



God is present in History



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(Intertestamental Period, Seleucids and Ptolemies, Prophecies of
Daniel about Apocalypse, the Great Tribulation)



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I thank you, Lord, for making me see that in you there is justice, and that your eyes are always attentive to your saints on earth.

I dedicate this book to all brothers in Christ who have a heart willing to obey and a bold mouth to proclaim His truth among men.

“Then he looked up at his disciples and said: ‘Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets’” (Lk. 6: 20-26).

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Notes:

- Words or phrases enclosed in brackets [] or parenthesis (), in italics, were placed by me, in most cases, to explain the biblical text, although some verses already contain them [not in italics].
- The version used here is the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV – 1989 (1995)
- NIV = New International Version (it will be used in brackets in some verses to make it easier for readers to understand).
- Source of research for texts and images: wikipedia.org
- Source of research for images: crystalinks.com

Introduction

This is a study of the Intertestamental Period, also called “God’s period of silence”, which was the period between Malachi and Christ, when He ceased to speak to mankind for nearly four hundred years through the prophets, because of the rebellion of His people and the idolatry of the heathen nations, which also contributed to the hardening of the hearts of the Israelites. With the beginning of the Roman Empire under the reign of Caesar Augustus, not only Israel but the entire world of that time suffered a great transformation. It was during the reign of Caesar Augustus (27 BC-14 AD) that Jesus was born, bringing the light that humanity needed to be free from the spiritual bondage to which it was arrested.

Soon after, the Lord called my attention to a very important prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 11: 1-45), when the prophet mentions the kings of the north and south, referring to the near future when other kingdoms would take the place of Babylon: Persia, Greece and finally Rome. But his prophecy also was related to a distant time in the future, the Apocalypse, which was later confirmed by the Apostle John, because at this stage of History, the Roman dominion was already present and God could already give more revelations to us through His disciple.

Following the sequence of the Intertestamental Period, then we’ll talk about the Hellenistic period, which began with Alexander the Great of Macedonia, and the division of the empire after his death among his four generals. However, the two main empires and peoples that interest for our study and, of course, to the prophecy of Daniel, are the kings of the North and South (Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties), i.e., Egyptians and Syrians, because the two empires had great dominion and influence over Israel. Knowing the story of the characters of that time, we are ready to understand the prophecy of Daniel 11: 1-45 and much more: what will happen to mankind in the end times, that is, in the period of the Great Tribulation and the Rapture of the church.

The purpose of this work is not to sadden people. On the contrary, the purpose is to show how important our intimacy with God is, and give us the hope that one day prepared by God (‘in the appointed time’, as the bible says), all the evil that we see and live in the world will be destroyed, and unrighteousness will be avenged, for it is necessary that men repent of their sins and recognize that only in Jesus there is freedom, justice, judgment, and eternal life.

I hope you enjoy the reading and the Holy Spirit may reveal to you some secrets of the spiritual world.

May the light of the Lord be upon you.

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Part 1 – The dominion of nations over Israel in the Intertestamental Period

Let's begin by the study about the dominion of pagan nations over Israel in Intertestamental Period and the Hasmonean period (Judas Maccabee and his descendants). 'Intertestamental Period' is the period between Malachi and Christ, which comprises nearly four hundred years, when Israel was dominated by pagans and when the Lord stopped speaking to His people through the prophets. So, this period was called "God's period of silence".

The kingdoms that dominated over Israel can be quoted by periods:

1) Persian Period (539-333 BC):

For about one hundred years after Nehemiah's time (The episode of Nehemiah took place around 445–432 BC) the Persians dominated Judah, but the Jews were allowed to continue with their religious observances without facing any opposition. During this period, the land of Judah was ruled by high priests. The Persian kings after the fall of Babylon, were:

- Cyrus the Persian emperor (Cyrus II or Cyrus the great) who ordered the return of the Jews in 538 BC (1st return of the exiles), by invading Babylon. He reigned as king of the Persians, Medes, Lydians and Babylonians (559–530 BC)
- Cambyses II (son of Cyrus): 530–522 BC.
- Darius I (brother-in-law of Cambyses II): 522–486 BC. In his reign the temple began to be rebuilt (520–516 BC). It had begun in 536 BC (2nd year of the reign of Cyrus in Babylon and stopped until 520 BC – 2nd year of Darius I). According to Strong's Concordance, 'Darius', Dārayavahuš (Strong #1867), comes from the Persian origin 'Dareyavesh', the title (rather than name) of a Persian king. According to Evandro de Souza Lopes – 'Os nomes bíblicos e seus significados, CPAD, 8^a ed. 2002' – 'Darius' comes from the Persian name 'Dozenda dara', which in Hebrew means: owner, lord; in Greek: the powerful, rich. Other sources give its meaning as: 'He who holds, the one who maintains.'
- Xerxes I (Ahasuerus – אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ): 465–486 BC (son of Darius I). Xerxes (great warrior, warlike, bellicose, lion) is a Greek transliteration of his Persian name after his ascension, Jshāyār Shah, meaning 'ruler of heroes.' In the bible his name is mentioned as Ahasuerus (Achashverosh אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ or Achshrush, in Hebrew – אַחַשְׁוֶרֶשׁ = prince, head, chief, lion); Hebrew equivalent of Persian 'Khshayarshan' = king lion; written as Ahashuerus, in Chaldean; or Axashverosh, in Greek. According to Strong's Concordance (Strong #325), Ahasuerus or Achshrush is the title (rather than name) of a Persian king.
- Artaxerxes I: 465–424 BC (son of Xerxes I, but not the firstborn). There was a 2nd return of the exiles to Jerusalem with Ezra in 458 BC to minister in the rebuilt temple. Rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, 445 BC (3rd return with Nehemiah).
- Xerxes II (son of Artaxerxes I) and reigned one month and a half. He was murdered by his brother Secydianus or Sogdianus (the form of the name is uncertain). In his turn, he was killed by Ochus, satrap of Hyrcania (region southeast of Caspian Sea, modern Iran), who rose to power and adopted the name of Darius II.
- Darius II (Neh. 12: 22) ruled Babylon and Persia (424–404 BC). He is called Darius the Persian. His birth name was Ochus; then he adopted the name of Darius II (Persian: Dārayavahuš; that's why the Greek sources call him Darius Nothos, 'Bastard').

Artaxerxes II Mnemon, meaning: ‘whose reign is through truth’ (404–358 BC). He was son of Darius II

- Artaxerxes III or Ochus (3rd son of Artaxerxes II): 358–338 BC.
- Artaxerxes IV or Arses (youngest son of Artaxerxes III): 338–336 BC
- Darius III (great-grandson of Darius II and cousin of Arses): 336–330 BC when Alexander the Great defeated him in Macedonia. Originally called Artashata; in Latin: Codomannus, and in ancient Greek: Kodomanos (Κοδομανός) was the last king of the Achaemenid Dynasty of Persia. Darius (Dārayavahuš, in Persian) was the name he adopted after ascending the throne.



Cyrus the Great or Cyrus II

Cyrus, Cyrus the Great, or Cyrus II, king of Persia as he was known, was the king who led his dynasty to the apogee (the Achaemenid dynasty, founded by the king of Persia Achaemenes, his great-grandfather, in fact a Mede ruler who paid taxes to Persia in the seventh century BC), dominating the kingdoms of Media, Iran, Lydia, Syria, Babylon, Palestine, Armenia and Turkestan, thus founding the Persian Empire. By invading Babylon, King Cyrus ordered the return of Jews to Jerusalem (1st return of the exiles) to rebuild the temple of the Lord. It is interesting that the rulers of this dynasty characterized their administration for tolerance to different cultures and religions of the conquered peoples and this created a great loyalty among the subjects. They also built roads linking the main cities, and the postal system was quite efficient. The roads also facilitated the trade of Egypt and Europe with India and China, of which Persia was benefited greatly. It is quite possible that because of this tolerant policy with the beliefs of his subjects that God has found the heart of Cyrus favorable to free the Jewish captives. So he ordered everything that had been stolen by Nebuchadnezzar, including the vessels of the temple in Jerusalem was returned and placed in the custody of Sheshbazzar (Ezr. 1: 8; Ezr. 5:14), whom he appointed the prince of Judah. The Persians and all citizens of the kingdom helped Jews by giving them silver, gold, goods and livestock, precious things, beside the freewill offerings for the house of God. Thus, the Jews returned and rebuilt the temple of the Lord. What happened here was very

similar to what happened in Egypt when the people gave many precious things to the people of Israel before their departure.

