel contains a detailed and specific prophecy of the future, which corresponds closely to history, confirming its accuracy and divine inspiration.

Scripture: Daniel 11:36-45

Topics: "End Times", "Antichrist Prophecy"

Description

In this sermon, John F. Walvoord delves into the detailed prophecy of Daniel 11, highlighting the transition from the historical fulfillment of events with Antiochus Epiphanes to the future unfulfilled prophecies concerning the end times. The passage shifts to describe a king who exalts himself above all gods, speaks blasphemous words against the God of gods, and prospers until the appointed time of indignation. This king, whether a Jew or a Roman world ruler, is depicted as a tyrant who disregards all deities, including the Messianic hope symbolized by 'the desire of women.' The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the symbolic nature of the text in relation to the future reign of the Antichrist and the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.

Transcript

The long introduction of chapter 10 to the fourth and final vision given to Daniel is followed in chapter 11 by the revelation of important events beginning with Darius the Mede (539 b.c.) and extending to the last Gentile ruler in the time of the end. Chapter 11 naturally divides into two major sections. The first, verses 1-35, describes the major rulers of the Persian Empire and then gives in great detail some of the major events of the third empire following Alexander the Great, concluding with Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 b.c.). The entire period from the death of Antiochus Epiphanes to the time of the end is skipped over with no reference to events of the present church age, and the second section, verses 36-45, deals with the last Gentile ruler who will be in power when Christ comes in His second advent. This is followed in chapter 12 by further prophecy of the last 1335 days, a period including the great tribulation, the second advent, and the beginning of the fifth or millennial kingdom. Probably no other portion of Scripture presents more minute prophecy than Daniel 11:1-35, and this has prompted the sharpest attack of critics seeking to discredit this prophetic portion.

Interestingly enough, it was the eleventh chapter of Daniel with its detailed prophecy of about two hundred years of history that prompted the heathen philosopher Porphyry (third century a.d.) to attack the book of Daniel as a forgery. In his study, Porphyry established the fact that history corresponded closely to the prophetic revelation of Daniel 11:1-35, and the correspondence was so precise that he was persuaded that no one could have prophesied these events in the future. Accordingly, he solved the problem by taking the position that the book of Daniel was written after the events occurred, that is, it was written in the second century B.C. This attack prompted Jerome to defend the book of Daniel and to issue his own commentary, which for over one thousand years thereafter was considered the standard commentary on the book of Daniel. As Wilbur Smith has said, "The most important single work produced by the Church Fathers on any of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, commenting upon the original Hebrew text, and showing a complete mastery of all the literature of the Church on the subjects touched upon to the time of composition, is without question St. Jerome's Commentary on the Book of Daniel."578

The controversy between Jerome and Porphyry has characterized discussion of the book of Daniel ever since, as has been noted in earlier discussion. Here, however, the lines are clearly drawn as the prophecy is detailed and specific, and fulfillment has already occurred. Daniel 11:1-35 is either the most precise and accurate prophecy of the future, fully demonstrating its divine inspiration, or as Porphyry claimed, it is a dishonest attempt to present history as if prophesied centuries earlier. Modern critics of Daniel have not gone much beyond the basic premise of Porphyry, namely, that such detailed prophecy is impossible, and, therefore, absurd and incredible.579

Farrar, expressing the critics's point of view in a modern setting, introduces his chapter on Daniel 11 with this summary:

If this chapter were indeed the utterance of a prophet in the Babylonian Exile, nearly four hundred years before the events—events of which many are of small comparative importance in the world's history—which are here so enigmatically and yet so minutely depicted, the revelation would be the most unique and perplexing in the whole Scriptures. It would represent a sudden and total departure from every method of God's providence and of God's manifestations of His will to the mind of the prophets. It would stand absolutely and abnormally alone as an abandonment of the limitations of all else which has ever been foretold.580

Leupold observes that Farrar's criticism was answered long before he made it by Hengstenberg and others who cite numerous passages in the Bible of detailed prophecy which at least support the idea that prophecy can be detailed and specific.581

A case in point is the whole subject of Messianic prophecy which predicted the coming of Christ with hundreds of details. The Median conquest of Babylon as a result of the drying up of the Euphrates River and the Babylonian drunken feast is anticipated in detail in Jeremiah 50-51 (note especially 50:38; 51:32, 36, 39, 57). Other illustrations include Isaiah 13:17-18; 21:1-10. In a similar way, prophecies concerning Syria, Phoenicia, Tyre, Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, and the Philistines are given in Zechariah 9:1-8. Actually, however, proof texts are not needed, as the issue is a clear-cut question as to whether God is omniscient about the future. If He is, revelation may be just as detailed as God elects to make it; and detailed prophecy becomes no more difficult or incredible than broad predictions.

Keil attempts to mediate between the skeptic and the position that this is detailed prophecy by distinguishing between prediction of details and prophecy in general. Accordingly, he considers it

unimportant whether the details of the prophecy precisely correspond to history as only the general fact that world kingdoms will not endure and in the end the people of God will be delivered constitutes the burden of this passage. Keil states,

Accordingly, the revelation has this as its object, to show how the heathen world-kingdoms shall not attain to an enduring stability, and by their persecution of the people of God shall only accomplish their purification, and bring on the end, in which, through their destruction, the people of God shall be delivered from all oppression and be transfigured. In order to reveal this to him (that it must be carried forward to completion by severe tribulation), it was not necessary that he should receive a complete account of the different events which would take place in the heathen world-power in the course of time, nor have it especially made prominent that their enmity shall first come to a completed manifestation under the last king who should arise out of the fourth world-kingdom.⁵⁸²

In making this concession to the critics, Keil concedes far more than the record requires. If the text is properly interpreted, the alleged historical errors fade; and Daniel's record stands accurate and complete, although not without problems of interpretation such as are true in any prophetic utterance. The expositor of this portion of Scripture has no convenient compromise between the two diverse views. Either this is genuine prophecy or it is not. The fact that it corresponds so closely to history should be, instead of a basis for criticism, a marvelous confirmation that prophecy properly understood is just as accurate as history. As has been previously pointed out, the attack on the prophecies of Daniel always fall short. The fulfillment of the complete revelation anticipates a situation yet future and could not be considered history even from the point of view of an alleged second-century Daniel.

