

Daniel 11:1-35

Daniel 11:2,3 "And now I will tell you the truth: Behold three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

Chapter 11 is a departure from the norm as far as what we have become used to in the Book of Daniel. Daniel's visions have been composed of colorful figures, unnatural animals along with mystery and intrigue. Our present chapter describes kings and their circumstances very plainly although without names. Daniel receives this prophecy from the messenger and now in retrospect we find in the prophecy an accurate description of the history of Daniel's world from his day until the reign and terror caused by Antiochus Epiphany. When the chapter is compared to the historical record found in ancient sources it is not a difficult thing to fill in the names and places and events described in the prophecy. The prophecy is specific and accurate even without names.

Let's note that God went to a lot of trouble to get this prophetic record to Daniel. The

forces of evil were equally engaged in preventing its delivery and so the significance of the message is not in doubt even before the content of the message is known. So why was this message to Daniel that has now been made know to us so important?

We asked, in chapter 8, what was the purpose of the vision? In that vision all of the events described led to Antiochus Epiphanes and chapter 11 once again takes us to the same place in history. As in chapter 8, the object of the story is to get to Antiochus Epiphanes. His significance in the Book of Daniel is out of proportion to history in which he was not that big of a deal but in the Book of Daniel he is a big deal because he serves as a type of the Anti-Christ who will come and do on a much grander scale what Antiochus Epiphanes did in the 2nd century B. C. The message is a vital one because it directs our attention to the end of time and to the day of judgment.

Thinking about the end of time and the day of judgment is positive for we who know the Lord. We live in a world in which injustice abounds and in which evil often triumphs and good appears at times to have been vanquished. At the end, when God speaks in judgment all of this is going to be

straightened out. The final word will be one of justice and righteousness. The evil will be vanquished and the good rewarded. (The good being defined as those who have come to know and serve the Lord.) This is good news and it is encouraging for us to know the final score even while we are in the middle of the struggle.

The outstanding characteristic of the chapter is the prophetic detailed panoramic view of the history of Daniel's day from his own times to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes nearly 400 years later. Clearly, when everything is chaotic and the world seems out of control, it isn't. God knows and God is present and God is working in the events of history to accomplish His specific plan. God's knowledge of the future has led some to conclude that God has determined the future to the extent that (they believe) we actually have no free will. Those who believe in predestination will quote Scripture to support their position and those who emphasize free will do the same. Believers have been arguing (often heatedly) about this for centuries and the debate still rages. Suffice it to say that the Bible describes both God's experience of our lives and our own and both experiences are valid. Consider the implications of Romans 8:28 .