

21.03.2020 FROM NORTH AND SOUTH TO THE BEAUTIFUL LAND

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. Daniel 11:35

The last part of Chapter 11 of Daniel has been always difficult to interpret. The chapter has the following divisions:

1. The East-West conflicts of the Persian and Greek empires (11:2-4).
2. The conflicts of the kings of the North (the Seleucid kings) and South (the Ptolemaic kings) who arise after the death of Alexander the Great (11:5-20). The passage ends with the rise of the Roman Empire.
3. The rise of the 'Contemptible (Vile) Person' as king of the North and his political activity (11:21-30).
4. The Contemptible Person's religious activities (11:31-39).
5. Conflicts at the Time of the End (11:40-45).

The chapter ends with the information that the King of the North will be destroyed in the Time of the End (11:45) for Michael our Prince will arise and stand up for His people, *'and at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book.'* Denial 12:1

Prophecies of Persia and Greece: 11:2-4

The prophecy of Daniel 11 begins with the prediction that "three more kings will arise in Persia" followed by a fourth who would "stir up all against the realm of Greece" (verse 2). The Persian king who invaded Greece was, of course, Xerxes, who reigned 485-464 B.C.

After the death of King Cyrus the Great, the next three kings of Persia were his son Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), a usurper called the False Smerdis or Bardiya (522 B.C.), and Darius I (522-486 B.C.). The fourth king was Xerxes (486-465 B.C.), known in the Bible as Ahasuerus—the Persian king who married Esther. The Greeks defeated him in the battles of Salamis (480 B.C.) and Plataea (479 B.C.). Later, the Greek army, united and led by Alexander of Macedonia, conquered the Medo-Persian Empire.

As Alexander was drafting plans to rebuild the old city of Babylon and make it his capital, he died suddenly at the age

of thirty-two. His leading generals fought among themselves, eliminated Alexander's brother and son, and sliced the empire into four parts. The far west went to Cassander, the north to Lysimachus, the east to Seleucus, and the south

to Ptolemy. *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise. Z. Stefanovic.*

Prophecies of Syria and Egypt: 11:5-20

Two of these generals became rulers of major kingdoms. The capital cities of these two divisions of the Greek kingdom were Alexandria in Egypt (south of Palestine) and Antioch in Syria (north of Palestine). The kings of the South were known by the name Ptolemy, while the throne name of each of the kings from the north was either Antiochus or Seleucus. Like Alexander, one of the army commanders of the king of the South becomes very strong and succeeds in gaining control of territory belonging to the king of the North.

Palestine was sandwiched between Syria and Egypt, hence the Jews, Daniel's people, were often caught up in the rivalries between the 2 kingdoms.

11:5-9 The king of the South who became strong and is mentioned in verse 5 was Ptolemy I Soter 'saviour' (323-280 B.C.), while the general who became even stronger was Seleucus I Nicator. There is a gap between the end of this verse and the beginning of verse 6, where "they" no longer refers to the two kings mentioned above but to Ptolemy II and Antiochus II. The rest of this verse gives details of the well known and tragic story of Bernice, the second wife of Antiochus II. After the death of Bernice's father, Ptolemy II, the jealous Laodice, Antiochus's first wife, murdered Bernice,

Antiochus II and their son. Verse 7 describes the determination of Bernice's brother, Ptolemy III (246-221 B.C.), to avenge her death. In this he was very successful, and because he was able to recover the previously stolen Egyptian images and gods, the Egyptians began to call him Euergetes, "Benefactor." *Ibid.*

11:10-15 The quarrels and wars between the two dynasties continue through centuries. Verses 10-12 describe the battle of Raphia, which took place in 217 B.C. Trained elephants were used in this battle, and tens of thousands of soldiers were killed and thousands wounded. Antiochus III, who was the loser in this battle, prepared a second attack against Egypt, which is described in verse 13. Egypt's internal political trouble is hinted at in verse 14, which says, "In those times many will rise against the king of the South." The Ptolemies also faced some external problems, because Philip of Macedon secured an alliance with Antiochus III. Verse 15 speaks of the great military success of Antiochus III, which resulted in his complete control over Judea. *Ibid.*

Rome

11:16-20 Beginning with verse 16, the vision describes the Roman conquest of the Beautiful Land—that is, Palestine.

Verses 17-19 portray Julius Caesar and his affair with "the daughter of the women," Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. Cassius Tonginus was the commander who "put an end to his insolence" and was a leader in the plot to murder him. Julius' successor was Caesar Augustus, whose role is briefly mentioned in verse 20 and under whose reign Jesus Christ was born.

