DANIEL 10-12

THE FINAL VISION

Kingdoms rise and fall, but God rules over them all.

BIG IDEA

Daniel 10-12 pulls back the curtain on spiritual conflict, traces the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms, shows faithful people standing firm under persecution, and ends with resurrection, accountability, and hope.

A guide designed to make sense on its own — even if you were not in the room for the Bible study.

How to use this guide

Read the listed Scripture first, then use the notes to follow the historical movement of the vision. The guide follows the same flow as the study: Daniel 10 sets the scene, Daniel 11 moves through Persia and Greece to Antiochus IV, and Daniel 12 answers the question of what happens to those who remain faithful even unto death.

KEEP THIS IN VIEW

The vision is not mainly a chart to decode. It is a word of courage to God's people: remain faithful when kingdoms shift, pressure rises, and you cannot see everything God is doing.

The historical runway

605 BC	Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem. Daniel is among those taken to Babylon.
586 BC	Jerusalem falls and the temple is destroyed by the Babylonians.
539 BC	Babylon falls to the Medo-Persian Empire.
538 BC	Cyrus issues a decree allowing Jewish exiles to return and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1).
536 BC	Daniel receives the vision recorded in Daniel 10-12.

By Daniel 10, the return has begun. Exiles have gone back under Zerubbabel and Jeshua, the altar has been rebuilt, temple work has begun, and opposition has arisen (Ezra 3-4). Daniel has been mourning for three weeks, although the text never tells us exactly why.

1. Daniel 10 — The curtain is pulled back

Read Daniel 10:1-3, 10-14, 20-21.

Daniel is troubled

Daniel sees a glorious heavenly figure and is overwhelmed. A messenger then tells him that his prayer was heard "from the first day," yet the messenger had been opposed for twenty-one days by "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" until Michael came to help.

WHAT DANIEL LEARNS

The answer was not delayed because God failed to hear him. Something was happening that Daniel could not see.

- Daniel sees kings.
- Daniel sees empires.
- Daniel sees wars.
- Daniel 10 briefly pulls back the curtain and shows another dimension of the conflict.

Three princes

Prince of Persia	A spiritual figure connected with Persia.
Prince of Greece	A spiritual figure connected with Greece.
Michael	Called "your prince" in relation to Daniel's people.

THE BOOK OF TRUTH

Daniel 10:21 transitions directly into the revelation that follows. Chapter 10 pulls back the curtain; chapter 11 tells us what is about to happen on the stage.

2. Daniel 11 — Persia gives way to Greece

Read Daniel 11:1-4 and compare Daniel 8:20-22.

Persia

Daniel is told that several Persian kings will arise and that a particularly wealthy king will stir up conflict with Greece. This king is commonly identified with Xerxes I, who reigned 486-465 BC and invaded Greece in 480 BC.

Alexander the Great

Daniel then sees a "mighty king" who rules with great dominion. This is Alexander the Great. Daniel 8 had already identified the goat as Greece and its great horn as the first king.

