

Daniel 11

This chapter goes into some historical details, well beyond the prior chapters of Daniel. There are so many details upon details that critics claim it had to be written after the fact. We have already read about world empires rising and falling hundreds of years before the events took place. Now we will learn some more specifics of events and behind-the scene happenings within these empires. The scriptures may or may not give details in a blow by blow detail. I had to leave most of the information out; because it was just too voluminous for one bible study. We just live in the present, and the immediate; but God doesn't care if these transitions take decades. It's all the same to him.

Read Daniel 11:1-3: We already know that Alexander the Great will lead the Greek Empire to capture the world with amazing speed. The fall of Persia and replacement by Greece did not happen in one day.

This vision came to Daniel during his time serving Darius the Mede. Let's look at who was in charge in Persia, when the course of history changed. Daniel told Darius that after his reign, there would be three Persian Kings:

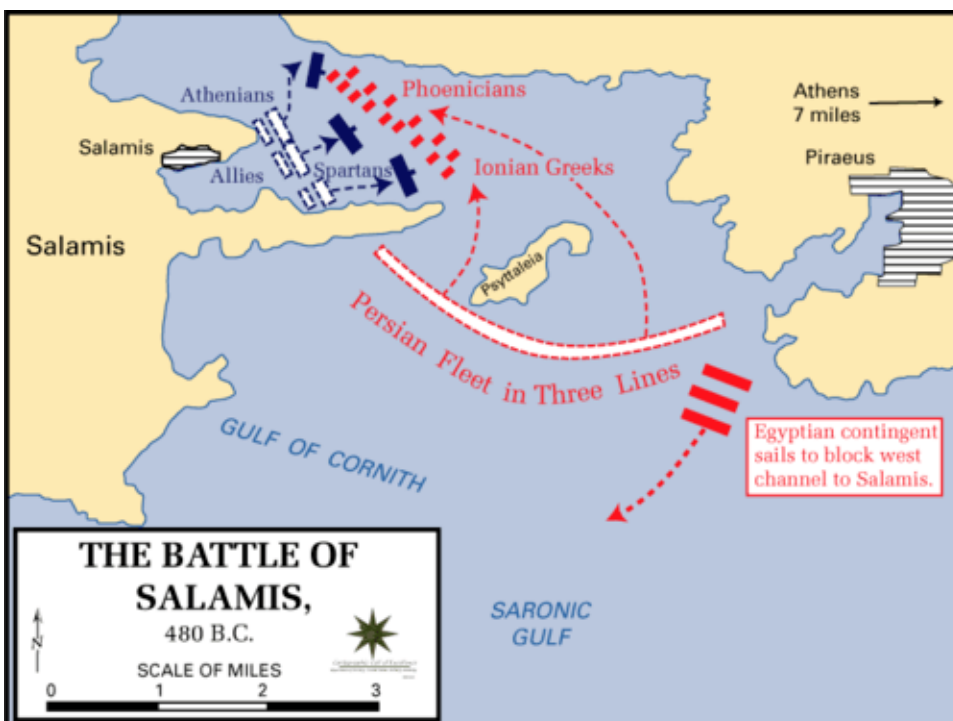
- Ahasuerus/Cambyses (husband of Esther who prevented a plot to kill all Jews)
- Artaxerxes/pseudo Smeruds, (commissioned Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild)
- Darius the Great (won 19 battles to further solidify his kingdom and confederation...organized empire into satraps)
- The fourth King, Xerxes the Great, who was prophesied to be far richer and stronger than them all (he invaded Greece)