His mother was called Mandane, daughter of the last king of Media, Astyages (reign: 585–550 BC). In 600 BC she married Cambyses I, son of Cyrus I, king of Persia. When the son was about to be born, Astyages had two prophetic dreams which were interpreted by the magicians as a prediction that his grandson (Cyrus, Kūruš, in ancient Persian) one day would rebel and succeed him on the throne. So he sent for her in Persia with the intention of murdering the baby as soon as he was born. He ordered the butler Harpagus to kill him. However, the child was not killed, but delivered to the care of a shepherd. In his place, they presented to Astyages a stillborn child, and the father of this child adopted Cyrus as son. At the age of ten, Cyrus was introduced to his grandfather. By intervention of the magicians, Cyrus was not punished and was sent back to his parents. Years later, through a rebellion of Harpagus, Cyrus dominated Media (region of the present Iran), entering the capital, Ecbatana, and spared the life of his grandfather. He also conquered Lydia and other territories, increasing the extension of the Persian Empire. Maybe by the story of his childhood, God has called him shepherd (Isa. 44: 28), besides the fact of using him to bring His people back to Israel. Let's remember that Cyrus, in the bible, is a figure of the Messiah, the Good Shepherd.



Cyrus Cylinder

Cyrus Cylinder is a document in the form of a clay cylinder inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform in whose interior there are great gray stones, currently divided in several fragments, listing his genealogy as a king of a lineage of kings, and reporting his capture of Babylon in 539 BC. The cylinder measures 22.5 cm length and 10 cm in its maximum diameter. The text says that the victorious Cyrus was received by the people of Babylon as their new ruler and entered the city in peace. It extols Cyrus' efforts as a benefactor of the citizens of Babylon, responsible for improving their lives, repatriating displaced peoples and restoring temples and religious sanctuaries through Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the region. It concludes with a description of Cyrus' work of repairing

the walls of Babylon. The text of the cylinder denounces the deposed Babylonian king Nabonidus as impious and portrays Cyrus as pleasing to the chief god Marduk. It probably dates from the sixth century BC (539 BC). There is much controversy among scholars about something written in Cyrus Cylinder on the repatriation of the Jews (Ezr. 1: 1-4; 2 Chr. 36: 23). Although not mentioned specifically in the text, the repatriation of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity has been interpreted as part of this general policy.

In Isa. 46: 9-11 it's written: "remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My purpose shall stand, and I will fulfill my intention', calling a bird of prey from the east, the man for my purpose from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have planned, and I will do it."

The 'bird of prey' refers to Cyrus. Cyrus was called 'bird' for his swiftness, and 'voracious' for his ferocity and victory over his enemies; a bird of prey like an eagle. He was quick on his horse, being compared to this bird. As Plutarch relates (He was a Greek historian and philosopher – 46-120 AD), Cyrus had an aquiline nose. Therefore, men who have such a nose among the Persians are highly esteemed. According to Plutarch, Cyrus is the Persian word for 'sun.' Xenophon said that Cyrus' standard was a golden eagle on the top of a high spear, and was held by the kings of Persia. Xenophon was a Greek historian, writer and military leader, disciple of Socrates, and who lived around 430-354 BC. He was a contemporary of Artaxerxes II, one of Cyrus' successors as king of Persia. Artaxerxes II lived between 436 and 358 BC and reigned in the period of 404-358 BC.

Taking into account the biblical text of Isaiah, Cyrus can be compared to a bird by its speed in coming at the time determined by God. He came from the east as the rising sun of righteousness, being called to do the will of the Lord. The work of the redemption of Israel was in accordance with the eternal purpose of God, prophesied by all the holy prophets, and now fulfilled. And divine righteousness and salvation are mentioned in the following verses (verses 12-13: "Listen to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from deliverance: I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off, and my salvation will not tarry; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory").

Also in Isa. 44: 28 the purpose of God was already written for Cyrus as the shepherd who would lead Israel back to the sheepfold (the land of their fathers): "...who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose'; and who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be rebuilt', and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"

2) The Hellenistic period (333-167 BC):

Dominion of the Ptolemies on Palestine (323-198 BC)

Dominion of the Seleucids on Palestine (198-167 BC)

In 333 BC the Persian armies concentrated in Macedonia under the command of Darius III were defeated by Alexander the Great (356-323 BC). For him, with no doubt, the Greek culture was the only force to congregate the world. He allowed the Jews to keep their laws and even assured them the exemption of taxes and levies in the sabbatical year. When in 323 BC, Alexander died at 33 years old his empire began to fall and was divided among his generals. Two of them remained with the eastern part: **1) Talmai** (Aramaic name of **Ptolemy I Soter**, who lived between 366 and 283 BC; in Greek, Πτολεμαῖος Σωτήρ, 'Ptolemaĩos Sōtér' – 'Ptolemy Savior'), founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty (in 323 BC), received Egypt as his part in the administrative government of Alexander's successors, establishing its capital in Alexandria. **2)**

Salvacus (To Hebrew historians, Salvacus is the name of **Seleucus I or Seleucus I Nicator**, in Greek, Σέλευκος Νικότωρ; Nikátōr, ‘the victor’, founder of the Seleucid dynasty), ruled over the region of Western and Eastern Turkey (called Anatolia in ancient times), Syria, Iraq, Iran, Persia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of India; and then, the Seleucid Dynasty extended its dominion over Lebanon and Israel. The other two generals of Alexander the Great who stayed with the western part of his empire were **Cassander** of Macedonia (350-297 BC) and **Philip Lysimachus** (360-281 BC). Thus, Israel submitted several times to pagan rulers. During the first hundred years, it stood under Egyptian rule, and in the end of the second century BC it went to Seleucid rule, against which the Jews would undertake a riot. While Israel was under the control of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, Jews were permitted to live according to their faith. The king himself considered the Torah (Book of the Law of Moses) a cultural heritage and forced 72 Jewish sages (around 250 BC) to translate it into Greek (Septuagint or Version of the Seventy, LXX). During this phase of the Ptolemaic period the Pharisees, Sadducees and **Essenes** emerged in Israel.

The **Sadducees** were a sect of Judaism of the Second Temple that flourished from the 2nd century BC to the 1st century AD, which some scholars claim to be descendants of Zadok (Hebrew: Tsadoq, צדק, which means ‘righteous’) a priest, descendant from Eleazar son of Aaron (1 Chr. 6: 4-8). He officiated as a priest in the time of David and Solomon. The Sadducees’ party was regarded as the party of priests and elites (priestly and aristocratic elite). Most of the Sadducees were wealthy and did not need to depend on ordinary secular work to survive. They fulfilled various political, social and religious functions, among which were the sacrifices and the administration of the Temple funds. They disagreed with the Pharisees on the question of the oral law, which they did not accept, denied the resurrection, angels and spirits (Acts 23: 8). They lasted some time after 70 AD, when the temple and city of Jerusalem were destroyed by the Romans, but they left their mark on all anti-rabbinical tendencies of the early centuries CE and medieval times. The Sadducees were initially partisans of Hellenism, while the Pharisees were of the orthodox faction.

The Essenes were a mystical-religious movement (without political orientation) that rejected the high priests appointed by the Seleucids or the Hasmoneans, considering them illegitimate. The name ‘Essene’ (in Greek: essaioi; in Syriac: essaya or essenoi; in Aramaic: chasajja; and in Latin: essenii) means ‘pious.’ Their doctrine was based on the renunciation of pleasures of the flesh in order to achieve spiritual holiness.

They lived in Qumran (or Khirbet Qumran, current name of the archaeological site, which in Hebrew means ‘ruin of the gray stain’), which was a place located in the region of Transjordan (West Bank), northwest of the Dead Sea, twelve kilometers from Jericho and twenty-two kilometers from Jerusalem. The colony of Qumran was known as ‘stronghold of the pious’, and held 200 to 300 people. It was abandoned in 31 BC, after a fire and an earthquake, but it was reconstructed and remained till the first century AD, when in 68 AD the Romans destroyed it. The name ‘Qumran’ is modern; it is derived from the Arabic ‘qamar’, meaning ‘moon.’ The name of the site in the period of the Second Temple was probably, Secacah, meaning ‘city of salt.’ Today, Qumran is summed up only in ruins.

