

Proof the Bible is Divinely Inspired and Accurate, and Therefore God Must Be Real (Daniel 11 Accurately Predicts the Kings that Will Overrun Israel 4 Centuries Into the Future)

Daniel Ch 11 perfectly predicts a series of kings that will overrun/oppress Israel starting from 536BC to 167 AD (370 years). Confirmed by historical documents of Persian and Greek empires.

Context

Israel was chastised by God for 70 years in Babylon captivity (for the 70 sabbath years that Judah skipped). Gabriel tells Daniel in Ch 9 that Israel's rebellion and chastisement will go on for a long time. At the end of the 70 years punishment, only 40,000 Jews return to Jerusalem. Daniel in prayer again over when Israel will be restored. Daniel is visited by another angel who tells him of kings that will overrun / oppress Israel in Daniel 11, verses 2-35.

End of Daniel Ch 11 v35 says there is a time gap. Verses 36 to the end of Ch 11 describe the final king to oppress Israel, who has not come yet, and he is the Antichrist (same as the "Beast" in Revelation 13). He will kill 2/3 of the Jews in a 3 ½ year span. Jesus' return will end the last king, and end the chastisement by God. Then Israel will be restored as promised.

Counter arguments

Critics do not argue the historical accuracy of the verses because the historical documents from the Persian and Greek empires confirm Daniel's verses. Instead, critics claim the book of Daniel must have been written after the four centuries, which would mean in the second century BC or later. That can't be true because the Maccabees, who tucked away the Dead Sea Scrolls in the second century BC, included copies of Daniel which were already treated/referenced as "canonical" (well established).

Detailed historical notes:

"Seleucis dynasty" on Wikipedia

"Ptolemy dynasty" on Wikipedia

<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/daniel/11-21.htm>

From the Fall of Judah to Alexander the Great (prep for the main body of the prophecy)

I included some other Old Testament references for context of what was happening to the Jews.

| Bible verse | Yr | Babylonian, Persian, and Greek Historical Records |
|---|-------|--|
| | 606BC | Judah taken captive into Babylon. Start the 70 yr punishment |
| | 539BC | Babylon falls to Cyrus the Great (Cyrus II) |
| Ezra 1:1 | 537BC | Decree by Cyrus II that temple can be rebuilt |
| Ezra 2 & 3 | 536BC | Only 40,000 Jews return to Jerusalem, led by Zerubbabel, start rebuilding the temple. Ends the 70 yr punishment |
| Daniel 10 & 11:1 Angel appears to Daniel to reveal the future kings that will overrun Jerusalem | 536BC | |
| | 529BC | Cambyses II (Ahasuerus) becomes Persian king |
| | 525BC | Cambyses II starts conquest of Egypt. Eventually conquers Egypt at Pelusium. Overruns Israel in the process. |
| | 522BC | Cambyses II dies. Civil wars starts in Persia. False Smerdis becomes king for 6 months. Then Smerdis (Artaxerxes) becomes king for a few months, stops the rebuilding of the temple. Then Darius the Great (Darius I) becomes Persian king. Not the same as Darius the Mede in Daniel 9 (governor under Cyrus II). Darius I has to fight other claimants to the throne for a couple years. |
| Ezra 5 & 6 | 520BC | Darius I decrees the temple rebuilding can continue. Temple rebuilding restarts under Haggai and Zechariah. |
| Ezra 6:15 | 515BC | Temple finished and dedicated |
| | 494BC | Ionic revolt ended by naval victory at Lade |
| | 492BC | Darius I attack on Athens fails |
| | 490BC | Darius I defeated at Marathon in Greece |

