

When I was younger, my parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles all tried to tell me things. Things that they said would make life easier for me. Things like “you need to save money”, or “you will need to know how to do this one day”, “be a man of your word” “treat other how you want to be treated, not how they treat you”. And I’m not saying they were wrong, but for my young undeveloped mind those things didn’t make sense. It not that I intentionally chose to disobey their advice, I just didn’t feel like it applied to me yet. As I grew up as a teenager, I realized the torment I put them all through as they watched me do some things the hard way. To be honest, by that point I had forgotten what they tried to teach me, or I simply wanted to do it my way, right wrong or undecided I was doing it my way.

I’m sure we all have experienced this throughout our lives. Now that I’m older, not sure my mind is fully developed still but I am remembering some of the things my family tried to teach me. Especially being a parent of young adults and attempting to share the same lessons with them, I see the frustration my family must have felt. Now I see my dad’s hands when I look at mine, and I find myself trying to be better prepared for what’s ahead. My dad was a little different, but he was always prepared. How many of you keep napkins in your glove box? Not my dad, he kept whole rolls of paper towels in the glove box. Didn’t matter what didn’t fit because of them. How many of you use your cigarette light in your car? For you youngsters, that is the 12 volt socket you charge your phone with in your car. Before your generation that socket was used to superheat a metal coil so you could light your cigarette.

Hilarious story, there is a two-year difference between me and my younger brother. One time we were sitting in the car waiting on our mom to load up the groceries, so I pushed that lighter in and just a few moments later it popped back out. I told my brother to put his finger in there, now my brother is one of those kids who couldn’t carry on more than one conversation at a time but boy is he intelligent! He sees the brilliant red glow from the lighter and says “no” so I put my finger in just far enough that I could feel the heat but so close to burn me. “See it won’t hurt you”, and I turned it around for him to try. Being trusting of his big brother he proceeds to stick his finger all the way in. Well, that didn’t last long, just about as quick I could smell the tip of his finger burning, he lets out scream that would make the dead jump...it also caught the attention of my mother who was still outside the car. That fun was short lived, I’ll tell you, I really got it when we got home.

Anyway, back to the 12-volt outlet, how many of you use it? What do you use it for? When I inherited my dad’s jeep, he had a splitter that gave him 3, 12-volt sockets, out of which he used a usb splitter. So, he was running a radar detector, a CB, a phone charger, a Garmin GPS, and had a spot for passengers to plug in their phone too. He was always prepared. All that to say that as I have grown up, I find myself doing some of those things they told me, the things they warned me I would need in the future. Today’s message is exactly that, a prophecy for the near, and distant future.

This chapter contains one of the most specifically fulfilled prophecies of the Bible, predicting the future over some 375 years, and to the end, with amazing accuracy. The chapter is so specific, that there are many critics who deny supernatural revelation, have insisted that it is written as *history*, written after the fact, fraudulently claiming to be prophecy. It is easy to go against God when you do not have a relationship with Him. When you have never seen a miracle or received a blessing that could have only come from God. Let’s read and see what you think.

Daniel 11:1-20

V1-2

We actually start hearing about this prophecy of Daniel 11 back in chapter 10. It begins: In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message and had understanding of the vision.

According to history, the third year of Cyrus was 535/534, in all probability this was just a few years before Daniel's death. Through Nebuchadnezzar's dreams back in chapter 2 and through Daniel's vision of the four beasts in chapter 7, God had already revealed that there would be four world-ruling empires followed by the Kingdom of God.

Now God was going to reveal to Daniel some amazing details about major world powers, beginning with the Medo-Persian Empire and continuing through the time of the end just prior to Christ's second coming. The angel that came to help Daniel understand the vision told him that its focus was on what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.

What is going to happen to the people of God both during his time and in the future was of great interest to Daniel, by this time approximately 42,000 Jews had returned to Jerusalem following the decree by Cyrus allowing them to go back to their homeland.

Simply, the angel told Daniel that there would be three more kings in Persia until a fourth arose. The fourth king would be strong, rich, and oppose the realm of Greece. There were actually four kings from the time Daniel spoke of until the fourth king, the one who did stir up all against the realm of Greece. Either the angel omitted the current king Cyrus, looking only to the future, or he ignored King Smerdis of Persia 522-21 B.C. because he ruled for less than one year and was an imposter to the throne.

So, the list goes like this,

Cyrus current to 530 B.C., then Cambyses son of Cyrus who reigned from 530-522 B.C.

Next was Smerdis of Persia whose real name was Guamata. While Cambyses was away on a military excursion, he impersonated him as he so closely resembled him. He quickly gained the love of the people by cutting their taxes for three years. He was caught pretty quickly, reigning for less than a year 522-521 B.C. before being executed for pretending to be Cambyses.

Following him would have been Darius reigning from 522-486 B.C. Everyone has something they are remembered for, and Darius's was for his military advancements and setting up a postal service in the kingdom.

Finally, was Xerxes who was in power from 486-465 B.C. He was extremely wealthy, which helped him: it was said that he paid for his army out of his own money. Not his private security but his army which was somewhere between 800,000 and 1,000,000. Xerxes's expedition against Greece is famous in history, taking 3 years to prepare. After a few small wins he and his army retreated back to Persia.

These visions and insights regarding the future of the Persian and Greek Empires were relevant because each empire attempted to wipe out the people of God at some time.

The Persian Empire tried to wipe out the Jewish people during the reign of Xerxes, through the plot of Haman. The Greek Empire tried to wipe out the Jewish people during the reign of Antiochus IV, when he attempted to kill every Jew who did not renounce their commitment to God and embrace Greek culture.