The Essenes were too concerned about the cleanliness of the body (they washed themselves constantly) as a symbol of purification of the soul. They made vow of Naziriteship (consecration to God, not cutting the hair, not drinking wine or any product derived from grape and not touching a corpse), so they were called Nazirites (as Samson, John the Baptist and Samuel). In the case of temporary vow, the hair of the Nazirite was shaved and burned at the end of consecration period. The Essenes kept the

name of God (the sacred Tetragrammaton – YHWH) given to Moses at Sinai, unlike other Jews (mostly Pharisees and Sadducees) who were forbidden pronounce it.



Ruins of Qumran



Location of Qumran

They believed that man was the tabernacle of God on earth, not built by human hands, and also waited for the Messiah. Some of the early Christians were Essenes, for some of them had converted to Jesus by accepting Him as the Son of God and Messiah.

This understanding ('man was the tabernacle of God on earth') was also shared by the **Pharisees** ('separatists'), members of the community of scribes and sages. They were considered separatists for rejecting Hellenistic culture or for opposing the Hasmonean monopoly on power. During the Hasmonean period, the Sadducees and Pharisees functioned primarily as political parties. The Pharisees (from the Hebrew פרושים) were a group of devotees of the Torah, who emerged almost simultaneously with the other two in the 2nd century BC. (they arose around 150 BC, during the period of Jonathan Maccabeus as High Priest of Israel – 153 to 143 BC). They were the creators of the institution of the synagogue. Pharisee means 'separated', 'holy'. The name, in Latin, is Pharisaeus; which comes from the ancient Greek, Φαρισαίος (Pharisaios), and from the Hebrew, prushim or perushim, which comes from the root parash, which means 'to separate', 'to move away', as it was a Jewish religious party characterized by its opposition to the other religious groups of its time and by the exaggeratedly rigorous observance of the legal prescriptions of the Torah and the traditions that they had established. The Pharisees probably had their origin in the 'Hassidim' (the pious), who supported the Maccabean revolt (167-160 BC). But not everyone was satisfied with Hasmonean rule, for they combined the office of king with that of high priest of the Temple in Jerusalem. A king of Israel was to be a descendant of David from the tribe of Judah. And the high priest was to be a descendant of Zadok, the high priest during Solomon's reign. The Hasmoneans, however, could claim neither of these lineages. Most of the Pharisees were not of the priestly class and therefore did

not depend exclusively on the Temple for their living. They were generally middle-class people who worked in various professions, such as merchants, artisans, and farmers. Some Pharisees were wealthy, but most were middle class and lived off their work.



Alexander the Great

3) The Hasmonean period (167-63 BC):

In the beginning of this period of History, Jews were submitted to a very heavy yoke. In 167 BC, the Seleucid king, King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, conquered Jerusalem, which became permanently controlled by soldiers. The Ptolemies had been tolerant with the Jews, allowing their religious practices, but the Seleucids (in the person of King Antiochus IV) struggled to foist them Hellenism (Greek culture), introducing the destruction of copies of the Scriptures as law and forbidding the Jewish worship: the observance of the Sabbath, dietary prohibitions and even the circumcision. Antiochus IV sent a large army against Jerusalem and took it by a sudden attack; he killed 40,000 people. Some historians report that in addition to looting the temple and killing the 40,000 people mentioned above, the mothers who were circumcising their babies were killed along with their families; sold many Jews as slaves; installed the statue of Zeus in the temple to be worshiped; committed sacrilege by killing a pig (unclean animal) on the altar and then its blood was sprinkled on the temple. He broke into the Holy of Holies and plundered the golden vessels and other utensils of the temple, equivalent to a thousand talents; he also interfered in the choice of the high priest and the governor of Judah, and this way, with the introduction of Hellenism in Judea, he finished with the sacrifices made in the temple of Jerusalem. The sacrilege of killing a pig (unclean animal) on the altar was mentioned by Jesus: “So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand)” (Matt. 24: 15; Mk. 13: 14, taken from Dan. 9: 27; Dan. 11: 31; Dan. 12: 11).

The oppressed Jews revolted under the leadership of Judas Maccabee (Judas ben Mattathias). His family name was Hamon, therefore, they were known as Hasmonean, and lived in a village called Modi'in (in Hebrew: מודיעין), about twenty miles west of Jerusalem and twenty-two miles southeast of Tel Aviv, at the site known today as Modi'in-Maccabim-Reut. The leader was Mattathias, father of five children: John (1st), Simon (2nd), Judas Maccabee (3rd, Judas ben Mattathias), Eleazar (4th), and Jonathan (5th). Mattathias was a priest, but not a high priest; there is no evidence whatsoever of his belonging to the lineage of Aaron as rabbinical sources attempt to link him to the priestly tribe of Jojarib (1 Chr. 24:7). The Hasmoneans combined the office of king with that of high priest of the Temple in Jerusalem. A king of Israel was to be held by a descendant of David from the tribe of Judah. And the high priest was to be a descendant of Zadok, the high priest during Solomon's reign. The Hasmoneans, however, could claim neither of these lines.

In the book of 1 Maccabees 2: 2–5, the sons of Mattathias had double names (one Greek and one Hebrew): John Gaddis; Simon Thassi; Judas Maccabeus (or Judas Maccabee); Eleazar Avaran e Jonathan Apphus). Some names may have been given by Mattathias; others were given later by the people.

Although Gaddi is a name that appears in the Bible in Num. 13: 11 as the name of one of the ten spies sent by Moses, by the tribe of Manasseh, the nickname 'Gaddi' for John Maccabeus can be related to Gad, the 7th son of Jacob, by Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, meaning 'good luck, fortunate, fortune', which many relate to the ancient heathen god Gad, which means something like 'lucky'. Gad was the name of the Semitic god of fortune, usually depicted as a male god but sometimes as a female god, and is attested in ancient records of Aram, Babylon and Arabia. Zilpah lived in Aram, with the family of Laban. Gad is also mentioned in the Bible as a deity in the Book of Isaiah (Isa. 65: 11-12 – some translations simply call him 'Fortune', as having been worshipped by a number of Hebrews during the Babylonian captivity. Gad apparently differed from Destiny (the god of destiny. In Hebrew, the word used is Mniy, transliterated as Minni). Destiny is a pagan god, responsible by the fate, and acted through numbers, like a game of chance or a numbers game. A glass containing a mixture of wine and honey was placed for him, especially in Egypt, on the last day of the year. Still another suggestion was made with the term used for 'grain', 'produce', perhaps suggesting John may have been a farmer.

The name 'Thassi' has a connotation of 'the Wise', a title which can also mean 'the Director', 'the Guide', 'the Man of Counsel', and 'the Zealous'. This name may have been given by Mattathias himself, so much so that when he died he named him as a counselor to his brothers in the revolt.

Macabee means 'hammer' (ha'Makabi). His family became known as the Maccabees. Judas in particular was given this nickname because of his ferocity in battle. But the traditional Jewish explanation is that Maccabee (Hebrew: מכבים Makkabi) is an acronym for the verse in Exodus 15: 11: "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods?" (KJV) or "Who among the gods is like you, O LORD?" (NIV), which in Hebrew transliterated is: 'M i k amocha ba' elim Y HWH' or **miy-khâmokhâh bâ'êlim Yhvh** and which was the battle cry of the Maccabees; also as an acronym for 'M attyahu ha K ohen bbY', 'Mattathias the priest of YHWH.' [wikipedia.org].

Eleazar Avaran, also known as Eleazar Maccabeus or Eleazar HaChorani, received this nickname because his father saw in him a Zealot among zealots, like Phinehas (Ps 106: 30-31; Num. 25: 7-8; 11-12). Others say that 'Avaran', in the Alexandrian version of the book of 1 Maccabees, is 'Sauran', which was interpreted as "the Piercer" (in reference to his death) or 'to be white' (referring to his light complexion). In other

versions it's written 'Horan', possibly derived from 'Hor' = hole,' similar to 'piercer' [wikipedia.org].

Apphus, according to some sources, is of Syriac origin and relates to the word choppus, which means 'the dissembler', 'the diplomat,' because of his personality (1 Macc. 2: 5) [source: Richard Gottheil, Samuel Krauss; <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8773-jonathan-maccabeus>].