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| Dan 11:2 "Now then, I will reveal the truth to you. Three more Persian kings will reign, to be succeeded by a fourth, far richer than the others..." | 486BC | The 3 Persian kings are Cyrus II, Cambyses II, and Darius I. Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) becomes Persian king when Darius I dies. |
| | 484BC | Egypt rebels, Xerxes I reconquers Egypt. Overruns Israel. |
| Esther 1 | 483BC | Queen Vashti (wife of Xerxes I) rejected |
| | 482BC | Babylon rebels. Xerxes I destroys the city |
| Dan 11:2 "... He will use his wealth to stir up everyone to fight against the kingdom of Greece." | 480BC | Xerxes I takes Athens, but is defeated at Salamis (Greece). Greeks expel Persians from Europe. |
| Esther 2:16 | 478BC | Esther chosen as queen by Xerxes I |
| Esther 3 & 9 | 473BC | Planned destruction of Jews by Haman turned around |
| | 466BC | Xerxes I beaten bad at Eurymedon |
| | 465BC | Artaxerxes I Longimanus becomes Persian king |
| Ezra 7-10 | 457BC | Artaxerxes I decrees second Jewish return to Jerusalem |
| | ? | Enemies partially destroy Jerusalem's wall |
| | 445BC | Artaxerxes I decrees the wall of Jerusalem can be rebuilt. Marks beginning of the 70 sevens prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27. 483 years from now to Jesus' formal entry into Jerusalem (and crucifixion). |
| Neh | 444BC | Nehemiah appointed governor, third Jewish return to Jerusalem, resume & complete wall |
| Neh 5 | 432BC | Nehemiah's first term as governor ends |
| Neh 13 | ? | Nehemiah appointed as governor 2 nd time |
| | 424BC | String of six Persian kings: Xerxes II, Sagdianus, Darius II, Artaxerxes II, Artaxerxes III, Artaxerxes IV. |
| | 336BC | Darius III becomes Persian king. Alexander the Great (Alexander III) becomes king in Greece in same year. |
| | 333BC | Alexander III beats Darius III, takes control of western Persia. |
| | 332BC | Alexander III conquers Egypt and Tyre, Marches through Israel on the way |
| | 330BC | Artaxerxes V becomes Persian king |
| Dan 11:3 "Then a mighty king will rise to power who will rule with great authority and accomplish everything he sets out to do." | 329BC | Alexander the Great (Alexander III) conquers the rest of Persia. Becomes Macedon & Persian king. Overruns Israel again, but treats Jerusalem well after having a vision from God. |
| Dan 11:4 "But at the height of his power, his kingdom will be broken apart and divided into four parts. It will not be ruled by the king's descendants, nor will the kingdom hold the authority it once had. For his empire will be uprooted and given to others." | 323BC | Alexander dies of disease. Alexander's retarded half-brother, an illegitimate son, and newborn are murdered. Four generals win the following battle for control, and split Alexander's empire in four – Cassandra took Macedonia, Lysimachus took Thrace and Asia Minor (Turkey), Ptolemy took Egypt, Seleucus took Syria. |

Kings of the North and South (descendants of two of Alexander's generals) – main body of the prophecy

Daniel's prophecy looking ahead a little over 200 years at this point.

Chain of Seleucid (Syrian) rulers covered by Daniel 11: ("kings of the north")

1. Seleucus 1 Nicator (originally General Seleucus under Alexander) – referenced in Dan 11:5
2. Antiochus I Soter
3. Antiochus II Theos – referenced in Dan 11:6
4. Seleucus II Callinicus – referenced in Dan 11:7
5. Seleucus III Ceraunus – referenced in Dan 11:9
6. Antiochus III the Great – referenced in Dan 11:9
7. Seleucus IV Philopator – referenced in Dan 11:20
8. Antiochus (son of Seleucus IV)
9. Antiochus IV Euphianes – referenced in Dan 11:21

Chain of Ptolemaic (Egyptian) rulers covered by Daniel 11: (“kings of the south”)

1. Ptolemy I Soter (originally General Ptolemy under Alexander) – referenced in Dan 11:5
2. Ptolemy II Philadelphus – referenced in Dan 11:6
3. Ptolemy III Euergetes – referenced in Dan 11:7
4. Ptolemy IV Philopator – referenced in Dan 11:11
5. Ptolemy V Epiphanes – referenced in Dan 11:17
6. Ptolemy VI Philometor – referenced in Dan 11:21