In attempting the difficult exegesis of this portion, the general principle should be observed that prophecy, as far as it goes, is accurate, but that prophecy is selective. The revelation does not contain all the history of the period nor name all the rulers. It is not always possible to determine why some facts are included and others excluded. But the total picture of struggle and turmoil which characterized the period of the third empire is portrayed by special reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, who is given more space than any other ruler in this chapter because of the relevance of his activities to the people of Israel.

Four Important Kings of Medo-Persia

11:1-2 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

The opening verse of chapter 11 is often considered the closing verse of chapter 10. In it, the angel, seen in 10:18, declares his support to confirm and strengthen Darius the Mede from the very beginning of his reign in Babylon. The statement that the angel "stood" in verse 1 is probably used in *sensu bellico* s. *militari*, that is, standing as in a military conflict against the enemy, as in 10:13. His stand is usually taken as being in support of Darius the Mede, "to confirm and strengthen him," but it is possible that "him" refers not to Darius the Mede—for the angel must fight against the prince of Persia (10:13)—but to Michael, the prince of Israel, on whose side he contends (10:21). In the first year of Darius the Mede when the world power passed from the Babylonian to the Medo-Persian, the angel stood by Michael, the guardian of Israel, until he succeeded in turning the new kingdom from hostility to favor toward Israel. The story of chapter 6 demonstrates that efforts were made in the first year of Darius to make him hostile toward Israel. But God sent His angel on that occasion and shut the lions' mouths (Dan 6:22). The miraculous

deliverance by the angel caused Darius the Mede to reverse his policies to favor Israel (6:24-27). The beginning of the second great empire with the fall of Babylon in chapter 5 was, then, more than a military conquest or triumph of the armies of the Medes and Persians. It was a new chapter in the divine drama of angelic warfare behind the scenes, and the change was by divine appointment.

The survey of history provided in the opening verses of chapter 11 fixes the prophecy as dealing with a period later than Nebuchadnezzar's dream but coinciding with the prophecy of chapter 8 of the ram and the he-goat. Porteous expresses it this way:

The survey of history begins at a slightly later point than in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (ch. 2) and in Daniel's vision of the beasts (ch. 7), but at the same point as in Daniel's vision of the ram and the he-goat (ch. 8). In fact, we are now given the amplification in detail of that vision, the various kings appearing in propria persona and no longer disguised as horns of heraldic beasts. Like Macbeth in the witches' cave, Daniel is supposedly permitted to see king after king appearing on the stage of history, strutting out his part and making way for his successor.⁵⁸³

With the passing of the Babylonian Empire, the natural question arose concerning the future of the Medo-Persian Empire. Concerning this, the angel announces, "And now will I show thee the truth," that is, the truth of what will come to pass in the future (cf. "the scripture of truth," 10:21). Daniel is informed that there will be three kings in Persia to be followed by a fourth far richer and greater than the others, who shall use his strength and riches to stir up all against the realm of Grecia. The identity of these four kings has, of course, been disputed; and Montgomery uses the many different combinations and explanations as an evidence of the incredibility of this prophecy.⁵⁸⁴

The most natural explanation, however, is that the four kings are the first four Persian rulers in addition to Darius the Mede, the point being that later Persian rulers were unimportant and in a state of decline. Assuming that all four kings are still future, Darius the Mede and Cyrus, known as Cyrus II (550-530 b.c.), are probably excluded. Note that the prophecy states, "Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia" or, as the New Berkeley Version translates, "three more kings shall arise in Persia," that is, in the future. The prophecy came to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus (10:1). The four kings would then be Cambyses (529-522 b.c., not mentioned in the Old Testament), Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521 B.C.), Darius I Hystaspes (521-486 b.c., Ezra 5, 6), and Xerxes I (486-465 b.c., Ezra 4:6). This identification has the advantage of taking Persian kings in order, climaxing with Xerxes I who led the great expedition against Greece. Xerxes represents, on the one hand, the acme in the development of Persian power, and, on the other hand, the beginning of its dissolution. Another conservative interpretation eliminates Pseudo-Smerdis, who reigned only briefly, and adds after Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I (465-424 b.c., Ezra 7:11-26) as the fourth ruler. However, according to the prophecy, the fourth ruler is the one who contends against Greece, which was not true of Artaxerxes I.

According to Daniel, the climax of Persian rulers came with Xerxes I who in secular history used his great riches and a period of some four years to gather a great army amounting to hundreds of thousands, one of the largest armies in the ancient world. The expedition which he launched in 480 b.c. against Greece was disastrous, however, and Xerxes never recovered. The Ahasuerus of Esther 1 may be identified with Xerxes I, and the ill-fated expedition against Greece may have occurred between chapters 1 and 2 of Esther. Details on the Persian Empire are not given here because these are covered adequately in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, insofar as they related to the people of Israel and the plan of God, and these records are supplemented by the prophetic books Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The

revelation turns immediately to details of the third empire not given elsewhere in the Word of God.

The Rise and Fall of Alexander the Great

11:3-4 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

One of the by-products of the attack on Greece by Xerxes I is that he incurred the undying hatred of Greece. Montgomery and some critics believe this is the ultimate meaning of "he shall stir up all" in verse 2. Montgomery translates it, "and he will stir up all, namely (?) the kingdom of Greece," and comments, "But the point is not that he made war against Greece (as far as Asia was concerned, Persia remained mistress, n.b., the Peace of Callias 449 B.C.), but rather that the world was aroused against the king." 585 Although there may be question whether this translation is justified, the facts are that Alexander the Great in conquering the Persian Empire was repaying Xerxes I. Alexander the Great was indeed "a mighty king" which Leupold translates "a hero-king" 586 and the remaining description fits Alexander the Great perfectly. He indeed had great dominion and was absolute ruler who did "according to his will."

