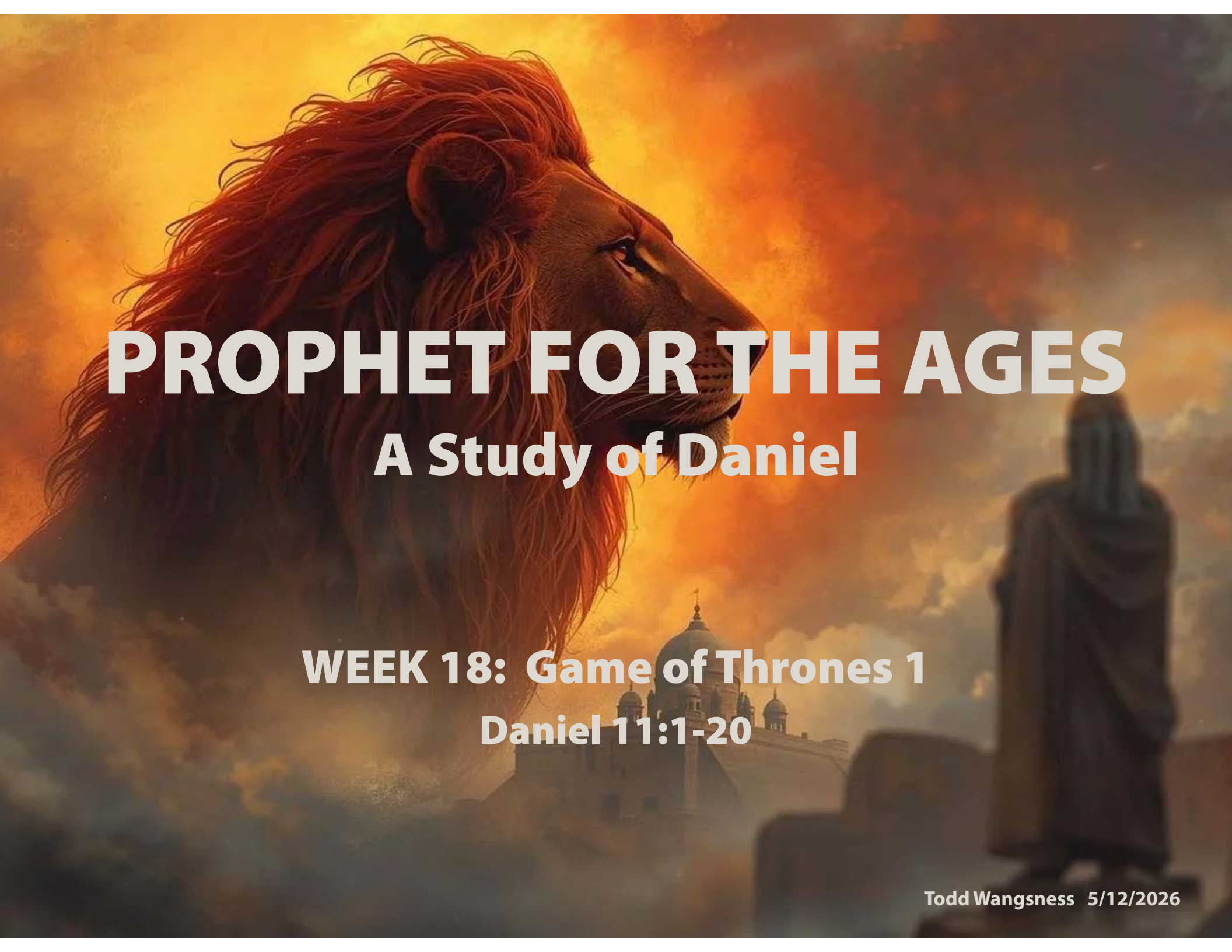




PROPHET FOR THE AGES

A Study of Daniel

WEEK 18: Game of Thrones 1
Daniel 11:1-20

Prophet for the Ages: Game of Thrones

Daniel 11:1-20 Overview

- Verse 5:** Rise of strong kingdoms under Ptolemy I (South, Egypt) and Seleucus I (North)
- Verse 6:** Failed alliance through marriage (a daughter of the South marries the North)
- Verse 7–9:** Revenge campaigns and back-and-forth battles
- Verse 10–19:** Multiple Syrian Wars. The North (especially Antiochus III the Great) eventually gains permanent control of Judea around 200–198 BC after defeating the Ptolemies at the Battle of Panium.
- Verse 20:** A brief ruler who tries to raise taxes/wealth but is destroyed

- This section is remarkably accurate “pre-written history”
- Scholars note dozens of specific details (names implied by actions, battles, alliances, marriages, and outcomes) that precisely match secular records of Hellenistic history

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Notable Quote About Daniel 11:1-20

"This chapter contains one of the most specifically fulfilled prophecies of the Bible, predicting history over some 375 years, with amazing accuracy. The chapter is so specific, that many critics who deny supernatural revelation, have insisted that it is history, written after the fact, fraudulently claiming to be prophecy. The rest of this prophecy focuses on two of the four inheritors of Alexander's realm. Only two are focused on because they constantly fought over the Promised Land because it sat between their centers of power."

