

GODLY LIVING IN A GODLESS WORLD

Expositional Study Of Daniel

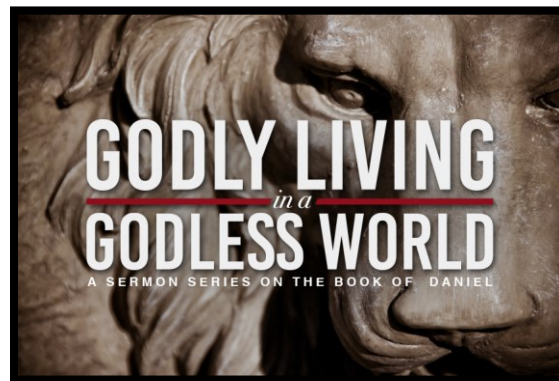
Daniel 11:2-45

Part 1

Written By

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From the beginning of the Bible to the end, a vast array of precise prophecies appear, concerning everything from what would happen to Israel if they disobeyed the Mosaic Covenant (Leviticus 26 . . . especially verses 33-35) to the naming of King Cyrus, the future Persian deliverer of Israel, an astonishing 150+ years before the fact during the prophetic ministry of Isaiah (Isaiah 44:28-45:1 . . . Isaiah's ministry occurred between 740-690 B.C. and Cyrus did not show up until 539 B.C.). J. Barton Payne, author of the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*, identifies a whopping 1,817 of these precise, not vague or broad, predictive prophecies, categorizing 1,239 in the Old Testament and 578 in the New Testament. The very presence and historical fulfillment of many of these prophecies, with the majority of them given so far in advance it removes the probability of guessing or reading trends in a highly unusual manner, we are left with two general conclusions.

One, fulfilled prophecies serve to verify the faith of saints in factual evidences, resulting in the hope their faith in the living, communicative, revelatory God is maximized in the godless day in which they live. Put differently, prophetic statements fulfilled in the past served to strengthen and embolden the faith of saints at that time because they knew, beyond a shadow of doubt, that God was providentially at work, guiding short and long-term history to its

prophesied messianic kingdom consummation. Ostensibly, then, when Jude prophetically warns the Church in 65 A.D. that the last days prior to the return of the Messiah will be overrun with sexually twisted, vile, and arrogant false teachers, who seek to undermine the Christian faith, saints are, by definition, equipped to emotionally and spiritually to be prepared to engage falsity instead of being discouraged and overcome by its pernicious presence. Jude's prophetic day is upon us. We all see it as false religions and false teaching spreads like an unchecked cancer across our land. Are you fighting or folding?

Two, fulfilled prophecies are a powerful apologetic God uses to point thinking, spiritually lost people to His existence and their need of Him and Him only, as their Savior and God (Acts 4:10-12). After He identified King Cyrus by name in Isaiah 45 and then detailing exactly what this liberator would do for Israel in the future (45:1-3a), God states why He provided this bold, jaw-dropping, exact prophetic proof, "In order that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name" (Isaiah 45:3b). Cyrus would know the living God of the Jews had called him to his task, not the false gods of his polytheistic system, by analyzing this ancient prophecy, and everyone beyond Cyrus would know, as well, that only the true, living God could supply precise predictive information like this. Prophecy underscores the fact there is an omniscient, unlimited Being who has given finite, limited humans amazing detailed prophecies so they can reason their way toward Him. As I have said before, and I will say again, the problem facing you if you are not a Christian, a believer in Jesus, is not informational . . . it is volitional. If you are a seeker, if you are searching for a spiritual worldview which has no leakage, which is true to the core, which is a offers a perfect balance between much needed faith and reason, which will effectively answer the questions and hunger of your soul, you need look no further than the salvation story recorded and validated, by means of prophecy, in the Bible.