| Bible verse | Yr | Syrian, Egyptian, and Roman Historical Records |
|---|-------|---|
| | 312BC | General Seleucis I Nicator becomes king of Syria and surrounding areas. Beginning of the “kings of the north” (Syria is north of Israel). |
| | 305BC | General Ptolemy declares himself Pharaoh Ptolemy I. Beginning of the “kings of the south” (Egypt is south of Israel). |
| Dan 11:5 “The king of the south will increase in power, but one of his own officials will become more powerful than he and will rule his kingdom with great strength.” | | General Ptolemy originally had authority over Seleucis while Alexander was around, but afterwards, Seleucis I becomes stronger as a king than Ptolemy I. |
| Dan 11:6 “Some years later an alliance will be formed between the king of the north and the king of the south. The daughter of the king of the south will be given in marriage to the king of the north to secure the alliance, but she will lose her influence over him, and so will her father. She will be abandoned along with her supporters.” | 246BC | Antiochus II Theos is the king of the north. Ptolemy II Philadelphus is king of the south. Theos wanted to marry the Ptolemy II’s daughter Berenice, so Theos divorced his wife Laodice I and married Berenice. Laodice I murders Berenice and all her attendants, and then poisons Theos. |
| Dan 11:7-8 “But when one of her relatives becomes king of the south, he will raise an army and enter the fortress of the king of the north and defeat him. When he returns to Egypt, he will carry back their idols with him, along with priceless articles of gold and silver. For some years afterward he will leave the king of the north alone.” | | Next king of the north is Seleucus II Callinicus. Next king of the south is Ptolemy III Euergetes, brother of murdered Berenice. Euergetes attacks and defeats Callinicus, and carries off lots of silver and idols. Ptolemy overruns Israel in the process. |
| Dan 11:9-10 “Later the king of the north will invade the realm of the king of the south but will soon return to his own land. However, the sons of the king of the north will assemble a mighty army that will advance like a flood and carry the battle as far as the enemy’s fortress.” | | Callinicus falls off his horse and dies, leaving 2 sons. Next king of the north is older son Seleucus III Ceraunus, who is pissed at Ptolemy. He assembles an army, but is murdered by his own troops. The younger brother, Antiochus III the Great, became king of the north. Antiochus III attacks Egypt with 75,000 troops. Which fortress does he stop at? Antiochus III overruns Israel in the process. |
| Dan 11:11-12 “Then, in a rage, the king of the south will rally against the vast forces assembled by the king of the north and will defeat them. After the enemy army is swept away, the king of the south will be filled with pride and will execute many thousands of his enemies. But his success will be short lived.” | | Ptolemy IV Philopator is next king of the south. Antiochus III still king of the north. Ptolemy IV attacks Antiochus III with 73,000 soldiers, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 elephants. Historian Polibius records the losses from the fight. Philopator wins at Raphia, but doesn’t totally break Antiochus III who escapes. Ptolemy IV overruns Israel in the process. |
| Dan 11:13-16 “A few years later the king of the north will return with a fully equipped army far greater than before. At that time there will be a general uprising against the king of the south. Violent men among your own people will join them in fulfillment of this vision, but they will not succeed. Then the king of the north will come and lay siege to a fortified city and capture it. The best troops of the south will not be able to stand in the face of the onslaught. The king of the north will march onward unopposed; none will be able to stop him. He will pause in the glorious land of Israel, intent on destroying it.” | | Ptolemy IV Philopator still king of the south, and Antiochus III the Great still king of the north. 13 years later, Antiochus III comes back for revenge. Apostate Jews (effectively mercenaries) join Antiochus, hoping that helping him beat Egypt will prompt him to free Israel. Antiochus III routes Ptolemy IV Philopator. Antiochus III pays off the mercenaries with money and favors. Antiochus III not only overruns Israel, but slaughters a bunch of the Jews on the way (because the Jews won’t pick up the Greek culture and gods like Antiochus wants?). |

