

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Image and Beasts Explained

The last three chapters of Daniel (10, 11 and 12) are a record of a single revelation given during the reign of Cyrus. In the introductory verses of chapter 10, we are told that a great spiritual battle was fought before the heavenly messenger was able to come to Daniel. It is made clear that this last revelation is of tremendous importance and significance.

In view of the vast importance attached to the vision, it comes as rather a surprise to many readers to discover the actual nature of its contents. Most of the revelation consists of a very detailed description of the history of part of the Greek empire. It is as remarkable for its apparent unimportance and irrelevance as for its immense detail. The explanation, however, is very simple.

The angel who brings the revelation says these words: 'I ... came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come' (10:14). Comparison between these words and those of 2:28 and 8:17, 19, 26 makes it clear that the new revelation is closely connected with the earlier visions. In contrast to those visions, however, we are told that Daniel 'understood the word and had understanding of the vision' (10:1). The reason is not very difficult to see — the revelation is given in the form of a straightforward historical narrative which clearly and openly explains how the earlier visions were to be fulfilled. When Jesus preached in parables, it was His custom to give the parable and then explain it afterwards. The same order occurs in the book of Daniel. We have the symbols in the earlier visions, and they are explained in the final vision.

In chapter 11 the angel describes the course of history from the time of Cyrus (in whose reign the prophecy was given) right up to the time of the Roman empire, shortly before the birth of Christ. Practically every detail of the third and fourth kingdoms finds an explanation here in the description of Persia and Greece. After a very lengthy description of Greek history from the time of Alexander to Antiochus Epiphanes, we are treated to a description of the empire's complete destruction. This is followed, in chapter 12, by details about the arrival of the heavenly kingdom. The last event mentioned is the destruction and scattering of the Jewish nation. The vision therefore brings together the two earlier strands of prophecy and weaves them into a single thread. One strand runs through chapters 2, 7 and 8, and the other through chapter 9. They are intimately joined in this final vision of chapters 10 to 12.

This latter vision contains a historical account of quite extraordinary detail. It is so detailed, in fact, that it reads like a history book. The accuracy and detail of *this prophecy in particular* is so great that critical scholars refuse to accept that it was written before the events took place. As described already, they assign it, together with the rest of Daniel's prophecies, to the time of Antiochus' persecution. We shall see, however, that the historical section actually goes well beyond the time of Antiochus up to the year 27 B.C., long after the very latest possible date of composition.

The man clothed in linen

We are told that the thing was revealed to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. He was by the river Tigris, having spent a period of three weeks in prayer and fasting, when he lifted his eyes and saw 'a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphaz. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like

the noise of a multitude'. What a contrast to the lifeless metals and brute beasts (representing earthly powers) of the earlier visions! When Daniel saw this mighty heavenly being 'no strength was left in him'. He was completely overcome by the great vision.

After Daniel's strength had been restored somewhat, the man explained that he had been sent in response to Daniel's prayer; but for the last three weeks he had been resisted and held back by 'the prince of the kingdom of Persia' — that is, the great spiritual power behind that nation. However, Michael, 'one of the chief princes', had come to his aid, so enabling him to reach Daniel and 'make him understand what was to befall his people in the latter days'. He said that he would return to fight with the prince of Persia and then the prince of Greece would come. He added that the only person helping him was 'Michael your prince'.

Some interpreters believe this heavenly being to be Christ, as his description is rather similar to that of Christ in Revelation 1. However, for the following reasons it is likely that this person is not Christ, but some high angelic authority:

1. The man speaking to Daniel does not claim in any way to be divine.
2. Daniel does not address him as a divine person.
3. The record does not indicate that he is divine, whereas in other theophanies of the Old Testament, the divinity of the Person is indicated very clearly.
4. Comparison with chapters 8 and 9 shows that Daniel's informant may well be the angel Gabriel. It is hardly surprising that Gabriel can be so awe-inspiring, seeing that he stands in the very presence of God (Luke 1:19).
5. In Revelation 15:6 we read of seven angels clothed in linen and girded with gold, and in Revelation 10:1, 5, 6 we read of a 'mighty angel' whose words and actions are closely akin to those of the man who is speaking to Daniel (12:7).
6. Daniel's informant makes repeated mention of Michael, who is 'one of the chief princes', 'your [Daniel's] prince', 'the great prince who has charge of [or stands for, R.V.] your people' (10:13, 21; 12:1). Michael appears to have greater claim to Daniel's allegiance than the informant and *He helps and strengthens the informant*. Regarding Daniel 11:1 (see below), we can take it that the informant helped *Darius the Mede*. There is no need to understand that it was Michael he helped.

Darius the Mede

'As for me [the man in linen], in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.' (Daniel 11:1)

We have learned already that God stirred up the Medes against Babylon. Here we read that a mighty angelic power was assisting Darius the Mede in the first year of his reign, when he took over from the Babylonian kings. (I am not saying that the kingdom of Darius the Mede was the Median empire.)

The future of Persia

'And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia; and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them; and when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece ...' (Daniel 11:2)

The prophecy is given during the reign of 'Cyrus king of Persia' (10:1). Daniel is told, 'three more kings shall arise in Persia', making four kings of Persia in all. The description of the fourth king is that of Xerxes, whose riches were proverbial. In 480 B.C. he launched an

immense and ostentatious invasion of Greece, but he was soundly defeated at Salamis, Plataea and Mycale. The decline of Persia can be dated from this time. Her power had cracked. Her period of greatness had covered the reigns of her first four kings — Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius and Xerxes. It was they who had created her vast and fabulously rich empire. We have seen already how this verse enables us to identify the four-headed leopard of chapter 7.

The rulers which followed these first four kings are considered to be so unimportant, relatively, that they are not even mentioned. The narrative considers Persia to be politically dead or dying after the reign of Xerxes, because it now goes straight on to describe Alexander, who was stirred up against Persia partly by the memory of Xerxes' invasion.

The rise and fall of Greece

'Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will. And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.' (Daniel 11:3, 4)

Here is described the irresistible might of Alexander. Following his death in 323 B.C., his empire was broken up and reduced in size. The remains were eventually divided into four main kingdoms (later reduced to three) which were ruled not by Alexander's descendants, but by four of his generals — Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy. The reader should note that in quick succession the narrator mentions *four* great kings of the Persian empire and *four* kingdoms of the Greek empire. This is powerful evidence that the four-headed leopard represents Persia and does *not* represent Greece, which was later symbolized by a four-horned he-goat. The four Persian kings are associated with the *power* of Persia (like the four heads of the leopard), whereas the four Greek kingdoms are associated with the empire's decline (like the four horns of the he-goat).