As previously revealed, in Daniel 8:8, Alexander died prematurely. The expression in verse 4, when he shall stand up, may be translated "while he was growing strong," that is, while still ascending in power. Another rendering, perhaps more normal Hebrew, is "and as soon as he shall have stood up," indicating the brief duration of Alexander's reign. The word stood has the same military connotation as in the preceding verses.

The angel predicts to Daniel that his kingdom shall be broken and divided to the four winds of heaven. This was fulfilled literally in that his kingdom was shattered after his death and not only divided to the four winds, but divided among his four generals. Alexander's empire was not given to his posterity. Hercules, the son of Alexander at the time of his death, whose mother was Barsina, was murdered by Polysperchon. Young Alexander, born posthumously of Roxana, was murdered in 310 b.c. The empire of Alexander the Great, after it fell into the hands of his four generals, did not preserve the glory and power it had in Alexander's day. The strong central rule which had characterized it passed with the death of Alexander. This event, recorded in Daniel's prophecy written about 539 B.C., was fulfilled when Alexander died in 323 B.C.

Ptolemy I Soter and Seleucus I Nicator

11:5 And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

Beginning in verse 5, the struggle between the various kings of the south, that is Egypt, and the kings of the north, that is Syria, begin and are traced by Daniel in this prophecy to the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 b.c), a period of about 150 years. In verse 8, the king of the south is identified as Egypt, and the Septuagint translates south as "Egypt" throughout this passage. Syria is not mentioned by name, as at the time of Daniel's writing, no such nation existed and such a reference would be confusing. In tracing the struggles between Egypt and Syria, the prophecy is selective and not all the rulers are mentioned, but usually the identification is clear.

The king of the south in verse 5 is probably Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 b.c). The one referred to as "he shall be strong above him" is the king of Syria, Seleucus I Nicator (312-281 b.c.). These rulers took the title of king in 306 b.c. Seleucus had fled from Antigonus of Babylon and was temporarily associated with Ptolemy 1. They combined their strength and defeated Antigonus, thus paving the way for Seleucus to gain control of the entire area from Asia Minor to India; and in time, he became stronger than Ptolemy who ruled Egypt. Hence the Scripture says that Seleucus "shall be strong above him [Ptolemy] and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion." This is qualified by the statement in the preceding verse, "not according to his dominion which he ruled." The emergence of Ptolemy as ruler of Egypt and Seleucus as ruler of Syria and surrounding territory laid the basis for these two lines of rulers in their respective countries and also set up a situation where they became rivals. The king of the south was also strong, as verse 5 indicates. The expression one of his princes probably refers to Seleucus described in the clause which follows. A possible translation is "and one of his princes shall be stronger than he." 587

Marriage of the Daughter of Egypt to the King of Syria

11:6 And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

The expression in the end of years means "after a lapse of several years" (cf. 2 Ch 18:2; Dan 11:8, 13). In the passage of time, it was natural that there would be intermarriage for political reasons between Egypt and Syria, and such is pictured in verse 6. The participants were the king of the south, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 b.c.) and his daughter, Berenice, who was married to Antiochus II Theos (261-246 b.c.) about 252 b.c. Passed over without mention is Antiochus I Soter (281-261 b.c.). The marriage was consummated at the demand of Ptolemy Philadelphus who required Antiochus to divorce his own wife, Laodiceia (or Laodice), in order to facilitate this marriage. His intent was to provide a basis of agreement, literally, "to make a straightening" between the two nations. As verse 6 indicates, however, the union was not successful in that "she shall not retain the power of the arm," that is, physical or political power, and neither of the male participants prospered. As it was indicated: "neither shall he stand, nor his arm; but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times." "He that strengthened her," means, "he that obtained her in marriage." Within a few years of the marriage, Ptolemy died; and Antiochus then took back his wife, Laodiceia. To gain revenge, however, Laodiceia murdered her husband as well as his Egyptian wife, Berenice, and the infant son of Antiochus and Berenice. The reference to "he that begat her" is, of course, to Ptolemy II whose death precipitated the murders which followed.

Ptolemy Euergetes and Seleucus Callinicus

11:7-9 But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail: and shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

Subsequent to the events of verse 6, a new king of Egypt known as Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.) succeeded in prevailing militarily over the king of the north, Seleucus Callinicus (247-226 b.c.); and, as

the prophecy indicates, he entered into the fortress of the king of the north, carried into Egypt princes as hostages, some of their idols, and their precious vessels of silver and gold. The expression out of a branch of her roots, literally, the sprouting of her roots, signifies lineage, the immediate ancestry of Berenice. The person referred to is consequently the son of her parents, her own brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes, the successor of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

The Hebrew word translated "princes" (11:8) can be rendered "molten images," and the transportation of the idols indicates the total subjugation of the northern kingdom (cf. Is 46:1-2; Jer 48:7; 49:3; Hos 10:5).⁵⁸⁸ In commemoration of his deed, Ptolemy Euergetes erected the monument Marmor Adulitanum, which boasts that he subjugated Mesopotamia, Persia, Susiana, Media, and all the countries as far as Bactria. The expression shall continue more years than the king of the north is best understood as meaning, "he shall refrain some years from the king of the north" (ASV), that is, "refrain from attacking the king of the north" (RSV).

Verse nine is probably better rendered "And he shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but he shall return into his own land" (ASV, also RSV). The actor is the king of the north, just mentioned in the previous verse, rather than the king of the south.