Daniel is a book of some of the most amazing, jaw-dropping prophecies ever uttered by a man. From the rise and fall of mighty Babylon, prophesied 68 years before the fact (Daniel 2 . . . 607 B.C. and Daniel 5:30-31 . . . 539 B.C.), to the exact revelation of the year of the Messiah's death in 33 A.D. (Daniel 9:24-27), this book drips with countless proofs God has spoken most definitively. Believe me, chapter 11 is no exception. In forty-five verses, the angel not only gives Daniel the last powerful prophecy of the book, he provides, by God's permission, no less than 38 (count them) precise (now predominately historically fulfilled) prophecies concerning the history of Persia, Greece, Egypt, and Syria as they lead up to the coming of the final world ruler, the Anti-christ, at the end of time (a motif the angel underscores in 10:14, 11:40, and 11:45. Porphyry, a pagan philosopher in the third century A.D. was the first to attack Daniel as a fake document written after the fact to elevate the Jewish God. To this atheistic pagan, the prophetic information of chapter 11 was so precise he concluded, *a priori*, it had to be written post-fact. Since his day, others, who espouse a distorted, anti-supernatural worldview, have carried his twisted torch forward. Old Testament scholars, however, like Bruce Waltke have dispatched this untenable premise with rock-solid textual, grammatical, and historical evidence.¹ Daniel was, and is, a sixth century B.C. document.²

¹Bruce K. Waltke, "The Date of the Book of Daniel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 133 (October-December 1976): 319-329.

Based, therefore, on a sixth century date for Daniel's prophetic words here in chapter 11 (536 B.C. to be exact), we can surmise these prophecies called the faithful in Israel to stay the spiritual course for the rest of human history as they would encounter persecution from Gentiles prior to the coming of the Messiah. Such is the nature of prophecy. Paul's words in 1 Timothy chapter 4 serve the same purpose in our day: "*Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron . . .*" (1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:1-9 is also a case in point). The detailed evidence, also, serves to call you, the unconvinced one, the academic, the tolerant one, the doubter of Christianity to consider the fulfilled facts so you can turn to the living God in saving faith prior to His glorious and prophesied physical revelation (Matthew 24:26-35). Put more succinctly, Daniel chapter 11, which will hold our homiletical/hermeneutical focus for several weeks, develops this main idea with great clarity:

Precise Prophecies Give Saints Focus And Sinners Facts (Daniel 11:1-45)

In order to adequately prepare us to sail into these wonderful and enlightening waters, I must, as your Captain, make some cursory observations in a quest to maximize your understanding of this intricate geo-political prophecy.

- As I have said, Daniel 11 is, in my estimation one of the greatest, as well as one of the most difficult prophecies of the Old Testament, difficult insofar as it covers some 370 years of ancient history. If ancient history is your thing, then you are going to love this chapter. If ancient history is not your thing, it will be your thing as you see how God has worked in history to comfort His people, to challenge the lost, and to keep His messianic kingdom program right on course, regardless of what the nations did or did not do.
- The chapter divides into two structural movements. One, verses 1 through 39 contain prophecies concerning the rise and fall of Persia, Greece, Egypt and Syria, covering 362 years . . . from Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), the ruler after Cyrus, to the demise of the Seleucid king and great Anti-christ type, Antiochus Epiphanes IV (175-164 B.C.). Two, verses 40 through 45 jump from, basically, 164 B.C. to the Anti-christ at the end of time, who will take how these godless empires ruled to a whole new godless level in his quest to oppose the Jews and the Messiah.
- This passage is meat, not milk. This is a thick, juicy steak from the spiritual version of *Ruth's Chris Steak House*. Steak is good, is it not,

²Josh McDowell, *Daniel in the Critics' Den* (San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1979) offers a detailed defense for the sixth century date of Daniel.

especially if you are in the third service with lunch bearing down on you. If you are new Christian, stay with me. God will give you information to build you up and challenge you in your spiritual walk. If you are an older Christian, get ready for God to feed your soul in the wicked days in which we live, thereby preparing you to be His light in the darkness. If you are not a believer, get ready for God to rattle your cage as He points you to the reasons for abandoning your vacuous worldview in favor of His.