- David Guzik

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The Kings of Medo-Persia

Dan 11:1-2 *“Also in the first year of Darius the Mede, I, even I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.) 2 And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece.*

- Verse 1 should really be the last verse of Chapter 10, but it clearly demonstrates the angelic realm is deeply involved in the transition of human governments
 - Cyrus the Great: 539 – 530 BC
- God’s foreknowledge and sovereignty is evident in Verse 2
 - It shows the timeline in advance of the rise of three future kings of Persia and their incursions against the kingdom of Greece. And a final fourth king of Persia.
 1. Cambyses: 530 – 522 BC 1st son of Cyrus. Died of suicide.
 2. Pseudo-Smerdis: 522 BC Killed 2nd son of Cyrus. Stole his identity.
 3. Darius I Hystaspes: 522 – 486 BC Killed Smerdis, claiming he usurped.
 4. Xerxes I: 486 – 464 BC Son of Darius (Ahasuerus of Esther)

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The Hellenistic Empire

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

- The angel's prophecy moved swiftly past the Medo-Persian empire and addressed the Hellenistic (Greek) empire in verse 3
- These verses echo much that has already disclosed in the Great Image (chapter 2), the Vision of the Four Beasts (chapter 7), and Vision of Ram and Goat (chapter 8)
- Alexander the Great was the "mighty king" in verse 3
- He was renown for his diplomatic skills, military prowess, and his ability to assimilate the diverse cultures of the lands he conquered
- He encouraged intermarriage from various parts of his empire and the exchange of ideas and customs, which shaped development of Western culture to this day
- He founded Alexandria in Egypt, which became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world

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- As mentioned in previous studies, in 332 BC at the age of 32, he and his army were returning from conquests in India
 - He went on a bender in Babylon and fell ill (some scholars suspect he was poisoned)
 - He went into a coma and died 10 days later
- This started the period known as the Diadochi (successors) Conflicts, which lasted over 20 years, marked by extremely bloody battles between his top generals
 - This period was filled with intrigue, betrayals, and assassinations of family members
- Ultimately, four generals secured various territories:
 - Seleucid Dynasty of Asia – *prominent later in Daniel 11 (king of the north)*
 - Ptolemaic Dynasty of Egypt – *prominent later in Daniel 11 (king of the south)*
 - Lysimachus Dynasty of Asia Minor (Turkey)
 - Cassander Dynasty of Greece/Macedonia
- As verse 4 details, none of his posterity would inherit his throne
 - He had one son that was assassinated by Cassander
- And ... also as noted in verse 4, none of the generals had his natural aptitude for ruling

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Control of Israel by the Kings of the North and South 332 – 63 BC		
Period	Controlling Power	Key Events / Notes
332-323 BC	Alexander the Great	Conquest of the region from Persians
323-301 BC	Multiple changes	~5-7 flips during Diadochi Wars (Ptolemy I, Antigonus, Seleucus allies). Very unstable.
301-200/198 BC	Ptolemaic Empire	Stable Ptolemaic rule for about 100 years.
274-195 BC	Ptolemaic (mostly)	Syrian Wars 1-4: Seleucids made incursions but Ptolemies retained control (Battle of Raphia 217 BC).
202-195 BC	Seleucid Empire	Fifth Syrian War: Antiochus III defeats Ptolemies at Battle of Panium (~200 BC). Permanent shift.
195-142/140 BC	Seleucid Empire	Seleucid rule until the Maccabean Revolt.
142/140-63 BC	Hasmonean (independent)	Maccabean revolt leads to semi-independent Hasmonean kingdom.
63 BC	Roman Republic / Empire	Pompey the Great captures Jerusalem in 63 BC, ending Hasmonean independence.

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Game of Thrones between the North and South

Dan 11:5 *“Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as one of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion shall be a great dominion.”*

- Early on, Seleucus and Ptolemy joined forces to defeat another one of Alexander’s generals, Antigonus
 - Seleucus was originally a general in Ptolemy’s army (“one of his princes”)
 - Seleucus took over the area of Syria and rapidly rose in power and dominion
 - He took the title “king of Syria” in 304 BC
 - Ultimately, Seleucus became stronger than Ptolemy (*great dominion*)
 - His kingdom extended from Asia Minor to India and included Syria, Babylon and Media
- The angel nailed this subtle detail 232 years earlier!
- Bible critics HATE the book of Daniel!

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“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned!”