Jerome, in his commentary, provides this description of the conquest by Ptolemy Euergetes:

He came up with a great army and advanced into the province of the king of the North, that is Seleucus Callinicus, who together with his mother Laodice was ruling in Syria, and abused them, and not only did he seize Syria, but also took Cilicia and the remoter regions beyond the Euphrates and nearly all of Asia as well. And then, when he heard that a rebellion was afoot in Egypt, he ravaged the kingdom of Seleucus and carried off as booty forty thousand talents of silver, and also precious vessels and images of the gods to the amount of two and a half thousand. Among them were the same images which Cambyses had brought to Persia at the time when he conquered Egypt. The Egyptian people were indeed devoted to idolatry, for when he had brought back their gods to them after so many years, they called him Euergetes (Benefactor). And he himself retained possession of Syria, but he handed over Cilicia to his friend, Antiochus, that he might govern it, and the provinces beyond the Euphrates he handed over to Xanthippus, another general.⁵⁸⁹

The precise accuracy of the prophecy written by Daniel three hundred years before it happened has occasioned the attack of the critics, but actually its accuracy is a support for the accuracy of scriptural prophecy as a whole.

Verse 9 as translated in the King James Version seems to imply that the king of the south returns to his own land. A better translation, however, would indicate that he, Seleucus Callinicus, is the subject of the verb shall come into his kingdom and refers to the fact that Seleucus several years after the Egyptian invasion was able to mount a return attack on Egypt about 240 b.c. Seleucus, however, was defeated completely and was forced to "return into his own land."⁵⁹⁰ This, of course, was only the beginning of the seesaw battle between the two nations. The inclusion of this background material leads up to the important point, which is the burden of the prophecy in verses 10-19—the ascendancy of Syria over Egypt and the return of the Holy Land to Syrian control. This set the stage for the persecutions of Israel under Antiochus Epiphanes, which is the major concern of verses 21-35 of this prophecy.

The Struggle Between Seleucus and Antiochus III the Great Against Ptolemy Philopator

11:10-19 But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it. For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed. 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, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him. After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Although Seleucus Callinicus was unsuccessful in his attack on Egypt, his successors described as his sons proved to be more successful. Seleucus III (226-223 B.C.) came to an untimely end, having perished in battle in Asia Minor, but the task was ably carried on by Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B.C.). Because of the passing of Seleucus, the plural of the first part of verse 10 is changed to the singular. Antiochus the Great was able to mount several campaigns against Egypt; and largely because of the indolence of the Egyptian ruler, Ptolemy Philopator (221-203 b.c.), he restored to Syria the territory as far south as Gaza.

The approach of the armies this near Egypt proper aroused the Egyptian ruler, who assembled a large army to combat Antiochus (11:11). In 217 b.c, Antiochus met the Egyptian army at the Palestinian border at Raphia. The Egyptian army was directed by Ptolemy accompanied by his sister-wife, Arsinoe.⁵⁹¹ There were about 70,000 soldiers on each side. The battle resulted in a complete victory for Egypt (11:11-12); and as Jerome comments, "Antiochus lost his entire army and was almost captured as he fled to the desert."⁵⁹² The prophecy was fulfilled that the multitude of the Syrians was given into the hand of the Egyptians. However, a peace had to be arranged because Antiochus had managed to escape. As verse 12 indicates, the Egyptian monarch was too indolent to pursue his advantage; and although the battle was disastrous for the Syrians, it tended to bring peace between the two nations, at least temporarily.⁵⁹³

Meanwhile, Antiochus turned his attention to conquests in the east, in which he was quite successful, gathering strength and wealth. In the period 212-204 b.c. he advanced east to the borders of India and as far north as the Caspian. Ptolemy Philopator and his queen died mysteriously in 203 b.c. and were succeeded by their infant son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

In 201 B.C., Antiochus managed to assemble another great army and again began a series of attacks on Egypt, as described in verse 13-16. The expression the robbers of thy people (11:14) refers to persons who violate law and justice; hence, they are "robbers," or "men of violence" (RSV). As Zockler says, "The oracle refers to the league against Egypt, into which a large number of Jews entered with Antiochus the Great, and to their participation in his warlike operations against that country, e.g., in his attacks on the

garrison which the Egyptian general Scopas had left in the citadel of Jerusalem.⁵⁹⁴ Zockler comments: "The theocratic writer sternly condemns this partial revolt to the Syrians as a criminal course or as common robbery, because of the many benefits conferred on the Jewish state by the earlier Ptolemies."⁵⁹⁵

The reference to establish the vision is probably a prophecy of the afflictions of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes already recorded in Daniel 8 and 9. These troubles appropriately can be regarded as a consequence of the revolt of the Egyptians against Syria. Encouraged by the rising power of Rome which threatened Syria, Egypt fought back. The Egyptian armies led by Scopas were defeated at Paneas, near the headwaters of the Jordan River. Antiochus III subsequently forced Scopas to surrender at Sidon, referred to as "the most fenced cities," literally "a city of fortifications," which the Seleucid king captured in 199-198 b.c. This victory resulted in the Syrian occupation of all Palestine as far south as Gaza. The allusion to "the arms at the south shall not stand" is to the unsuccessful attempt by three Egyptian leaders, Eropas, Menacles, and Damoyenus to rescue the besieged Scopas from Sidon. Threatened by Rome, however, Antiochus effected a diplomatic settlement with Egypt by marrying his daughter Cleopatra to the young king, Ptolemy V Epiphanes in 192 b.c. In so doing, he fulfilled the prophecy "he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him." The expression corrupting her may mean "to ruin the land,"⁵⁹⁶ that is, Antiochus the Great purposed by this betrothal of his young daughter to the seven-year old Ptolemy to ruin his former opponent and present ally. As Young states, "In this stratagem, however, Antiochus fails, because Cleopatra constantly sides with her husband over against her father."⁵⁹⁷

In this series of events, the prophecies of verses 13-17 are accurately fulfilled. Antiochus the Great begins to suffer reverses, however, as indicated in verse 18, where "a prince for his own behalf refers to the Roman consul Lucius Scipio Asiaticus, who, as Young expresses it, "brought about the defeat of Antiochus."⁵⁹⁸ The reference to "the reproach offered by him," refers to Antiochus' scornful treatment of the Roman ambassadors at a meeting in Lysimachia, when he said contemptuously, "Asia did not concern them, the Romans, and he was not subject to their orders."⁵⁹⁹

