

# Historical Context of Daniel chapter 11

## **Persian Kings – Daniel 11:1-2**

**Cyrus the Great (539-529)** - Currently ruling the empire of Persia at the time of Daniel 6, 10-12. Darius (Daniel 6) was the ruler of the city of Babylon appointed by Cyrus

## **(3 more kings and a fourth....)– Daniel 11:2**

**#1 - Cambyses (529–522)**

**#2 - Smerdis (522–521)** – took the throne falsely because he looked exactly like the son of Cambyses

**#3 - Darius I (521–486)** – different Darius than Daniel 6 and 11 – he faces the Greeks at Marathon where legend has it a Greek soldier ran from Marathon to Athens, 24 miles and announced victory. A race has been held in his honor ever since - Darius was defeated by the Greeks but his son vowed to avenge his father

**#4 - Xerxes (486–465)** – last of the great Persian Kings. Had more money than any Persian king before him. Was married to Esther in the Bible under his given not kingly appointment name Ahasuerus. He was the king who faced 300 Spartans at the battle of Thermopylae. Xerxes won the battle but inspired young Greek boys to stand against Persia including eventually Alexander the Great

## **The Greek Empire – Daniel 11:3-4**

**Alexander the Great – (336-323)** – he conquers the world in 13 years and then dies at age 33. His empire is divided among his four generals.

## **The Four Generals of Alexander the Great**

**#1 – Lysimachus – Ruled over Thrace and Asia Minor**

**#2 – Cassander – Ruled over Macedonia and Greece**

**#3 – Seleucus – Ruled over Syria, Babylon, Persia, India**

**#4 – Ptolemy – Ruled over Egypt, Palestine, Petra, Cyprus**

Each of these kings became their own smaller empires, which battled against each other for the next 200 years. Daniel chapter 11 is written from the perspective of the Jewish nation, so the King of the North was the Seleucid Empire to the North of Israel in modern Syria, and Iran. The King of the South was the Ptolemæic empire to the south of Israel located in Egypt.

## **Ptolematic/Seleucid Kings – Daniel 11:5-20**

**Ptolemy II** - gave his daughter Bernice to **Antiochus II**, whose former wife eventually kills her and the son they have together – Daniel 11:5-6

**Ptolemy III** – Bernice's brother in revenge invades the Seleucid empire and takes back 40,000 pounds of gold and idols that had been stolen by Antiochus II's invasions into Egypt. – Daniel 11:7-8

**Antiochus III (The Great)** – decides he wants to unite the empires under one just like Alexander the Great had. So with a great army he invades Egypt but is defeated by **Ptolemy IV** – Antiochus III (The Great) then tries the marriage route and gives his daughter Cleopatra (not the Roman one but who she was named after.) to one day marry Ptolemy IV's infant son and really to spy on the Kingdom and look for weakness. The problem is Ptolemy's young son grows up to be known as one of the best-looking men in the ancient world. He assumes the throne, takes the name **Ptolemy Epiphanes** (Epiphanes means "glorious one"), He wins Cleopatra's heart who then turns on her father. Antiochus III (The Great) tries one more time to revive the Alexandrian empire by uniting with Phillip V of Macedon and invades Egypt and briefly takes control. He then turns his attention to Greece as the final part of the former Alexandrian Empire but is opposed by a young Roman general named Glabrio. (Daniel 11:18) Antiochus III (The Great) was still so full of himself even after defeat he goes to Jerusalem and against the advice of the Jewish high priest enters the Holy of Holies and is struck by the Lord and is not heard from again – Daniel 11:9-19

**Seleucus IV Philopator** – the son of Antiochus the III who in order to pay for all of his Dad's wars and now their obligation to Rome for losing to them, taxed the people of the Seleucid empire heavily including the Jewish people. He was assassinated back in his place not because he was a bad king, it wasn't in war or because people hated him, it was because of the jealousies of his brothers who wanted to rule. – Daniel 11:20

## **Antiochus Epiphanes - Daniel 11:21-35**

The brother who emerged on top became known as Antiochus Epiphanes,. Antiochus Epiphanes is just a small person in history but is mentioned in so much Biblical prophecy because of his over the top hatred and killing of the Jews, their response to him in the Maccabean revolt and the forerunner he then becomes of the Antichrist who has still not yet emerged on the pages of history.