



# Daniel

דניאל

## Chapter 11

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### DANIEL SEES THE FUTURE

Daniel's account of the future recorded in chapter 11 is so astonishing in its detail that critics who don't believe in prophecy have no place to go except to claim desperately that it was written after that history took place.

Yet any claim of that nature meets with impossible credibility problems, because copies of Daniel have been found dating earlier than many of the events described in these passages. Not only that, but the book was translated into Greek around 270BC as part of the Septuagint, and this version is identical to Hebrew versions.

Chapter 11 and 12 work together as one vision, with chapter 10 forming the prelude or introduction. The vision can be divided into 3 parts:

- Part 1, though future to Daniel, is to us history, because it was completely fulfilled by events now past.
- Part 2 was fulfilled as a foreshadowing in the second century BC. However, most scholars agree that this description will also be fulfilled in the future under a coming world leader.
- Part 3 is still in the future as far as we're concerned. Some people (generally known as "preterists") insist that all of Daniel relates to events that are now over, but this requires the holder of that view to argue that Scripture is not completely accurate.

While Daniel was fasting, an angel appeared to him above the water of the Tigris River. This angel, described in terms similar to those used by John several hundred years later in describing his Revelation of Jesus Christ, has talked about spiritual warfare. He now begins to describe war between men, in particular the ongoing battles over several generations between the Seleucid empire (the "king of the North") and the Egyptian empire of Ptolemy (the "king of the South").

### DANIEL 11:1

*And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and strengthen him.*

- Continuing his statement begun at the end of chapter 10, the angel says that he took action to support Darius the Mede and protect him from spiritual attack. The Hebrew is not clear about whether the "him" in this verse refers to Darius or to Michael the Archangel, who was the subject at the start of this sentence.



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### DANIEL 11:2

Now, I tell you the truth: three kings will yet stand up in Persia; and then a fourth who will be far richer than the others. By power gained through his riches he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.

- The three kings are Cambyses (Cyrus' elder son) from 529-523, an imposter named Gaumata (also named Bardiya) who passed himself off as Cyrus' younger son after having the real son murdered) from 523-522), and Darius 1 from 522-485. Darius was the son of Hystaspes who murdered the imposter. Darius was the cousin of Cyrus and thus of royal blood.
- The fourth king is Xerxes (Ahasuerus) who ruled during the near-holocaust described in the book of Esther, from 485-464. He would ultimately play a major role in Greece's anger towards the Persians by spending years trying to militarily subdue Greece with only partial success.
- The angel's earlier account of spiritual warfare with the demonic "kings of Persia" probably related to the battle over protecting the Jews from Haman's attempt to wipe them out through Xerxes. A Jewish Queen named Esther became the source of their salvation in a surprising plot twist.

### DANIEL 11:3

Then a mighty king will stand up, who will rule with great authority, and do as he pleases.

- This is of course a reference to Alexander the Great. The angel has skipped a number of other Persian kings, moving forward about 120 years.

### DANIEL 11:4

After he comes, his kingdom will be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the authority he had, for his kingdom will be plucked up and given to others beside those.

- Alexander died at the height of his power. His half brother, Philip Arrhidaeus, was mentally defective. Alexander had two sons, too young to take over, who were murdered within 13 years of their father's death. After 22 years of infighting, Alexander's empire was divided up between his four key generals. None of these four parts were even a shadow of the greatness of the original.



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- The two key pieces were that of Seleucus Nicator, who took control of Syria, and Ptolemy I Soter taking Egypt. These two would battle each other for the next 150 years, continuing until Roman rule was established in the area under Pompey. Because these power struggles are seen through the lens of Israel, they are described in geographical reference to Israel. Thus, Seleucus who is located north of Israel is “the king of the North” while Ptolemy is “the king of the South.”

