

Lesson 18 – Daniel 11:2-35
“Daniel’s Final Vision – Part 1”

1. v2: Prophecy Concerning Medo-Persia:

- a. Persian power would reach its pinnacle and begin its decline during the reign of the fourth king in succession from Cyrus (550-530 B.C.).
- b. The four kings are Cambyses (529-522 B.C.), Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521), Darius I (521-486 B.C., Ezra 5-6), and Xerxes I (486-465 B.C., Esther).
- c. Xerxes I:
 - 1) His name in Hebrew = Ahasuerus, Persian = Khshayarsha, and Greek = Xerxes.
 - 2) He used his great riches to amass one of the largest armies in the ancient world and then launched a campaign against Greece in 480 B.C.
 - 3) The campaign was disastrous and in the resulting Treaty of Thermopylae, Persia lost its Syrian territory to the Greeks.
 - 4) The events of this ill-fated campaign would have taken place between chapters one and two of the Book of Esther, which means that Xerxes I was Esther’s husband.
 - 5) The Persian Empire never recovered from this defeat and eventually surrendered to Alexander after suffering their final defeat at Issus in 333 B.C.

2. v3-4: Prophecy Concerning Greece:

- a. The mighty king who would die young (“when he shall stand up,” may be translated “while he was growing strong” (Walvoord, 257)) was without a doubt Alexander the Great.
- b. A main motivating factor behind his defeat of the Persian Empire was Xerxes’ attempt to conquer Greece.
- c. His kingdom upon his death was scattered to the four winds (the four corners of the known world) when it was divided among his four general and its strong central leadership was lost forever.
- d. Neither of his two sons inherited his kingdom. His son Hercules was murdered by Polysperchon, and young Alexander, who was born after Alexander’s death, was murdered in 310 B.C.

3. v5-20: Prophecy Concerning the Ptolemy Kingdom of Egypt and the Seleucid Kingdom of Syria:

- a. v5: Prophecy concerning Ptolemy I Soter (323-285 B.C.) and Seleucus I Nicator (312-281 B.C.). They combined their forces to defeat Antigonus of Babylon, which gave Seleucus I control over the area from Asia Minor to India, and in time, he became stronger than Ptolemy I. Their proximity to one another and both of their desire to control the land bridge connecting the trade routes between Egypt and the rest of the world (i.e. the Promised Land) resulted in these two kings and their kingdoms becoming rivals.
- b. v6: Prophecy concerning the marriage of Ptolemy II Philadelphus' (285-246 B.C.) daughter Berenice to Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.). This was a political arrangement that required Antiochus to divorce his wife, Laodiceia, in order to facilitate the marriage. The marriage did not achieve its political goals and no one involved prospered. Within a few years of the marriage, Ptolemy died, and Antiochus then took back his wife, Laodiceia. In revenge, Laodiceia murdered her husband, his wife Berenice, and their infant son.
- c. v7-9: Prophecy concerning Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.) and Seleucus Callinicus (247-226 B.C.). Berenice's brother succeeded to the throne in Egypt after Ptolemy II and successfully attacked and pillaged the northern kingdom of Syria. Seleucus Callinicus tried to return the favor in 240 B.C. but was soundly defeated by Ptolemy's forces and was forced to "return into his own land." This marks the beginning of the seesaw struggle between these two kingdoms to control the Holy Land.
- d. v10-19: Prophecy concerning Ptolemy Philopator (221-203 B.C.) and Antiochus III The Great (223-187 B.C.). In 217 B.C., Antiochus III attempts to conquer the Ptolemaic Kingdom. He is soundly defeated and forced to flee into the desert. The resulting peace treaty allowed Antiochus to regroup and regain his military strength. In 201 B.C., he attacks Egypt for the second time (v13-16). The Jews join with Antiochus in his attack against Egypt and in so doing turn their backs on the Ptolemies who had been good to them in the past. Egyptian forces fought back but were forced to surrender at Sidon in 198 B.C. Israel is now under the control of the Seleucid Kingdom, which sets the stage for the persecution they will experience under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Threatened by Rome, Antiochus makes peace with his southern neighbor by marrying his daughter, Cleopatra, to the 7 year old Ptolemy. However, his plans are foiled by her constant siding with her husband over against her father. Antiochus III then turns his attention to the conquest of Greece. After suffering decisive defeats in 191 B.C. north of Athens and in 189 B.C. at Manesia southeast of Ephesus by soldiers of Rome and Pergamum under the leadership of the Roman general Scipio, Antiochus is forced to return to his own land, defeated and broken (v18-19). The removal of this military threat in the west paved the way for Roman expansion in the years to come.
- e. v20: Prophecy concerning Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175). Due to the failures of his predecessor and the raising power of Rome, the Seleucid kingdom is forced to pay Rome an annual tribute of a thousand talents. In order to pay this very large sum, Seleucus IV places the Jews under a heavy burden of taxation. Seleucus' tax collector, Heliodorus, even took treasures from the temple to meet the burden established upon the Jewish people by Seleucus IV. Heliodorus later murders Seleucus thereby fulfilling the

