



*The Most High
God rules over
the kingdoms of
the world and
appoints anyone
he desires to
rule over them.*

(Dan 5:21b NLT)

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The Demise of an Arrogant King (11:36-45)

- Scholars are in agreement that the vision up to this point has been concerned with events between the time of Cyrus (in which Daniel lived) and the death of Antiochus IV, but with v. 36 this agreement ends.¹
- In vv. 36-45 we have the description given of a “king”.
- There have been a number of proposals given by scholars over the years as to who this “king” might be:²
 - Some (e.g., Sam Storms and Albert Barnes) have proposed that this “king” is **Antiochus IV Epiphanes**, and that what is said here is just a continuation of the description given of him in vss. 21-35.
 - Some see this king as representing the **Roman empire** (John Calvin) or some series of **Roman emperors** (e.g., Jay Rogers)
 - The **pope of Rome** and the Papal System.
 - **Herod the Great** (Philip Mauro and James Jordan).
 - **The Antichrist**. This probably the most popular interpretation. It was advocated by Jerome (347-420 A.D.), and he has been followed by many since.

¹ Miller, Stephen R., *Daniel*, vol. 18, *The New American Commentary* (p. 76)

² Young, Edward J.; *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary*; (p. 247)

The Demise of an Arrogant King (11:36-45)

- Each of these views has difficulty explaining how portions of this text fit with their idea of who is being described here.
- I personally think that Herod is the best fit, and a series of Roman emperors is a close second.
- I think it could work to see this as a continuation of the description of Antiochus IV, though there do seem to be a number of problems making this work.
- I find the idea that this is the Antichrist to be the least likely option, even if it is the popular view.
- The main problem I have with the Antichrist view is the same problem I have with seeing the seventieth week of Daniel as taking place at the end of human history: it involves seeing a 2000+ year gap between what is described here and what precedes it, without there being any hint in the text about there being this kind of gap in time.
- One of the attractions to this view is that, since the Antichrist is yet future, anything that is said about him here can't be falsified. But in my opinion, that makes the view *less* attractive.

The Demise of an Arrogant King (11:36-45)

- As we work our way through the text, I will put the most effort into explaining how it fits the Herod view as advanced by Philip Mauro.
- While I find his explanation to be the best ***overall*** fit, there do seem to be shortcomings in some of his explanations and I will point those out as we go along.
- During the discussion time at the end, I will ask your feedback, based on what you have seen today, which view you think is the best fit.

The Demise of an Arrogant King (11:36-45)

11:36 And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. ³⁷ He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. ³⁸ He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹ He shall deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price. (NIV)

The Demise of an Arrogant King (11:36-45)

11:40 "At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. ⁴¹ He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. ⁴² He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. ⁴³ He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. ⁴⁴ But news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. ⁴⁵ And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him. (NIV)

*11:36 "And **the king** shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done. (ESV)*

- There are a number of reasons to see “*the king*” mentioned here as referring to Herod the Great.
- The section preceding this verse (verses 32–35) describes the period of time when the Maccabees successfully revolted against Antiochus IV, which we know historically resulted in a period of Hasmonean rule in Israel from 140 BC to 37 BC.
- So, it makes sense that what we see next in the text is a reference to the events in Israel which followed immediately after that era of Hasmonean rule.
- And that is exactly what we do find.
- There is no need either to make these verses apply to Antiochus Epiphanes, or to make a sudden and gigantic leap into the far distant future, in order to find a person whose career might conceivably fit this part of the prophecy.
- Because there is a person who occupies center stage in Israel at the end of the Hasmonean era, who answers to every item of the prophetic description given here.

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- We have reference here to the one whom the Gospels refer to as "*Herod the King*" (e.g. Mat 2:1), who was a usurper of the throne of David when Christ, the true King, was born.
- For Herod alone is called by that title in the Gospels, and he alone had the rank and authority of "*king*" in Israel in those days.
- The text does not speak of *a* king, but of *the* king, the emphatic Hebrew article being used.
- This is in marked contrast with the terms of verse 40, where the Hebrew speaks of "a king of the north," and "a king of the south."
- Nor can "*the king*" of verse 36 refer to either of the kings of verse 27, since these are never spoken of as "the king," but always, both before and after verse 36, as "*the king of the north*," or "*the king of the south*," as the case may be.