- This is prophetic information you, as Christians, need to know so your faith is not only strengthened, but so you are able to give the non-Christians God puts in your path cognitive evidence for the hope you have in the living God who came to earth to die for our sin and to rise from the grave as the only One who can save us from the power of sin (Romans 5:9; 6:19ff; 1 Timothy 1:15; Hebrews 7:24). Translated, it would be a good idea to put some of this prophetic/historical information to memory so you are prepared for your next evangelistic encounter with someone searching for spiritual truth.
- The main portion of this prophecy concerns the geo-political intrigues and warfare between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires, or two of the four kingdoms formed by Alexander the Great's four generals after his sudden death at 33 years of age in 323 B.C.; viz., Ptolemy . . . the "p" is silent and the tol is pronounced like our word tall (Egypt), Seleucus I Nicator . . . also spelled Seleukos Nikator (Syria), Lysimachus (Asia Minor), and Cassander (Mesopotamia). The Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires are showcased here prophetically primarily because of their relation and domination of Israel. This chapter dovetails naturally with what Daniel has said before in chapters 2, 7, and 8 about the Anti-Semitic, brutal, ruthless, and ever increasing beastlike behavior of the nations prior to the revelation of the Jewish Messiah. By showcasing their constant state of warfare, with helpless little Israel between them, God sets the stage for the appearance of the messianic ruler who will defend His people and finally erect the long-awaited utopian kingdom of peace, love, and holiness. Further, by prophetically detailing how these two empires battled it out for supremacy of the Middle East, along with rule over Palestine, God demonstrates how He guided this chaotic, bloodthirsty history (from our perspective) to the rise of the Romans who would kill the Messiah (Daniel 9:24-27). The implication should not be missed. Since God guided this history, He will most surely make sure world history culminates with the arrival of the Roman Beast, the Anti-christ, whom the Messiah will put down in a definitive fashion (Daniel 7:26-27). We, in the 21st century, must, also, not forget that the same God is constantly working in and through all the evil exploits of the nations to

bring them to naught at the revelation of His Son, Jesus, the Messiah (Revelation 19). Hold on. Stay the course. God is with us (Psalm 46).

- In order to demonstrate how precise prophecies give saints a proper focus on His providential plan while supplying sinners with facts needed for faith, the passage structurally breaks down into four distinct prophetic proofs. *Proof 1: Prophecies About Persia* (Daniel 11:1-2); *Proof 2: Prophecies About Greece* (Daniel 11:3-4); *Proof 3: Prophecies About Egypt and Syria* (Daniel 11:5-35); and *Proof 4: Prophecies About The Anti-christ* (Daniel 11:36-45). We shall, over the next several studies, address these proofs in the chronological order in which they are presented.

I purposefully spent a great deal of time giving you the details of our journey so that you will be positioned to appreciate and apply the truths found herein. Despite how godless our day becomes, He is the living God who raises up and puts down kings and kingdoms so that in due time THE KING can, and will, appear in resplendent glory against the utter backdrop of wickedness. With this overview information in mind, we are now prepared to look at . . .

Proof #1: Prophecies About Persia (Daniel 11:2)

After giving Daniel the lowdown on the angelic battle in the heavenlies where Israel and truth are concerned, the mighty angel turned and began to give Daniel what he had called in chapter 10, verse 21, “the Scripture of Truth.”

² And now I will tell you the truth.

Hold it right there. In that short, concise statement, the angel underlined and highlighted the fact that there is, contrary to what our relativistic world teaches, absolute, unchanging, unmitigated truth, especially of a spiritual nature. The Aristotelian concept of the law of non-contradiction logically tells us that A cannot equal B, or that A and B cannot be equally valid if both are diametrically opposed to each other. Ostensibly, there is either gravity or there is not gravity. Both cannot be true at the same time because they are scientifically mutually exclusive.

The same logical reasoning applies to religion and spirituality. Since the law of non-contradiction, which arises from the first principles of logic, shows us, by definition, absolute truth exists in our world across all disciplines, then it is only logical to believe there could be one spiritual, religious truth. Prophecy, by its very nature, is one means of validating the presence and reality of which religion possesses all spiritual, religious truth. Since the Bible contains that incontrovertible evidence, especially in places like Daniel 11, it is, as the angel says “the Scripture of Truth” (אֲבֵל אֲנִיד לְךָ אֶת־הַרְשׁוּם בְּכֹתֵב אֱמֹת). You, my friend, need look no further for which book is God’s book. His fingerprints are all over it.

Pivoting from this opening statement, the angel dives right into Persian history. In his younger years, Daniel has prophesied the rise of Persia when Babylon enjoyed the zenith of its

power under King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2). He had lived to see this prophetic word verified by the rise of Persia and their blitzkrieg destruction of Babylon in 539 B.C. Talk about evidence to assure you that God was with you. Talk about evidence that God does, in fact, exist. This was it. But there was, and is, more to Persian history as Daniel discovers:

Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece.