The narrative now concentrates on the Ptolemies of Egypt and the Seleucids of Syria, as it was they who most directly affected Israel. The former are called the kings of the south and the latter the kings of the north.

'Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and his dominion shall be a great dominion.' (Daniel 11:5)

After Alexander's death, one of his most powerful generals, Ptolemy Soter, had himself appointed as satrap of Egypt. He eventually made himself king in 304 B.C. One of Alexander's lesser generals, Seleucus, took control of the far eastern satrapies and made himself king in 312 B.C., having been under Ptolemy's protection for a time. After the battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C., Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander and Lysimachus emerged as the four most powerful rulers, but Seleucus became ruler of by far the largest of the Greek kingdoms (incorporating Syria, Babylonia, Media etc.) and was consequently called Nicator, 'Conqueror'.

'After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make peace; but she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his offspring shall not endure; but she shall be given up, and her attendants, her child, and he who got possession of her.' (Daniel 11:6)

In order to end his war with Antiochus Theos, who was the son of Antiochus Soter and grandson of Seleucus Nicator, Ptolemy Philadelphus gave his daughter Berenice to Antiochus. The latter thereupon divorced his former wife, Laodice, and disinherited her son. After Ptolemy died, however, Antiochus took back Laodice, who then poisoned him, caused Berenice and her son to be put to death and raised her own son, Seleucus Callinicus, to the

throne.

'In those times a branch from her roots shall arise in his place; he shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.' (Daniel 11:7)

Ptolemy Euergetes, brother of Berenice, succeeded Philadelphus and avenged his sister's death by overrunning Syria and slaying Laodice.

'He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their molten images and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north. Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return into his own land.' (Daniel 11:8, 9)

Ptolemy, on hearing of trouble back in Egypt, returned with much silver and many precious vessels and images, including Egyptian idols which Cambyses had carried from Egypt into Persia. The Egyptians were so gratified that they named him Euergetes, 'Benefactor'.

'His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall come on and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress.' (Daniel 11:10)

'His sons' were Seleucus Ceraunus and Antiochus the Great, sons of the king of the north, Seleucus Callinicus. Antiochus succeeded his elder brother on the throne and successfully warred with Ptolemy Philopater, Euergetes' son, until he had recovered all the parts of Syria subjugated by Euergetes.

'Then the king of the south, moved with anger, shall come out and fight with the king of the north; and he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand. And when the multitude is taken, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail.' (Daniel 11:11, 12)

Ptolemy Philopater, angered by his losses, struck back and in 217 B.C. defeated a large Syrian army at Raphia, near Gaza. He did not follow up his victory over Antiochus, but made peace with him and gave himself up to licentious living.

'For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the former; and after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies. In those times many shall rise against the king of the south; and the men of violence among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfil the vision; but they shall fail. Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks, and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his picked troops, for there shall be no strength to stand. But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land, and all of it shall be in his power.' (Daniel 11:13-16)

Nineteen years after his defeat at Raphia, Antiochus returned with a great army and defeated Ptolemy Epiphanes, the young son of Ptolemy Philopater, at Panion. Antiochus was helped by Philip of Macedon and rebels in Egypt itself. Certain Jews also helped him besiege the Egyptian garrison in Jerusalem. If they hoped that this would cause their country to gain its independence they were disappointed, since Judaea was now brought under the sway of the Seleucids. It had hitherto belonged to the Ptolemies and had been much devastated by the continual fighting.

'He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of peace and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the

kingdom; but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.’ (Daniel 11:17)

Antiochus turned to wile instead of force in his attempt to bring all the possessions of the Ptolemies under his sway. He gave Ptolemy Epiphanes his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, but she favoured her husband rather than her father, so defeating his schemes.

‘Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many of them; but a commander shall put an end to his insolence; indeed he shall turn his insolence back upon him. Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.’ (Daniel 11:18, 19)

Antiochus warred with Rome and took many of the Aegean islands, but was defeated by Lucius Scipio Asiaticus at Magnesia in 189 B.C. and ceded to Rome all Asia Minor north and west of the Taurus mountains. Antiochus had to return to his own land and find the money to pay the tribute imposed by Rome. He attempted to plunder the temple of Jupiter at Elymais and was killed by the infuriated inhabitants.

‘Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute through the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle.’ (Daniel 11:20)

Seleucus Philopater, son of Antiochus the Great, succeeded his father on the throne. He exacted much money from his subjects (to pay the aforementioned tribute) and sent his minister Heliodorus to plunder the temple in Jerusalem. After a relatively short reign of twelve years (his father reigned for thirty-six years) he was poisoned by Heliodorus, who hoped to gain the crown thereby.

Antiochus Epiphanes

‘In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given; he shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, and the prince of the covenant also. And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully; and he shall become strong with a small people.’ (Daniel 11:21-23)

Antiochus Epiphanes was the younger brother of Seleucus Philopater and had been a hostage in Rome. He was on the way back to Syria when Seleucus died. Demetrius, the elder son of Seleucus, had taken his place as hostage in Rome. Employing his considerable capacity for cunning and flattery, Antiochus Epiphanes borrowed an army from the king of Pergamos and overthrew Heliodorus. He then arranged an agreement or ‘covenant’ whereby he was to reign jointly with the younger son of Seleucus, also named Antiochus. This joint reign or ‘alliance’ lasted about five years until the child was murdered. In this manner did Antiochus Epiphanes acquire the kingdom. He was ‘contemptible’ in that he indulged in mad escapades beneath the dignity of a king — so much so that he was nicknamed Epimanes, ‘the madman’. They had not given him ‘royal majesty’ because he was not the rightful heir to the throne. However, everyone in his way (including the child Antiochus, ‘the prince of the covenant’) was ‘swept away before him’. The rightful heir to the throne, Demetrius, was left sitting in Rome.

Up to this point, the chapter has been accounting for the ten horns and little horn of Daniel’s fourth beast. Seleucus Philopater was the seventh Seleucid king and in his rise to power Antiochus Epiphanes, the little horn, had to displace a further three individuals — Demetrius, Heliodorus and the child Antiochus.