Xerxes loss caused a ripple effect that would ultimately be the demise of the Medo-Persian

Empire. His battle with Greece although he lost would intensify the hatred the Grecians held for the Persians. If you do not know Jesus as your savior, it should scare you how the decisions of one can adversely affect the outcome of a nation.

V 3-4

Verse 3 introduces us to the next phase in world empires, the rise of Alexander the Great. Although this verse does not make it perfectly clear who this 'mighty king' would be, verse 4 leaves us in no doubt that he was the ruler predicted here.

In seven or eight years he accomplished the most dazzling military conquest in human history. But as we have talked about, he only lived four more years. Following Alexander's death, his empire was divided among four of his generals. This was not the wish of his family, Alexander had two sons who were murdered pretty quickly after his death. This left no rightful heir to assume the throne.

Old Alex was great at a few things, 1 conquering any nation he set his sights on, and 2 being cool about it. After conquering some areas, he allowed them to continue doing things the way they always had. He also sent Persia a friendly love letter letting them know that he was coming to visit. It read something like this: "Your ancestors entered into Macedonia and the other parts of Greece and did us damage when they had received no affront to cause it. Now I, as General of the Greeks, and provoked by you, and desirous of avenging the injury done us by the Persians, have passed into Asia." Darius responds asking Alex to reconsider, which is responded with a NO from Alexander. Darius tries one more time offering to forfeit all land to the west of the Euphrates River. This included Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. He also promised a peace treaty with the bonus of his daughter's hand in marriage.

Again, the reply is NO, and in true Alexander the great fashion even after being told to take the generous deal from his commanding officer, he could not stand the thought of having control of everything except that little sliver of Persia.

V 5

The remainder of Daniel 11:5-39 documents the actions of the last two of these kingdoms—Egypt to the south of Jerusalem and Syria to the north of Jerusalem. In this section of Scripture, the rulers and their successors are referred to as the "king of the North" and the "king of the South."

These kings were fulfilled by Ptolemy I of Egypt, who exerted his control over the Holy Land. Soon after the division of Alexander's Empire, the Ptolemies dominated this region. Ptolemy I had a prince named Seleucus, who rose to power and took dominion over the region of Syria. He became more

powerful than his former Egyptian ruler. The Seleucids are identified with the *Kings of the North*, and the Ptolemies were the *Kings of the South*.

These two nations of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies fought for over 130 years. Whichever one was stronger at the time held dominion over the Holy Land. There are several times it mentions the kings of the North and South, but it is talking about more than just these two kings. Rather the family lines of these kings who carry on in civil war from generation to generation.

V 6

After years of fighting there is a glimmer of hope. An agreement was made that the daughter of the king of the South would marry the son of the king of the North. Joined by a marriage, the kings of the North and South would be allies for a while, but the arrangement would not last. Mostly because Antiochus already had a wife, its weird how marring another woman to save the nation would cause such a big problem. His current wife was a powerful woman named Laodice, most people of power do not like being dumped.

Laodice figured that she would take care of this problem once and for all. Her husband had a child with this new woman named Berenice, who was endowed to the throne, so she had Berenice, and the child killed, shortly after that Laodice would also poison her husband. This gained her the title of queen until her son grew up enough to take over the kingdom.

The other reason all this was taking place was because Ptolemy II Berenice's father, the king of the South died. With him out of the picture the truce between the North and South also died. The plan was to have a king from both blood lines on the throne which would keep peace between them.

V 7-8

This one from her family line was her brother Ptolemy III, he organized a great battle against Syria to avenge his sister's death. This war raged on for nearly 5 years, after success in Syria he succeeded in other battles too. Recovering some of the land that was taken from his father on the coasts of Asia Minor. He returns home a hero, avenging his sister and the truce that was made, bringing back loads of silver and gold from Syria, and even some of the Egyptian idols that had been taken by the Persians some 250 years before by Cambyses.

V 9-10

Verse 8 says that the King of the South would leave the king of the North alone for some years. During this time both Kings died, Seleucus II and just four years later Ptolemy III. Great with them this silly family feud will end, right? Nope sure didn't, as we said earlier this was a generational war, and again the following generation would stir it all back up again, each time increasing in severity.

The sons of the kings of the North would continue the battle. Seleucus II had two sons, both of which were successful generals, but Seleucus III only ruled for a short time and was when replaced by his brother Antiochus III. Antiochus, the second son, would conquer the Holy Land in a furious battle which stood as a buffer between the kings of the South and the kings of the North. Antiochus took control from the Ptolemies, for this time the king of the North was stronger.

Have you ever been asked if you could know how or when you would die, would you want to know? I have heard opposing answers to this question. Some say absolutely not, I would always dread it and fear that day's arrival. Others say yes, I could do all I've ever wanted to before then, I could make sure all my loved ones knew I loved them. I could say good-bye to friends. Either side of the fence you land on, the future will always be a head of us. For Daniel it must have been petrifying to know the strife his people in the future would be subjected to. Daniel was learning that no matter what happens, Gods people would make through.

The battles between the North and the South were devastating for both sides. Large numbers of soldiers from both sides killed revenge back and forth repaying one for the actions of the other. A vicious cycle, with the Jewish people stuck in the middle.

Do you feel like you are stuck in the middle of the world fighting around you? As the world crumbles in on itself, battles will undoubtedly affect us. As Christians we have to grow into the understanding, that through God we will prevail!

So which side do you believe, is this scripture Prophecy? Is God flexing His knowledge in giving such great detail about the future? Or is this history, was it written years after all this had already taken place?

I can tell you where I stand, this book has a lot of history, but it still holds the future. For Daniel this was definitely a prophecy.