In chapter 8, Daniel learned how the powerful Persian army would be decimated by the Greeks, but here in chapter 11, verse 2, God gives his prophet further insight. The opening word, “Behold, viz., *hinneh* (הִנֵּה-עוֹד שְׁלֹשָׁה מְלָכִים עֹמְדִים לְפָנַי) emphatically states that three kings would follow Cyrus, with the fourth one being extremely wealthy and with a penchant for stirring up his entire nation against the Greeks. The three kings who followed Cyrus are well-known in history: **CAMBYSES** (530-522 B.C.), Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521 B.C.), and **DARIUS I HYSTASPES** (521-486 B.C.). The fourth king, from what we know of biblical and extra-biblical history was **XERXES I. AHASUERUS** (486-465 B.C.). As a side note, he was the king during the time of Esther and Mordecai, and he lived to watch God sovereignly protect the Jews under his care. Interesting.

Did Xerxes fulfill what the angel told Daniel some 70 years before the fact? Yes, to the letter. Xerxes’ father, Darius I Hystaspes, attacked the up and coming Greek empire in 493 B.C. and in 490 B.C. in Marathon; however, these battles proved ill-fated. The Battle of Marathon, wherein the outnumbered Greek forces led by General Miltiades defeated the superior forces of Darius I Hystaspes, proved to be the undoing of the Persians. Darius commanded his troops to withdraw and sail the short distance to Athens in order to sack it, but Miltiades had his hoplite troops double-time it back to Athens to meet the Persians once again. The legend of Pheidippides, a Greek warrior, tells of how he ran to Athens to announce the victory, and from this came the concept of the modern day marathon race. But in any event, Darius was no match for the Greeks, as is intimated in Daniel 11, verse 2.

Xerxes the Great, also called Xerxes Shahanshah, or King of Kings, conversely, rose to the occasion, as prophesied, and built up his military with his wealth gained from conquests of Lydia, Babylonia, and Egypt, coupled with heavy taxation started by his father. He invaded Greece in 480 B.C. with two million men, according to Herodotus. Using ships and men, he built a boat bridge across the Hellespont, a narrow body of water connecting Asia Minor and Greece (Europe), and attacked. The two countries fought each other in pitched battles on land and sea for the next two years. The naval Battle of Salamis in September of 480 B.C., a battle the Greeks won, moved Xerxes to attack Greece on land at a small town called Plataea in 479 B.C.

As the Greeks did at the Battle of Marathon, the hoplite warriors stood tenaciously against the superior forces of the Persians, thereby ending Persian hopes of Grecian conquest. Xerxes did exactly what the angel told Daniel he would do to the letter, and he foretold the exploits of this king some fifty years before the fact. The only way this information could have

been known was for God to give to the angel, who gave it to Daniel, who gave it to all the peoples of the world. All of this prophetic data, of course, showed the Jews, at this time, that God was, in fact, with them even as they endured his wicked, blood-thirsty rule. And as God demonstrated through Esther and Mordecai at this time, He would and could reverse diabolical plans devised by the likes of a wicked man like Haman to expunge God's people from the earth. How exact is the Word of God! This prophetic, now historical proof, should put wind in your sails if you are walking with God in this evil world. And if you do not have a faith relationship with Him, this prophetic, now historical data, should move you from unbelief to belief.

Need more information to strengthen your faith in faithless times, or to ascertain whether this Christianity stuff is THE faith or not? Read on. God does not let you down.

Proof #2: Prophecies About Greece (Daniel 11:3-4)

Between verses 2 and 3 there is a time gap of 134 years. God chose to skip the slow unraveling of the once great Persian Empire under her next seven leaders:

- **ARTAXERXES I** (465-423 B.C.). During his rule Israel returned two more times to the Promised Land, 457 B.C. according to Ezra 7:6-7 and 444 B.C. according to Nehemiah 2:1. Nehemiah went back during this third and final return. Again, in the background of this prophecy, God quietly showed He stood with and providentially provided for His people.
- **XERXES II** (423 B.C.)
- **DARIUS II** (423-404 B.C.)
- **ARTAXERXES II** (404-358 B.C.)
- **ARTAXERXES III** (358-338 B.C.)
- **ARSES** (338-336 B.C.)
- **DARIUS III** (336-331 B.C.).