‘Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province; and he shall do what

neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.' (Daniel 11:24)

The narrative continues to describe Antiochus' methods. He looted and enriched himself in a way that his ancestors had never done. Polybius, the Greek historian, tells us that he 'despoiled most sanctuaries'. He bestowed lavish gifts upon his followers in order to gain support. He was constantly scheming to increase his power.

'And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him. Even those who eat his rich food shall be his undoing; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. And as for the two kings, their minds shall be bent on mischief; they shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail; for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.' (Daniel 11:25-27)

This describes the first of Antiochus' expeditions against Egypt. He entered Egypt with a great army of footmen, cavalry, chariots and elephants. Ptolemy Philometer was defeated owing to the treachery and incompetence of his officers and ministers. Antiochus advanced unchecked until he reached Alexandria, which he was unable to take. He captured Philometer and placed him as king at Memphis, pretending he wanted to help him against Ptolemy Physcon, whom the Egyptians had made king, as Philometer was in Antiochus' hands.

'And he shall return to his land with great substance, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will, and return to his own land.' (Daniel 11:28)

Antiochus returned from Egypt in 169 B.C. with much loot. In his absence it had been rumoured that he had died in the fighting. Acting upon this, a former high priest, Jason, and his followers had stormed Jerusalem and ousted Menelaus, the high priest installed by Antiochus. On his return, therefore, Antiochus attacked Jerusalem, slaughtered many of its inhabitants, plundered and desecrated the temple and reinstated Menelaus as high priest.

'At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south; but it shall not be this time as it was before. For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and give heed to those who forsake the holy covenant. Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the continual burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.' (Daniel 11:29-31)

Ptolemy suspected Antiochus' designs and hired mercenaries from Greece. In 168 B.C., therefore, Antiochus advanced towards Egypt with a large army and fleet. But this second expedition had an ending very different from that of the first, because Ptolemy had also asked the Romans for help. The Roman ambassador, Popilius Laenas, waited until he had the news of Rome's victory in a war with Macedon and then immediately sailed to Ptolemy's aid. This victory over Macedon (during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes) marked the beginning of the Greek empire's collapse and break-up. Popilius met Antiochus at Eleusis, four miles from Alexandria, and presented him with the Senate's decree that he was to keep out of Egypt. Antiochus replied that he would consider the matter, but Popilius haughtily drew a line round him with a rod and informed him that he was to give a reply before he left the circle. Antiochus had to submit and withdrew north again, seething with anger and humiliation.

He gave vent to his wrath by turning on the Jews. He sent an army which fell upon Jerusalem, slaughtering many, taking others as slaves and looting and partially destroying the city. In 167 B.C. orders were given that the temple ritual must be suspended, that the sacred scriptures must be destroyed, that the Sabbath and other festival days be no longer observed, that the strict food laws be abolished and that the rite of circumcision be discontinued. The

culminating attack on Jewish worship came in December, when an altar and probably also an image ('the abomination that makes desolate') were erected in the temple court and dedicated to the worship of Olympian Zeus. (The historian of I Maccabees plainly records that an 'abomination of desolation' was set up on the altar.) Similar altars were set up throughout Judaea and the Jews were ordered to sacrifice at them. Disobedience was rewarded with severe penalties and the result of all this was a savage and barbaric persecution. The Hellenizing Jews who forsook Judaism and embraced the Greek culture were favoured and honoured.

'He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant; but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action. And those among the people who are wise shall make many understand, though they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder, for some days. When they fall, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery; and some of those who are wise shall fall, to refine and to cleanse them and to make them white, until the time of the end, for it is yet for the time appointed.' (Daniel 11:32-35)

As mentioned already, Antiochus flattered and favoured the Jews who forsook Judaism for the Greek culture. The faithful Jews, on the other hand, wrote a glorious chapter in the history of Israel. They were subjected to the most appalling persecution, but they remained true throughout it all. Many had to endure torture and death. It was not long, however, before the priest Mattathias and his sons raised the standard of revolt. In the hills they gathered a guerilla band around them and, led by Judas Maccabeus, they repeatedly defeated the armies of Antiochus. This is the probable meaning of 'they shall receive a little help'. Many joined the faithful 'with flattery' when they saw that the war was going favourably for Judas.

Note the words, 'until the time of the end'. We were told that the vision of the ram and the he-goat concerned 'the time of the end'. The he-goat symbolized Greece, and its little horn symbolized Antiochus Epiphanes. We are now told that the saints would suffer under Antiochus 'until the time of the end'. Again, it is apparent that Antiochus and the Greek empire were destroyed *at the time of the end*.

Up to this point, verse 35, there is general agreement concerning the interpretation of the narrative. The next section, verses 36 to 39, has caused some disagreement. Although it can be applied to Antiochus, some conservative interpreters assert that he fulfilled it only partially. However, we shall see that in fact he did fulfil it completely. The section describes his general policy and, in particular, it shows why he made such a determined attempt to eradicate Judaism. We are told in verse 36 that he would prosper 'till the indignation is accomplished'. Compare this with the statement that the doings of Antiochus, as related in the vision of the he-goat, took place 'at the latter end of the indignation' (8:19).

'And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is determined shall be done.' (Daniel 11:36)

Antiochus did exactly what he liked. He called himself *Theos Epiphanes*, 'God Manifest', regarding himself as the incarnate manifestation of Olympian Zeus, whom he set up as the greatest of gods. He blasphemed the God of Israel, but he prospered only for as long as God had ordained.

'He shall give no heed to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women; he shall not give heed to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. He shall honour the god of fortresses instead of these; a god whom his fathers did not know he shall honour with

gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. (Daniel 11:37, 38)

Antiochus did not honour Apollo, the traditional protector of the Seleucid dynasty, but instead he raised up Olympian Zeus as the chief god of his kingdom and he himself claimed to be his incarnation — thus his real god was himself. The head of Zeus replaced the head of Apollo on Seleucid coins. ‘The one beloved by women’ may have been Tammuz, a Syrian deity (see Ezekiel 8:14 — ‘there sat women weeping for Tammuz’). All this was part of a plan to strengthen and unite his kingdom by giving it one Hellenic culture and religion. Antiochus was in fact seeking to mingle the iron of Greece with the clay of the conquered peoples, as pictured by the image’s feet of iron and clay. The iron sought to mingle with the clay, and so strengthen it. This strengthening of the kingdom against external and internal dangers through cultural and religious unity may help to explain what is meant by ‘the god of fortresses’. The term may also refer to the fact that Antiochus enforced the worship of his god with the help of soldiers and fortresses, particularly the hated citadel at Jerusalem, the Akra. The following verse shows that this god was also used to *overcome* fortresses — it was used to break down resistance.