| Bible verse | Yr | Syrian, Egyptian, and Roman Historical Records |
|--|-------|--|
| Dan 11:17 “He will make plans to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will form an alliance with the king of the south. He will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom from within, but his plan will fail.” | | Antiochus III still king of the north, next king of the south is Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Antiochus III sends his daughter Cleopatra I Syra to marry Ptolemy V Epiphanes, and plant her as a spy to break Egypt from within. However, Cleopatra loves her husband Ptolemy more than her father Antiochus, and the plan fails. |
| Dan 11:18 “After this, he will turn his attention to the coastland and conquer many cities. But a commander from another land will put an end to his insolence and cause him to retreat in shame.” | 188BC | Antiochus III the Great still king of the north, and Ptolemy V Epiphanes still king of the south. Antiochus III goes after the cities on the Greek coast, and gets stomped by Rome (who has taken over Greece by now). Rome lets Antiochus III go back home after forcing Antiochus to pay 1000 talents of silver to Rome periodically as homage. |
| Dan 11:19 “He will take refuge in his own fortresses but will stumble and fall and be seen no more.” | 187BC | Antiochus III tries to steal gold from a Babylonian temple in Syria, and the local people kill him. |
| Dan 11:20 “His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. But after a very brief reign, he will die, though not from anger or in battle.” | 175BC | Next king of the north is Seleucus IV. He raises taxes to pay Rome’s fee. Assassinated by someone, presumably Heliodorus. |
| Dan 11:21 “The next to come to power will be a despicable man who is not in line for royal succession. He will slip in when least expected and take over the kingdom by flattery and intrigue.” | 175BC | Rightful king of the north is the son of Seleucus IV, but he is being held prisoner in Rome. Syrian throne held by a usurper named Heliodorus. Antiochus IV also a prisoner in Rome for a while, but gets out before the son of Seleucus. Antiochus IV goes to Syria and bribes Heliodorus’ people into a takeover. Antiochus IV calls himself Epiphanes, “the Illustrious”, and also used the name Theos, "God," seen upon his coins. His subjects called him Epimanes "the Insane". Had a contemptible character: lounged like a mere idler about the streets of Antioch, mingled with foreigners and men of the vilest character, not ashamed to get drunk with the young and carouse with them, seen drunk in the streets, would parade the streets of his capital in a long robe and with a garland of roses upon his head and throw stones hidden in his robe at anyone who attempted to pass by or to follow him. |
| Dan 11:22 “Before him great armies will be swept away, including a covenant prince.” | | Heliodorus’ army is broken apart. Antiochus IV also “sells” the Jewish high priest position to a vassal for money. |
| Dan 11:23-24 “With deceitful promises, he will make various alliances. He will become strong despite having only a handful of followers. Without warning he will enter the richest areas of the land. Then he will distribute among his followers the plunder and wealth of the rich—something his predecessors had never done. He will plot the overthrow of strongholds, but this will last for only a short while.” | | Antiochus IV’s young nephew Ptolemy VI Philometor has lost control of much of Egypt. Antiochus IV claims to help his nephew regain control, and takes over a series of cities leading into Egypt without appearing to invade (brings in a small troop, and hands out gifts and favors to people that help him). Makes it into the fertile areas of Egypt. |
| Dan 11:25-27 “Then he will stir up his courage and raise a great army against the king of the south. The king of the south will go to battle with a mighty army, but to no avail, for there will be plots against him. His own household will cause his downfall. His army will be swept away, and many will be killed. Seeking nothing but each other’s harm, these kings will plot against each other at the conference table, attempting to deceive each other. But it will make no difference, for the end will come at the appointed time.” | | Ptolemy VI eventually fights back and forms an army. Antiochus IV beats Ptolemy VI badly at Pelusium due to traitors, and Ptolemy VI becomes a vassal. Antiochus IV does not kill his nephew, instead he negotiates terms. They both make treaties and promises that they don’t keep. |

| Bible verse | Yr | Syrian, Egyptian, and Roman Historical Records |
|---|-------|--|
| Dan 11:28 "The king of the north will then return home with great riches. On the way he will set himself against the people of the holy covenant, doing much damage before continuing his journey." | | While Antiochus IV is in Egypt, there's a small revolt in Jerusalem against the fake high priest. When Antiochus comes back from Egypt, he took Jerusalem by force, slew 40,000 inhabitants, sold 40,000 more as slaves, profaned the temple, took the golden vessels from the temple, and reinstated a fake high priest. |
| Dan 11:29-30 "Then at the appointed time he will once again invade the south, but this time the result will be different. For warships from western coastlands will scare him off, and he will withdraw and return home. But he will vent his anger against the people of the holy covenant and reward those who forsake the covenant." | | Antiochus IV invades Egypt a second time. Ptolemy VI is not strong enough to fight him, so Ptolemy makes a deal with the Romans. Roman navy from Kittim (Cyprus, to the west) beats Antiochus' navy, and threatens to surround Antiochus' army. Antiochus IV forced to retreat and start paying homage to Rome (like Antiochus III). |
| Dan 11:31-35 "His army will take over the Temple fortress, pollute the sanctuary, put a stop to the daily sacrifices, and set up the sacrilegious object that causes desecration. He will flatter and win over those who have violated the covenant. But the people who know their God will be strong and will resist him. Wise leaders will give instruction to many, but these teachers will die by fire and sword, or they will be jailed and robbed. During these persecutions, little help will arrive, and many who join them will not be sincere. And some of the wise will fall victim to persecution. In this way, they will be refined and cleansed and made pure until the time of the end, for the appointed time is still to come. | 167BC | Antiochus IV Epiphanes returns from Egypt, bitter from defeat. Vents on Jerusalem, which is already in trouble with the "false" high priest. Rewards Jews that drop the covenant (Old Testament law), kills those that don't. Kills around 80,000 more Jews, takes 40,000 prisoner, sells another 40,000 as slaves. Trashes the temple, sets up an altar to Zeus in it. A group among the Jews called Hassidians arose, led by Judas Maccabeus, who successfully revolt to provide a temporary relief – the "little help". Maccabeus slaughters the apostate Jews. This is 369 years after Daniel's prophecy. Verse 36 picks up with the last king who is yet to come. |