

CAPITOL STUDIES

APRIL 3, 2024 • WEEK 13



DANIEL: CHRIST'S CIVIL SERVANT IN BABYLON

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Verse of the Week

Daniel 11:31b-32

And they will set up the abomination of desolation. By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

Conflicts North and South



HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SEE A PLAN come together? Sometimes plans are hard to make. There are so many variables, so many factors to consider. How do you prepare for the “what ifs”? What if this were to happen? What if that were to happen? It’s one thing to lay out your strategy, to reach for your goal. But what if the plan is *not* for the next 24 hours, or the next 7 days, or the next 365 days? That should still be possible for you to do, right? If you keep up with your “G.P.A.” (your goal, plan, and administration of the plan), then you could find your path to success. Bu what if it were a 10-year plan, a 50-year plan, or a 100-year plan? You see as you include additional time, you add in more and more variables.

What could you accomplish if you could accurately predict the events a century from now or two centuries from now? These questions highlight the remarkable accuracy of what we are studying today. This prophecy was given to Daniel around 535 BC. The “mighty king” of Daniel 11:3 was Alexander the Great. He invaded the Persian Empire in 336 BC, which was 200 years after God gave that prophecy about him! Some of the events described in today’s text were 300 years after this prophecy was given. From the passage before us today, it is clear that God says what He means, and He means what He says. When kingdoms are shaken, you can confidently trust in the Most High God, Who rules in the kingdoms of men.

Arin Hess

Pastor Arin Hess, *Chaplain, Capitol Studies*



INTRODUCTION

Israel is the land bridge between the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. In many ways, whoever controls this territory controls the destiny of billions of people and has great wealth in his grasp. In past years, Europe and the United States have received two thirds or more of their oil from the Middle East. All the nations of the world would be crippled without the oil from this source. The Dead Sea area alone is probably worth more than the total wealth of the United States. Being a part of this area in the Middle East makes Israel a coveted prize for world leaders. Many feel that, in time, whoever controls this wealth will rule the world without a serious contender.¹

I. PROPHECIES ALREADY FULFILLED

A. Introduction

Daniel 11:1

In the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.²

As we discussed in chapter 10, the angel Gabriel is likely the one who has come to help encourage Daniel and to give him a message. This message from Gabriel carries on into chapter 11. Thus, Gabriel is the one speaking here, and he is saying that he (Gabriel) came also to be an encouragement and protection for “him.” This could refer to Darius the Mede, but likely it refers to Michael the archangel, who was just mentioned in the last verse of chapter 10. This is saying that as Michael was an encouragement and help to Gabriel (Dan. 10:13), Gabriel had also been the same to Michael in the midst of their past heavenly battles during the first year of Darius the Mede (two years prior). This verse should probably be attached to the end of chapter 10.

B. Persia & Greece

Daniel 11:2-4

And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece.³ And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.⁴ But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his own descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to others besides them.

There is a time lapse of about 150 years between verses 2 and 3. The “mighty king” is Alexander the Great, whose sprawling empire was divided at his death among his four generals since he had no posterity. (This is the brass part of the great image of chapter 2.) To be *uprooted* describes the gradual disintegration of the Greek empire and the final transfer of sovereignty to Rome by 31 BC.



C. Egypt & Syria

Daniel 11:5-9 (Translation modified slightly from the NASB)
Then the king of the South [Ptolemy I Soter] will grow strong, along with one of his princes [Seleucus I Nicator] who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his [Seleucus'] domain will be a great dominion indeed. ⁶After some years they [Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Antiochus II Theos] will form an alliance, and the daughter [Bernice] of the king of the South [Ptolemy II Philadelphus] will come to the king of the North [Antiochus II Theos] to carry out a peaceful arrangement [get married]. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he [Antiochus II Theos] remain with his power, but she [Bernice] will be given up [to be killed by Laodice], along with those who brought her in [her husband Antiochus II Theos] and the one whom she begat [her infant son] as well as he who supported her in those times [her father Ptolemy II Philadelphus]. ⁷But one of the descendants of her [Bernice's] family [her brother Ptolemy III Euergetes] will arise in his [Ptolemy II Philadelphus'] place, and he [Ptolemy III Euergetes] will come against their [the Seleucid family's] army and enter the fortress of the king of the North [Laodice's son Seleucus II Callinicus], and he [Ptolemy III Euergetes] will deal with them and display great strength. ⁸Also their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part [Ptolemy III Euergetes] will refrain from attacking the king of the North [Seleucus II Callinicus] for some years. ⁹Then the latter [Seleucus II Callinicus] will enter the realm of the king of the South [Ptolemy III Euergetes], but will return to his own land [after an unsuccessful battle].