‘He shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god; those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with honour. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price.’ (Daniel 11:39)

One of the strongest fortresses Antiochus had to overcome was that of the Jewish religion. In verse 31 the centre of Jewish worship, the temple, is called a ‘fortress’, the same word, *maoz*, being used (see R.V.). The orthodox Jews strongly opposed Antiochus’ efforts to impose on them a pagan Greek culture and religion. The Jewish ‘clay’ refused to mingle with the Greek ‘iron’. Antiochus therefore decided that Judaism must be stamped out completely and the cult of Zeus must be imposed forcibly. He tried to overcome the fortress of Judaism by enforcing the worship of Olympian Zeus — a strange god indeed to the Jews. Those who ‘acknowledged’ him (the Hellenizing Jews), he ‘magnified with honour’ and ‘made them rulers over many’. Amongst these Jews was Menelaus, the false high priest, who had obtained his office with the aid of a large bribe (‘a price’).

The destruction of the Greek empire

We come now to the final and most controversial section of chapter 11. Superficially it appears to continue the description of Antiochus Epiphanes — yet it bears no relation whatever to his actual historical career. Critical scholars point to this as major evidence for a second century B.C. date of authorship during the reign of Antiochus. They inform us that this last section of the chapter is the unknown author’s hopeful, but inaccurate prediction of the future career and eventual destruction of Antiochus — the first part of the chapter being, of course, an accurate description of *past* history.

Conservative scholars usually overcome the difficulty by assuming that Daniel suddenly jumps thousands of years and starts describing the ‘Antichrist’. Reading chapter 11, however, one is given little or no reason to suspect that this extraordinary gap exists between verses 39 and 40 (or 35 and 36, verses 36 to 39 often being included as part of the description of the Antichrist). The final section has every appearance of being a direct continuation of the preceding verses and we shall see that in fact it accurately describes the destruction of the Greek empire and the arrival of Rome. The section is a detailed historical account *of the same type* as the preceding verses. It is most unlikely that the narrative should suddenly take a jump of over two thousand years and calmly continue describing history in the same sort of detail as before. The existence of the interpretation outlined below should make such an unnatural solution to the problem quite unnecessary. Moreover, to project the section into the future

would again *totally ignore Christ's first advent*. We have seen already how completely this is at variance with New Testament teaching.

The section begins at verse 40 with the words, '*At the time of the end*'. As we have seen, the goal of Daniel's prophecy is the advent of the Messiah; therefore these words probably carry us nearer this event. Let it be noted, however, that we are still in the region of the Greek era, because we are specifically told that the vision of the ram and the he-goat in chapter 8 concerns '*the time of the end*' and that the he-goat represents Greece (8:17, 21). Daniel has made it clear that the sign of Christ's imminent arrival will be the destruction of the Greek empire. He has described the career of Antiochus, '*the beginning of the end*', so he now goes straight on to describe the final destruction of the Greek empire (the destruction of the body of the fourth beast).

The Romans began their conquest of the Greek empire during the reign of Antiochus by defeating Macedon in 168 B.C. It was fully incorporated into the empire a few years later, when it was made a Roman province in 148 B.C. Rome was now the paramount power in the East, but she did not proceed to annex any land there until 65 B.C., when Syria was absorbed into the Roman empire, Jerusalem being taken by Pompey in 63 B.C. Egypt was more or less at the mercy of Rome, but was not made an imperial province until 27 B.C. Verses 40 to 43 are an excellent description of the arrival of Rome in the East.

'At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him; but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train.' (Daniel 11:40-43)

We read here that '*At the time of the end the king of the south [the king of Egypt] shall attack him [the king of Syria]*'. A more literal translation of '*attack*' is '*push at*' (as in the A.V.) — but I will deal with this particular phrase in the section below entitled '*The kings of the north and south*'. Leaving this opening phrase aside for the moment, therefore, let us consider the next phrase. Immediately we are faced with an ambiguity. We are told that the king of the north shall rush upon '*him*'. This '*him*' could be the king of Egypt, but another possibility is that it is the same '*him*' as the one in the preceding phrase — that is, the king of Syria. It is possible, therefore, that verse 40 should be understood as follows. '*At the time of the end the king of the south (Egypt) shall attack him (Syria); but the king of the north (Rome) shall rush upon him (Syria) like a whirlwind*' etc.

In the first part of verse 40 the central figure is the king of Syria, as in the preceding passage; but the words '*at the time of the end*' have transported us on a number of years to the closing years of the Greek empire. The king of Syria is no longer Antiochus Epiphanes — he is now Antiochus Asiaticus, the last of the Seleucid monarchs. This interpretation may appear rather unconvincing at first sight, but if you read on, I think you will find it fully justified.

The rest of the passage graphically describes the progress of Rome. Pompey's legate, Scaurus, arrived in 65 B.C. and annexed Syria. Pompey himself arrived on the scene later and started out on a campaign against the Nabataeans in 63 B.C. The Nabataeans were a powerful Arab tribe which had occupied the old kingdoms of Edom to the south, Moab to the south-east and Ammon to the north-east of the Dead Sea. However, Pompey did not complete the campaign. He postponed it (indefinitely) in order that he might settle the quarrels of rival Jewish leaders. Thus the Nabataeans retained their independence, and Edom, Moab and most

of Ammon remained outside the Roman empire. A small section of Ammon lay within the Roman territories of Peraea and Decapolis. Pompey proceeded to Jerusalem and captured the city without much difficulty; and so the Jews were again under foreign domination after only a few short years of independence. As mentioned already, Egypt lay within the power of Rome, but was not made an imperial province until 27 B.C. Libya and Ethiopia, both of which bordered Egypt, were indeed 'at the steps' (R.V.) of Rome. This amazing chapter closes with verses 44 and 45, which read,

'But tidings from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go forth with great fury to exterminate and utterly destroy many. And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.'
(Daniel 11; 44, 45)

These last two verses refer to the ever-present threat to the Roman empire of the Parthians in the north-east. In 54 B.C. Crassus undertook a campaign against the Parthians (he, Pompey and Julius Caesar were the members of the First Triumvirate); but before the campaign *he took over the province of Syria and pillaged it very thoroughly, also plundering the treasures of the temple in Jerusalem.* Doubtless he pitched his tents between the Mediterranean and Mount Zion at some stage. His campaign was unsuccessful, however, and he was killed by the Parthians — thus did he 'come to his end'. After Pompey and Julius Caesar had died, Augustus finally became emperor. It was during his reign that Jesus Christ was born.