### **DANIEL 11:5**

*The king of the south will be strong, but one of his princes will be even stronger and will have great authority and power over his own kingdom.*

- Ptolemy reigned Egypt from 323-285BC. However, his successor Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-245BC) became an even stronger king, establishing the great Library of Alexandria and commissioning the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek -- the common trade language of the day.
- Ptolemy 1 captured Jerusalem on a Sabbath day in 321BC without resistance, but in 316 lost Israel to his rival Antigonus. After the battle of Baza in 312BC, Ptolemy regained the territory with assistance from Seleucus Nicator (312-281BC). Seleucus established the Seleucid empire, ruling from Babylon.

### **DANIEL 11:6**

*At the end of many years they will join together as allies. The daughter of the king of the south will come to the king of the north to make an agreement, but she will not retain her power and neither will he nor his power stand. At this time she will be handed over, together with the escorts that brought her and her father and the one who supported her.*

- A political marriage was arranged between Antiochus II Theos (262-246BC) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus' daughter Bernice. Antiochus had to divorce his wife Laodiceia, which enraged her. She responded by poisoning Antiochus and Bernice, along with their infant son and setting her elder son Seleucus II Callinicus on the throne (246-226BC). Note that this happened after the Septuagint translation that already included the complete book of Daniel along with this account!



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### DANIEL 11:7

But out of her family line will arise one in his estate. He will come with an army, and will enter the fortress of the king of the north. He will fight against them, and will succeed.

- The brother of the murdered Bernice, Ptolemy II Euergetes (245-221BC) sought revenge. He invaded Syria, seized the port of Antioch and overran Seleucus' empire all the way to Babylon.

### DANIEL 11:8

He will also seize and carry captive into Egypt their gods with molten images and their valuable articles of silver and gold. For certain years he will stay away from the king of the north.

- Ptolemy II took huge spoils back to Egypt. These included 400 talents of gold, 40,000 talents of silver and 2,500 idols.

### DANIEL 11:9

Then the king [of the north] will invade the kingdom of the king of the south, but will retreat into his own land.

- After two years Seleucus reorganized and marched south against Egypt, but was soundly defeated and returned to Antioch with only a small force remaining.
- Note that your Bible may contain a remarkably different turn of events. There's a good reason for the confusion: the sentence structure in the Hebrew isn't very specific, making it quite easy to misunderstand. As a result, some Bibles such as the KJV appear to indicate that the king of the south attacks north, while others say that the king of the north invades southward, which is the intended meaning. The exact Hebrew reading goes something like this: bow [will invade] [the other] melek [kingdom] negeb [south] [and will] shuwv [turn away from, retreat] [to his own] adamah [land]. It's not hard to see why Bible translators could have gotten it wrong.

### DANIEL 11:10

But his sons will prepare for war, and will assemble a great army, one that will come and sweep through like a flood. Then he will return, and be stirred up all the way to his fortress.



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- Seleucus' sons were Seleucus III Ceraunus (226-223BC) who was murdered in Asia Minor, and Antiochus II, also known as Antiochus The Great. History books tend to have lots to say about Antiochus the Great (223-187BC) who recovered the fortress of Seleucia along with Tyre, then resumed the war with Egypt.

### **DANIEL 11:11**

*Then the king of the south will be moved with rage, and will come and fight against the king of the north, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated.*

- The army of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203BC) marched against Antiochus III. At the battle of Raphia just south of Gaza, Antiochus was defeated despite his larger army and signed a peace treaty with Ptolemy who then went on a tour of the Holy lands, though he was badly treated in Jerusalem. Curiously, while attempting to enter the Holy of Holies he was struck with a sudden unexplained paralysis and unable to enter.

### **DANIEL 11:12**

*And when he has carried off the army, the king of the south will be filled with pride and will slaughter many tens of thousands, but he will not be strengthened by it.*

- Filled with pride and angry about what happened to him in Jerusalem, Ptolemy IV took out his humiliation when he returned to Egypt by murdering thousands of Egyptian Jews.

### **DANIEL 11:13**

*For the king of the north will return with an even larger army than the previous one. After a few years he will advance with a huge army fully equipped.*

- After Ptolemy IV died, his four-year-old son succeeded him as Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181BC). Some 12 years after his defeat at the Battle of Raphia, Antiochus III set out with a greater army in an attempt to conquer Egypt.