Now the angel Gabriel speaks of the Syrian and Egyptian conflicts. These verses focus on the northern and southern divisions of the central part of Alexander's former territories. The "king of the South" represents all the kings from the Ptolemy family of Egypt. All the kings from the Seleucid family of Syria are referred to as the "king of the North." This passage presents an amazing, detailed summary of the campaigns which Syria and Egypt waged against each other. In the military invasions northward and southward, Israel was situated in between these two kingdoms and thus usually became the battlefield of the warring factions and suffered the brunt of their revenge.

The prince of verse 5 was Alexander's Syrian general Seleucus I Nicator, who found it necessary to accept asylum in Egypt when Antigonos I Monophthalmos—an early contender for Alexander's empire from Macedonia—routed him from the North. The king of the South was Ptolemy I Soter. With Ptolemy's help, Seleucus regained his authority in Syria and subsequently increased his dominion until his territories exceeded those of the Ptolemy family.

Several years later, an attempt was made to cement alliances between Egypt and Syria. Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt pressured Antiochus II Theos of Syria to marry his daughter Bernice. Antiochus put away his own wife Laodice (Laodicea was named after her) and pronounced her children illegitimate. When Ptolemy II Philadelphus died, Antiochus II Theos took Laodice back, and she promptly murdered Bernice and her





children. Later, she poisoned her husband Antiochus and put her son Seleucus II Callinicus on the throne of Syria. The marriage alliance proved an utter failure (v. 6). The peace was only temporary and was followed by the invasion of the North by Ptolemy III Euergetes (vv. 7-8) and the counterattack by Seleucus II Callinicus (v. 9) and his sons Seleucus III Soter and Antiochus III the Great, who pushed as far south as Raphia in southern Judea (v. 10).*

**See the Appendix for lists of these various rulers.*

Daniel 11:10-13

His sons [Seleucus II Callinicus' sons, Seleucus III Soter and Antiochus III the Great] will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them [Antiochus III the Great] will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his very fortress. ¹¹The king of the South [Ptolemy IV Philopator] will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North [Antiochus III the Great]. Then the latter [Antiochus III the Great] will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be given into the hand of the former [Ptolemy IV Philopator]. ¹²When the multitude [of Antiochus III the Great] is carried away [by Ptolemy IV Philopator], his [Ptolemy's] heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail. ¹³For the king of the North [Antiochus III the Great] will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment.

Antiochus III the Great and his armies poured out of the North like a flood and deluged Judea (v. 10). Eventually, Syria and Egypt settled down to a kind of cold war which lasted 13 years (v. 12). The struggle for domination continued under Ptolemy IV Philopator, a man of profligate lifestyle. The reference to his heart being lifted up (v. 12, v. 18) prepares the biblically astute reader for his downfall (Dan. 2:21a).

Daniel 11:14-19

Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South [Ptolemy IV Philopator]; the violent ones among your people [Daniel's people, the Jews] will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down. ¹⁵Then the king of the North [Antiochus III the Great] will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South [Ptolemy's forces] will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand. ¹⁶But he [Antiochus III the Great] who comes against him [Ptolemy IV Philopator] will do as he [Antiochus III the Great] pleases, and no one will be able to withstand him [Antiochus III the Great]; he will also stay for a time in the Beautiful Land [Israel], with destruction in his hand. ¹⁷He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he [Antiochus III the Great] will also give him [Ptolemy V Epiphanes] the daughter of women [Antiochus' daughter Cleopatra in marriage] to ruin it [the peace agreement]. But she [Cleopatra] will not take a stand for him [her father Antiochus III the Great] or be on his side. ¹⁸Then he [Antiochus III the Great] will turn his face to the coastlands [Greece and Asia minor] and capture



many. But a [Roman] commander [Cornelius Scipio] will put a stop to his [Antiochus'] scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn. ¹⁹So he [Antiochus III the Great] will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.