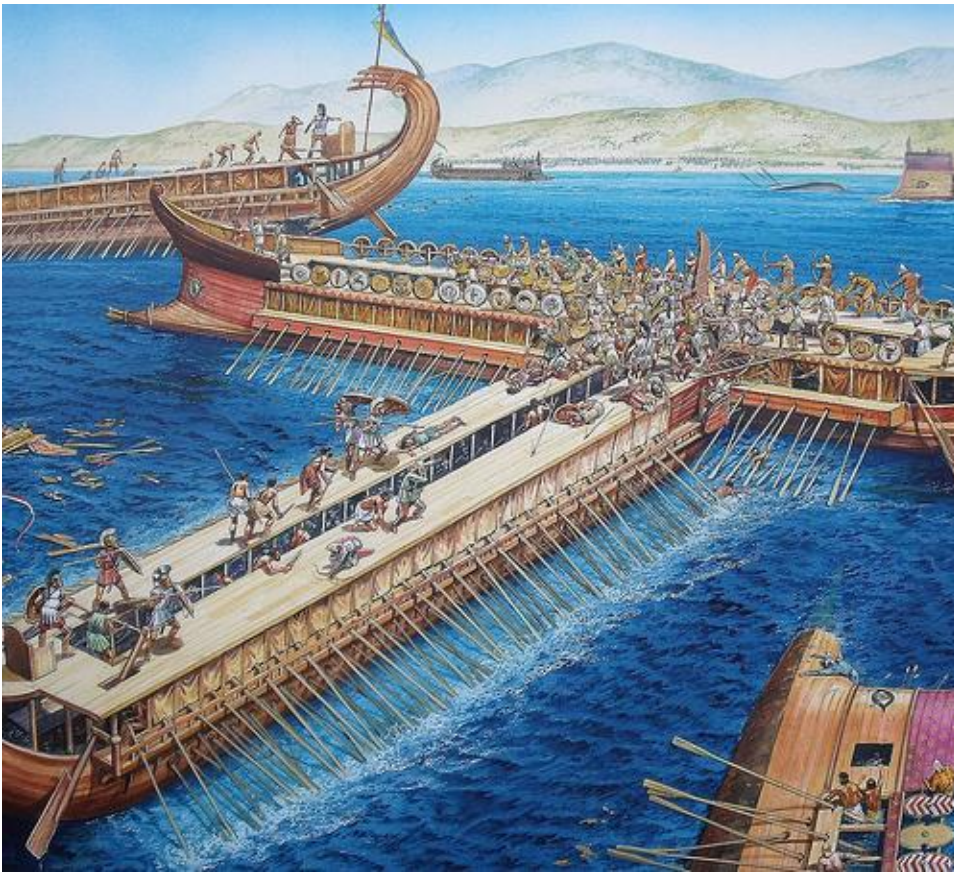
King Xerxes the Great reigned from 486-465 B.C. He invaded Greece in 480 B.C. He previously had crushed revolts Egypt and Babylon. His troops then crossed the Hellespont into Greece.

Alexander did not stop Persia and turn things around in the beginning. The Persian army and navy were massive, compared to Greece. Greece was really a community of city-states. Alexander was busy taking control over all of the little kingdoms in Greece and consolidating the surrounding areas. Persia initially crushed Greece and pounded its way through the country. The Persians crushed Thermopile, Artemusium, and then they captured and crushed Athens. The whole northern mainland of Greece had been crushed by Persia. All that was left were the southern islands. The southern Greek islands had fought back against Alexander as well.



The momentum shifted for the first time in September 480 B.C. at naval the Battle of Salamis. The Greeks lured 1,000 high-masted ships of Persia into the straits at Salamis, against 370 smaller ships of Greece. The large Persian ships could not properly maneuver in this tight area; and they were all rammed and sunk by the Grecians. The Greeks only lost 40 ships. This was a decisive victory for Greece; after having lost so much ground already.





The battle of Marathon did not happen until 10 years later. To God, these transitions are small things. A decade or two is just a comma to God. To the men involved, it involved decades and lifetimes of wars and maneuvering.

This unstoppable force has reached the end of God's appointed life cycle. Now God raises up Alexander the Great, to defeat huge odds and become a very unlikely victor over a massive opponent.

Read Daniel 11:4-13: Alexander the Great is really not highlighted in this chapter. He rises to power; and dies young, leaving his kingdom to four generals. Most of this chapter is about the 4 quadrants/kingdoms of Alexander's conquests battling each other for increasing power. It all seems to be pure history; but it is a window into how many details God pulls together in order to deal with his people. The four generals are referred to as the Diadochi (successors). They are generally referred to as:

- Cassander (Antipater) - Took over Greece
- Ptolemy – Took over Egypt and middle east
- Selucis – Took area east of Turkey eastward beyond Babylon
- Lysimachus- Turkey and Armenia

You may wonder why all of this historical detail. The details provided really center on the areas surrounding Israel; and the background to their neighborhood in the world at that time. Israel is the hub on the wheel and central to many empires that have risen and fallen.