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- Many commentaries (the futurists) understand "*the king*" spoken of here as the "*man of sin*," described in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10.
- But the "*man of sin*" is never called a king, nor described as having kingly rank, but rather as one claiming divine worship in the temple of God, and backing up his pretensions by means of miracles and lying wonders.
- The "*king*" of Daniel 11:36 achieves his ends in a very different way as we will soon see.
- It is said of this king that "*He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished [or "until the time of wrath is completed"]*" – which I would see as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

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- The dynasty of Herod was able, through all the political upheavals of the times, to maintain its favor with Rome, and flourished in authority in Palestine, until the destruction of Jerusalem.
- For it was "*Herod the king*"
 - Who sought to bring about the death of Christ soon after His birth (with the slaughter of the infants)
 - Whose successors put to death John the Baptist (this was done by Herod Antipas) and James the brother of John (by Herod Agrippa I, who also imprisoned Peter, intending to deliver him to the Jews)
 - Who finally sent Paul in chains to Rome (which was done by Herod Agrippa II, the *last* of the dynasty, the man who is best known to the world as he who was "*almost persuaded to become a Christian*" – Acts 26:28).

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- The **first** thing said of this king is that he “*shall do as he wills*.”
- This expression is used in this same prophecy of two other individuals.
- The first of these is Alexander the Great, of whom it is said that he “*shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills*” (Daniel 11:3).
- The other (Daniel 11:16) is Antiochus the Great, of whom it is also said, he “*shall do as he wills*” and history shows that this monarch, too, was very successful, during the first part of his reign, in carrying out his evil designs.
- This characteristic also distinguished Herod the Great to a remarkable degree.
- Herod rose up from a lowly origin to the rank and authority of king, in securing for himself despotic power and retaining it through all the political changes of the times.

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- Further it is said of this king that *"He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods."*
- These words are descriptive of Herod.
- The words *"above every god"* may be taken to mean every ruler and authority in Israel, just as *"God of gods"* means the Supreme Authority above all authorities.
- Herod did successfully aspire to the lordship over every authority in the land, whether priests or rulers. He assumed to appoint whom he would to the office of high priest.
- He put his own brother-in-law, Aristobulus, Mariamne's brother, in that office, and shortly after had him murdered.

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- Herod also uttered "*astonishing things against the God of gods*".
- This characteristic is a little harder to demonstrate as being true of Herod.
- Mauro suggests that this could be a reference to his decree for the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem, the express purpose of which was to get rid of Immanuel, God come in the flesh to be the Ruler of His people, and to be "*the ruler of kings on earth*" (Revelation 1:5).
- Herod's way of making himself secure upon the throne was to put to death every suspected rival.
- For Herod, in common with the Jewish teachers in his day mistakenly supposed that the Christ of God was coming at that time to occupy the earthly throne upon which Herod was then seated.

11:37 *He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers, or to the one beloved by women. He shall not pay attention to any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. (ESV)*

- Here we read :*“He shall pay no attention to the gods of his fathers.”*
- Herod, though of Edomite origin, was virtually a Jew; for all the remaining Edomites, who had come into Judea several centuries earlier, had been pulled into Judaism and adopted Jewish practices like circumcision and observance of the Torah.
- As the representative of Roman authority, Herod sought to legitimize his rule over Judea by aligning himself with Jewish traditions, despite his Hellenistic and Roman leanings.
- But despite his Jewish identity, Roman loyalty, and actions like building temples to Augustus in the cities of Caesarea and Sebaste gave many Jews cause to **question** his commitment to Judaism and the *“gods of his fathers”*.