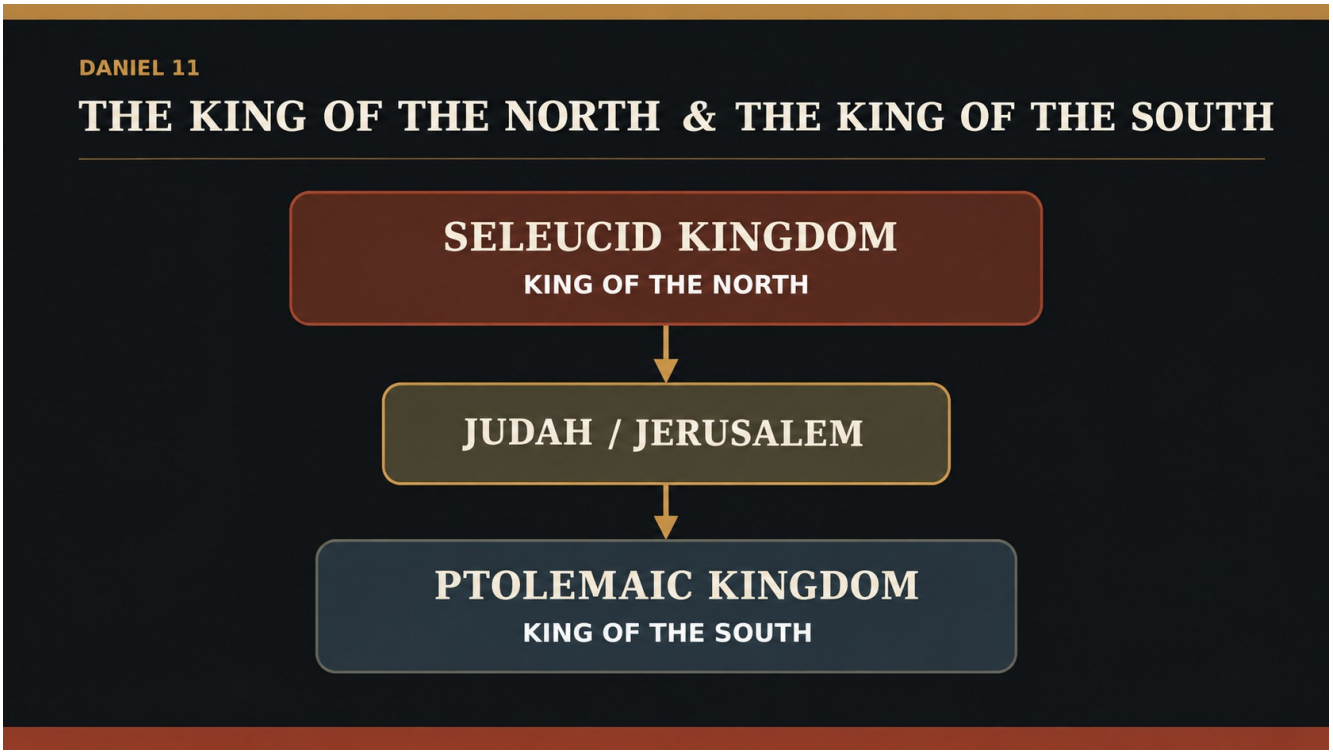
336 BC	Alexander becomes king of Macedonia.
323 BC	Alexander dies unexpectedly in Babylon at about 32 years old.
After 323	His generals fight for control in the Wars of the Successors.
c. 301 BC	Four major successor kingdoms have emerged more clearly after the Battle of Ipsus.

DANIEL'S WORDING

"His kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity." Alexander's empire does not pass intact to a stable adult heir.

3. The King of the North & the King of the South

Daniel 11 now narrows its attention to two Greek successor kingdoms because Israel sits between them.



The directions are given in relation to Israel: the Seleucid kingdom lies primarily to the north, while the Ptolemaic kingdom controls Egypt to the south. Judah/Jerusalem is caught between them.

A failed marriage alliance — Daniel 11:5-6

Around 252 BC, Berenice, daughter of the Ptolemaic king Ptolemy II, married the Seleucid king Antiochus II in an attempt to secure peace. The alliance failed. Berenice, her child, and Antiochus II were eventually killed amid the struggle for power.

WHAT FOLLOWS

Daniel 11:7-20 compresses generations of wars, alliances, betrayals, and political maneuvering. For roughly the next century, the Ptolemies and Seleucids struggle for control of the region.

4. Antiochus IV Epiphanes

Read Daniel 11:21-35.

175 BC	Antiochus IV becomes king. Daniel 11:21 calls the coming ruler a "contemptible person."
168 BC	Antiochus invades Egypt again, is confronted by Roman representatives, and is forced to withdraw.
167 BC	The Jerusalem temple is desecrated as Antiochus attempts to suppress Jewish religious practice.
164 BC	The temple is cleansed and rededicated after the Jewish resistance recaptures Jerusalem.

What the persecution actually involved

- Circumcision was forbidden.
- Sabbath observance was prohibited.
- Jewish festivals were prohibited.
- The regular sacrifices to God were stopped.
- Copies of the Torah were torn up and burned.
- Possessing the Torah could result in death.
- The Jerusalem temple was desecrated.
- A pagan altar associated with Zeus was erected at the temple.
- Pigs and other unclean animals were commanded as sacrifices.
- Pagan altars and shrines were established throughout the land.
- Jews were forced to participate in pagan worship.
- Those who continued practicing their faith could be executed.

DANIEL'S PHRASE

This is the historical setting of "the abomination that makes desolate" in Daniel 11:31.

5. "The people who know their God"

"The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action."

Daniel 11:32

The Maccabean Revolt

In 167 BC, a Jewish priest named Mattathias refuses to participate in pagan sacrifice and resistance begins. After his death, his son Judas, nicknamed Maccabeus, becomes the most famous leader of the revolt.