The revolt broke out when a group of Greeks gathered the inhabitants of the village in the square where an altar with idols had been erected. The Greek general demanded that John made offerings there. He, however, refused vehemently and his attitude provoked the revolt, for his father, Matthias, killed a Hellenistic Jew who took a step forward to offer sacrifice to an idol. Modern scholars say that it all started in a civil war between traditionalist Jews and Hellenized Jews in Jerusalem. For this reason Zechariah writes: 'I will cause them, every one, to fall each into the hand of a neighbor, and each into the hand of the king [NIV: their king]; and they shall devastate the earth, and I will deliver no one from their hand' (Zech. 11: 6). What began as a civil war and as a religious rebellion was gradually transformed into a national liberation war, when the kingdom of Syria joined the Hellenistic Jews in their conflict with the traditionalists. Mattathias and his five sons fled to the wilderness of Judah.

Mattathias died at old age (166 BC). Of his sons he appointed Simon as counselor and Judas as general. Judas adopted the strategy of guerrilla, catching the enemy in surprise attacks. Judas wanted to retake Jerusalem to cleanse the temple. But by reaching the holy temple, he found only desolation, ruins, statues and idols everywhere. Finally, the Maccabees drove out the troops of Antiochus IV from Jerusalem. Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 8: 14) was referring to the time that elapsed from the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king, until its purification by Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabean revolt lasted from 167 BC to 160 BC, that is, 2,300 days, or more precisely, 6 years, 3 months and 18 days.

Judas Maccabeus died at the Battle of Elasa in April 160 BC.

Eleazar Avaram died crushed at the Battle of Beth Zechariah in 162 BC, after attacking a war elephant thrusting a spear into its belly, believing that it carried the Seleucid King Antiochus IV. The dead elephant then collapsed upon Eleazar, killing him as well.

Jonathan Maccabeus (Jonathan Apphus), the brother of Judas Maccabeus, became leader of the Hasmonean rebels in Jerusalem (160-143 BC), succeeding Judas Maccabeus. In 159 he managed to defeat Bacchides, the Seleucid general, who left his trail of destruction and famine in Judea. He and his brothers, Simon Thassi and John Gaddis, and the remaining Maccabees fled to the desert east of the Jordan River. John was killed in 159 BC in Nabataea (southern Moab) by rival tribes from Madaba (a Moabite city). The First Book of Maccabees says that with this 'the sword ceased from Israel', and so nothing is recorded for the next five years (158-153). But during the seven years between the death of the previous high priest, Alcimus (Jakim-Alcimus – 162–160 BC) and Jonathan's appointment as high priest in Jerusalem, it is not known who held that office. There are only hypotheses of a priest descended from Zadok in the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in 1947.

Jonathan Maccabeus served as High Priest of Israel from 153 to 143 BC, appointed by Alexander Balas (a usurper of the Seleucid throne, 150–145 BC). At the Feast of Tabernacles in 153 BC, Jonathan wore the high priestly garments and officiated for the first time. In 147 BC, he was given full control of the territory of Judea after he defeated Demetrius II Nicator, who had sought to seize the throne from Alexander Balas. After Balas' death in 145 BC and the accession of Demetrius II Nicator (145–144 BC) to the

Seleucid throne, Jonathan gained a foothold in Samaria, allying himself with Demetrius. Jonathan Apphus was finally captured and killed in 142 BC by the Seleucid king Diodotus Tryphon (142-139 BC), having fallen into his trap of receiving Ptolemais and other fortresses. They were meeting at Baskama, east of the Jordan. The few soldiers of his army who were with him were killed and he remained there until his brother Simon Thassi brought him his two sons as hostages, at the request of Diodotus Tryphon to release Jonathan. But Simon also fell into the trap and Jonathan and his eldest sons were killed. His youngest son became high priest in his place. Rabbinic sources say that one of Apphus' daughters was an ancestor of Flavius Josephus.

Jonathan was succeeded by his other brother, Simon Maccabeus (Simon Thassi, 142-135 BC). He and his two eldest sons, Mattathias and Judah, were murdered in February 135 BC by their son-in-law Ptolemy at a banquet at Dok (a mountain above the city of Jericho).

After the death of his father Simon Maccabaeus, John Hyrcanus I assumed the office of priest and king. However, the Seleucid king Antiochus VII Euergetes or Sidetes (139-129 BC) conquered the Jews after a siege of Jerusalem, and executed their main leaders. In the year 116 BC, two Seleucid rulers started a contention for the throne, and this was a reason for John Hyrcanus I to reaffirm the Jewish independence and bring Samaria and Idumea under the control of Jerusalem. His son, Alexander Jannaeus king of Judaea (103-76 BC), attacked Ptolemais (now called Acre, a city of Galilee, to the north of the Haifa Bay, on the Mediterranean coast located in a promontory near Mount Carmel) and inherited the throne of his brother Aristobulus I (who had died), marrying her sister-in-law Salome Alexandra, through the levirate law. Alexander Jannaeus expanded the Hasmonean kingdom and established the capital in the city of Gamla in 81 BC, where is now the city of Golan.

In 65-64 BC, the Seleucid Empire was annexed to the Roman Republic. Thus, the Hasmonean Period also finished, and the Roman Period began, when Pompey invaded Jerusalem (63 AC). The second temple built by Zerubbabel and restored and fortified by the Hasmonean kings was a so powerful fortress that withstood the siege of Pompey for 3 months.



Judas and the Maccabean Revolt



Hasmonean Kingdom

When Pompey arrived in Jerusalem, his first action was to inspect the city. Josephus writes: “And when he was come to the city, he looked about where he might make his attack; for he saw the walls were so firm, that it would be hard to overcome them; and that the valley before the walls was terrible; and that the temple, which was within that valley, was itself encompassed with a very strong wall, insomuch that if the city were taken, that temple would be a second place of refuge for the enemy to retire to.” [Josephus, *The War of the Jews* i.vii. §1.1].

4) The Roman period (63 BC-476 AD):

In the year 63 BC, the Roman general Pompey (Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus; c.106-49 BC) or Pompey the Great, conquered Jerusalem, and the provinces of Palestine were subjugated to Roman rule. In 60 BC, Julius Caesar allied himself with Gnaeus

Pompeius Magnus and Marcus Licinius Crassus (115–53 BC; triumvir: 60–53 BC; elected consul in 70 and 55 BC) and governed Rome (the “First Triumvirate” – 60–53 BC). Crassus died in 53 BC. Pompey was slain in Egypt in 49 BC, and then Gaius Julius Caesar (49–44 BC) rose to power of the Roman Republic and proclaimed himself dictator for life. He died assassinated in 44 BC due to a conspiracy led by Marcus Junius Brutus [c. 85–42 BC; patrician and political leader of Roman republican conservative orientation] and Gaius Cassius Longinus [c. 86–42 BC; a Roman senator and the principal agent in the conspiracy against Julius Caesar, along with his brother-in-law, Marcus Junius Brutus], and from then on there was a power struggle between Mark Antony (a soldier and a famous Roman politician) and Gaius Octavian, great-nephew and successor of Julius Caesar. The Battle of Actium in 31 BC, near Actium in Greece, between Mark Antony and Octavian, was won by the latter and marked the date of the end of the Republic.

After the Battle of Actium, Octavian disbanded his armies and called for elections. He was elected consul, and in 27 BC, he officially returned power to the Roman Senate and offered to relinquish his military supremacy and his hegemony over Egypt. However, the Senate also granted him control over the provinces of Hispania, Gaul, and Syria, where the largest concentrations of troops were stationed. Shortly thereafter, the Senate conferred upon him the title of “Augustus,” which also carried religious connotations in Antiquity.

Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian Augustus, known as Caesar Augustus, reigned as emperor from 27 BC to 14 AD. Part of the time, the government of each region of the empire stayed in charge of princes, and in the rest, under the responsibility of procurators appointed by the emperor. Augustus appointed Herod the Great, governor of Palestine at the time of Christ’s birth.