### **DANIEL 11:14**

*And in those times many will stand up against the king of the south. Violent criminals among your people will raise themselves up to fulfill the vision, but they will not succeed.*



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- Antiochus had an ally in Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. In addition, many vassal kings of Egypt opposed Ptolemy V.
- In 200BC, an Egyptian Jew named Scopas raised up an army in an attempt to win Judea from Antiochus but he was defeated by Antiochus III's 100,000-strong army at Sidon in 198BC.

### **DANIEL 11:15-16**

Then the king of the north will come and build up siege ramps and capture the most fortified cities. The forces of the south will not withstand, not even their best troops, no one will have any strength to resist.

But the invader will do as he pleases, and none will be able to stand against him. He will set himself up in the glorious land, and will have the power to destroy it.

- In the city that would later be named Caesarea Philippi north of Galilee, Antiochus took control of Palestine from the Egyptians for the last time, soundly defeating them at the Battle of Panion. Meanwhile the Romans were getting a foothold in Greece and working on their naval strength.

### **DANIEL 11:17**

He will be determined to enter with the might of his whole kingdom, so this is what he will do: he will give him his daughter in marriage to overthrow the kingdom. But she will not remain loyal to helping him.

- Increasing Roman control was beginning to play a role in the conflicts between the Seleucid and Egyptian empires. A peace accord was established in 196BC, which would later be utilized by Antiochus IV when he wrested control of the empire. Anticipating he would need to neutralize Egypt, Antiochus III had entered a marriage alliance, sending his daughter Cleopatra to be the bride of Ptolemy V. Because the boy was much too young at the time, the marriage wasn't consummated for several years. Antiochus expected her to be a useful spy, but instead she became loyal to her husband and his plans failed to help him.



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### **DANIEL 11:18-19**

After this will he turn his attention toward the coastlands, and will take many of them. But a prince for his own behalf will put an end to his insolence and will cause it to turn back upon him.

Then he will turn his attention toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall, and will be seen no more.

- In 192BC, Antiochus made his move towards Greece but was soundly defeated a year later at the Battle of Thermopylae. He then resorted to a sea battle to keep the Romans out of his territory, but was again defeated. He called for 70,000 reinforcements. Roman troops under Scipio were half that strength when they met at Magnesia about 50 miles north of Ephesus. But the Roman's superior military training and tactics so badly defeated Antiochus that he was completely wiped out in a humiliating defeat that led to a complete and total surrender. He had to pay a tribute equivalent to 30 million dollars. He was ruined.

### **DANIEL 11:20**

Then will arise a successor who will send a tax collector to maintain the glory of the kingdom. Within a few years he will be destroyed, but not in anger nor in battle.

- Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175BC), a son of Antiochus III sent his treasurer Heliodorus to Jerusalem to seize funds in an effort to rebuild the coffers of an empire financially wiped out by war. He gave his son Demetrius to Rome as a hostage and oppressed Israel through taxation. After 12 years he was murdered by Heliodorus who hoped to take over.

The first 20 verses of Daniel 11 are clearly historical to our generation. They can all be very specifically matched to events in history with uncanny detail.

Now we come to a section of the prophecy that applies partially to history, yet will also apply in a strange repetition of events to a future leader.

### **DANIEL 11:21**

He will be succeeded by a vile person to whom has not been given the honor of royal position. He will come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by flattery and deceit.



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- Antiochus IV Epiphanes was not the rightful heir to the throne. The brother of Seleucus IV Philopator, he had been held in Rome as a hostage to ensure that Seleucus would pay his tribute. After 12 years he had himself trade places with Seleucus' son Demetrius and was released. On his way to Antioch, his brother Seleucus IV was murdered. There were rumors that Heliodorus was actually working for Antiochus IV when he committed that murder. Antiochus IV, through various flatteries and bribes, took hold of the throne.
- He was indeed contemptible, having the goal of converting Jerusalem into a center for Greek culture. He also established a co-regency with the young Antiochus who was still a minor, then had him murdered.
- The passages that relate well to Antiochus IV are also a foreshadowing of the coming world leader, who will have many of the same characteristics and will take the same actions described here. In that sense these verses relate to two people at the same time, one in our past and one in our future.