In **verse 6** we read about the warring empires of the south (Ptolemy) and the north (Seleucids). Ptolemy had a plan to combine both empires through a strategic marriage. Antiochus II (Selucids) married Bernice (daughter of Ptolemy), with the understanding that none of Antiochus's original sons would become rulers...and that Antiochus II would leave his old wife. Ptolemy died, and Antiochus went back to his original wife, who then poisoned him. Antiochus's son became ruler of the Seleucids despite the crafty plan of Ptolemy.

In **verses 7-8** we read about a southern Ptolemaic king defeating a northern Seluecid King, and carrying away much treasure to Egypt. Ptolemy Philadelphius and Antiochus Theos fought for ten years, Afterwards Ptolemy Evergetes defeated Seluecus Callinicus; and carried away much treasure back to Egypt.

In **verses 9-10** Selucus Callinicus had a failed attempt to regain his treasure from the south. He had two sons (Selucus and Antiochus the Great) who become very motivated to regain what had been lost by their predecessors. Selucus makes a little progress, but was involved in some inner-empire infighting. Antiochus the Great takes over the whole empire, and brings a large army to regain a lost fort, and then onward to Egypt. He marched right through unstopped. Ptolemy sent troops and was soundly defeated.

In **verses 11-13** Ptolemy Philopater will become frantically motivated to take on the huge army of Antiochus at the battle of Raphia. He marched out of Egypt to counterattack. Antiochus had 62,000 foot soldiers, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 war elephants. Ptolemy defeated Antiochus with 70,000 foot soldiers, 5,000 cavalry, and 73 war elephants. Both sides took a lot of losses. Meanwhile, there had been religious persecutions of Jews by Ptolemy.

Twelve years later Ptolemy Philopator died, and his 4-year old son Ptolemy V (Epiphanes) became king. Antiochus gained more foreign allied troops and defeated the child king in Egypt. There is much back story between each successive invasion, regarding wars on other fronts, and commandeering more foreign armies to assist in the succeeding attacks. it is amazing that all of their wealth and power was directed to mutual destruction as a full-time effort. The Jews are being surrounded and manhandled by both empires.

Read Daniel 11:14-19: Antiochus the Great will come with allies against Egypt. He took advantage of the unhappy colonies and holdings of Egypt. Egypt had a civil war; and there were alliances with the Seleucid Kingdom of the north and Antiochus. The reason that this history is listed is because this infighting and upheaval divided the Jews between these warring empires. The Jews seemed like a non-factor; but they were the invisible key to the whole conflict. Israel became the football field...and the Jews were the football. The Egyptians were dominating them until the Seleucids came through and drove Ptolemy back to Egypt.

Antiochus chased the Ptolemy army back to Egypt and built a siege against them. That effort failed; and they fled back to Israel. Antiochus the Great will become very boastful and totally subject the Jews and essentially use the territory to mark a first down in this back and forth north-south battle. Israel will become more than a dormant nation. It will be a measuring line of success or failure.

Cleopatra was a daughter of one Antiochus's generals; and was a Greek. She was forced to marry Ptolemy's son to form an alliance and become the king and queen of Egypt. Instead of supporting the Seleucid Kingdom, she took over as Queen of Egypt by herself. She used alliances with Rome to give her even more power. She used her good looks and appeal to men for political advantage.

Meanwhile, Antiochus also sought a Roman alliance. He offered to fight against their enemies in Greece. Antiochus lost hugely. He lost in Europe; and now Cleopatra was gaining strength to the south as well. His power was slipping away. The next section goes very far into the weeds in world history. In fact there is nothing that closely resembles the accuracy and detail of the portion of world history like the Bible.

Read Daniel 11: 20-29: Describes one who will **send the tax-gatherers through his kingdom**. Antiochus practiced deceit. He involved his family to create false alliances; to obtain military advantage. Meanwhile, he was being beaten in wars, and had a major financial problem. This describes Seleucus Philopater, the son and successor of Antiochus, who **oppressed his people with most grievous taxes**, that he might raise the tribute of one thousand talents, which he was **obliged to pay annually to the Romans, as well as that he might support his own failing government**. The money was stored in the temple in Jerusalem. He was nothing more than a tax raiser, to save his empire. His reign was of short duration in comparison to his father's, for he reigned only twelve years, and his father thirty-seven. He was **killed by the treachery of his own treasurer Heliodorus**.