We can see, therefore, that verses 40 to 45 are a perfect description of the destruction of the Greek empire and the arrival of the Romans. This interpretation is so accurate and so completely in context, that it must surely be the correct one.

Now the chief objection to our interpretation of verses 40 to 45 is that there is no clear indication that the identity of 'the king of the north' has changed. In the previous verses 'the king of the north' has always been a Greek king of Syria, and one would naturally assume that the same goes for these verses. This objection may be answered as follows.

The words 'at the time of the end' *are* an indication — even if not a particularly obvious one — that 'the king of the north' has changed his identity. The words are extremely significant, and form a definite break or turning point in the narrative. Daniel has already shown that at the time of the end the Greek empire will be destroyed, following the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, and that this will precede the coming of the kingdom of Heaven. Since this section follows a description of Antiochus Epiphanes, precedes a description of the kingdom of Heaven and is introduced by the words 'at the time of the end', we should expect it to concern the destruction of the Greek empire. If we take it that it is describing this, it is reasonable to assume that the destroying 'king of the north' here is some new non-Greek character. In view of the fact that the description does not apply to any Greek king of Syria, but does apply perfectly to the nation which destroyed the Greek empire, one might say it is more than reasonable.

Note also the way in which the words 'and the land of Egypt shall not escape' are tacked onto the end of verses 40-42.

'At the time of the end the king of the south shall attack him; but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind . . . he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. He shall come into the glorious land . . . He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.'

These words do not suggest a king of the north whose *prime target* (v. 40) is the king of Egypt. The impression we get is of some *outside power* attacking the whole area, beginning with Syria. Egypt is only one of the victims, and a late one at that.

Another difficulty with my interpretation is the fact that Antiochus' death — a very important event — is not described. This is a fairly weighty objection, and I shall deal with it in some detail later, in the section entitled 'The critics answered'. In the meantime, we can note that there are strong hints of this event in verses 24, 27, 35, 36. In those verses it is indicated that Antiochus will prosper *only for as long as God has ordained*.

Another difficulty, in some people's minds, may be the gap in time between verses 39 and 40. In fact this gap can be explained very easily. In the vision of the four beasts, the death of the little horn was followed by the destruction of the body of the fourth beast. The narrative of chapter 11 corresponds to this by describing the career of Antiochus and then going straight on to describe the destruction of the Greek empire. The intervening period of time is irrelevant and therefore not described. (Note that this is true also of Persian history after the first four great kings. Daniel 11:2 describes the first four kings of Persia — corresponding to the four heads of the leopard — and then, completely ignoring the later kings of Persia, goes straight on in verse 3 to describe Alexander.)

The last section describing the Romans' failure against the Parthians may seem slightly irrelevant to the main idea of the prophecy, which is the destruction of the Greek empire in preparation for the coming of Christ. But one function this small section does perform is that of showing that Daniel's fourth kingdom (as described in 2:33, 40 and 7:7, 23) is *not* the Roman empire. First, we learn here that Rome was badly defeated even before she had finished subjugating the Greek empire and while she was still in her prime. This does not agree with the picture we have of the iron-hard, all-conquering fourth kingdom. Second, these verses draw attention to the fact that the Romans did not by any means tread down 'the whole earth'. The Parthians ruled a very large part of the former Babylonian, Median, Persian and Greek empires, and we have noted already that in the context of the book of Daniel 'the whole earth' must surely include the area covered by those empires.

Another function performed by 11:44, 45 is that of showing how 7:12 was fulfilled. In 7:11 we were told that the fourth beast was killed and 'its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire'. This is explained by the account of Rome's annexation of Syria in 11:40-43. In 7:12 we were told, 'As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time'. This is explained by the account of Rome's failure against Parthia in 11:44, 45. *Because of this failure, Babylonia, Media and Persia all remained outside the Roman empire*. Their dominion was taken away, but they were independent of Rome.

I said in chapter 3 that Daniel 11:40-45 describes in a very remarkable way how 7:11, 12 was fulfilled — and this has now been explained. It seems safe to say that my interpretation of 11:40-45 is more than adequately justified. In the introductory chapter of this book, it was stated that the course of history is described in accurate detail *right up to the time of Christ*, and that this fact more or less completely demolishes one of the critical scholars' major arguments for a second century B.C. date of authorship. As we have seen, the events taking place *after* the reign of Antiochus are described in just as accurate detail as the events before and during his reign.

Objections

This section and the two following ones have been written for this edition of *God in Control* in response to a criticism of my interpretation. The criticism to which I refer appears in Ernest C. Lucas' commentary on Daniel, published in 2002:

'Gurney (1980: 146-152) argues that these verses refer to the events related to the Roman takeover of Syria and Palestine from the annexation of Syria by Pompey's legate,

Scaurus, in 65 BC to Crassus' death while campaigning against the Parthians in 54 BC. Unfortunately for this scheme, Rome never occupied, let alone plundered, Egypt during this period. Egypt did not become a Roman province until 27 BC. Also, Gurney's interpretation requires a number of abrupt changes in the subjects of the verbs, which go against the natural reading of the passage. His claim that the phrase "At the time of the end" (40a) signals a major change of subject is not convincing. The references to a "time" limit on Antiochus' activities and of an impending "end" in vv. 24, 27, 35, 36 have all been pointing forward to his ultimate downfall, following the pattern set by previous kings in the survey. Without vv. 40-45 as that downfall, the storyline is left hanging in the air, with the carefully built-up pattern unfinished.'¹

In fact I did not say that these verses deal only with the period 65 B.C. to 54 B.C. After describing the events of 65 B.C. and 63 B.C., I wrote these words:

'As mentioned already, Egypt lay within the power of Rome, but was not made an imperial province until 27 B.C. Libya and Ethiopia, both of which bordered Egypt, were indeed 'at the steps' (R.V.) of Rome.'