### DANIEL 11:22-23

*They will be swept like a flood from before him, and will be destroyed. Yes, even the prince of the covenant.*

*After making an agreement with him, he will work deceitfully, for he will rise to power and become strong with only a small number of people.*

- These passages refer to Antiochus' dealings with the priesthood. They appear to refer to the Jewish religious adherence being swept away, as Antiochus would later eliminate all Jewish practices. The "prince of the covenant" probably refers to the high priest Onias III. First he had been deposed peacefully. But then his brother Jason offered Antiochus a bribe and was installed as high priest. Later another brother, Menelaus, offered a larger bribe and became high priest instead. In the fall of 171 Onias was murdered.

### DANIEL 11:24

*He will invade on the pretense of peace even the richest provinces and he will do things that neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute among his followers the prey, plunder, loot and wealth. Yes, he will plot the overthrow of fortresses, but only for a time.*

- Antiochus IV robbed the richest places of the countries under his control, and was known for distributing the loot to gain political power. He also attacked his enemies when they least expected it, after making peace agreements with them.



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### **DANIEL 11:25-26**

He will stir up his power and courage against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south will be stirred up to battle with a very great and powerful army, but he will not stand because of the plots devised against him.

Yes, those who eat from his own provisions will destroy him. His army will be swept away and many will die in battle.

- After Cleopatra died, Ptolemy VI Philometer (a nephew of Antiochus IV) received bad advice by two officials who were trying to undermine him and was unable to withstand an attack from Antiochus in 169BC. Antiochus took the city of Memphis and Ptolemy surrendered.

### **DANIEL 11:27**

Both these kings' hearts will be bent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table. But their plans will not succeed, for the end will still be at the appointed time.

- Because Ptolemy VI Philometer was a nephew, he ate at the same table with Antiochus IV as they discussed politics and military strategy. Antiochus, of course, wanted to control all of Egypt and was only using his nephew to gain information he could use to win. Meanwhile, the citizens of Alexandria made Ptolemy's younger brother Ptolemy Physcon king instead. Antiochus tried to break the revolt but was unsuccessful and returned to Syria. Ptolemy VI then disavowed his loyalty to Antiochus and was reinstated with his brother in a co-regency of Egypt.

### **DANIEL 11:28**

Then he [the king of the north] will return to his land with great riches, but his heart will be against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own land.

- Antiochus IV was unhappy with the events in Egypt and raided the temple treasury. Sources disagree on exactly when this took place. It probably happened between the first and second Egyptian invasions, as implied in this account given to Daniel in advance.



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### **DANIEL 11:29**

At the appointed time he will return and invade the south again; but the outcome will not be as it was the previous times.

- In the spring of 168 Antiochus again headed for Egypt with an initial siege of Memphis. He again took control of lower Egypt and turned his attention on Alexandria, the city that had defied him on his last attempt. This time the outcome was quite different, as the city appealed to a young upstart military power with a naval base just up the coast at Cyprus.
- Note the reference that this happened at “the appointed time.” No doubt Antiochus IV thought he was calling the schedule of events, but in fact it was entirely under the control of God.

### **DANIEL 11:30**

For ships of Chittim [Cyprus] will come against him. Therefore he will be grieved and will turn back, and will vent his rage against the holy covenant. So will he do; he will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

- Roman ships from Cyprus (also called Kittim or Chittim) arrived just as Antiochus approached Alexandria. Roman consul Gaius Popillius Laenas met him by the walls of Alexandria and commanded him to leave Egypt. When Antiochus replied that he had to consult with his advisors, the Romans drew a circle in the dirt around him and declared that he had to give his answer before stepping out of the circle. This was probably in July 168. Humiliated by this event, he headed home and turned his fury on the Jews.

### **DANIEL 11:31**

His armed forces will rise up and they will desecrate the sanctuary of strength, and will take away the daily sacrifice. Then they will place the abomination that causes desolation.