prophecy at the end of verse 20. Of course, all of this is serving to set the stage for Antiochus IV who would rule from 175 to 164 B.C.

4. v21-35: Prophecy Concerning Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.):

- a. v21-23: His Rise to Power.
 - 1) v21: After hearing of his brother's death at the hands of Heliodorus, he posed as the guardian of Seleucus' young son, Antiochus, who would have been the rightful heir to the throne. Then through various intrigues, he was able to secure the throne for himself. He then solidified his position on the throne by having the young Antiochus murdered. Of course he claimed to have nothing to do with the boy's death and even had Antiochus' murderer put to death, which only served to eliminate one more possible challenger for the throne.
 - 2) v22: He also used military power (i.e., "with the arms of a flood") and the murder of the high priest Onias to secure the kingdom for himself. The phrase "the prince of the covenant" is the title bore by the high priest because he was de facto the head of the theocracy at that time. Antiochus IV ordered the murder of Onias in 172 B.C. The term "covenant" is a term used for the Jewish state.
 - 3) v23: He also used leagues with other nations to solidify his power.
- b. v24-26: His Growth in Power. He attacked his enemies during times of peace (i.e., when they did not expect aggression by him) and then he would use the wealth plundered to buy favor with others or to secure their cooperation in the future. He conducted several military expeditions against the Ptolemaic Kingdom (i.e., the king of the south) and was successful in defeating him.
- c. v27-28: His Wickedness toward Israel is Manifested. He returned from his exploits against Egypt with great riches and then began to turn his aggression and anger against the Jewish people. Possibly, he was jealous and covetous of the wealth contained within the Jewish temple.
- d. v29-35: His Defeat by Rome turns into His Persecution of the Jews.
 - 1) Another expedition into Egypt in 168 B.C. ran head-on into the Romans near Alexandria ("for the ships Chittim (Cyprus) shall come against him" is referring to Roman forces, i.e. forces to the west of his kingdom). Antiochus IV was forced to concede Egypt to Roman power and return to Syria where he vented his anger and frustration against the Jewish people. He looted Jerusalem on two occasions. On the first occasion, he stole much of the temple treasures and monies and allegedly left 40,000 dead Jews in his wake. The second time resulted in the temple being turned into a temple of Zeus to include swine being sacrificed on the altar. He also at this time prohibited circumcision and Sabbath observance, banned the Torah, and ordered sacrifices be made to pagan gods at various altars throughout the country.

- 2) “It was a time of purging and separation of the true from the false, of those who were courageous from those who were fainthearted” (Walvoord, 269).
- 3) “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” (Walvoord, 268).
- 4) The persecutions of Antiochus IV are not the time of the end “because it is yet for a time appointed” (v35), but rather they serve to foreshadow the persecutions of the still future antichrist who is the subject of the prophecies beginning in verse 36 and going through verse 45, which we will examine in our next session.

5. Conclusion:

- a. According to Dr. Walvoord, an astonishing 135 prophetic statements are recorded in these first thirty-five verses all of which have been perfectly fulfilled in the annals of history.
- b. What spiritual lessons can we learn from all of this?