Although he is not pointed to in the prophecy, Darius III is the final Persian king before the kingdom fell to the Greeks, as prophesied, under the leadership of Alexander the Great. Listen to what the angel told Daniel would happen after the fall of Persia:

³ And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.

Darius III was defeated in three battles against the Greeks: the Granicus River in Asia Minor, 334; Issus (the gateway to Syria and Palestine, 333-332 B.C.), and Gaugamela (pronounced gwag-a-mela) the gateway to the heartland of the once mighty Persian Empire, 331 B.C. Alexander did do as he pleased. After the battle at the Granicus River he acquired Asia Minor. After the battle at Issus, a coastal city located at the apex of the Gulf of Issus in Cilicia, just north of Syria, he had complete strategic access to Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine. With the

victory at Gaugamela in 331 B.C., Persia's great cities of Babylon and Susa rested in his crosshairs. Truly, Alexander did as he pleased, just as God foretold. But by 323 B.C., Alexander, a mere 32 year old world ruler, died in Babylon. Yes, God said he would rise quickly and then fall and that is exactly what history records. Who did his massive world empire go to? God said it would not go to his sons,

⁴ But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.

Alexander did have a half-brother, Philip Arrhidaeus. He, however, was mentally impaired and incapable of ruling. He had a son, also named Alexander IV of Macedon, born to his wife Roxanna after his death in 323 B.C.. It is also rumored he had a son, Hercules, by Barsine, a concubine in 327 B.C. What happened to these potential kings is detailed well by Leon Wood:

At first a decision was made that the first two should rule as comonarchs, with other persons making decisions in their names for some time. Dissension broke out as to who those others should be, however, with bitter fighting taking place before long. In 317 B.C., the half-brother, Philip, was murdered in the resulting turmoil; in 310 B.C. also the young Alexander, and in 309 B.C., finally the illegitimate Hercules. No posterity of Alexander then remained to inherit any part of the empire.³

And it all occurred exactly as God has prophesied it would a jaw-dropping, eye-popping 227 years BEFORE THE FACT (536 B.C.-309 B.C equals 227)!!! And Alexander's, once glorious world empire, was given to others just as God said. God said in Daniel 8:21-22 that four kings would emerge from Alexander's empire, and the angel echoes this truth at the close of verse 4. The *Diadochi*, Greek for "successors" (Διάδοχοι), stood for the four generals of Alexander who carved up the rudderless kingdom: Ptolemy (Egypt), Seleucus (Syria), Lysimachus (Asia Minor), and Cassander (Macedonia). Once more, God gave Daniel precise information that no man could have known. No one can say it was just a lucky guess Daniel wrote that Greece would dissolve in this fashion because this was over two hundred years BEFORE THE FACT!!! You might make an intelligent prophecy this week and say that if Israel moves its embassy to Jerusalem this will result in a war with the Palestinians; however, that observation is child's play in light of what Daniel wrote about. Your statement would be just a good geo-political guess. What Daniel's prophecy does in humanly impossible, and points, by definition to a living God who gives us prophecies like this for two main reasons:

Precise Prophecies Give Saints Focus And Sinner Facts (Daniel 11:1-45)

³Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1973), 282.

If you are Christ-follower right now, God is telling you, “I’m here, I’m in control, so you hold on and be my courageous, faithful witness (like Daniel in his 80s) while I work to bring my messianic kingdom to earth.” If you are not a Christ-follower, God is asking you a simple, highly logical question: “Will you allow the incontrovertible evidence of this prophecy to move your from unbelief to belief, from being spiritually lost to being spiritually found?” Or will you, like Friedrich Nietzsche, live to say, “If one were to prove this God of the Christians to us, we should be even less able to believe in him.”⁴ I think the living God has given you all the proof you need. Today is the day for the decision of your life. Today is the day to trust Jesus, the Messiah, as your Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9).

⁴Friedrich Nietzsche, *The AntiChrist*, section 47, quoted in Walter Kaufmann, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Viking, 1968), 627).