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- Here we are told that “the King” (Herod), would “*pay no attention to [or, “have no regard for”]... the one beloved [or, “desired”] by women*”.
- This is a difficult expression, and the application of it made by commentaries (regardless of who they believe “*the king*” is) never really seems to be a good fit, in my opinion.
- Nevertheless, Philip Mauro, who understands this expression to be describing Herod, argues that the “*women*” here should be understood to be women of Israel, because the ardent “*desire*” of every one of them was that they might be the mother of the Messiah.
- He then goes on to argue that Herod demonstrated that he had “*no regard for*” the Messiah who was “*beloved by women*” when he attempted to murder the **infant** Messiah through his slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem , as recorded in Matthew 2:1-16.

11:38 *He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these. A god whom his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.* (ESV)

- Here it tells us that “*the king*” (Herod): “*shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these*”
- The expression, “*god of fortresses*,” could be a reference to the Roman emperors who demanded that they be worshipped (as a “*god*”), in that it was by “*forces*,” or “*fortifications*,” that they extended and maintained their power, and enforced the worship they demanded.
- Herod paid them “*honor*” in the most extravagant fashion; and he did it “*with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts*”.
- This honor paid by Herod, first to Julius Caesar, then to Anthony, and then to Anthony’s conqueror, Augustus, was one of the most conspicuous features of Herod’s policy.
- Josephus , a first-century Jewish historian, records how Herod sent delegations to Rome, and also to Anthony and Cleopatra in Egypt, bearing the most costly presents.
- He built many fortified cities and ***named*** them ***in honor*** of Caesar

*11:39 He shall deal with the **strongest fortresses** with the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor. He shall make them rulers over many and shall divide the land for a price. (ESV)*

- Here we have a reference to one of the most prominent acts of Herod's long reign, namely, his rebuilding of the temple, and his making the temple area a stronghold for Caesar.
- But, in rebuilding it, Herod took care to make it into a fortress for his own purposes, this being one of the "**strongest fortresses**" of the land.
- As a part of this plan, he constructed on the north side of the temple, and overlooking it, a strong citadel which he named the Tower of Antonia, after Mark Anthony.
- Josephus says concerning this: "*But for the Tower itself, when Herod the king of the Jews had fortified it more firmly than before, in order to secure and guard the temple, he gratified Antonius who was his friend and the Roman ruler by calling it the Tower of Antonia*" (Ant. XV. 11:4–7).

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- In connection with the prediction of what this king would do in the chief strongholds “*with the help of a foreign god*,” we should also mention the many images and statues of Caesar, which Herod set up to be worshipped in various fortified places.
- In this way did he, in his estate (office), “*honor the god of forces*” (Caesar) whose statues he everywhere introduced as objects of worship.
- He fulfilled with literal exactness the words, “*Those who acknowledge him he shall load with honor*” (Daniel 11:39).
- The last clause finds a striking fulfillment in Herod’s extravagant pains to glorify Caesar, which, as we have shown, went beyond all bounds.
- The words “*divide the land for a price*” (or parceling it out for hire) were fulfilled in the practice adopted by Herod of parceling out among persons favorable to himself, the land adjacent to places which it was important for him to control in case of emergency.
- And so, from these things we see a fairly strong correspondence between what is said here of “*the king*” and what we know of the career of Herod.

11:40 *"At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through. (ESV)*

- The events foretold in this part of the prophecy are said to take place "*at the time of the end*"; that is to say they were coincident with the last era of Jewish history before 70 AD.
- The specific events described in this verse could be describing the events of the great Actian war that marked the culmination of the power struggle between Octavian (later Augustus, the first Roman emperor) and Mark Antony, supported by Cleopatra VII of Egypt.
- At that time a king of the south (Cleopatra, the last to occupy the throne of Egypt, aided by Mark Anthony) made a push with Herod, who was in league with them, against Syria, which had meanwhile become a Roman province.
- The first move in the Actian war was made by Anthony (at the urgency of Cleopatra), in which he was assisted by Herod.
- Plutarch, an ancient Greek historian, writes concerning this event: "*Anthony, being informed of these things*" (that is of certain disputes between Augustus and others in the Senate at Rome) "*immediately sent Canidus [a prominent Roman general] to the seacoast with sixteen legions.*"