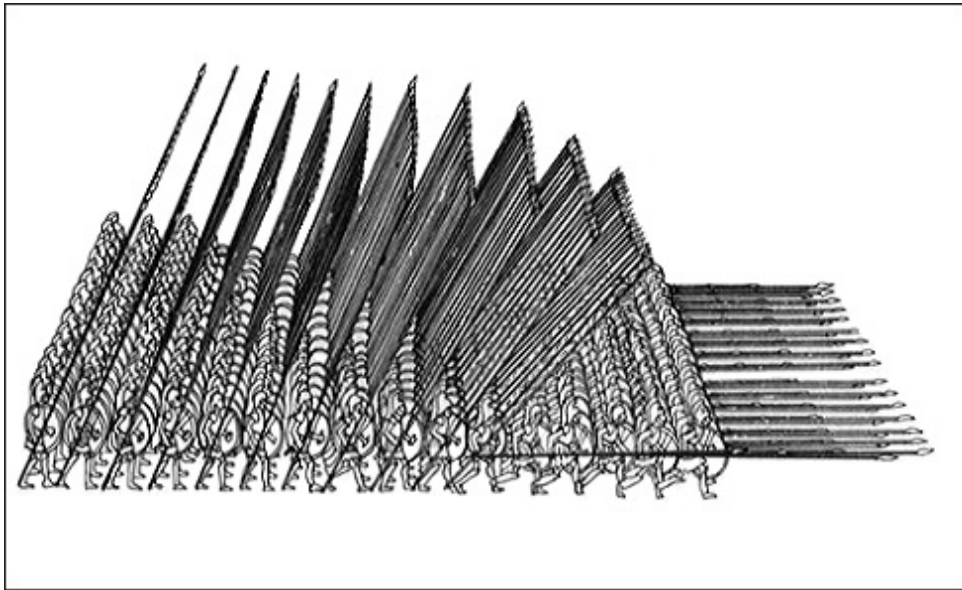
Since then, many emperors followed until the fall of the Roman Empire. In general, the term fall of the Roman Empire refers to the end of the Western Roman Empire, occurred in 476 AD, with the taking of Rome by the Heruli, since the Eastern Empire, which later, the historians denominated the Byzantine Empire, continued to exist for nearly a thousand years, until 1453, when the Fall of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks occurred. The fall of the Western Roman Empire was caused by a series of factors, including the barbarian invasions that led to the final overthrow of the State. Heruli were a Germanic tribe, possibly originating from southern Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden and Norway) and invaded the Roman Empire in the third century. The Heruli with the Goths participated in several expeditions, looting the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea.

Part 2 - Intertestamental period - Seleucids and Ptolemies

Here, the greater focus will be given to the Hellenistic period, in a more detailed study about the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings, because everything that happened in this period of History was revealed to the prophet Daniel (Dan. 11: 1-45). Besides the kings of the North and South (Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties), we will also talk about the other two generals of Alexander the Great, who inherited the western part of the empire after his death. Although it may seem that we are watching a class of General History, it is important to remember the presence of God in the story of humankind, moving kingdoms and nations according to His will, and how much He desires to reveal His plans to the true prophets, so we can hear His voice and see ourselves through the lives of these characters and learn from them not to repeat the same mistakes.

In 333 BC the Persian armies concentrated in Macedonia under the command of Darius III were defeated by Alexander the Great (356-323 BC). When in 323 BC, Alexander died at 33 years old his empire began to fall and was divided among his generals. Two of them remained with the eastern part: **1) Talmai** (Aramaic name of **Ptolemy I Soter**, who lived between 366 and 283 BC; in Greek, Πτολεμαῖος Σωτήρ, ‘Ptolemaíos Sōtér’ – ‘Ptolemy Savior’), founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty (in 323 BC), received Egypt as his part in the administrative government of Alexander’s successors, establishing its capital in Alexandria. **2) Salvacus** (To Hebrew historians, Salvacus is the name of **Seleucus I or Seleucus I Nicator**, in Greek, Σέλευκος Νικάτωρ; Nikátōr, ‘the victor’, founder of the Seleucid dynasty), ruled over the region of Western and Eastern Turkey (called Anatolia in Ancient times), Syria, Iraq, Iran, Persia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of India; and then, the Seleucid Dynasty extended its dominion over Lebanon and Israel around 168 BC. The other two generals of Alexander the Great who stayed with the western part of his empire were **Cassander of Macedonia** (350-297 BC) and **Philip Lysimachus** (360-281 BC).





Macedonian phalanxes – the formation of Alexander’s army, with soldiers very close to each other and spears arranged in a way that hindered the passage of the enemy through the Greek soldiers. Who did not die in the first line of spears died probably in the others. This type of battle formation made Alexander’s army practically invincible. The Romans copied the same strategy of battle formation for their infantry legions.





It's interesting to take a look in the extension of the Persian Empire left by Darius III and the extension of the Empire conquered by Alexander the Great.

Alexander's empire was a little smaller than the Persian. It was the second greatest empire of Ancient times.



Alexander the Great

When Alexander died at 33 years old (323 BC), before his empire was divided among his four generals, there was a first division between them and a great Macedonian nobleman, General and satrap called Antigonos I Monophthalmus (382-301 BC), who served at the court of Alexander and his father, Philip II, and who became the lord of all Asia Minor, establishing the Antigonid dynasty. He reigned for 5

years (306-301 BC), controlling Macedonia and Greece, and lived until 80-81 years old. Thus, from a trusted commander and general, he became king and successor. He was called Monophthalmus (the one-eyed) because he had only one eye; the other one was lost in the battlefield. He was attacked by the other Diadochi, and was too feared by all of them. After his death (in the fourth coalition of Diadochi), the empire was finally divided among the four generals of Alexander.

The Diadochi (Greek Διάδοχοι, Diadokhoi, 'successors') also called epigones (Greek: Επίγονοι, transliterated as Epígonoi, 'children'), in the story of Hellenism, were the successors of Alexander the Great. The Wars of the Diadochi happened after the death of Alexander.

If you want to understand better the genealogy of the two dynasties (Seleucids and Ptolemies), download the attachment (PDF): https://www.searaagape.com.br/genealogy_kings seleucidsandptolemies.pdf



Cassander (350-297 BC) inherited Macedonia (Greece). Cassander was the son of Antipater, one of Alexander's generals and of his father Philip II of Macedonia. There is nothing very interesting to be said about Cassander, except the coalitions that made with the other generals (Diadochi) of Alexander to take the empire from the hands of Antigonus I Monophthalmus. Another factor of interest in Cassander's life was a series of murders he carried out, including Alexander's mother (Olympia) and his son by his wife Roxanne, Alexander IV (at 13 years old – 311 BC). Cassander married Thessalonica of Macedonia and had three children: Philip IV of Macedonia, Antipater II of Macedonia and Alexander V of Macedonia. Cassander died of tuberculosis in 297 or 296 BC in Macedonia. His eldest son and successor Philip IV of Macedonia also died of the same disease four months later.

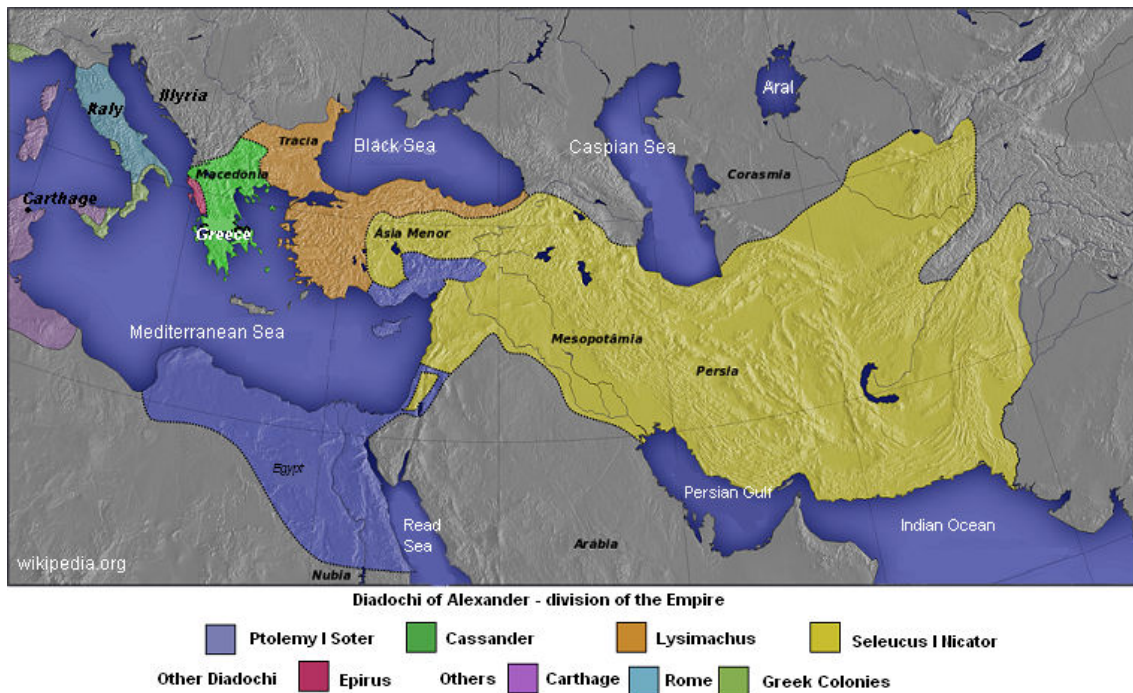
General **Philip Lysimachus** (360-281 BC) became one of the four Alexander's diadochi. In 315 BC, Philip Lysimachus joined with Cassander, Ptolemy, and Seleucus against Antigonus I Monophthalmus. In this first alliance between the four generals against him, he emerged unscathed. Lysimachus continued to fight his wars to increase