While Ptolemy IV Philopator did inflict a massive defeat on Syria at Raphia, his ascendancy did not continue and eventually, when his son Ptolemy V Epiphanes was enthroned at the age of four, Antiochus III the Great conquered “the Beautiful Land” (vv. 13-16). Antiochus, too, displayed the self-exaltation which merits divine judgment (v. 16, v. 19). He secured the assistance of King Philip V of Macedonia and of the apostate Jews in Palestine (“the violent ones”) who were glad to get free from Egyptian (Ptolemy) control (v. 14). But Antiochus was frustrated in his plan to conquer Egypt by the interference of Rome. He thereupon decided to take diplomatic measures by giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V Epiphanes, heir apparent to the Egyptian throne. Antiochus depended upon Cleopatra’s allegiance, but she repudiated her father and instead supported her husband (v. 17).

Antiochus III the Great then plundered the coastlands and islands of the Mediterranean until Rome drove him out of Greece and later defeated him at Magnesia in 190 BC (vv. 18-19). This forced him to return home, and, retreating, he disappeared from the stage of history, dying within two years (v. 19).

Daniel 11:20

Then in his [Antiochus III the Great's] place one [his son Seleucus IV Philopator] will arise who will send an oppressor [his treasurer Heliodorus to collect taxes] through the Jewel of his kingdom [Jerusalem]; yet within a few days he [Seleucus IV Philopator] will be shattered [murdered], though not in anger nor in battle.

Antiochus’s son, Seleucus IV Philopator, who followed as king of Syria, inherited a large empire but one bankrupted by long years of military action and was forced to increase the tribute money which Rome had exacted from his father. Shortly after he sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, to pilfer the temple treasures at Jerusalem (v. 20), he was then poisoned by Heliodorus.

D. The Madman

Daniel 11:21-28

In his [Seleucus IV Philopator's] place a despicable person [his brother Antiochus IV Epiphanes] will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred [because it should have gone to Seleucus' son Demetrius], but he [Antiochus IV Epiphanes] will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue. ²²The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant [the Jewish high priest, Onias III, who was ousted by Antiochus IV Epiphanes]. ²³After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people. ²⁴In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the





realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time. ²⁵He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South [now Ptolemy VI Philometer, Ptolemy V Epiphanes' son] with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him. ²⁶Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. ²⁷As for both kings [Antiochus IV Epiphanes and Ptolemy VI Philometer], their hearts will be intent on evil, and they will speak lies to each other at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still to come at the appointed time. ²⁸Then he [Antiochus IV Epiphanes] will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant [the people of Israel], and he will take action and then return to his own land.

Seleucus IV Philopator was soon succeeded by the figure who now dominates the rest of the chapter, a despicable person (v. 21), his brother Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who usurped the throne from Seleucus' son. Because of his daring wickedness which he perpetrated against the Jews, some of his subjects called him a madman. (This was a word play on his name, changing "Epiphanes," meaning "the illustrious one," to "Epimanes," meaning "madman."⁴) No atrocity was too enormous for him to perform. By various means, including intrigue and deceit (vv. 21 & 23), he promoted a policy of Hellenization, forcing the people under his rule to adopt Greek culture and practices, bringing him into direct conflict with Jews who were committed to orthodox piety. Again, the danger of feeling secure is underlined (v. 24; see also Dan. 8:25), as is the time limit which God places on hostile human activities ("only for a time," v. 24).

Antiochus IV prevented an Egyptian invasion of Palestine by himself invading Egypt, now ruled by Ptolemy VI Philometer, again succeeding partly by intrigue (according to vv. 24–25). But full success eluded him (v. 27), and when disorder emerged in Palestine, he returned to Syria. Again, the divine limits feature in history, and the sinister nature of opposition to the people of God is emphasized (v. 28).

