

1. Last week I exegeted Dan 10:20-21 and then we looked at thirteen points of introduction relating to chapter eleven. When time expired I was about to begin a study of Dan 11:1 and 2.

2. Before we continue that study of Dan 11:1-2, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 10:1-21.

Dan 10:1 In 535 B.C., which was the third year of Cyrus the Great's reign, Daniel (who was called by Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar) received a message from God. The message, delivered by Gabriel, was true and it concerned a time of trial in which Israel would greatly suffer. The understanding of the message also came to him in a vision.

Dan 10:2 Hearing of the difficulties being encountered by those who had returned to the land to rebuild the Temple, I mourned for three weeks.

Dan 10:3 I did not eat any choice foods; in fact I ate no meat and drank no wine; neither did I use any body lotions during these three weeks.

Dan 10:4 On the twenty-fourth of March while on assignment from the King, I was standing on the banks of the Tigris River.

Dan 10:5 Suddenly before me stood a man Who was dressed in linen; he wore a belt of fine gold.

Dan 10:6 His body was like a transparent stone with a refulgence like that of gold, his face flashed like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of highly polished brass, and his voice roared like the sound of thunder. It was apparent to me I had been visited by a Theophany.

Dan 10:7 I was the only one who could see or hear the Theophany; the men who were with me were overcome with fear; in fact they were so overcome that they ran away and hid themselves. I have no idea what so terrified them.

Dan 10:8 I was left alone, gazing at the magnificent vision; I turned deathly pale, fainted and fell to the ground.

Dan 10:9 Then I heard the voice of the Theophany, as I listened I fell into a deep trance with my face to the ground.

Dan 10:10 And then the angel Gabriel stood over me and aroused me from my trance; he lifted me trembling to my hands and knees.

Dan 10:11 "Daniel, in God's eyes you are highly esteemed and dearly loved, I want you to consider carefully the words I am about to speak, now stand up and understand that it was God Himself Who sent me to you." And when he said this I raised myself to a standing position but I was still trembling.

Dan 10:12 Gabriel saw my trepidation and said, "stop being afraid, since the first day that you wanted to know more about Israel's future I was dispatched from God's presence for the specific purpose of answering your questions."

Dan 10:13 But on my way the demon assigned to influence the various Persian kings resisted me for some three weeks. Then Michael, the elect angel assigned to protect Israel, came to my assistance, because I had been detained over Persia.

Dan 10:14 Now do not be afraid for I, Gabriel, have come to explain to you what is going to happen to Israel in the future, your vision concerns a time yet to come.

Dan 10:15 As Gabriel spoke to me, I bowed my head looking only at the ground finding myself unable to speak.

Dan 10:16 Then Gabriel touched my lips, and I was able to again speak. I said to Gabriel who stood before me, "I am overcome with anxiety because of what I have seen, I am absolutely helpless and without discernment.

Dan 10:17 I have so many questions but how can I, your servant, Stalk with you? My physical strength is gone and I am having difficulty breathing."

Dan 10:18 Again Gabriel, God's special messenger, touched me and I immediately felt better.

Dan 10:19 I was now able to listen. Gabriel then said "Do not be afraid, O man highly esteemed and loved of God. Peace! Be strong now; be strong." His words strengthened me so I said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength."

Dan 10:20 Gabriel seemed to be satisfied as to my recovery, He said "Do you know why I have come to you?" Before I could answer he continued, "I am here to tell you what is written in the book of the future.

Dan 10:21 After I deliver my lengthy message then I must leave, I will on my return trip encounter not only the demon prince of Persia but because of my message I will also have to face the demon prince of Greece. Only Michael the guardian angel of Israel will help me; with his help I will return to the third heaven.

3. Now let's see what we can learn from the first two verses of chapter eleven:

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Dan 11:1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

Dan 11:2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

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Dan 11:1 And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)

Dan 11:2 "Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

Principles:

1. The opening verse of chapter 11 is often considered the closing verse of chapter ten. In it, the angel Gabriel declares his earlier and present support of Darius the Mede. Remember the year is approximately B.C. 535.

2. His stand is usually taken as a description of the angel's protection of Darius the Mede.

3. In the first year of Darius the Mede when the world power passed from the Babylonians to the Medo Persians, the angel it would seem had worked with Darius until he succeeded in turning the new kingdom from hostility to favor toward Israel.

3.1 The story of Daniel chapter six demonstrates that efforts were made in the first year of Darius to make him hostile toward Israel. But God sent His angel on that occasion and shut the lions' mouths (Dan 6:11-13, 22).

Dan 6:11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

Dan 6:12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?" The king answered, "The decree stands-- in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

Dan 6:13 Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. ō He still prays three times a day."

Dan 6:22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

4. The miraculous deliverance by the angel caused Darius the Mede to reverse his policies to favor Israel (Dan 6:24-27).

Dan 6:24 At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Dan 6:25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly!

Dan 6:26 "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.

Dan 6:27 He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

5. The survey of history provided in the opening verses of chapter eleven fixes the prophecy as dealing with a period later than Nebuchadnezzar's dream but coinciding with the prophecy of chapter eight of the ram and the he goat.

Dan 11:2 "Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

Dan 8:20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia.

Dan 8:21 The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes is the first king.

Dan 8:22 The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.

Dan 8:23 "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise.

Dan 8:24 He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people.

6. With the passing of the Babylonian Empire, the natural question arose concerning the future of the Medo Persian Empire.

6.1 Concerning this, the angel announces, "And now will I show thee the truth," that is, the truth of what will come to pass in the future.

