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THE PERIOD FROM PERSIA TO ALEXANDER | DANIEL 11:1-4

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- Verse 1 –
  - The messenger (v. 20) recalls that which happened two years prior. **Darius the Mede** is the same person as **Cyrus king of Persia** (10:1). Darius is a title (restrainer or maintainer).
  - Who is the one talking, who also **stood to confirm and strengthen**?
    - It appears to be the first messenger of Daniel 10, the one who has the appearance of a preincarnate appearance of Christ.
    - Our notes will make the assumption that this is the Christ speaking.
  - Who is the **him** whom Christ **stood to confirm and to strengthen**?
    - It could be Darius, but could also be **Michael your prince** (10:21).
    - Since Christ is going to **fight with the prince of Persia** it makes better sense to see this as Christ (the Captain of the Lord's Army) joining with Michael for the victory over which Michael is struggling.
    - Be reminded that when Darius took control of the Babylonian Kingdom, the first story we have is that of Darius' edict that would harm Israel (Daniel 6), and it was only after the Lion's Den that Darius was totally favorable to the Jews (Dan. 6:24-27).
- Verse 2 –
  - **yet three, and the fourth...** There are three future kings followed by **the fourth** who will be **far richer than they all** and will be the instigator of Greece.
    - While there are other kings in the Persian line, their role is incidental to the revelation and thus they are not mentioned.
    - The four kings are Cambyses (529-522BC), Pseudo-Smerdis (522-521BC), Darius Hystapes (521-486BC) and Xerxes (486-465BC).
  - **he shall stir up all** - Xerxes was the husband of Esther, and invaded Greece in 480BC. It was this invasion that instigated Alexander the Great to invade Persia many years later in 334BC. (Xerxes was called by his title, Ahasuerus, in Ezra 4:6 and in the book of Esther).
- Verses 3-4 –
  - The revelation of **a mighty king** is the revelation of Alexander the Great (see also Dan. 8:8).
  - However, as soon as this king **shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided**. This took place in 323BC, when Alexander died at the age of 32 (presumably by poisoning).
  - The Kingdom of Alexander went **not to his posterity** (he had a half brother and two sons, one illegitimate). Rather, the kingdom was divided among his generals, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy.

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THE PERIOD FROM ALEXANDER TO ANTIOCHUS IV | DANIEL 11:5-20

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- Verse 5 –
  - Only the kingdoms of Ptolemy and Seleucus are mentioned in prophecy because only these two had interactions with the chosen nation of Israel, and the Bible is unconcerned about affairs outside of Israel.
  - **the king of the south** - The **king of the south** is a reference to the kingdom of Ptolemy. The direction (south) is in relation to Israel.
  - **one of his princes** - is most likely a reference to Seleucus, who was originally in partnership with Ptolemy, and under his authority. As any map of the Greek Empire would display, the Seleucid Kingdom became the strongest of the four, and gave **dominion** to the Seleucid empire, which will be called **the king of the north** beginning in v. 6.