- There was a rumor in Jerusalem that Antiochus IV had been killed in battle. Jason took the opportunity to rise up against Menelaus in an attempt to gain back his position. This further enraged Antiochus IV, who went about his attack in his usual deceitful style. He sent Apollonius with a contingent of soldiers into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, apparently on a peace mission. But the men suddenly began a merciless slaughter of thousands of Jews.



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- Antiochus IV then abolished the daily sacrifice and all religious observances, including the reading of Scripture. He slaughtered a pig on the altar. On December 25, 167BC he set up an idol of Zeus in the Holy of Holies and declared the temple officially a temple to the Greek god Zeus. This is known as the “abomination that causes desolation.”
- Although we focus on Antiochus IV because it is so clearly represented here, we must also keep in mind that this refers also to the actions of a world leader who is yet to come. That ruler will act in the same way and will also set up an idol in the Holy of Holies exactly 3-1/2 years after enforcing a peace treaty with Israel. He will also abolish religious observances and slaughter thousands of Jews.

### **DANIEL 11:32**

*Those who have violated the covenant he will corrupt by flatteries, but the people who know their God will be strong, and will take action against him.*

- There were many non-religious Jews who supported this movement towards Hellenization (converting to Greek culture). In today’s world a majority of Jews are non-religious and since this relates both to past and future events, it is not hard to see how the future world leader will corrupt many Jews at that time to his way of thinking.
- Five brothers, the sons of Mattathias Maccabeaus, a priest, rose up against Antiochus and led a 3 year revolt that eventually succeeded in recapturing the city. Exactly three years to the day after Antiochus IV set up the idol, the temple was rededicated in a ceremony called “Hanukkah” (Dedication), which is still celebrated on December 25 to this day. It is likely that the future leader who will place his idol in the Holy of Holies will do so on the same day.
- The verses that follow move away from clear relation to Antiochus IV and seem to refer exclusively to the actions of the future leader, the one often called the Antichrist.
- This section is open to much debate because, even with the help of visions like these, the future is unknown territory except what we can connect to other passages of Scripture. Similarity to other prophetic passages such as 2Thessalonians 2 are striking.



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### **DANIEL 11:33-35**

Those who have understanding among the people will instruct many. Yet they will fall by the sword, be burned or captured or plundered for many days.

When they will fall, they will receive little help, but many will deceitfully come to their side.

Some of the wise will fall, so they may be refined and purged and purified until the time of the end, because it will still come at the appointed time.

- These events refer equally well to the time of the Maccabean revolt and the final actions of the Jews opposing the Antichrist.

### **DANIEL 11:36**

The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and will speak unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will prosper until the time of wrath is completed, for what was determined will be done.

- This begins a section that appears to describe someone other than Antiochus IV. Although it is true that Antiochus referred to himself as “god manifest” (it was even on his coins), the passages that follow do not relate well to Antiochus. He did honor Zeus.
- The reference that he will say unheard-of things means that his blasphemies and accusations against God will go beyond anything a leader of the past would have dared to utter. He will not control his tongue in order to meet standards of public decency.

### **DANIEL 11:37-38**

He will show no regard for the God of his fathers, nor the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, for he will magnify himself above them all.

But in his estate he will honor a god of fortresses, and a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, and with precious stones and pleasant things.

- Some scholars believe he will be a Jew because of this passage and others. He would not honor the one true God but place himself above God. It is also possible that he will be a Gentile, but if he shows no regard for any gods of his ancestors, yet honors a god unknown to his fathers this becomes somewhat more complex. Antiochus did hold the god Zeus above himself despite his claims of divinity.