6.2 Daniel is informed that there will be three kings in Persia to be followed by a fourth far richer and greater than the others, who shall use his strength and riches to stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

7. The identity of these four kings has been disputed. Let's see how Wycliffe has identified them.

"The three kings in Persia appear to have been: first, Cambyses, Cyrus' son (accession 529 B.C.); second, Pseudo-Smerdis, who reigned briefly in 522 B.C.); and third, Darius I ... also called, the Great, (522-486 B.C.); a ... great monarch. The fourth, far greater than they all was, then, Xerxes, known in Esther as Ahasuerus (486-464 B.C.). The wars of Darius I and of Xerxes, by which the Persians infuriated all of Greece, are well known to students of classical antiquity and standard ancient history."

8. The three Kings fit Cambyses, Smerdis and Darius the First; Xerxes would certainly seem to be the fourth.

Dan 11:2 "Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

Dan 11:3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

9. Notice what John Walvoord has written of the identification of the Kings:

"The most natural explanation, however, is that the four kings are the first four Persian rulers in addition to Darius the Mede, the point being that later Persian rulers were unimportant and in a state of decline."

0.1 Assuming that all four kings are still future, the four kings would then be Cambyses (529-522 B.C.) ... Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521 B.C.), Darius I ... (521-486 B.C.), and Xerxes I (486-465 BC)."

10. This identification has the advantage of taking Persian kings in order, climaxing with Xerxes I who led the great expedition against Greece.

11. Xerxes represents, on the one hand, the ultimate development of Persian power, and, on the other hand, the beginning of its dissolution.

12. There is another conservative interpretation which eliminates Pseudo-Smerdis, who reigned only briefly, and adds after Xerxes I, Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.) as the fourth ruler. However, according to the prophecy, the fourth ruler is the one who contends against Greece, which was not true of Artaxerxes I.

13. According to Daniel, the climax of Persian rulers came with Xerxes the first who in secular history used his great riches and a period of some four years to gather a great army amounting to hundreds of thousands, one of the largest armies in the ancient world.

14. The expedition which he launched in 480 B.C. against Greece was disastrous, however, Xerxes never recovered.

15. The Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther would certainly seem to be Xerxes I, and the ill-fated expedition against Greece most likely occurred between chapters one and two of Esther.

16. You may recall in our earlier study of Esther, the disappointment of Ahasuerus in his failed expedition resulted in his renewed and obsessive interest in the internal affairs of his Persian Kingdom.

17. Before we study the rise and fall of Alexander the Great, I want to give you an expanded translation of Dan 11:1 and 2.

Expanded Translation

Dan 11:1 Gabriel began his lesson from the Book of the Futures: "In the first year of Darius the Mede, I supported and protected him. I worked to get him to respect and foster your people Israel but

Dan 11:2 I have more to teach: Three more kings after Darius the Mede will appear in Persia (Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis and Darius I) and then a fourth (Xerxes I) who will be much richer and more powerful than all the others. When he reaches his zenith both in power and wealth, he will stir up all of Persia against the kingdom of Greece. He will authorize a military expedition to attack both Macedonia and the city states of Achaia."

18. Now let's see what principles we can glean from Dan 11:3-4.

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Dan 11:3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

Dan 11:4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

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Dan 11:3 Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases.

Dan 11:4 After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others.

Principles:

1. The mighty King is Alexander the Great, the four winds of heaven represent Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus the four survivors of a civil war.

1.1 A fifth, Antigonus, was in the running but lost out. As the Grolier Encyclopedia records:

"The Macedonian Antigonus I, b. c. 382, was one of the successors (Diadochi) of ALEXANDER THE GREAT. He was governor of Phrygia under Alexander. After Alexander's death he finally got control over the eastern provinces ... Trying to conquer the western portion, he was opposed by the other Diadochi ... was defeated and killed at Ipsus in Anatolia in 301."

2. Let me review a little history of the Hellenistic empires as such relate to Israel.

3. Soon after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. his generals divided his empire into four parts, two of which--Egypt and Syria - were under the rule of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids respectively.

4. The Holy Land was controlled from Egypt by the Ptolemaic Dynasty from 323 to 198, and was subsequently overturned by the Seleucids of Syria and was subsequently governed by the Seleucids of Syria from 198 to 142.

4.1 The Diadochi, as the successors of Alexander were called, struggled bitterly for power and control over his domain.

4.2 At first Ptolemy I seized his own satrapy, Egypt and North Africa, which had splendid resources and fortifications.

4.3 Seleucus eventually gained Syria and Mesopotamia, and by 301 Lysimachus held Thrace and Asia Minor; Cassander ruled Macedonia.



Now back to our passage:

7. One of the by-products of the attack on Greece by Xerxes I is that he incurred the undying hatred of Greece toward Persia.

8. Montgomery translates it, "and he will stir up all, namely the kingdom of Greece," and then comments,

"But the point is not that he made war against Greece ... but rather that the world was aroused against the king." Although there may be question whether this ... is justified, the facts are that Alexander the Great in conquering the Persian Empire was repaying Xerxes the First. Alexander the Great was indeed "a mighty king" ... He indeed had great dominion and was absolute ruler who did "according to his will."

9. As previously revealed, in Daniel 8:8, Alexander died prematurely and four generals took over. The dream is interpreted in Dan 8:19-22.

Dan 8:8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

The Interpretation of the Vision

Dan 8:19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be.

Dan 8:20 The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia.

Dan 8:21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

Dan 8:22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

End Lesson Taught 1-5-2003