This defeat came about in the following manner. Having successfully sustained his conquest against Egypt by defeating Scopas, Antiochus then turned his attention to the threat from the west and attempted to equal the conquests of Alexander the Great by conquering Greece. In this he was notably unsuccessful, being defeated in 191 B.C. at Thermopylae north of Athens and again in 189 b.c. at Magnesia on the Maeander River southeast of Ephesus by soldiers of Rome and Pergamum under the leadership of the Roman general Scipio. This fulfilled the prophecies of verses 18 and 19, and from an historic viewpoint, was important in removing from Europe the "control by Asiatic governments. This paved the way for Roman expansion later."⁶⁰⁰

Antiochus the Great, who could have gone down in history as one of the great conquerors of the ancient world if he had been content to leave Greece alone, instead fulfilled the prophecy of verse 19 in that he had to return to his own land, defeated and broken. He was killed trying to plunder a temple in Elam. From the standpoint of the history of Israel, this was important because Antiochus the Great was followed by Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 b.c), who in turn was succeeded by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 b.c), the notorious persecutor of the Jews described in detail in Daniel 11:21-35. In these prophecies, properly interpreted, is an accurate prophetic picture of this period, which would be remarkable even if it was history. As prophecy, it bears the unmistakable imprint of divine inspiration.

Seleucus Philopator, the Raiser of Taxes

11:20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

The Seleucid king ruling between the times of Antiochus the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes, Seleucus IV Philopator, is mentioned here for his oppression by taxation of the people of Israel. Because of the rising power of Rome, he was forced to pay tribute to the Romans of a thousand talents annually.⁶⁰¹ In order to raise this large amount of money, Seleucus had to tax all the lands under his domain, including special taxes from the Jews secured by a tax collector named Heliodorus (2 Mac 3:7) who took treasures from the temple at Jerusalem.⁶⁰² As Zockler points out, "Soon after Heliodorus was dispatched to plunder the temple, Seleucus Philopator was suddenly and mysteriously removed. This explains the statement, "within a few days he shall be destroyed" (11:20), possibly by poison administered to him by the same Heliodorus."⁶⁰³ This set the stage for the terrible persecutions by Antiochus Epiphanes which followed.

The Rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes

11:21-23 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

Beginning with verse 21, a major section of this chapter is devoted to a comparatively obscure Syrian ruler who was on the throne from 175 to 164 B.C., previously alluded to as the "little horn" (Dan 8:9-14, 23-25). He reigned in the days of the decline of the Syrian power and the rise of Rome to the west, and only his death in 164 B.C. prevented his humiliation by Rome. From the standpoint of Scripture and the revelation by the angel to Daniel, this was the most important feature of the entire third empire. The reasons for the prominence of Antiochus IV Epiphanes were his desecration of the Jewish temple and altar, and his bitter persecution of the Jewish people. As is true of the entire section beginning with chapter 8, Gentile dominion is viewed primarily from its relationship to the progress of the Jewish nation. By comparison with Seleucus IV Philopator, his predecessor, he is described as "a vile person." The title Epiphanes, meaning "glorious," was a title which Antiochus gave himself, in keeping with his desire to be regarded as god. The description here given is God's viewpoint of him because of his immoral life, persecution, and hatred of the people of God. His life was characterized by intrigue, expediency, and lust for power in which honor was always secondary.

The expression to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom has reference to the fact that he seized the throne rather than obtaining it honorably. At the time his predecessor died, there were several possible candidates for the throne. Probably the most legitimate ruler would have been Demetrius, the young son of his brother Seleucus IV, who at the time was being held in Rome as a hostage by the Romans. There was also a younger son of Seleucus IV, also by name of Antiochus, who was still a baby in Syria. Antiochus IV, the brother of Seleucus IV, was in Athens at the time of his brother's death. There he received word that his brother Seleucus had been murdered by Heliodorus, as prophesied in Daniel 11:20, "he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle." Montgomery describes this as dying "with his boots on," a disgrace to a king; cf. Saul's death.⁶⁰⁴

Posing as the guardian of young Antiochus who was in Syria, Antiochus IV Epiphanes proceeded to Antioch where by various intrigues, referred to in verse 21 as "he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries," he secured the throne. Meanwhile, young Antiochus was murdered by Andronicus, whom Antiochus IV then put to death, although it is possible that Antiochus himself had laid the whole plot. Heliodorus, who had murdered Seleucus IV, was not able to secure the throne and disappeared. Antiochus IV was therefore secure on his throne and began an active life of military conquest and intrigue in his struggle for power against both Egypt and Rome.

Verse 22 speaks of military activity including several campaigns against Egypt. The prophecy does not attempt to be specific but describes in general how armies on various occasions were destroyed as by a flood and "shall be broken." The reference to "the arms of a flood" may refer to military forces rather than a natural flood.⁶⁰⁵ In other words, he shall be victorious over his enemies. The forces which he overwhelmed include, as Zockler states, "in part the troops of Heliodorus, whom Antiochus routed with the assistance of his Pergamenian allies, and in part the Egyptian forces which sought to deprive him of Coele-Syria soon after his accession to the throne."⁶⁰⁶ When Antiochus learned that the Egyptians were about to attack him, he invaded Egypt in 170 B.C. and defeated the Egyptians in a battle which occurred between Mt. Casius and Pelusium, an area on the southeast sea coast of the Mediterranean Sea halfway between Gaza and the Nile delta.⁶⁰⁷ The battle area is today called Ras Baron.

The reference to the "prince of the covenant" prophesies the murder of the high priest Onias, which was ordered by Antiochus in 172 B.C., and indicates the troublesome times of his reign. The high priest bore the title "prince of the covenant" because he was de facto the head of the theocracy at that time. In 11:28 and 11:32 the "covenant" is used for the Jewish state.