Dan 11:6 *And at the end of some years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her authority, and neither he nor his authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in those times.*

- **Ptolemy made a proposition to Antiochus in Syria to form an alliance instead of fighting each other**
 - **Paraphrased (from John Courson’s commentary):**
 - Ptolemy said, “My only daughter is Berenice. Marry her and that will make us one big family like Alexander wanted us to be.”**
 - “I can’t,” Antiochus said. “I’m married to Laodice.”**
 - “Dump her!” Ptolemy said.**
 - “Ok.” said Antiochus. So Antiochus divorced Laodice and married Berenice.**
- **Laodice was not at all happy about that. So she poisoned Antiochus, had Berenice and her infant son killed, and then proceeded to murder all of Berenice’s royal attendants.**

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Revenge on Laodice

Dan 11:7-8 *But from a branch of her roots one shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail. 8 And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their princes and their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the North.*

- The “her’ in this passage is Berenice
- Her brother, Ptolemy III, was enraged about his sister’s death and vowed to avenge her
- He overthrew all the Syrian fortresses from Cilicia to the Tigris and killed Laodice
- On the way back home, he raided the temples of Syria and carried 2,500 Syrian gods and 40,000 talents of silver and gold articles back to Egypt
- Again ... the prophecy is astonishingly accurate

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***Dan 11:9-12 “Also the king of the North shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land. 10 However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return to his fortress and stir up strife. 11 “And the king of the South shall be moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into the hand of his enemy. 12 When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail.*”**

- In response to the invasion by Ptolemy III, Antiochus III launched a counter-attack against Egypt in 217 BC (Battle of Raphia)
 - He reclaimed Israel as part of his empire during this conflict
- In verse 11, Antiochus III made a conquest into Egypt against Ptolemy IV with a superior force
 - Ptolemy IV was enraged, and defeated Antiochus III and secured the northern borders of his kingdom for the remainder of his reign
- Yet again, the angel’s prophecy proved entirely accurate

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The Fifth Syrian War (217 – 202 BC)

Dan 11:13 *For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.*

- **Antiochus III (Syria) expanded his dominion eastward into India and northward to the Caspian Sea over this 15 year period**
- **During this time, he gathered more and more strength and his army became more experienced and battle-hardened**

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Dan 11:14-16 *“Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, violent men of your people shall exalt themselves in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall fall. 15 So the king of the North shall come and build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the forces of the South shall not withstand him. Even his choice troops shall have no strength to resist. 16 But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.”*

- Antiochus III enlisted the support of a Jewish group of mercenaries led by a Jewish leader, Tobias
- In the Battle of Panium, the Syrian/Jewish army attacked Panium (Caesarea Phillipi) and Sidon and defeated the Egyptians
- Tobias thought joining forces with the Syrians would curry favor with Antiochus and would result in more autonomy for the Jews
 - He thought wrong. It just led to more subjugation, only this time, to the Syrians.

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Dan 11:17

“He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand with him, or be for him.

- Rome was now becoming ascendant in their power and influence
- Antiochus III now sought to counter this threat by normalizing relations with Egypt
 - He offered the marriage of his daughter, Cleopatra I, to Ptolemy V
 - Cleopatra was seven years old when married to Ptolemy
 - Through this marriage, he hoped to control the throne of Egypt
 - However, Cleopatra was faithful and loyal to her husband and did not bend to her father's schemes
 - After Ptolemy's death (natural causes), Cleopatra became regent in 181 BC, ruling equitably and maintaining peace with Syria, while doing nothing to alienate Rome
- Consequently, Antiochus's scheme to control Egypt through his daughter came to naught

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The Battle of Thermopylae

Dan 11:18-19 After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. 19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

- Antiochus clearly saw the danger that Rome presented
- He wanted to break Rome's power before it was too late
- He resumed his campaigns into Asia Minor with the assistance of Hannibal
 - He conquered many significant regions including Thrace and Greece
- In 191 BC, Antiochus III was defeated by the Romans in an epic, bloody battle known as the Battle of Thermopylae
 - This ended the Syrian control of Asia Minor
- He was ignominiously assassinated in Susa in 187 BC

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Dan 11:20

“There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes on the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle.

- **After the death of Antiochus III, his son, Seleucus IV Philopator, assumed the throne**
- **He ruled for a relatively short time (12 years) compared to his father (37 years)**
- **He died after being poisoned by Heliodorus, a powerful minister in the Seleucid government**
- **Heliodorus reigned for a very short time, and imposed heavy taxation on Israel to address tribute payments to Rome following Antiochus’s III’s defeat**
- **Antiochus III’s youngest son, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, quickly overthrew Heliodorus and became monarch in 175 BC**
- **Next week, we delve into the rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a most evil ruler**
- **He was a precursor to the Antichrist likely to appear on the world stage in our time**

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Questions To Ponder

- The prophecy in Daniel 11 is incredibly detailed, and includes blow-by-blow accounts of rulers, conquests and subterfuge spanning centuries of time
 - What is the purpose of this level of detail, considering the prophecy portion contained in verses 1-20 seems to only apply to a bygone era?
 - Do we see this same detail in prophecies concerning end-time events?
- God's sovereignty and omniscience are clearly on display through these verses
 - Were all these events "according to God's Will" or did God simply "foreknow" the events that would take place, including the evil and mayhem that came to pass?
 - *Psa 2:1-4 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision.*

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Questions To Ponder (cont.)

- What should be our state of mind during the trying times of this present evil age?
- *Rom 1:30-32 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.*
- *Col 1:9-14 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*