- The resistance fights Seleucid oppression.
- Faithful Jews refuse to abandon covenant faithfulness.
- Jerusalem is recaptured.
- The temple is cleansed.
- Sacrifices resume.
- The temple is rededicated in 164 BC.

HANUKKAH

The rededication of the temple is commemorated by Hanukkah. The Feast of Dedication is also mentioned in John 10.

6. Daniel 11:36-45 — Where interpreters divide

Up through verse 35, there is broad agreement that Daniel is describing Antiochus IV. Beginning around verse 36, interpreters divide.

A future ruler is now in view	Antiochus remains in view
Reasons noted in the study: • Verse 40 says, "At the time of the end." • Daniel 12:1 begins, "At that time," and describes extraordinary trouble. • Daniel 12:2 moves into resurrection. Some therefore see a final ruler who resembles Antiochus.	Reason noted in the study: • Daniel does not clearly introduce a new ruler at verse 36. • Earlier changes of ruler normally receive some indication. • Verse 36 simply says, "And the king shall do as he wills." That makes it natural for some interpreters to keep reading the king as Antiochus.

The study does not pretend there is no debate here. There are reasons offered for both readings.

7. Daniel 12 — Did Antiochus win?

Daniel 11:33-35 says some faithful people will fall by sword and flame, captivity and plunder. Some will die faithful. Daniel 12 answers the question their deaths raise.

DID ANTIOCHUS WIN?

No.

Read Daniel 12:1-4. Daniel sees deliverance and resurrection: some awake to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

RESURRECTION IS VINDICATION

The faithful may suffer. The faithful may even die. But death does not get the final word. The faithful will be vindicated, the wicked will be held accountable, and God gets the final word.

The movement of the passage

- Some remain faithful under intense pressure.
- Some of the faithful die.
- Death does not erase God's promise.
- Those who sleep in the dust will awake.
- Everlasting life and everlasting contempt show that death does not allow anyone to escape God's final judgment.

8. Seal the book & the final numbers

What does "seal the book" mean?

In the study, "seal" is understood as preserve rather than hide. Daniel is writing about things that will happen long after he is gone, so the words are to be preserved for the people who will need them.

DANIEL AND REVELATION

Daniel 12:4: "Seal the book...until the time of the end." Revelation 22:10: "Do not seal up the words...for the time is near." The study highlights the contrast: Daniel's words are preserved for later; John's audience is told the time is near.

1,290 days and 1,335 days

Daniel 12:11-13 gives two numbers:

1,290 DAYS • 1,335 DAYS

Different interpretations exist. Some connect the numbers with Antiochus, the temple's desecration beginning around 167 BC, and its restoration in 164 BC. Others connect them with a future period of tribulation, especially if Daniel 11:36-45 is understood as describing a future ruler.

WHAT DANIEL IS ACTUALLY TOLD

"Go your way till the end... You shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days." Daniel will die before these events unfold, but the vision ends with the promise that Daniel will stand again.

9. Put the whole vision together

Daniel 10	The curtain is pulled back. Daniel learns that more is happening than he can see.
Daniel 11:1-4	Persia gives way to Greece; Alexander's empire is broken and divided.
Daniel 11:5-20	North and South struggle while God's people live between the rival kingdoms.
Daniel 11:21-35	Antiochus IV rises, persecutes the Jews, and desecrates the temple.
167-164 BC	Faithful Jews resist; the Maccabean revolt leads to the temple's rededication.
Daniel 11:36-45	Interpreters divide over whether the vision remains with Antiochus or moves to a future ruler.
Daniel 12	Suffering and death are not the end. Resurrection, vindication, and accountability belong to God.

Key truths to remember

- God hears even when the answer is not immediately visible.
- Earthly kingdoms rise and fall, but they do not surprise God.
- Faithfulness can be costly.
- Knowing God is what enables His people to stand firm.
- Death does not get the final word.
- God gets the final word.

Questions for review

Why are the two rival dynasties called the King of the North and King of the South?

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How does Daniel 8 help identify the kingdoms in Daniel 11?

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What did Antiochus IV do that made his persecution so severe?

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What does Daniel 11:32 say faithful people do under pressure?

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Why is resurrection such an important ending to this vision?

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What are the two main ways the study presented Daniel 11:36-45?

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