Verse 23 described his various leagues with other nations, especially with Egypt which involved considerable intrigue and deceit. At the time, there was a contest for power between two of Antiochus's nephews, Ptolemy Philometor and Ptolemy Euergetes for control of Egypt. Antiochus supported Ptolemy Philometor, but only for his own gain. Out of it, Antiochus became stronger himself.

Antiochus's Growth in Power

11:24-26 He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers's fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time. And 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 forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

Always active to enlarge his kingdom, either by military devices or intrigue, Antiochus, according to verse 24, like his fathers, robbed the richest places of the country under his control. The prediction He shall enter peaceably means that he attacked the enemy "in a time of security" or "peace," when the enemy did not expect him. Unlike his father, Antiochus IV did not use his wealth secured in this way for personal advantage so much as to buy favor with others and to secure their cooperation. The expression he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches indicates this distribution of the wealth he had secured. According to 1 Maccabees 3:30, "He feared that he might not have such funds as he had before for his expenses and for the gifts which he used to give more lavishly than preceding kings" (RSV).

Among his military maneuvers were several expeditions against Egypt which are indicated in verse 25. Which of the several expeditions this represents is of no importance, as this prophecy is simply describing in general the characteristics of the reign of Antiochus 4: The outcome of the battle was that the king of Egypt was defeated as indicated in the statement but he shall not stand, referring to the king of the south. Even those who should have supported him conspired against him as revealed in verse 26. The result was that, generally speaking, Antiochus was victorious over the Egyptians.

The Wickedness of Antiochus

11:27-28 And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed. Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

The struggle between Syria and Egypt, however, led to various agreements which did not prosper. Neither the rulers of Egypt nor Syria were honorable in their agreements as indicated in verse 27, "they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper." As the last part of verse 27 makes clear, in spite of all his intrigue, Antiochus was fulfilling prophecy on schedule.

Antiochus, returning from Egypt with great riches, began to manifest his hatred against the people of Israel and his covetousness in relation to the wealth of the temple. This is indicated in the statement, His heart shall be against the holy covenant.⁶⁰⁸

Antiochus Opposed by Rome Persecutes the Jews

11:29-31 At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

In another expedition against Egypt, "at the time appointed," that is, by God, he managed to capture Ptolemy Philometor but was finally forced to evacuate Egypt because he failed to take the city of Alexandria.⁶⁰⁹ His success was not as great as in former expeditions, as stated, "it shall not be as the former, or as the latter." Still another invasion of Egypt occurred about 168 B.C. Here, however, he was met near Alexandria by a Roman consul, Gaius Popilius Laenas, who summarily demanded that he leave Egypt at the pain of being attacked by Rome. The Roman consul is reported to have drawn a circle about the king and told him that his decision had to be reached before he stepped out of the circle. Rather than risk a war with Rome, Antiochus, although greatly displeased, withdrew from Egypt immediately and conceded Egypt to Roman power. Prophetically, this is indicated in verse 30 by the statement for the ships of Chittim shall come against him, usually taken as a symbolic representation of Roman power which came from the west past Chittim (also spelled Kittim), a reference to the island of Cyprus which was to the west of his kingdom. The fleet of Laenas sailed to Egypt after the Roman victory over Perseus of Macedon near Pydna south of Thessalonica (June 22, 168 B.C.). In the Septuagint, the expression the ships of Chittim is translated "the Romans," giving the sense if not the exact translation.

Disgruntled by his defeat in Egypt at the hands of Rome, Antiochus Epiphanes seems to have vented his wrath upon the Jewish people as intimated in verse 30 in the expression, "have indignation against the holy covenant." The history of the period is given in 1 and 2 Maccabees. The added statement and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant indicates his affiliation with those who sided with Antiochus, who became his favorites and proteges (cf. 1 Mac 2:18; 2 Mac 6:1).

In the process of his opposition to the Jews, Antiochus polluted the holy altar in the temple by offering a sow upon the altar and forbidding the continuance of the daily sacrifices (cf. 1 Mac 1:44-54). He also issued orders that the Jews should cease their worship and erected in the holy place an idol, probably the image of Zeus Olympius. This represents placing "the abomination that maketh desolate," mentioned in verse 31 to which Christ referred in Matthew 24:15. The parallel prophecy in Daniel 8:23-25 covers the same series of incidents.

This desecration of the temple, in opposition to the Jewish faith, precipitated the Maccabean revolt which was cruelly suppressed by Antiochus with tens of thousands of Israelites perishing. The entire series of incidents, however, including the persecution of Israel, the desecration of their temple, and the stopping of the daily sacrifice, although fulfilled historically in Antiochus' persecution of Israel, is also prophetic of the future persecution of Israel which will result in the great tribulation. The reference in Matthew 24:15 where Christ is describing the beginning of the great tribulation is linked to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus as being similar in kind. Antiochus thus becomes a type of the future man of sin and his activities foreshadow the ultimate blasphemous persecution of Israel and the desecration of their temple.

The Resulting Persecutions of Israel

11:32-35 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

The continued opposition of Antiochus to the Jewish faith is prophesied in verse 32, indicating how he attempts to corrupt them; but the strong reaction of the Jewish people is indicated in the expression but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. The resulting conflict, however, brought much harm on the people of Israel; and though it caused to some extent a spiritual revival, many were killed, as indicated in verse 33. Some of the Jews succumbed to the flattery of the king and defected from their fellow Jews as they revolted against Antiochus. It was a time of purging and separation of the true from the false, of those who were courageous from those who were fainthearted.

ZÄckler quotes Fuller to indicate the various processes used to purify the Jews, "Not only the pretended adherents to Jehovah's party to separate themselves from His sincere followers, but the latter themselves, incited thereto by the example of steadfastness and self-denial furnished by their martyrs, shall cast out from themselves everything that is impure; and they shall succeed in gaining over all those who share their convictions in their hearts, but have been hindered by fear and timidity from avowing an open connection with them. In like manner, a Nicodemus and a Joseph of Arimathaea were induced by the very death of Christ on the cross to confess their allegiance to him." Thus Antiochus attempts to annihilate the party among the Jews that is devoted to its God, but succeeds only in contributing to its

purifying.â610

The purging process is indicated in verse 35 to continue to the time of the end. It is clear from this reference that the persecutions of Antiochus are not the time of the end, even though they foreshadow them. The mention of the time of the end in verse 35 is notice, however, that from verse 36 on, the prophecy leaps the centuries that intervene to the last generation prior to God's judgment of Gentile power and its rulers. Beginning in verse 36, prophecy is unfolded that is as yet unfulfilled.