Daniel 11:29-35

At the appointed time he [Antiochus IV Epiphanes] will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before. ³⁰For ships of Kittim [Roman ships from the island of Cyprus] will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant [the people of Israel] and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress [the Temple], and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. ³²By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action. ³³Those who have insight among the people



will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. ³⁴Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. ³⁵Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.

Antiochus invaded Egypt again in 168 BC, when three members of the Ptolemy family (Ptolemy VI Philometer, his brother Ptolemy VIII, and their sister Cleopatra II) had agreed on a joint reign. This time Antiochus found himself faced with a humiliating Roman ultimatum to leave (v. 30), after which he vented his fury against God and His people, enlisting the help of Jews sympathetic to the Hellenization process (vv. 30-32). This culminated in the massacre of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the ravaging of the city. The sanctuary was defiled, the daily offerings abolished, an altar to Zeus was set up, and pagan rites were celebrated on the altar of burnt offering (the “abomination that causes desolation,” v. 31; see also Matt. 24:15).

Despite Jewish apostasy (described in vv. 30 & 32), other Jews were faithful to death (v. 33). It was in this context that the famous resistance of the Maccabees took place. As in all resistance movements, spiritual as well as political, the faithful received support from people who weren’t sincere (“join with them in hypocrisy”) which they could have done without (v. 34).³

Verses 33-35 form a transition and carry us across the years to the time of the Messiah. All of this period—called the times of the Gentiles—will be characterized by persecution, peril, and wars. This portion of chapter 11 presents a picture of Jerusalem under siege and the people under Gentile domination until the end of the age.

II. PROPHECIES YET TO BE FULFILLED

A. The Elevation of the Antichrist

Daniel 11:36-39

Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done. ³⁷He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. ³⁸But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. ³⁹He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.

The antichrist is not the sole ruler of the future. He will share with the beast out of the sea—the northern dictator (Revelation 13:1). The first beast professes to be God almighty, and the second beast acknowledges





the first beast (Revelation 13:12). It is possible that one will control in Europe and the other in Palestine. They will both claim divine attributes and honors, and both will support the other.

The king of Daniel 11:36 is the second beast of Revelation 13:11. This one makes a military treaty with the first beast for the protection of the Palestine against the northern invasion. This European dictator wants universal worship. He requires that an image be set up in the temple at Jerusalem to enforce idolatry (v. 39). In order to maintain a cordial relationship, this second beast (antichrist) will comply. The antichrist will be so ardent in promoting the worship of the European political and military dictator (first beast) that he will do all he can to acknowledge him as deity (see Matthew 24:15). The antichrist secures Western protection by plundering the vast resources of Israel and sending them to his ally in Europe (v. 38). The relationship between the antichrist and the first beast as described in Revelation chapter 13 is the same as the relationship as described in Daniel 11:36-39.

What are the distinctive marks of an antichrist or *the* antichrist? John the apostle is the only biblical writer who uses the term *antichrist*. In John's day many antichrists were or had been on the scene (1 John 2:18). John speaks of the antichrist as if it could be a spirit, a system, a philosophy, and/or a person. The antichrist is foremost a liar and a deceiver (see 1 John 2:22; 2 John 7). In prophecy, his distinctive marks are his deceit and fraudulent claim to be the Messiah. Also, because of his tremendous hatred of God and all that pertains to God or Christ, the antichrist does all he can to destroy God's people.¹

B. The Enemies of the Antichrist

Daniel 11:40-45

At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through. ⁴¹He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. ⁴²Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape. ⁴³But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels. ⁴⁴But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

According to verses 33–35, there was a small group of faithful Jews who opposed the godlessness of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and trusted God to enable them to fight back. A Jewish priest named Mattathias, with his five sons, gathered an army and were able to fight back. His son Judas, nicknamed Maccabeus (“the hammerer”), was one of the heroes of this revolt. Many Jews laid down their lives for their city, their temple, and their faith, and finally they won. On December 14, 165 BC, the temple



was purified and the altar dedicated (see Dan. 8:9–14, 23–25). The Jews celebrate this occasion annually as the Feast of Lights (Hanukkah). It is referred to as the “Feast of Dedication” in John 10:22. Their enemy, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, died in Persia in 163 BC. He was judged insane, and it was no wonder people called him “Antiochus Epimanes—Antiochus the madman.”