11:22 It is during this period that '*the prince of the covenant is broken*'—a reference to the death of Christ.

A New Power: the 'Contemptible Person' and His Political Activities 11:21-29

11:21-24 There is an element of continuity between the contemptible person introduced in verse 21 and the kings that ruled before him. This link is found in the words "and in his place shall arise" followed by a verb that is identical in form with the beginning of verse 20. Yet, in spite of this element of continuity, commentators have consistently pointed to a clear break at this point in the narrative. No other king mentioned in the text to this point has been labelled "despicable" or contemptible. The verses that immediately follow provide the reason that the label is given to this king: This person has no legitimate claim to the throne but comes to power as a usurper. Instead of winning in conventional wars, his strategy is to use flatteries and smooth talk as he attacks without warning—just as the little horn did, according to the description given in Daniel 8:25: "He will cause deceit to prosper. . . . When they feel secure, he will destroy many."

Prior to this king's rise to power, strong armies are swept away before him (cf. Dan. 7:8)—an event comparable to a great flood. This military demise is in some way linked to the death of a Prince of the covenant, a person whose title matches Messiah, the ruler in Daniel 9:25-27. *Ibid.*

11:25-28 This contemptible person's actions will be marked by deceit. His wars against the southern Kingdom are described by many commentators as the Crusades. His pride will take him so far as to act against the Holy Covenant (11:28). When a subsequent war effort fails, his heart will be raised in rage against the Holy Covenant (11:29).

The 'Contemptible Person' and His Religious Activities 11:31-39

The activities and damage against the Holy Covenant:

*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.** 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. **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.** Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. 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. 11:31-35

This king has confrontations that are of a religious character, often stemming from an arrogant and hostile attitude toward God, His people, and His institutions, notably the sanctuary and the worship of God. In dealing with God's people, this king will use the same strategies that proved successful in the past: force in dealing with some and flattery in dealing with others. Like the little horn of chapter 8, this power too attacks the temple and its continual services. **The continual service of the sanctuary is replaced with the abomination that causes destruction, that is, the idolatrous way of approaching God in worship.** This came from a system that for a thousand of years led people away from the priestly ministry of Jesus and deprived them of access to the Prince of the covenant (11:22). In this way, an earthly religious power substituted its activity for the work of Christ.

Only those who remain true to God's covenant can resist this power. With their God-given wisdom, they instruct many in the midst of the persecution that is directed against both groups. In the context of Daniel's vision, the term 'many' refers to the non-Hebrew people, many of whom join the wise from among the remnant people. The result of persecution will be that the wise and the repentant from among the many will be refined, purified, and made spotless in preparation for the time of the end, which will certainly come at the appointed time. *Ibid.*

The Character of the Contemptible Person 11:36-39

'Then the king shall do according to his own will...' He sets himself as God, for only God can do as He pleases (Psalm 115:13)

'He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods...'

'He shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory...'

At the Time of the End 11:40-45

At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown... He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

The time of the end is "a period of time, a segment of history in which certain events will happen". In contrast, the 'end of time' is a point in time; it is the end of human history as we know it. *Shea*

The contemptible person is the King of the North at the time of the end. He controls the North, South and West when his conquests are over. He seems invincible, and yet, when Michael, the Prince of God's people stands up (Daniel 12:1) for His people (He comes from the East), the King of the North will be finally defeated. The battle described here is the Battle of Armageddon of Revelation 16. It is a spiritual battle that encompasses the whole world. In this final battle, Christ and His heavenly army will emerge victorious. Satan and all his hosts will be defeated in this final great spiritual battle on earth.

When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him. Isaiah 59:19

"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great Prince who stands watch over the sons of your people... And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book." Daniel 12:1

Conclusion:

The world today without Christ is full of despair; men see a never-ending procession of wars and cruelty and death with no end in sight. But God's people never despair; they know that God's plan for humanity is life, not death, good, not evil. They know that men and women have consciences and the capacity to feel guilt, and therefore, ultimately the capacity to turn to God in repentance. Ultimately, God's people believe in the One who has destroyed the works of the Devil at Calvary.

"History is full of accounts of wars, full of the exploits of ambitious men. But everyone has ended up in the grave. Only a man who called Himself the Son of Man has overcome the tomb, and He offers His victory to all who will believe in Him." *G Arthur Keough*

"Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death." Revelation 1:17, 18