The amazingly detailed prophecies of the first thirty-five verses of this chapter, containing as they do approximately one hundred and thirty-five prophetic statements, all now fulfilled, constitute an impressive introduction to the events that are yet future, beginning in verse 36. Critics who on the one hand assail this chapter as being so accurate that it could not possibly be written before the event, and on the other hand attempt to find discrepancies which support their contention that the pseudo-Daniel is a poor historian, actually are arguing on both sides of the question at the same time. The fact is that there is no supported evidence which can contradict any statement made in these thirty-five verses. The contention that it cannot be prophetic because of its accuracy involves assumptions which would undermine the entire prophetic Scriptures. From the divine viewpoint, the accuracy of this prophetic word is supporting evidence that prophecy yet unfulfilled will have the same precise fulfillment in the future. This is especially relevant to the futuristic aspect of this vision of Daniel beginning in Daniel 11:36.

The King of the End Time

11:36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

Beginning with verse 36, a sharp break in the prophecy may be observed, introduced by the expression the time of the end in verse 35. Up to this point, the prophecy dealing with the Persian and Grecian Empires has been fulfilled minutely and with amazing precision. Beginning with verse 36, however, an entirely different situation obtains. No commentator claims to find precise fulfillment in the remainder of this chapter. Although Zockler and others attempt to relate Daniel 11:36-45 to Antiochus, many students of Scripture have recognized from antiquity that another king must be in view. Ibn-Ezra, for example, identified this king with Constantine the Great; Rashi and Calvin referred him to the Roman Empire as a whole; and Jerome, Theodoret, and Luther, among others, identified him with the New Testament Antichrist.⁶¹¹ In contrast to the preceding section, there is no specific correspondence to history. Accordingly, scholars who regard this as genuine Scripture, usually regard this section as future and unfulfilled.

As E. B. Pusey has noted, "Even the Jews in S. Jerome's time looked upon this prophecy as having still to receive its fulfillment."⁶¹² In reference to Daniel 11:36, Jerome comments,

"The Jews believe that this passage has reference to the Antichrist, alleging that after the small help of Julian a king is going to rise up who shall do according to his own will and shall lift himself up against all that is called god, and shall speak arrogant words against the God of gods. He shall act in such a way as to sit in the Temple of God and shall make himself out to be God, and his will shall be prospered until the wrath of God is fulfilled, for in him the consummation will take place. We, too, understand this to refer to the Antichrist."⁶¹³

Earlier Jerome had pointed out that Antiochus was merely a foreshadowing of the Antichrist, "Just as the Savior had Solomon and the other saints as types of His advent, so also we should believe that the Antichrist very properly had as a type of himself the utterly wicked king, Antiochus, who persecuted the saints and defiled the Temple."⁶¹⁴

Although many variations of interpretation exist, in general, interpretations of Daniel 11:36-45 fall into three major categories: (1) that it is a further historic or prophetic account fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes; (2) that it is fiction, that is, the wishful thinking of the author which does not correspond to history precisely; (3) that it is genuine prophecy as yet unfulfilled.

Liberal critics, following the thesis that Daniel was written by a second-century b.c. writer, almost uniformly hold that this section was fulfilled in the life and death of Antiochus Epiphanes.⁶¹⁵ Even liberal scholars, however, agree that this section is not nearly as accurate as the earlier portion. Although finding it an accurate forecast of Antiochus's death—in regarding the passage as a prophecy of the king's catastrophic end, as Montgomery holds—liberals also admit as Montgomery does, "but it cannot, with those conservative theologians, be taken in any way as an exact prophecy of the actual events of his ruin. The alleged final victorious war with Egypt, including the conquest of Cyrenaica and Ethiopia, in the face of the power of Rome and the silence of secular history, is absolutely imaginary."⁶¹⁶ In other words, even liberal scholars, who find the earlier section so remarkably accurate that they hold it as history rather than prophecy, admit a sharp difference in the latter section beginning in verse 36 as not corresponding to history. This is the reason why conservative scholars have rejected the historical interpretation and, with due regard to the inspiration of Scripture, expect a future fulfillment.

The second possibility, that the passage is fiction, does not seem to have seriously attracted even the liberal scholar, preferring as he does to identify it with Antiochus Epiphanes. Other competing interpretations, such as those that compare the passage to Constantine the Great, Omar ibn El-Khattab, the Roman Empire (Calvin), the Pope of Rome, the Papal system, or Herod the Great (Mauro), all cited by Young, are not generally considered live options today.⁶¹⁷

Because of the completely unsatisfactory explanation of an historical fulfillment of verses 36-45 in contrast with the precise fulfillment of the earlier portion, conservative expositors relate this passage to the climax of history culminating in the second advent of Christ. This, of course, is in keeping with the total tenor of Daniel's prophecies which characteristically have their climax in the end of the interadvent age and the triumph of the kingdom of heaven which the Son of man will accomplish when He returns. The passage, therefore, is to be considered as contemporaneous with the climax of chapter 2, the destruction of the image, and the destruction of the little horn of Daniel 7, a period described in the book of Revelation, chapters 6-19. The king described in verses 36-39 of Daniel 11 and the events of the subsequent verses therefore have nothing to do with the second century b.c., and are entirely future and unfulfilled.