Further on I wrote,

'Note also the way in which the words "and the land of Egypt shall not escape" are tacked onto the end of verses 40-42 These words do not suggest a king of the north whose *prime target* (v. 40) is the king of Egypt. The impression we get is of some *outside power* attacking the whole area, beginning with Syria. Egypt is only one of the victims, and a late one at that.'

In this book I have reiterated again and again that the destruction of the Greek empire was completed in 27 B.C., and that this was shortly before the birth of Christ. The *main point* of my interpretation of 11:40-45 is that these verses describe the final destruction of the Greek empire, and they bring us up to 27 B.C., just before the birth of Christ. It is hard to see how I could have made it any clearer. Verses 40-43 are looking forward not only to 65 B.C. and 63 B.C., but also beyond them to 27 B.C. These verses are describing Rome's conquest of the whole area, from 65 B.C. (or earlier) to 27 B.C. The events are telescoped together somewhat, but this is common in Biblical prophecy. In verses 44, 45 the narrative describes a particular setback which occurred in 54 B.C. *during the course of that conquest*. As explained already, this setback was described for a very special reason.

However, even if we accept that verses 40-43 describe the Greek empire's destruction by Rome, and verses 44, 45 describe the failed campaign against the Parthians, we still have the problem of the change of identity of the king of the north in verse 40. Lucas said that my interpretation goes against the natural reading of the passage. I anticipated this objection, and I dealt with it; but Lucas found my explanation unconvincing. He wrote, 'His claim that the phrase "At the time of the end" (40a) signals a major change of subject is not convincing.' However, this pointer or clue (indicating that the king of the north's identity has changed) does not stand alone. It is backed up powerfully by several other factors. I have mentioned most of these already, but I will list them again:

- 1) Most scholars agree that if we follow what appears at first sight to be the most obvious and 'natural' meaning of these verses, we have an *erroneous* prediction of Antiochus' future career and downfall. But the book of Daniel is part of the Old Testament scriptures, and Christ taught that they are the divinely inspired, infallible, inerrant word of God. I believe therefore that any interpretation which imputes error is incompatible with Christ's teaching.

- 2) The literature with which we are dealing is not purely human and natural. Daniel's prophecies were received by direct revelation, and are both unique and supernatural. They cannot be *fully* understood by natural methods of analysis. For example, such analysis can fail to see references to Christ. After His resurrection, Christ 'interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (Luke 24:27). These truths are not necessarily self-evident. I develop this point further below, in the final paragraph of this section.
- 3) Christ applied Daniel's prophecies to Himself and to the Jewish War of 67-70 A.D. He did this when He referred to 'the stone', 'the Son of man', and 'the abomination of desolation'. And it is very possible that He gave further teaching from the book of Daniel after His resurrection (Luke 24:27).
- 4) This passage should be interpreted in the context of the other prophecies of Daniel. The overall picture they presented was that Antiochus' downfall would be followed by *the destruction of the Greek empire*, and this in turn would be followed by the kingdom of Heaven filling the whole earth, and the Son of man receiving the kingdom.
- 5) A major purpose of Daniel's prophecies was to predict the course of history up to the coming of the Messiah. If this passage describes the events of 65-27 B.C., it fulfilled that purpose, because it described history almost up to the time of Christ. But if it was a prediction of the downfall of Antiochus, it failed to fulfil that purpose, because Christ appeared more than a century and a half after the death of Antiochus.
- 6) Crucially, these verses were *not* fulfilled by the downfall of Antiochus (if secular history is to be believed); but they *were* fulfilled by the events of 65-27 B.C. Some readers may disagree; but the historical facts are as I have stated — and I present further historical facts below. Readers will have to judge for themselves.
- 7) The problem of Daniel 11:40-45 is very similar to that of 9:24-27. When we studied that passage, we saw that there was a *superficial* resemblance to events of Antiochus' time, and *this was probably deliberate*. But the latter events fulfilled the prophecy *imperfectly*, whereas the events of Christ's time fulfilled it *perfectly*. I discussed this problem in Chapter One, as well as in Chapter Six, and I refer to it again in the section below, 'The critics answered'.
- 8) In Chapters One and Six, I suggested that there is an element of riddle or parable in some of Daniel's prophecies. The real meaning is not always immediately apparent. It is like treasure hidden just below the surface, waiting to be found. It appears to me that this is true of 11:40-45, just as it is true of 9:24-27.
- 9) The words 'At the time of the end' are very significant, and could well mark a break or turning point in the narrative. I suggest that they are the key which unlocks the riddle. There is more about this in the section below, entitled 'The time of the end'.
- 10) There was a fundamental difference in the status of the kings of Syria after 83 B.C. This is a historical fact which I noticed only recently. I explain it in the section below, entitled 'The kings of the north and the south'.

To summarize, it is a fact that Daniel 11:40-45 was *not* fulfilled by events in the reign of Antiochus (if secular history is to be believed); but it *was* fulfilled by the events of 65-27 B.C. Furthermore, the latter interpretation agrees perfectly with the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7 and 8, and it brings us almost to the time of Christ. The king of the north's change of identity in verse 40 is not immediately obvious, and 'breaks the flow', as it were. But this could be an ambiguity which God introduced *deliberately*, and I suggest that everything else points to its being the correct reading. I suggest that this interpretation is like treasure hidden just below

the surface, waiting to be discovered by the expectant and believing seeker.

Finally, Lucas says that without verses 40-45 as the downfall of Antiochus, the storyline is ‘left hanging in the air’ with ‘the carefully built-up pattern unfinished’. But as Lucas himself says, verses 24, 27, 35, 36 refer to the appointed downfall of Antiochus; so his downfall does not go unmentioned. Furthermore, there are special reasons for the way in which Antiochus’ downfall is handled in this prophecy. The seventh and eighth reasons given above are part of the answer. The other part, I believe, is the explanation which I provide in the section below, entitled ‘The critics answered’. The *real climax* of the prophecy at this point is not Antiochus’ downfall — it is the destruction of the Greek empire which preceded the coming of the Messiah. This agrees perfectly with the earlier prophecies. Contrary to what Lucas says, the storyline is *not* left hanging in the air, and the carefully built-up pattern *is* finished.