Gabriel closes this section about Antiochus by reminding Daniel that what he had related to him had implications for Israel in “the time of the end” (11:35). Although he had spoken about leaders who would appear after the fall of Persia, Daniel could see in those events some of the things that would happen to the Jews in the end times. This was especially true of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a clear picture of the future Antichrist. Daniel knew that his people would endure great suffering for their faith, that some would apostatize and join the enemy, and that others would trust the Lord and “do exploits” (v. 32). No matter how difficult the times, God has always had His faithful remnant, and He will keep His covenant with His people to the very end. Having mentioned “the time of the end,” Gabriel will now continue to speak about the future Antichrist and the terrible time of Jacob’s trouble.³

CONCLUSION

What do we learn from the numerous shake-ups in the kingdoms described in Daniel chapter 11? The Most High God was in control! The apostle Paul summarized these and other events with a single phrase: “the fullness of time.” He wrote to the Gentile church in Galatians, “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4). Do you see how significant this is to you today? You and I were redeemed by this Redeemer. The only way that we can go to heaven is to be redeemed by God’s Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Through Him, we enjoy the blessings of being adopted as God’s children.

Let’s stop for a moment to remember the good news of the Gospel. To Joseph of Nazareth, God made a prediction about Mary’s Son. His name would be called “Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). So, the question today is this: Are you one of His people? The wages of your sin is death (Romans 6:23), but God sent His Son for you: “For He has made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:20). In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son to redeem you, to adopt you, and to allow you to be clothed in His righteousness. Would you trust Him today as your Savior and Lord? Then, let’s rejoice in the Father Who sent forth His Son in the fullness of time. The Lord had prepared the world for the good news of His Son.

Pastor Arin Hess



Theme Verse

Daniel said,

“Let the name of God be **blessed** forever and ever,

For **wisdom** and **power** belong to Him.

It is He who changes the **times** and the **epochs**;

He **removes** kings and **establishes** kings;

He gives **wisdom** to wise men and **knowledge** to men of understanding.”

Daniel 2:20-21



Serving Civil Servants with Scripture

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FOOTNOTES

1. S. B. Ferguson, “Daniel,” in the *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (4th ed.), InterVarsity Press, 1994, pp. 761–762.

2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.

3. Warren Wiersbe, *Be Resolute (Daniel): Determining to Go God's Direction*, David C. Cook, Kindle Edition, 2000, pp. 165-167.

Parts of this material are taken from several sources: Edward Watke, Jr., *Study of the Book of Daniel*, Revival in the Home Ministries, Augusta, GA, 1992; Pastor Gordon Dickson from Calvary Baptist Church in Findly, Ohio, www.cbcbfindlay.org; and J. Dwight Pentecost, “Daniel,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books, 1985, pp. 1367-1372.

APPENDIX

Seleucid Family – Kings of the North – Syria

Seleucus I Nicator	312–281 BC	Dan. 11:5
Antiochus I Soter	281–262 BC	<i>Not Mentioned in Daniel</i>
Antiochus II Theos	262–246 BC	Dan. 11:6
Seleucus II Callinicus	246–227 BC	Dan. 11:7-9
Seleucus III Soter	227–223 BC	Dan. 11:10
Antiochus III the Great	223–187 BC	Dan. 11:10-11, 13, 15-19
Seleucus IV Philopator	187-176 BC	Dan. 11:20
Antiochus IV Epiphanes	175-163 BC	Dan. 11:21-32

Ptolemy Family – Kings of the South – Egypt

Ptolemy I Soter	323–285 BC	Dan. 11:5
Ptolemy II Philadelphus	285–246 BC	Dan. 11:6
Ptolemy III Euergetes	246–221 BC	Dan. 11:7-8
Ptolemy IV Philopator	221–204 BC	Dan. 11:11-12, 14-15
Ptolemy V Epiphanes	204–181 BC	Dan. 11:17
Ptolemy VI Philometer	181–145 BC	Dan. 11:25

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

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