The forces of **Attalus and Eumenes, who favored Antiochus: were his competitors for the crown**, namely, Heliodorus, the murderer of Seleucus, and his partisans, as well as those of the king of Egypt, Ptolemy Philometor, who had formed some designs upon Syria. The deceitful Antiochus became a victim of treachery himself. He had his dirty fingers in world politics as well as the temple in Jerusalem (of all places).

As soon as Antiochus was seated in his throne, he removed Onias from the high-priesthood, and preferred Jason, Onias's brother for the great sums of money which were offered to him. But though Antiochus had *made a league* with Jason the new high-priest, yet he did not faithfully adhere to it, but acted *deceitfully*; and substituted his brother Menelaus in his room, by means of an armed force, because he offered him three hundred talents more than that which he had received from Jason. Antiochus had been many years a hostage at Rome; and, coming from there with only a few attendants, he appeared in Syria little at first, but soon received a great increase. *He shall enter peaceably into the fattest places of the province* — By the friendship of Eumenes and Attalus he *entered peaceably* upon the upper provinces, and likewise upon the provinces of Coelosyria and Palestine.

The king of the south, Ptolemy Philometor, demanded the surrender of Coelo-syria to him, as by right belonging to him, through virtue of the marriage articles between Ptolemy Epiphanes and Cleopatra; but Antiochus, instead of complying with his demand, invaded Egypt with a vast force both by sea and land. *And the king of the south shall be stirred up*, &c. — That is, the generals of Ptolemy were stirred up to war with very many and exceeding strong forces; and yet could not resist the fraudulent counsels of Antiochus. The two armies engaged between Pelusium and mount Cassius, and Antiochus obtained the victory. The next campaign he had greater success, routed the Egyptians, took Pelusium, ascended as far as Memphis, and made himself master of all Egypt except Alexandria.

With the spoils taken in Egypt, which were of immense value. *And his heart shall be against the holy covenant* — “While he was absent in Egypt a false report was spread of his death; and Jason, thinking this a favorable opportunity for recovering the high-priesthood, marched to Jerusalem with a thousand men, assaulted and took the city, drove Menelaus into the castle, and exercised great cruelties upon the citizens. Antiochus, hearing of this, concluded that the whole nation had revolted; and being informed that the people had made great rejoicings at the report of his death, he determined to take a severe revenge, and went up with a great army, as well as with great indignation, against Jerusalem. He besieged and took the city by force of arms, slew 40,000 of the inhabitants, and sold as many more for slaves, polluted the temple and altar with swines’ flesh, profaned the holy of holies by breaking into it, took away the golden vessels, and other sacred treasures, to the value of eighteen hundred talents, restored Menelaus to his office and authority. This is where Antiochus Epiphanes is used to compare to the coming antichrist.

Antiochus perceiving that his fine-woven policy was unravelled, and that the two brothers, Philometor and Euergetes, instead of wasting and ruining each other in war, had laid aside their mutual dissensions, and provided for their common safety and interest by making peace, and agreeing to reign jointly, was so offended, that he prepared war much more eagerly and maliciously against both than he had before against one of them. Early, therefore, in the spring he set forward with his army, and passing through Coelosyria, came into Egypt; and the inhabitants of Memphis submitting to him, he came by easy marches down to Alexandria. *But it shall not be as the former* — That is, this expedition shall not be so successful as his former ones: *for the ships of Chittim shall come against him* — That is, the ships which brought the Roman ambassadors, namely, Popilius Lænas and his companions; who came from Italy, touched at Greece, and arrived in Egypt, at the supplication of the Ptolemies, to command a peace between the contending kings: see an account of this matter in the note on [Daniel 8:23](#). The reason of the Romans acting in this imperious manner, and of Antiochus so readily obeying, was, as Polybius suggests, the total conquests that Æmilius the Roman consul had just made of the kingdom of Macedonia. *Therefore he shall be grieved and return* — It was a great mortification to Antiochus to be so humbled, and so disappointed of his expected prey. He led back his forces into Syria, says Polybius, grieved and groaning, but thinking it expedient to yield to the times for the present. *And have indignation against the holy covenant* — Or, the law of God. Antiochus being disappointed in his designs upon Egypt, vented all his fury upon the Jews; for he detached Apollonius with an army of twenty-two thousand men, who coming to Jerusalem slew great multitudes, plundered the city, set fire to it in several places, and pulled down the houses and walls round about it. Then they built, on an eminence in the city of David, a strong fortress, which might command the temple; and issuing from thence they fell upon those who came to worship, and shed

innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary, and defiled it; so that the temple was deserted and the whole service omitted; the city was forsaken of its natives, and became a habitation of strangers. *So shall he do, he shall even return*, &c. — After his return to Antioch, he published a decree which obliged all persons, upon pain of death, to conform to the religion of the Greeks; and so the Jewish law was abrogated, the heathen worship was set up in its stead, and the temple itself was consecrated to Jupiter Olympus. In the transacting of these matters he had *intelligence with them that forsook the holy covenant* — Namely, Menelaus and the other apostate Jews of his party, who were the king's chief instigators against their religion and country: see [1Ma 1:41-64](#); [2Ma 6:1-9](#). "It may be proper to stop here, and reflect a little, how particular and circumstantial this prophecy is concerning the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, from the death of Alexander to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. There is not so complete and regular a series of their kings; there is not so concise and comprehensive an account of their affairs, to be found in any author of those times. The prophecy is really more perfect than any history. No one historian hath related so many circumstances, and in such exact order of time, as the prophet hath foretold them; so that it has been necessary to have recourse to several authors, Greek and Roman, Jewish and Christian; and to collect something from one, and something from another, for the better explaining and illustrating the great variety of particulars contained in this prophecy. The prophecy indeed is wonderfully exact, not only to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, but beyond that time." So that we may conclude in the words of the inspired writer; No one could thus *declare the times and seasons* but *He who hath them in his own power*: see [Acts 1:7](#); and Bishop Newton.

Read Daniel 11:30-39: Now we go even deeper to see how corruption in Jerusalem, and struggles between northern and southern forces meld together perfectly to set the scene for further understanding of the mind of antichrist as it has played out once before.

The Egyptian government had called in the aid of the Romans, and Antiochus, therefore, was threatened with a war with the Romans if he did not abandon his enterprise against Egypt. The reference in the passage before us is to the embassy which the Romans sent to Antiochus in Egypt, requiring him to desist from his enterprise against Egypt. "When he had arrived at Leusine, about four miles from Alexandria, he met Caius Popilins Laenas, Caius Decimius, and Caius Hostilius, ambassadors, whom the Roman Senate had sent to him at the earnest request of Ptolemy Physcon. They were instructed to assure Antiochus that he must leave the kingdom of Egypt and the island of Cyprus in peace, or expect a war with the Romans.

Therefore he shall be grieved - The word used here - כאַה kâ'âh - means, properly, to become faint-hearted; to be frightened; to be dejected, sad, humbled, [Job 30:8](#); [Ezekiel 13:22](#); [Psalm 109:16](#). The meaning here is, that he became dispirited, dejected, cast down, and abandoned his purpose. He saw that it would be vain to attempt to contend with the Romans, and he was constrained reluctantly to relinquish his enterprise.

The temple is here called *the sanctuary of strength*, either because it was fortified after the manner of a castle, or else because it was a token of the divine protection, as being the place God had chosen to be worshipped in. We are informed by Josephus, by the author of the Maccabees, and others, that Antiochus's soldiers entered the temple and plundered it, and that afterward he ordered that the Jews should not be suffered to offer up the daily sacrifices, which, according to the law, they were accustomed to offer; that he compelled them also to omit their worship of the true God, and to pay

divine honours to them whom he regarded as gods, and to make shrines in every city and village, and to build altars, and daily to sacrifice swine upon them: see Joseph. *Antiq.* lib. 12. cap. 5, sec. 4. *And they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate* — In the Scriptures, idols are commonly called abominations. This was a prediction of the great profanation Antiochus should cause to the temple, in placing an idol upon the altar of burnt- offerings: see [1Ma 6:54](#); [1Ma 6:59](#). It is probable, that the idol was Jupiter, because we find that they dedicated the temple anew to Jupiter Olympus

It is here called the *abomination that maketh desolate*, because it banished the true worship of God, and his worshippers, from the place.