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- Some Bible translations say he will “not desire women” but this is a poor interpretation. The NIV is much more accurate than the KJV. This reference means that he will not have a regard for the “one desired by women” which is a reference to women expecting to bear the anticipated Messiah as their son (the role that was eventually fulfilled by Mary). It is not a reference to homosexuality as some claim.
- The reference to “god of fortresses” is interesting for two reasons. First, the word “god” is apparently in the feminine rather than masculine form (though I haven’t been able to confirm that). Second, if you look closely at statues or images of Artemis or Diana of Ephesus, their crown is actually a fortress. Could this be a reference then to a goddess? The sentence structure in the Hebrew language also suggests that there are possibly two different gods that will be honored, one the god of fortresses and the other a god unknown to his ancestors. This is not certain, but a possibility.
- Jesus made a reference to the coming world leader in an interesting context. He said, “another will come in his own name and him you will receive” (see John 5:43). Since Jews would never receive a Gentile, this is another reason some scholars believe the coming world leader will be Jewish, but it is far from certain because of references that he will arise from the fourth (Roman) empire.
- Other passages that seem to point to a Jew include Ezekiel 21:25-27; 28:2-10; Psalm 55.

### DANIEL 11:39

He will engage the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god, whom he will acknowledge. He will increase in glory and will assign people as rulers over many, and will divide up the land for financial gain.

- Like Antiochus IV, he will have military success and will gain power through political maneuvering. However, there are no historical records about Antiochus putting others in positions of significant rule over kingdoms, though he did play political games in which he assigned power to people to get them on side. This seems to refer more to the coming leader than it did to Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

### DANIEL 11:40

At the time of the end the king of the south attack him in battle, and the king of the north will storm against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and horsemen and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries, and sweep over them like a flood.



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- None of this relates to Antiochus IV and his battle against the Ptolemys. His final defeat at Alexandria ended any attempt to conquer Egypt. The battle between Syria and Egypt appears to be a continuing one in the future, according to this verse. For this reason and others (including earlier references by Daniel that he will arise out of the third empire), some scholars believe this coming world leader will be of Syrian birth.
- Antiochus never had a great fleet. This leader has a large naval force. This battle happens in the very end times (“at the time of the end”). The navy may be the result of his conquest of the three nation states described in other parts of Scripture.

### **DANIEL 11:41**

*He will also invade the glorious land. Many countries will be overthrown, but these will escape out of his hand: Edom, Moab, and the leaders of Ammon.*

- This man will then invade Israel. Remember that earlier he enforced a peace treaty. Now he ignores it to create his own military conquest of Israel.
- The Bible states that the “remnant” of Israel that is faithful to God through the Great Tribulation will be given protection in Petra. This is in Jordan, related directly to the territories described here. Some scholars believe that this reference explains how that area will be kept free for the Israelites to flee to after the persecution begins.

### **DANIEL 11:42-43**

*He will stretch forth his power over many countries. Even the land of Egypt will not escape.*

*He will gain control over the treasures of gold and of silver and over all the precious things of Egypt, with the Libyans and the Ethiopians in submission to him.*

- Antiochus IV never did conquer deep into Egypt, and certainly not even close to Libya or other parts of Africa. The extent of his victories over Egypt were the region around the city of Memphis. The future leader will obviously conquer other areas including Libya and North Africa.



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### **DANIEL 11:44**

But reports out of the east and out of the north will trouble him. Therefore he will set out with great fury to destroy and utterly annihilate many.

- Reports from the east and north may represent possibly China and Russia, or a combined Russian-Iranian alliance. The book of Revelation talks about an attack from the region of Russia. When arranging to sell arms to Iran in the 1990's, Russia had to sign an agreement that they would protect Iran in a future invasion of Israel. The Bible also talks about an invasion of 200 million soldiers from the far east (almost certainly China). Are these the kind of reports referred to here? In any case, this will enrage him into furious evil activity to annihilate all who oppose him.

### **DANIEL 11:45**

He will pitch the tents of his royal palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

- There are two views of this. Some say it refers to Jerusalem (between the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee). Others say it refers to a different location, probably in the Jezreel valley where the battle of Armageddon will take place (between the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee). The reference to the mountain may be Moriah, but some suggest that it means Armageddon (literally “the mountain of Megiddo”).
- The Hebrew for this passage implies that it is here that he will come to his end, which probably points to Megiddo, the location of the final battle of Armageddon at which time the Messiah will come in glory to end the war before all life is destroyed and will put an end to sin, taking the throne of David for the millennial rule of peace.