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- In the meantime Anthony went to Ephesus accompanied by Cleopatra. There he assembled his fleet, which consisted of 800 ships of burden, of which Cleopatra furnished 200 in addition to 20,000 talents, and provisions for the army.
- Anthony advanced to Athens, with constantly increasing forces, Augustus being wholly unprepared to fight him;
- Plutarch writes concerning this: *"When Caesar was informed of the magnificence of Anthony's preparations, he was afraid of being forced into war that summer."*
- This would have been a disaster for him, for his forces at this point were inadequate.
- Thus, a king of the south was the first to make a push in this war, and he pushed with Herod.
- Notice that the predictions of the prophet were fulfilled in respect to the character of the forces engaged in the war.
- Those forces included *"chariots and horsemen"*, and *"many ships"*.

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- A strange feature of the battle is that, Anthony's foot soldiers **outnumbered** those of Augustus, and although his generals urged him to engage in a land battle, nevertheless (to quote again from Plutarch): *"Such a slave was he to the will of a woman that, to gratify her, though much superior on land, he put his whole confidence in the navy; notwithstanding that the ships had not half their complement of men."*
- This brought on the great naval fight of Actium, which ended in a complete victory for Augustus; which did result in a *"king of the north"* coming upon a *"king of the south"*, *"like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships"*.
- Plutarch records that, after the disaster at Actium, Anthony's infantry deserted him.
- This sealed the fate of Anthony and Cleopatra.

^{11:41} *He shall come into the glorious land. And tens of thousands shall fall, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites. (ESV)*

- Augustus, referred to here as “*He*” will come from the north and enter the “*glorious land*” (Judea) with Herod's assistance, leading to overthrows in many regions.
- But Edom, Moab, and Ammon (regions south and east of Judea) escape his direct control, as they were not fully subdued.

^{11:42} He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.
⁴³ He shall become ruler of the treasures *of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt*, and the Libyans and the Cushites shall follow in his train. (ESV)

- Here we see Augustus conquers Egypt, gaining control over its vast treasures (*“of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt”*).
- Libya and Ethiopia (Cush) fall under his influence or *“in his train”* (following him submissively), through Roman generals.
- Egypt's wealth was crucial in Herod's time, funding Roman expansions.
- Mauro ties this to the timeline after Actium (30 BC), when Augustus annexed Egypt.

^{11:44} But *news from the east and the north* shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction. (ESV)

- “*news from the east*” could refer to the wise men's arrival (Magi from Persia/Babylon), troubling Herod and leading to the slaughter of Bethlehem's infants (Matthew 2:1–16).
- “*news from the north*” may be a reference to Antipater's conspiracy from Rome, inciting Herod's fury against his own sons – leading to his execution of Aristobulus and Alexander.
- A picture is being painted here of Herod's troubled state and destructive fury.

^{11:45} And he shall pitch his palatial tents *between the sea and the glorious holy mountain*. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him. (ESV)

- Here we see a possible reference to palaces built by Herod in Jerusalem “*between*”:
 - “*the sea*” – i.e., the Mediterranean Sea
 - and the “*glorious holy mountain*” – i.e., Mount Zion
- “*Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.*” – Herod dies alone, tormented by diseases and remorse, with failed attempts to secure sympathy (e.g., ordering Jewish leaders killed at his death, a command that goes unfulfilled).

Class Discussion Time

- I explained at the beginning of today's lesson that there have been a number of proposals given by scholars over the years as to who "*the king*" discussed in Daniel 11:36-45 might be:
 - Some (e.g., Sam Storms and Albert Barnes) have proposed that this "king" is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and that we is said here is just a continuation of the description given of him in vss. 21-35.
 - Some see this king as representing the Roman empire (John Calvin) or some series of Roman emperors (e.g., Jay Rogers)
 - The pope of Rome and the Papal System.
 - Herod the Great (Philip Mauro and James Jordan).
 - The Antichrist. This probably the most popular interpretation. It was advocated by Jerome (347-420 A.D.), and he has been followed by many since.
- What did you think of the view that I lean towards and therefore spent most of my time explaining – a view proposed by Philip Mauro that this text is referring to King Herod?
- Is there another view that you believe better fits the text? If so, why?