- **his dominion** - Possibly a continued reference to Seleucid, but more likely now a reference to Ptolemy, who also had a **great dominion**.
- Verse 6 –
  - **in the end of years** - Darby translates as, "after the course of years." The Hebrew does not require that this be a reference to end-times, and the context does not allow it.
  - **the kings daughter...** - Berenice (daughter of Ptolemy II Phladelphus) married the Seleucid king Antiochus II Theos about 252BC.
  - **she shall not retain** - After the death of Berenice's father (Ptolemy II), Antiochus II divorced Berenice and took back his original wife, whom he had divorced in favor of the political marriage with Berenice.
  - **neither shall he stand...** - The original wife (Laodiceia), after being taken back into the marriage, gained revenge by murdering Antiochus II, along with Berenice and the son from that marriage.
  - **he that begat her** - YLT says, "and she is given up, she, and those bringing her in, and her child," thus a reference to her child, not her father.
- Verse 7-8 –
  - **out of a branch...** - Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III, was **out of a branch of her roots** and he rose up as the king.
  - **which shall come with an army...** - Ptolemy III prevailed over Seleucus Callinicus of the north.
- Verse 9 - There is a question of antecedent's here that affects the translation. Likely, the reference is to the **king of the north** (in v. 8) who **shall come**, and he will come into the kingdom of **the king of the south** and then **shall return into his own land**. Darby translates, "and *the same* [i.e., the king of the north, as stated in v. 8] shall come into the realm of the king of the south, but shall return into his own land." The attack of Seleucus Callinicus on Ptolemy III took place about 240 BC, but (as prophesied) Seleucus went home in defeat. While Seleucus lost the battle, this began a back and forth tension between the north (Syria) and the south (Egypt), which ultimately led to a northern victory and the reign of Antiochus IV Epihanes over Israel.
- Verse 10 - Seleucus III died in a battle, and his son Antiochus III the Great arose in power and took the land of Israel under possession, and had control as far south as Gaza, on the Egyptian border.
- Verse 11 - In a 217BC battle, the Egyptian king Ptolemy took 70,000 troops, and met the same number of troops from Antiochus III. The battle took place at Raphia, on the border of Egypt and Israel (modern day Gaza). (See "The Battle of Raphia" for more information. This is the only known battle in which African elephants went against Asian elephants.)
- Verse 12 –
  - **his heart shall be lifted** - Ptolemy IV was decreed Pharaoh of Egypt, a title that had not been used of Ptolemaic kings until this time. This is known from a stele called the Memphis Decree, which was written in three languages and, like the Rosetta Stone, instrumental in deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics.
  - **many ten thousands** - The actual Hebrew is *myriads*. According to Polybius, the Seleucids lost about 10,000 men (vs about 1500 for the Ptolemies).
  - **he shall not be strengthened by it**- This phrase is an introductory bridge to v. 13.
- Verse 13 –
  - **the king of the north shall return** - Antiochus III went back home and began to move eastward, and grew the kingdom to a greater degree than ever before, reaching the borders of India to the east and the Caspian Sea to the north.
  - **shall certainly come...** - Antiochus III returned to attack Egypt in 201 BC.
- Verse 14 - There were many of the Jewish people who aligned themselves with Antiochus III against the King of the South. The term **robbers of thy people** is likely a negative reference to the Jews who aligned with Antiochus III (the Ptolemaic kings had been generous to the Jewish people). These robbers would **establish the vision** presumably given in Daniel 8-9, the vision of the destruction of the yet-future Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
- Verse 15 – The king of the north (Antiochus III) came south and the king of the south, through General Scopas met near modern Banias, and chased Scopas and his troops to Sidon, the "city of fortifications." Sidon was captured in 198 BC. From the time of the battle at Banias and the defeat at Sidon, all of the Jewish homeland was under the control of the Seleucids.

- Verse 17 –
  - **he shall also...** - The ultimate goal of Antiochus III was to capture **the whole kingdom**
  - **thus shall he do...**
    - - Antiochus III gave his daughter, Cleopatra (ancestress of Cleopatra V who married Mark Anthony) to Ptolemy V. He was 16 and she was 12 when they were married. This marriage was to institute a peace treaty at the behest of Rome, which sided with Egypt and was pressuring Antiochus III.
    - The words **corrupting her** could be in reference to the corruption of the Ptolemaic kingdom that was Antiochus III's ultimate design in the arranged marriage.
  - **she shall not stand on his side** - The corruption plan of Antiochus III did not work, as Cleopatra consistently sided with her husband and against her father.
- Verse 18 –
  - That is, "a leader will avenge himself against the reproach given to him from Antiochus III and will turn the reproach back on Antiochus III." History records that Lucius Scipio Asiaticus was scornfully treated by Antiochus III and Scipio avenged himself at the battles of Thermopylae (191BC) and Magnesia (189BC), where Scipio soundly defeated Antiochus III. These victories ended any further hope of Seleucid control of Europe and paved the way for later Roman rule.
- Verse 19 - Antiochus III turned back and went home, and died an ignoble death plundering a temple. He was succeeded by Seleucus IV, who reigned from 187-175BC, and is prophesied in v. 20.
- Verse 20 - Seleucus IV was forced to pay tribute to Rome, and so raised taxes tremendously. He sent a tax collector named Heliodorus to Jerusalem to plunder the temple of its treasury in order to pay the taxes. 2 Maccabees 3:7-40 gives an account of God's protection of the treasuries and Heliodorus' conversion. Some believe that Heliodorus returned to Seleucid and poisoned him. In any case, Seleucid IV was **destroyed, neither in anger nor in battle.**