Another way of expressing the objection about the king of the north’s change of identity is this: Why should Rome be called ‘the king of the north’ in these verses when it could have been called ‘the Kittim’, as in verse 30, and the king of Syria could have continued as ‘the king of the north’, as in the previous verses? This would have been consistent with the rest of the chapter, and also simpler, tidier and less ambiguous. I suggest, however, that this is the very reason why Rome was *not* called the Kittim. If it *had* been called the Kittim in these verses, the fulfilment would have been *too* obvious and certain. Daniel’s prophecies predict the historical setting and date of Christ’s advent in a most amazing way. *But God does not force us to see this.* He included an element of ambiguity for much the same reason that Christ spoke in parables (Matthew 13:10-17) — and there are other reasons also. I described these reasons in Chapters One and Six; but I will set out the main points again in the final section of this chapter.

I stated above that Daniel’s prophecies were received by direct revelation, and are both unique and supernatural. Daniel himself could not have known how they would be fulfilled. He could not have known that the king of the north’s identity was different in verses 40-45. Only God Himself knew. This ‘device’ was not employed by Daniel — it was employed *by God*. I think therefore that a search for something similar outside the Bible is likely to be fruitless, and even *within* the Bible, Daniel’s prophecies are unique. However, sudden strange shifts of designation do occur in the Old Testament. One example is ‘The Angel of the Lord’ also being called ‘The Lord’ in the same passage. This kind of shift makes sense *only in the light of the New Testament*. I agree that if this were ordinary, natural literature, one would take ‘the king of the north’ in verses 40-45 to be the Greek king of Syria, as in the preceding verses. But for several reasons, as listed above, I believe the main reference must be to Rome. It is like treasure hidden just below the surface; but it is there for those who have ‘eyes to see and ears to hear’ (Matthew 13:10-17).

The time of the end

At this point, let us look again at the words ‘At the time of the end’ in 11:40. ‘The time of the end’ appears also in verse 35, which concludes, ‘... until the time of the end, for it is yet for the time appointed.’ We noted that verse 35 ends the *historical* section about Antiochus Epiphanes. Verses 36-39 describe his *attitude* behind the historical acts of the previous verses. The words at the end of verse 35 have been translated in different ways. Some translations take them to mean simply that the end will definitely come. But others take them to mean that the end will come at the appointed time, *but not just yet*. The NRSV, for example, reads, ‘for there is still an interval until the time appointed.’ And the JPS reads, ‘for an interval still remains until the appointed time.’ (I am indebted to Dr. Philip Johnston for pointing this out to me.)

If this is the true meaning of the words, therefore, the historical section about Antiochus ends by saying that the end will come at the appointed time, but ‘not just yet’. This supports the idea that verse 40, which begins with the words ‘At the time of the end’, describes events which occurred *after an interval*. This, of course, is not to say that Antiochus had nothing to do with ‘the time of the end’. The vision of the ram and the he-goat was ‘for the time of the end’ and ‘pertained to the appointed time of the end’. Verse 35 appears to indicate that the tribulation of Antiochus Epiphanes heralded ‘the time of the end’, but it did not come immediately — it came after an interval.

The kings of the north and south

The only part of 11:40-45 which I have not yet explained is the phrase within the opening sentence, ‘... the king of the south shall attack him ...’ There is no historical record of the king of Egypt attacking the king of Syria around 65 B.C.

The A.V. translates the sentence as follows: ‘At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him ...’ The word translated ‘attack’ in the R.S.V. is *nagach*. According to Young’s Concordance, its meaning in this instance is ‘to push self on or forward’. In 9 out of 12 occurrences of *nagach* in the Old Testament, it is translated in the A.V. as ‘push’. It appears to me that in Daniel 11:40 it does not have to mean ‘attack physically’. It could indicate merely the advancement of one’s own interests (at the expense of someone else’s) through political and diplomatic intrigue.

It could mean here that the king of Egypt continued the traditional conflict with the king of Syria. But he did so by advancing his own interests politically and diplomatically, rather than by means of warfare. At the time we are considering, the kings of Syria and Egypt were weak, and were completely overshadowed by the power of Rome. Antiochus Asiaticus was the son of Antiochus Eusebes and the Ptolemaic princess Cleopatra Selene. The latter acted as regent for the boy after his father’s death some time between 92 and 85 B.C. In 83 B.C., however, Tigranes, king of Armenia, conquered Syria, and Cleopatra traveled to Rome and tried to have her sons recognized as *kings of Egypt*. This particular mission was unsuccessful, but her sons were recognized in Rome as ‘Kings of Syria’ and ‘maintained a royal state’.

Note that in 83 B.C. the Seleucid kingdom of Syria and ‘the king of the north’ of Daniel 11:5-39 ceased to exist. Antiochus Asiaticus was a Seleucid, but he had no kingdom and no power. Even when he did become the client ruler of Syria in 69 B.C. (see below), he remained subordinate to Rome. Clearly the status of the Seleucid king of Syria had changed, and this could be one more reason why the title ‘the king of the north’ was transferred to Rome.

The man who became king of Egypt in 80 B.C. was Ptolemy Auletes. This man was, I believe, ‘the king of the south’ of Daniel 11:40. To further his own ends, he pursued a pro-Roman policy and eventually he managed to get himself formally recognized as an ally of Rome. This was after he had paid substantial bribes to Julius Caesar and Pompey! It is not hard to imagine that he was hostile towards Antiochus Asiaticus, who had vied with him for the throne of Egypt. He advanced his own interests at the expense of Antiochus in 80 B.C. — and he probably continued to do so afterwards.

Tigranes was defeated by the Romans in successive battles, starting in 69 B.C. In the same year, the Romans approved Antiochus’ appointment as the client ruler of Syria. Thus Antiochus was ruling Syria when it was annexed by Rome in 65 B.C. However, Pompey had Antiochus deposed and killed by an Arab chieftain in 64 B.C. He was survived by Philip Philoromaeus for a short time, but the Seleucid dynasty had ended. As for Ptolemy Auletes, he had to flee to Rome in 58 B.C.; but he returned to Egypt in 55 B.C. and reigned there until his death in 51 B.C.