Among conservative scholars, however, two differing identifications of the king of verse 36 are given. The common identification is that offered by J. N. Darby that the king of Daniel 11:36 is none other than the Antichrist, who is an unregenerate Jew living in Palestine at the end time but in league with the Roman world ruler. Darby, although not emphasizing the racial background of this king, identifies him with the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10 and with the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18.⁶¹⁸ A. C. Gaebelein offers the same interpretation with more specific emphasis on the Jewish character of this ruler as a false Messiah acceptable to the Jewish people.⁶¹⁹ The principal support for this point of view is found in the expression of verse 37 "neither shall he regard the God of his fathers," which is identified as the God of

Israel. Further, it is assumed that Jewish people will not accept even a false Messiah unless he is Jewish in background. As an apostate, he disregards his fathers' God, the hope of the Messiah, and instead honors the Roman world dictator as god.

A better identification of the king, the second identification, however, is to relate him to the Roman world ruler, the same individual as the little horn of Daniel 7 and the beast out of the sea of Revelation 13:1-10. Upon careful consideration, the evidence in support of Darby's identification is seen to be insufficient, and the second view is preferred.

According to verse 36, the king is an absolute ruler who "shall do according to his will." If this is the great tribulation, as intimated in Daniel 12:1, when the Roman ruler is a world ruler, it is difficult to contemplate any other ruler who could be absolute in authority, especially in an area so close to the center of Roman power as Palestine. There can be only one king who does absolutely according to his will in this period, and this must be the world ruler which according to Daniel 7:23 "shall devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces." Although other rulers will be associated with him, such as the ten horns of Revelation 17:12 and the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18, none of these can be described as absolute rulers.

Further evidence is found in the fact that he not only assumes complete political rule but also the role of God. According to verse 36, "he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god." In his claim for deity, which he demands that all recognize at the pain of death (Rev 13:15), he clearly asserts his supremacy over all others. To describe a ruler in Palestine during this time under these extravagant terms would be incongruous with the total situation. According to verse 36, he shall also blaspheme against the true God and prosper for a time until he comes to his end.

Liberal interpreters cite this verse as evidence of identification of this passage with Antiochus Epiphanes, for it is well established that Antiochus claimed qualities belonging to God as manifested in the coins of his realm and in the title of Epiphanes itself, which he considered as stating that he manifested the powers of God. Montgomery states, for instance, "but Epiphanes took his godhead very seriously. He was the first to assume 'Theos' on his coins, and the addition of 'Manifest' (practically 'incarnate') indicated his self-identification with Deity, he was not merely a god like his forebears. The ever-increasing obsession of godhead appears from the sequence of his coins." 620 The identification of this passage with Antiochus, however, breaks down as the prophecy unfolds in succeeding verses. If this is indeed the end time, just before the second advent of Christ, the description of the king fits only one person, namely, the Roman who "shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished," that is, his blasphemous course be fulfilled.

The Final World Religion

11:37-39 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

One of the more important arguments supporting the conclusion that this king is a Jew is found in the opening phrase of verse 37, "neither shall he regard the God of his fathers." As Gaebelin states, "The King, Antichrist shall not regard the God of his fathers. Here his Jewish descent becomes evident. It is a Jewish phrase 'the God of his fathers' and beside this, to establish his fraudulent claim to be the King

Messiah, he must be a Jew.⁶²¹ Gaebelien and others upholding this view, however, overlook a most decisive fact that the word for "God" here is Elohim, a name for God in general, applying both to the true God and to false gods. If the expression had been the usual one when referring to the God of Israel, the Jehovah of his fathers, the identification would be unmistakable. Very frequently in Scripture, the God of Israel is described as Jehovah, "the Lord God" of their fathers (cf. Ex 3:15-16; 4:5; Deu 1:11, 21; 4:1; 6:3; 12:1; 26:7; 29:25; Jos 18:3; Judg 2:12; 2 Ki 21:22; 1 Ch 29:20; 2 Ch 7:22; 11:16; 13:18; 15:12; 19:4; 20:6; 21:10; 24:24; 28:9; 29:5; 30:7, 19; 34:33; 36:15; Ezra 7:27; 8:28). Although Daniel uses "God (Elohim) of my fathers" in Daniel 2:23 in view of this common usage elsewhere in Scripture, for Daniel to omit the word Jehovah or Lord, (KJV) in a passage where a specific name for the God of Israel would be necessary, becomes significant. The expression should be rendered "the gods of his fathers," that is, any god, as most revisions translate it.

In keeping with the blasphemous character of this king who magnifies himself above every god, he disregards whatever deities his fathers worshiped; In keeping with the general word for god, Elohim, the expression, "the gods of his fathers," becomes a general reference to any deities whether pagan or the true God.

In keeping with his disregard for former deities, he does not pay respect to what is called "the desire of women." This expression has been regarded as a reference to a specific pagan goddess such as Ewald's identification with Tammuz-Adonis which Montgomery states has "come to be generally adopted" since Bevan.⁶²²

Bevan in his discussion states, "The Desire of women" must, to judge by the context, be some object of women. Most modern interpreters, following Ephraim Syrus, explain this as a reference to the goddess Nanaia, whose temple in Elymais the king endeavoured to plunder shortly before his death. But to this view there are two objections. Firstly, the attack upon the temple of Nanaia cannot have been heard of in Judaea till the year 164 b.c. Secondly, there is no reason why Nanaia should be designated as the Desire of women. Even if her worship was, as has been supposed, of a voluptuous character, this would scarcely give rise to such an appellation. It appears, therefore, much more probable that Ewald is right in explaining the Desire of women as Tammuz (Adonis), whose cult had been popular in Syria from time immemorial, especially amongst women (Ezek. 8:14).⁶²³ Others, like Young after Keil,⁶²⁴ consider it the normal love or desire for women which is natural to men, meaning that this king is inhuman in his disregard of women.

Although Daniel is not specific, a plausible explanation of this passage, in the light of Daniel's Jewish background, is that this expression, the desire of women, is the natural desire of Jewish women to become the mother of the promised Messiah, the seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3:15. The expression then becomes a symbol of the Messianic hope in general. As Gaebelien expresses it, "Still more interesting is the statement 'he shall not regard the desire of women.'"

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