his territory. In 306 BC Lysimachus became king of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Thrace (the region between the Black Sea and Macedonia), and reigned for twenty years. In 302 BC, Lysimachus made the second alliance between Cassander, Ptolemy and Seleucus, and with the reinforcing troops of Cassander, he entered Asia Minor. But Antigonus approached, so he retreated to a residence near the city of Heraclea Pontica (on the Black Sea coast, in Turkey), marrying the widow queen Amestris, a Persian princess, niece of Darius III. In 301 BC, the four Diadochi got together for the fourth time against Antigonus Monophthalmus at the battle of Ipsus, near the town of the same name, in Phrygia – name of the old Midwest region in ancient Asia Minor (Anatolia), in modern Turkey. At the time, Cassander ruled Macedonia, Lysimachus was governor of Thrace, Seleucus I Nicator was ruler of Babylon and Persia, and Ptolemy, ruler of Egypt. The four Diadochi allies won the battle, Antigonus Monophthalmus was killed, and his son Demetrius I Poliorcetes escaped, fleeing to Ephesus (Poliorcetes means, ‘the besieger’ [of cities]).

So Ptolemy gained Egypt; Seleucus, most of the lands of Antigonus in eastern Asia Minor, and Lysimachus received the rest of Asia Minor. Seeing that Seleucus was stronger, Lysimachus allied with Ptolemy I Soter, divorced Amestris, and married the daughter of Ptolemy, Arsinoe II of Egypt (316-270 BC), who became Queen of Thrace and then, co-ruler of Egypt with her brother and husband, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Amestris returned to Heraclea and then was murdered in 306 BC by her two sons (Clearchus II and Oxyathres, sons from her previous marriage to Dionysius, tyrant of Heraclea) who, in turn, were convicted by Lysimachus. She also had by him (Dionysius) a daughter named Amestris. Arsinoe II asked him the residence in Heraclea and, in 284 BC, conspired against the eldest son of Lysimachus (Agathocles) so that her children were heirs to the throne. She did this with the help of her brother Ptolemy Keraunos. They made use of lie, accusing Agathocles of conspiring with Seleucus to take his father’s throne. This one condemned his own son, which caused indignation in many cities of Asia Minor, which rebelled. His trusted friends left him. Then, yes, her widowed daughter-in-law fled to Seleucus, who in turn invaded the territories of Lysimachus in Asia. Almost at the same time, Demetrius I Poliorcetes, who was out of Greece, came back with hostilities against Lysimachus, but after seeing his towns invaded in Asia Minor he made a peace agreement with the general, staying as ruler of Macedonia. Shortly after, the wars between them returned, but Lysimachus won again, taking possession of the territory. In 281 BC, Lysimachus entered Lydia, and in the decisive Battle of Corupedium he was killed by Seleucus, who also defeated Cassander and died shortly after his enemies. Lysimachus’ body was guarded by a loyal dog for a few days, and after this it was found on the battlefield, was handed over to his son Alexander, who buried him in Lysimachia. Alexander was his only child by Amestris.

The four major divisions of Alexander Empire after the battle of Ipsus:

The eastern part: 1) Ptolemy I Soter, founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty (in 323 BC), got Egypt, establishing its capital in Alexandria. 2) Seleucus I or Seleucus I Nicator, founder of the Seleucid dynasty), ruled over the region of Western and Eastern Turkey (Anatolia), Syria, Iraq, Iran, Persia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of India; and then, Lebanon and Israel. **The western part** of his empire was divided between Cassander (350-297 BC), who received Macedonia (Greece), and Philip Lysimachus (360-281 BC), who received the rest of Asia Minor and Thrace.



Now, let's concentrate in the main **Dynasties: Ptolemaic and Seleucid**.

Ptolemaic Dynasty:



Ptolemy I Soter

Ptolemy I Soter, who lived between 366 and 283 BC, was the founder of Ptolemaic dynasty (in 323 BC). From 323 to 305 BC, he was satrap; from 305 to 285 BC, he was king. Then, he abdicated, and died in 283 BC. Ptolemy I Soter was the son of Arsinoe of Macedonia. History refers to his father as Lagus, who was a Macedonian, hence the name Lagids or Lagidae, also given to the dynasty he founded. But the Macedonians of the second century AD said that his real father was Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, because Ptolemy I Soter was born shortly after the marriage of his mother with Lagus. Ptolemy I Soter received Egypt, establishing its capital in Alexandria. He always concerned to keep Egypt safe because of the wars of Diadochi, also exercising a strict

control over the region of Cyprus, Cyrene, Syria and Judea. In 308 BC he took possession of Corinth, Sicyon (old town at the south of Greece in the Peloponnese peninsula) and Megara (an agricultural town to the north of the Isthmus of Corinth). But in 306 BC, during a battle against Demetrius I, son of Antigonos I Monophthalmus, Ptolemy I definitely lost Cyprus. He had already lost Syria to Antigonos, but came to conquer it back for the fourth time in 301 BC, after the death of his enemy in the battle of Ipsus. However, other members of the coalition ascribed Syria to Seleucus. So, for about a century, the issue of possession of southern Syria (Israel) caused a constant conflict between the Ptolemaic dynasty and the Seleucids. In 285 BC, Ptolemy I Soter abdicated in favor of the son of Berenice I, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. He died in 283 BC at the age of 84 years and was the founder of Museum and Library of Alexandria, encouraging the permanence of Greek sages in the city where they chose to stay.

He had three wives and children by them:

1) By Eurydice (whom he married in 321 BC): Ptolemy Keraunos, Meleager of Macedonia, Argaeus, Lysandra and Ptolemais. Eurydice was the daughter of Antipater a Macedonian general who strongly supported King Philip II of Macedon and his son Alexander the Great. In 320 BC, he became regent of Alexander's entire empire. Eurydice was sister of Cassander.

2) By Berenice I (whom he married in 316 BC): Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247 BC), Arsinoe II and Philotera. Berenice I was his concubine and also Eurydice's cousin. Later, she became his main wife and future queen. He adopted the children of Berenice I of her first marriage (with a nobleman named Philip): Magas of Cyrene, Antigone and possibly Theoxena, as princes of the royal house of Macedonia.

3) By Thaïs: Lagus, Leonticus and Eirene, the Greek form of Irene (no Historical report is found about them; only that Thaïs of Athens was a courtesan).

Through his daughters, Ptolemy I Soter held many diplomatic weddings, sealing strong and important alliances with the main successor leaders of Alexander and other kingdoms in the Hellenistic period, and ensuring the kingship of his direct descendants in the major kingdoms of the Hellenistic world in the following centuries:

1) Irene (Eirene) married the king of Cyprus.

2) Antigone, the daughter of the first marriage of Berenice I, married the king of Epirus.

3) Theoxena, another daughter of Berenice I, married the king of Syracuse.

4) Lysandra, daughter of Eurydice, married first King Alexander V of Macedon, son of Cassander, but on his death in less than a year, she married Agathocles, son of Lysimachus, and had several children with him. When Agathocles was killed by his own father, accused of treason as we saw above, Lysandra fled with her children to the court of Seleucus I Nicator in Babylon.