In the light of these extra historical details, let me add a few more touches to the interpretation of Daniel 11:40. 'The time of the end' was around the time of the final destruction of the Greek empire. The 'him' (in both cases) was a Seleucid king, like the 'he' in verse 39, and his name was Antiochus Asiaticus. Although he became the actual king of Syria (rather than 'king in waiting') eventually, it was a greatly diminished role. He was a client ruler, subordinate to Rome, and he had very little power. Rome was now 'the king of the north'. The king of the south was the king of Egypt (as before), and his name was Ptolemy Auletes. He 'pushed himself forward' against Antiochus in 80 B.C. in the diplomatic fight over the throne of Egypt, and he may well have continued to oppose him in other ways after that. We read that Ptolemy 'pushed at' Antiochus, but this activity was really very mild. It was the prelude to much more violent action by Rome. We read that 'the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through.' This describes Rome's conquest of the area ruled by Antiochus, and the surrounding countries. The most important part of this conquest, as far as Daniel's prophecy was concerned, was the annexation of Syria in 65 B.C. This was 'the beginning of the end' — the beginning of the final destruction of the Greek empire before the coming of Christ. Verse 41 describes the Romans' entry into the Holy Land, and the Nabataeans' escape when Pompey called off his campaign against them. The annexation of Egypt in 27 B.C. completed the final destruction of the Greek empire, and is described in verses 42, 43.

Note that the next two sections were in the first edition of *God in Control*, and so also was the section above entitled 'The destruction of the Greek empire'. Nearly all the answers to Lucas' criticisms can be found in the first edition of *God in Control*. Readers can judge for themselves whether or not those criticisms are valid and take proper account of what I wrote.

The four kingdoms

Let us pause for a moment and try to see how this chapter links up with the previous ones, and how it shows us that the 'four kingdoms' are indeed Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece.

To begin with, in his introductory remarks the man in linen says, 'I will return to fight against the prince of Persia; and when I am through with him, lo, the prince of Greece will come' (10:20). Note that Persia is not coupled with Media here and that there is no mention of Rome following Greece.

When we come to the actual revelation, we find that it is preceded by a brief mention of the Median king who took over from the Babylonian kings. The second verse speaks of four great *Persian* kings who very definitely correspond to the four powerful heads of the third beast. The next forty-one verses deal at extraordinary length with *Greece*. Note the Babylon-Media-Persia-Greece sequence with the emphasis on Greece. (As explained in Chapter Five, I am not saying that the kingdom of Darius the Mede *was* the Median kingdom.)

The irresistible might of Alexander corresponds to the fourth kingdom's initial phase of immense power, represented by the legs of iron. The empire after Alexander's death corresponds to the kingdom's second phase of division and weakness, represented by the feet of iron and clay. The ten horns and little horn of the fourth beast are clearly identified by the detailed description of the kings of Syria and Antiochus Epiphanes. The destruction of the Syrian Greek empire corresponds to the destruction of the image and also the body of the fourth beast. The annexation of Egypt can be included as part of the destruction of the image. It was completed in 27 B.C. and brings us up to about twenty years before the birth of Christ. Rome's failure against Parthia shows us how the first three beasts escaped destruction with the fourth beast. At the same time it shows us that Rome was not the fourth kingdom.

That the fourth kingdom was Greek is confirmed by the extraordinary detail with which the Greek empire and Antiochus are described and by their close similarity to the fourth kingdom and the little horn. In addition to this we are given details about the Roman empire which more or less completely exclude any possibility of its being the fourth kingdom.

The critics answered

To critical scholars, Daniel 11:40-45 is an extremely important passage. Not only do these scholars believe it to be one of the few attempts at genuine prediction in the book, but they believe also that it enables us to establish the date of authorship with considerable accuracy. If 11:2-39 is an accurate record of *past* history, and 11:40-45 is an inaccurate prediction of *future* history, it fixes the date of authorship at shortly before 164 B.C.

In the light of our discovery that verses 40-45 describe the destruction of the Greek empire by Rome, how should we view the critical position? First, we can say quite categorically that these verses contain *accurate* predictions of events leading up to the time of Christ. These predictions are just as accurate and just as detailed as those in the preceding verses — and they correspond exactly to certain details in the visions of chapters 2 and 7. It is clear therefore that the most important argument for a second century date of authorship is wrong and should be discarded.

We have seen that the gap in time between verses 39 and 40 is easily explained, but how do we explain the fact that Antiochus' death is not described? And how do we explain the fact that verses 40-45 do give a superficial impression of continuing to describe Antiochus? It could be argued that a second century author *thought* he was describing the last days of Antiochus, but guided by the Holy Spirit, he was actually describing the destruction of the Greek empire by Rome. But this is most unlikely — there is no need to postulate a second century date of authorship.

I have discussed these or similar questions already in Chapters One and Six, and also (very briefly) in the present chapter. I suggested that the 'riddle' or 'hidden treasure' explanation is a vital part of the answer. But in addition to this, I suggested that this is a case of 'prophetic foreshortening'. Historically, the death of Antiochus Epiphanes occurred well before the final destruction of the Greek empire. But in 11:40-45 these happenings are telescoped together, and given the superficial appearance of taking place continuously over a fairly short period of time. More than that, the final destruction of the Greek empire is presented in such a way that it appears superficially to be an account of the downfall of Antiochus Epiphanes. There is a sense, perhaps, in which the downfall of Antiochus is actually identified with the destruction of the Greek empire. The reason for this, as described in the introductory chapter, is that all these different happenings were parts of a single event — namely, the destruction of the Greek 'antichrist', the fourth beast.

Another explanation which follows on from this, and is another aspect of the 'prophetic foreshortening', is the traditional conservative view that these verses look forward to the last great 'Antichrist'. We have noted already that the prophecies of Daniel may have more than one fulfilment. Antiochus and the Greek empire may well typify some future antichrist. Daniel 11:40-45 does describe the destruction of the Greek empire by Rome; but it may well be that it looks forward also to the last great 'Antichrist'. The destruction of the Greek antichrist — Antiochus and the Greek empire — typifies the eventual destruction of the last 'Antichrist'. This is apparent from Revelation 13:1-18 and 19:19, 20 (as we shall see in our final chapter) and also from II Thessalonians 2:1-12.

'Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ... that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who

opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God ... the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming ...' (II Thessalonians 2:1-12)

I suggest that God introduced this ambiguity in Daniel 11:40-45 *deliberately* (as in the case of 9:24-27) — partly for the latter two reasons, and partly for much the same reason that Jesus taught in parables. This particular passage is of enormous significance, since it brings us right up to the time of Christ. It has, in a sense, been disguised; but it is there for those who are willing to believe what the New Testament plainly teaches — namely, that Christ's coming was foretold in great detail in the Old Testament.

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1. Ernest C. Lucas, *Daniel*, (Apollos Old Testament Commentary 20, Inter-Varsity Press, Illinois, 2002), p. 292.

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