

That there could be two future blasphemous rulers does not surprise the reader who recalls the arrogant anti-God rulers of Babylon and Medo-Persia already described in chapters 3-6.

The view presented here does not deny that there are similarities between Antiochus IV and the future ruler. Indeed, both of these kings follow in the patterns of the arrogant kings Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. Antiochus IV is called a “little horn,” as is this future king (7:8), so it is only natural that the two share similar characteristics.

Furthermore, Jesus understood that the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel was still in the future (Matt 24:15). He would have no basis for such a conclusion if Antiochus IV was described in 11:36-45 and thus was equal to the figure in 9:27 and the little horn of chapter 7. If this were the case, the time of all of the predictions in Daniel would have passed before Jesus’ birth, and the lack of the appearance of the kingdom of God and the resurrection of all men would have been shown Daniel to contain false prophecies.

Jesus’ interpretation requires that the little horn of chapter 7 be identified with the ruler of 9:27 and 11:36-45 and be an individual who had not appeared in history before Jesus’ crucifixion. This interpretation is confirmed by Paul (2 Thess 2:3-12) and John (Rev 13:1-10), who both anticipate an ultimate evil ruler who is crushed by God’s kingdom. When understood in light of the prophets and the Psalms, especially Psalms 2 and 110, it is clear that the “one like a son of man” (Dan 7:13-14) is the Davidic ruler who will defeat all forces arrayed against the Lord and usher in God’s kingdom.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Do you believe that God knows the future in *precise detail*? How does that affect your life?

Why do you think that God allows his people to be persecuted?

How can you prepare for persecution?

## DANIEL 11: ANTIOCHUS AND THE ANTICHRIST

### THE MESSAGE OF DANIEL 11

The fourth and final vision given to Daniel reveals in precise detail the persecution that the people of Israel would face under the evil rulers of the third and fourth kingdoms.

### OUTLINE OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

- I. The angel interprets the vision of the great war, beginning with Daniel’s time (11:2-12:3).
  - A. Persia and Greece (11:2-4)
  - B. The Seleucids and the Ptolemies (11:5-20)
    1. Conflicts between Ptolemy I, Ptolemy II, Antigonus I and Antiochus II (11:5-6).
    2. Conflicts between Ptolemy III and Seleucus II (11:7-10).
    3. Conflicts between Ptolemy IV and Antiochus III (11:11-13).
    4. Victories and ultimate failure of Antiochus III (11:14-19).
    5. Acts of Seleucus IV against the temple (11:20).
  - C. Two future little horns (11:21-12:3)
    1. Victories of Antiochus IV over Ptolemy VI (11:21-28).
    2. The defeat of Antiochus IV in Egypt leads him to attack Jerusalem and set up the abomination of desolation (11:29-32).
    3. Jewish (Maccabean) rebellion against Antiochus IV (11:33-35).
    4. The character, actions, and destiny of the future king are described (11:36-45).
    5. At the time of the king’s defeat, the people of Israel will be delivered and the final resurrection will occur (12:1-3).

### THE PURPOSE OF DANIEL 11

This vision was given to Daniel and the righteous remnant so that they might hold fast in faith to a sovereign God while in the midst of horrible persecution before the arrival of God’s kingdom.

## THE IDENTITY OF THE LAST RULER

The vision's precise accuracy is the result either of a God who intimately knows the future or a human who has described history after the fact with the intent to deceive. The suggestion that the author was communicating in a genre familiar to readers who would have understood that he was not intending to deceive is a scholarly creation to avoid recognizing supernatural involvement while allegedly retaining some spiritual value in the book.

All agree that the vision through verse 35 corresponds remarkably to history in the Middle East from 530 to 165 BC. The angel briefly describes the Persian kingdom and the conquest of Alexander the Great before focusing on conflicts directly affecting the land of Israel, beginning with Ptolemy I, Ptolemy II, Antigonus I and Antiochus II (11:5-6). He moved from this to reporting on the battles of Ptolemy III and Seleucus II (11:7-10) and then Ptolemy IV and Antiochus III (11:11-13). Antiochus III's victories and ultimate failure are then described (11:14-19), with a brief comment about the acts of Seleucus IV against the temple (11:20).

All of this sets the stage for the great persecutor of God's people, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. His battles against Ptolemy VI are recounted (11:21-28) before his defeat in Egypt leads him to attack Jerusalem and set up the abomination of desolation (11:29-32). This may lead the reader to connect this event with the similar episode described in 9:27, but the careful student will note that the vision of chapter 11 began with the Persians and is currently describing the Greeks and not the fourth kingdom at the end of the 70 weeks. Thus Antiochus IV should be identified with the little horn of the third kingdom (Greece) as described in chapter 8.

The major interpretive debate in the chapter concerns the person described in 11:36-45. Those who deny predictive prophecy believe that this is a continued description of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. There are three insurmountable problems with this view: (1) These events do not correspond with the life and death of Antiochus IV; (2) These events occur at the "time of the end" (11:40) and

culminate in the resurrection of all people (12:2), which did not occur in the 160s BC; (3) Jesus and Paul believed that this passage was speaking of a future ruler, not of one who had already died (Matt 24:4-35; 2 Thes 2:4-12).

[Note: Those who do not believe that God exists or predicts the future through his prophets *must* hold that these events were predicted after the fact. Because events in 11:36-45 were not true of Antiochus IV's life and death, they conclude that the writer of this book penned this account in 165 BC, in between the "history" of 11:2-35 and the "prophecy" of 11:36-45. While it is theoretically possible that a person could have done this, it strains credibility that all Jewish people accepted this work, without any debate or hesitation, as divinely inspired despite the fact that it contains alleged false prophecies!]

The better option is that 11:36-45 describes not Antiochus IV but a future ruler who resembles him in some ways but is not identical to him. This approach is supported by the following lines of evidence. First, against the charge that 11:36 does not indicate a shift in reference, it should be observed this chapter frequently jumps from one ruler to another without signifying the change (e.g., 11:6, 11, 14). Second, the individual of verse 36 is introduced simply as "the king," a term never used exactly this way of Antiochus IV in 11:21-35. Third, the phrase "the time of the end" in verses 35 and 40 is a signal to the reader that this is not a reference to the second century BC. Fourth, the figure is clearly not the king of the north (as Antiochus IV was) because he is attacked by the king of the north (11:40). Fifth, this ruler lives in the days preceding the final resurrection as indicated by the phrase "at that time" in 12:1.

That 11:36-45 is best understood to be speaking of a ruler after Antiochus IV makes perfect sense when one recalls that the book of Daniel has already predicted a little horn of the third kingdom (chap. 8) and a little horn of the fourth kingdom (chap. 7, 9). Chapter 11 brings the two together, first describing the little horn of the third kingdom (11:21-35) and then jumping ahead to the little horn of the fourth kingdom (11:36-45). (Such a jump in time is not out of character for this vision, as can be seen in 11:2-3.)