Antiochus, as heathen authors have recorded, plundered almost all the temples of the gods which he came near, to whomsoever dedicated. *And he shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods* — Shall speak boasting and reproachful words against the true God. Antiochus is called a blasphemmer, [2Ma 9:28](#); and frequent mention is made in these books of blasphemies committed in Judea and Jerusalem at that time.

He made laws to abolish the religion of his country, and to bring in the idols of the Greeks. And though his predecessors had honored the God of Israel, and given great gifts to the temple at Jerusalem. What god this was that was the *desire of women*, cannot be certainly said; it is probable it was the *moon*, (the queen of heaven, as they used to call her,) or some other of the heavenly luminaries; for the Syrian women are described in Scripture as particularly attached to these. Or the expression may refer to his barbarous cruelty, and be intended to signify that he should spare no age nor sex, and should have no regard to women, however lovely or amiable. In fact, the author of the Maccabees informs us, that by his command mothers were killed with their children; and that *there was killing of young and old, men, women, and children, slaying of virgins and infants*, [2Ma 5:13](#). *Nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all* — He shall not regard the gods of any country whatsoever, but think himself above them, and treat them as if he were so. He was so proud, that he thought himself above the condition of a mortal man. Literally, *the god Mahuzzim*. This seems to be either Jupiter Olympus, never introduced among the Syrians till Antiochus did it, or, as others rather suppose, Mars, the god of war, whom Antiochus ordered to be worshipped in his dominions: which latter opinion seems the more likely, as Antiochus was almost always engaged in some war or other, and appears to have depended most upon his sword for raising himself to power and dignity.

The word *Mahuz* is used: see also [Psalm 27:5](#);) seems to be here intended by the *most strong holds*, or fortresses of Mahuzzim, that is, of *munitions*, or *protections*, as it is signified that he should set up the strange god there. Some read it, He shall commit the munitions of strength, that is, the city of Jerusalem, to a strange god: or, he shall put it under the protection of Jupiter Olympus.

Read Daniel 11:40-45: These verses speak of the last expedition of the northern king, and of the disappearance of the king of the south. The portrait of Antiochus, as noticed in the Note on [Daniel 11:36](#), was gradually fading away, and now not a line of it remains. No such invasion of Egypt as that mentioned here is mentioned in history. From the time mentioned in [Daniel 11:30](#) he appears to have abstained from approaching too closely to the Roman authorities. The story related in [1 Maccabees 3:27-37](#) states that on hearing of the successes of the Maccabee princes he went into Persia on a plundering expedition, leaving Lysias his representative in Palestine. Lysias was defeated at Bethsur, and the news of the overthrow of his army was brought to Antiochus while he was in Persia. So

appalling was the effect upon him of these tidings, that "he fell sick for grief" ([1 Maccabees 6:8](#)), and died.

The wrath of Antiochus was particularly against the Jews, and it is not a little remarkable that no mention is made of his invading these adjacent countries. The route which he pursued was to Egypt, along the shores of the Mediterranean, and though he turned from his course to wreak his vengeance on the Jews, yet it does not appear that he carried his arms farther from the main line of his march. Antiochus was principally engaged with the Egyptians and the Romans; he was also engaged with the Jews, for Palestine had been the battlefield.

But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver - See the notes at [Daniel 11:28](#). Having seized upon the most important places in Egypt, and having possession of the person of the king, he would, of course, have the wealth of Egypt at his disposal, and would return to his land laden with spoils.

And over all the precious things of Egypt - The rich lands, the public buildings, the contents of the royal palace, the works of art, and the monuments, and books, and implements of war. All these would, of course, be at the disposal of the conqueror.

And the Libyans - The word Libyans, in the Hebrew Scriptures, is everywhere joined with the Egyptians and Ethiopians. They are supposed to have been a people of Egyptian origin, and their country bordered on Egypt in the west. See Tanner's Ancient Atlas. A conquest of Egypt was almost in itself a conquest of Libya.

Antiochus more than once invaded Egypt, he never passed further into Africa. These nationalities are associated with each other; e.g. in [Jeremiah 46:8, 9](#), we have, "The Ethiopians and the Libyans that handle the shield." So in [Ezekiel 30:5](#) we have the countries spoken of together.

This chapter passes from Antiochus Epiphanes to the antichrist. These last verse are not known to be historic; and are prophetically describing where the antichrist and the false prophet meet their doom.

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19:17-21)