5) Ptolemais married Demetrius I, nicknamed Poliorcetes (meaning 'he who besieges cities' or 'the besieger of cities'), son of Antigonos I Monophthalmus, around 287-286 BC. Her husband died shortly after the birth of her only son, whom she named Demetrius 'the fair' or 'the handsome', heir to the Macedonian throne and future king of Cyrene (now a region in the eastern coast of Libya). Demetrius the handsome had two wives: Olympias of Larisa (bore him a son who became king of Macedonia) and Queen Berenice of Cyrene, who would become Berenice II of Egypt. Demetrius the handsome was assassinated by Berenice at being caught in bed with his mother-in-law.

6) Arsinoe II of Egypt was married three times: at sixteen years old, to Lysimachus of Thrace and had three children: Ptolemy of Telmessus (or Ptolemy Epigonos or Epigones), Lysimachus and Philip. The last two would be killed later by their uncle Ptolemy Keraunos (Arsinoe's half-brother), in the so-called massacre of Cassandrea or

Kassandrea, a city in Macedonia where she reigned. Ptolemy Keraunos ruled over Macedonia and Thrace, and the death of Lysimachus and Philip occurred when Arsinoe II was marrying him. According to historians, the third son, Ptolemy of Telmessus, who had advised the mother not to marry, managed to escape to Illyria. Arsinoe II fled to Alexandria in Egypt, where she married her brother, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. She did not have children with him.

7) Philotera, daughter of Berenice I and Ptolemy I Soter, was the only daughter who did not marry.

Ptolemy II Philadelphus, son of Ptolemy I Soter and Berenice I, reigned between 285 and 246 BC. He married two women named Arsinoe: Arsinoe I (daughter of Lysimachus) and Arsinoe II (his sister). In fact, Ptolemy II Philadelphus has never been heir to the Ptolemaic throne. Being the youngest son of Pharaoh, he was on the last step of the line of succession, while the first would be occupied by his half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos (son of Ptolemy Soter and Eurydice). But this one was rejected as successor by his father and became king of Macedonia in 281 BC, dying in the following year during a Gaulish invasion. His other brother, Meleager, succeeded him in the Macedonian throne for a short period. With Arsinoe I (daughter of Lysimachus) Ptolemy II Philadelphus had three children: Ptolemy III Euergetes, Lysimachus and Berenice Syra (Berenice Phernophorus, meaning 'Dowry Bearer'). By Arsinoe II (his sister), Ptolemy II Philadelphus had no children.

This king appealed to the High Priest in Jerusalem to have a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures for his royal library. The priest sent him seventy-two elders to Alexandria with an official copy of the Law. There, in seventy-two days, they made a translation that was read before the Jewish community presented to the king. Because of the number of translators, this translation became known as Septuagint (LXX). That was the original Septuagint. The Septuagint was written in Koine Greek ('common' or 'common dialect', i.e., popular Greek).

Ptolemy III Euergetes was the successor of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (son of his wife Arsinoe I – the daughter of Lysimachus). He ruled Egypt between 246 and 221 BC. He also took Cilicia and conquered all the lands till the river Euphrates (Third Syrian War or Laodicean War). The Egyptian king continued the domestic policy of his father, colonizing Fayoum, a city in Middle Egypt located 130 kilometers southwest of Cairo. He also ordered the construction of Horus' Temple (237 BC) and the recovery of statues brought out of Egypt during the Persian domination period. As a result of this achievement Ptolemy was named Euergetes, meaning 'Benefactor.' During his reign there were two important events between Ptolemy III Euergetes and Syria: 1) He invaded Syria after an incident with his sister Berenice Syra and his son (we will see this later), in the government of his contemporary, the Seleucid king, Antiochus II Theos (261-246 BC). 2) Two brothers and Seleucid kings (Seleucus II Callinicus and Antiochus Hierax) fought each other, and Antiochus Hierax sought refuge with Ptolemy III Euergetes; he was arrested and escaped but was killed by robbers while fleeing. Ptolemy III married Berenice II (daughter of Magas of Cyrene) and had three children: Ptolemy IV Philopator, Arsinoe III and Magas. He was succeeded by his son, Ptolemy IV.

Ptolemy IV Philopator (244-205 BC): was the successor of Ptolemy III Euergetes after 221 BC. During his reign the Ptolemaic dynasty began to decline, and consequently Egypt. He killed his father and his mother, earning the nickname

Philopator (he who loves his father) ironically. Ptolemy IV also commanded his Chief Minister, Sosibius, to kill his brother Magas (the son of Ptolemy III), and his uncle Lysimachus. He is portrayed by classical authors as a weak and cruel king, who delivered the affairs of state to his ministers and advisers, as Sosibius. In 219 BC King Antiochus III the Great conquered some coastal cities of Celesyria, threatening the Ptolemaic dominion in this region. Ptolemy and Sosibius reorganized the army, for the first time since the Ptolemaic rule, recruiting the native population of Egypt – Fourth Syrian War (219-216 BC). He confronted again the Seleucid king Antiochus III the Great in 217 BC at the Battle of Raphia (or battle of Gaza), in the south of Palestine, where Egypt prevailed. In 210 BC he married Arsinoe III (his sister), with whom he had a son and successor: Ptolemy V Epiphanes, who came to marry Cleopatra I, daughter of Antiochus III the Great (the Seleucid king) to seal a political agreement. After his death, Sosibius and Agathocles ordered the death of Arsinoe III, who was preparing to rule as regent during the minority of his son. Sosibius and Agathocles (his two ministers) died at the hands of the mob (they were lynched), when people heard about the circumstances of the death of Arsinoe III.

Ptolemy V Epiphanes (210-181 BC) reigned from 205 BC, after the death of his father. Some historians say that he became king at the age of five, with a false testament where Sosibius and Agathocles (his two ministers) were considered his guardians. After their death, Ptolemy V was under the care of Oenanthe, Agathocles' mother.



This confusing situation was exploited by the Seleucid king Antiochus III the Great to attack cities in Celesyria – Fifth Syrian War (202-195 BC). Celesyria or Coele-Syria is the region to the North of Syria, later taken by the Romans and Parthians. By Roman intervention, peace was made through the marriage of Cleopatra I, daughter of Antiochus III the Great, to Ptolemy V.

During the reign of his father a Nubian king of the south of Egypt initiated a separatist movement of his territory from the Ptolemaic empire, but Ptolemy V was able to finish with it. By Cleopatra I, he had three children: Ptolemy VI Philometor (meaning 'he who loves his mother'), Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (or Ptolemy VIII Physcon, meaning pot-bellied or great belly) and a daughter, Cleopatra II. Ptolemy VI Philometor and Cleopatra II were brothers and married, as it was customary for Pharaohs, for the Ptolemaic kings had adopted many customs of the Pharaohs. There was rivalry between the two brothers Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II. Ptolemy VI Philometor (or Eupator) was the successor of Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

Ptolemy VI Philometor (reign: 180-145 BC) ruled as co-regent with his mother Cleopatra I (after the death of his father) until her death in 176 AD (the new ruler was six years old at the time). Afterwards he stayed under the tutelage of two advisers of the court, who urged him to invade Celesyria. He married his sister Cleopatra II, more or less, in 175 or 173 BC and had children: Cleopatra III, Cleopatra Thea, Ptolemy Eupator and Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator. In 170 BC Ptolemy VI Philometor wanted to put his brother Ptolemy Physcon (later called Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II) as co-regent, along with his sister and wife Cleopatra II. But that same year, his uncle Antiochus IV Epiphanes invaded Egypt and arrested him (Sixth Syrian War – 170-168 AC). Thus, from 170 to 163 BC the nation was governed by the brother of Ptolemy VI Philometor, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, chosen by the people of Alexandria to be king. In 164 BC Ptolemy VI was expelled from the Egyptian capital Alexandria and took refuge in Rome, who decided to intervene in the dispute between the two brothers, putting Ptolemy VI Philometor as king of Egypt and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II as king of Cyrenaica (eastern coast of Libya), but this one also required the isle of Cyprus. Ptolemy VI Philometor prevented him from achieving this, but fearing the reaction of Rome he let his brother govern Cyrenaica and gave him a daughter in marriage, Cleopatra Thea. However, she came to marry a usurper of the Seleucid throne, Alexander Balas, whose goal was to kill Ptolemy VI Philometor too, as he had done with the legitimate son of Seleucus IV Philopator: Demetrius I Soter. The legitimate successor of this latter was his son Demetrius II Nicator. Thus, Ptolemy VI Philometor considered invalid the marriage of his daughter with Alexander and gave her to Demetrius II Nicator. Faced with such a troubled situation, the inhabitants of Antioch and the Seleucid army asked Ptolemy VI Philometor to become the new Seleucid king, but he refused the offer.

Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (called Physcon = pot-bellied or great belly; He is also known as Ptolemy VIII Physcon) ruled in two periods (170-163 BC and 145-116 BC). The first period of his reign refers to the period in which his brother and Egyptian king Ptolemy VI Philometor was taken prisoner by his uncle, Antiochus IV Epiphanes. During this time he reigned with his sister and sister-in-law, Cleopatra II. With the death of Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II tried to take the throne marrying Cleopatra II his sister who tried to protect the interests of her child, Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator, appointed regent by his father. In 145 BC, on the day of her marriage to Cleopatra II, Ptolemy VIII killed the nephew (Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator). Later, he repudiated the sister and wife to marry her daughter, his niece Cleopatra III, who gave him two children: Ptolemy IX Soter II and Ptolemy X Alexander I, besides three daughters: Cleopatra IV, Cleopatra Selene I and Tryphaena. While she was the widow of Ptolemy VI Philometor, Cleopatra II was supported both by Jews and by intellectuals of Alexandria, which were persecuted by Ptolemy VIII Ptolemy III Euergetes II. Thus,

there was a popularity division between the king and the queen, for some citizens supported Cleopatra II and others, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II. So, in 131 BC, he fled to Cyprus with Cleopatra III, his niece and wife. While he was in exile, he knew that his statues were being destroyed. By envy of Cleopatra II, and as retaliation, he murders the only child of both (Ptolemy Memphitis – 12 years old at the moment. Some historians say that his identity is not yet proven, or that he and Ptolemy Eupator are the same person), sending the dismembered pieces of the child to the Queen on her birthday. In 127-126 BC, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II managed to conquer Egypt, reconciling with Cleopatra II. The three ruled together from 124 BC until the death of Cleopatra II. Demetrius II Nicator tried to invade Egypt, but Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II resisted him. Cleopatra II, who was the mother of Cleopatra Thea and, therefore, mother-in-law of Demetrius II Nicator had promised him the throne of Egypt. Demetrius II Nicator was defeated in a battle near Damascus and tried to flee to Tyre, but his entry in that place was denied and, trying to escape, he was killed (125 BC). Before he died, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II granted the power to Cleopatra III and the two children he had by her to choose which one would be the king, Ptolemy IX Soter II or Ptolemy X Alexander I. Historical records show that Ptolemy IX Soter II ruled twice (116-107 BC and 88-80 BC). Ptolemy X Alexander I reigned during 107-88 BC. Ptolemy IX Soter II married his two sisters, Cleopatra IV and Cleopatra Selene I and had a daughter (Cleopatra, also called Cleopatra Berenice III), who married his uncle Ptolemy X Alexander I.

Thenceforth, the Ptolemaic rulers were (see table at the end of the text):

Ptolemy IX Soter II (116-107 BC)

Ptolemy X Alexander I (107-88 BC)

Ptolemy IX Soter II (88-80 BC)

Ptolemy XI Alexander II (80 BC)

Ptolemy XII (80-51 BC)

Cleopatra VII (51-30 BC)

Ptolemy XIII (51-47 BC) – co-regency with the sister Cleopatra VII

Intervention of Roman Republic in Egypt – Julius Caesar – 47-46 BC

Ptolemy XIV (47-40 AC) – co-regency with the sister Cleopatra VII

Ptolomeu XV Caesar (Cesarion = little Caesar – 44-30 BC)

End of Roman Republic and beginning of Roman Empire – 31/29 BC

Seleucid Dynasty:

Seleucus I or Seleucus I Nicator (Ancient Greek: Nikátōr, ‘the victor’), founder of the Seleucid dynasty, ruled over the region of Western and Eastern Turkey (called Anatolia in Ancient times), Syria, Iraq, Iran, Persia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of India; then, the Seleucid Dynasty extended its dominion over Lebanon and Israel around 168-166 BC. Seleucus I settled in Babylon in 312 BC, the year that usually sets the date of the foundation of Seleucid Empire. He ruled, as satrap (from 323 BC), not only Babylon but also the colossal eastern part of Alexander’s empire. In the northern part of Syria he founded the city of Antioch (Antioch of Syria), in honor of his father Antiochus (a great general during the rule of Philip II of Macedon and his son Alexander the Great). Seleucus I was only child. His mother’s name was Laodice. Seleucus I was born in 358 BC and died assassinated in 281 BC by Ptolemy Keraunos as soon as he reached the European continent. His reign goes from 323 to 281 BC (323-305 BC as satrap and 305-281 BC as king). He was succeeded by his son Antiochus I Soter (281-261 BC).



Since the government of Philip II of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great), four major cities were founded in Asia, with the participation of Antiochus (a general of his army; the father of Seleucus Nicator) and Seleucus I Nicator: Antioch in Turkey; Seleucia ('Seleucia Pieria' – founded by Seleucus I Nicator to the north of mouth of the Orontes river in Syria); Apamea (city of Syria 50 kilometers from the Orontes river, founded by Seleucus I Nicator in honor of his wife Apama); and Laodicea, most likely referring to the city of Laodicea of Lycus (the river Lycus), a city of Phrygia and Lydia in Asia Minor 60 km east of Ephesus.



The ruins of Laodicea

Previously, the city was called Diospole (Diospolis, the city of Zeus) and Rhodas, but when it was reconstructed it received this name in honor of Laodice, wife of Antiochus II Theos (in fact, it was him who rebuilt it, around 261-253 BC), the

grandson of Seleucus I Nicator. The site currently is deserted, and is called by the Turks Eski-Hissar, 'old castle.'

Seleucus I Nicator had two wives: Apama and Stratonice (daughter of Demetrius I Poliorcetes the son of Antigonus). With Apama, he had three children: Apama, Laodice and Antiochus I Soter. Later, after the death of Apama, Seleucus met Stratonice, with whom he had a daughter: Phila.

Seleucus I Nicator was a satrap in the time of Alexander the Great. In Persian, satrap (*khshathrapâvan*) means: 'protector of power [on the territory]' or 'protector of the kingdom', and was the name given to the governors of the provinces, called satrapies in ancient Achaemenid and Sassanid empires of Persia. In other words, satraps were viceroys invested with considerable power, and had their own subjects and territories. Each satrapy was ruled by a satrap, who was appointed by the king. Seleucus I Nicator was moved away from his satrapy in 316 BC by Nicanor, a general of Antigonus I Monophthalmus. In 312 BC, he returned to Babylon, founding the Seleucid dynasty, and in 305 BC he had already managed to put all satrapies of the eastern empire under his rule. His reign reached an area of 3,750,000 square kilometers and a population of 15 million people. Not only Seleucus as all other Diadochi sought alliances with the most privileged classes of these regions (merchants, landowners, priests etc.), for they had riches and prestige and could help them to govern the non-Hellenic populations in peace and with authority, since the immigrants of Greek origin were restricted to only 10% of the population. In the battle of Ipsus (301 BC) described above, where all the Diadochi conspired to overthrow the reign of Antigonus and his son Demetrius I Poliorcetes, Seleucus ended up to set his power in eastern Asia Minor on a great part of the Antigonus' territory, while the other three generals divided the empire of Alexander: Ptolemy won Egypt and Lysimachus received Thrace and the rest of Asia Minor which extended to the River Halys (north of Turkey). Ptolemy claimed no other territorial gain besides Egypt and the recognition of the conquest of the Phoenician port cities. He was also very happy with the end of wars for possession of territories. Cassander, for not having taken the initiative in military confrontation, received very little of the partition, and was content with Macedonia and in taking the part of Greece that Demetrius I Poliorcetes had taken in 307 BC, when he had cast out the ruler of Athens. Seleucus incorporated the rest of Mesopotamia and Syria to his huge territory, gaining the Mediterranean portion of Syrian territory (already conquered by Antiochus his father), which was important commercial region and had a numerous population.

As it was said about Lysimachus, seeing that Seleucus was stronger he allied with Ptolemy I Soter, divorced Amestris and married the daughter of Ptolemy, Arsinoe II of Egypt around 300-299 BC. But here there was also an interest on the part of Ptolemy. So, he made this agreement with Lysimachus through the marriage of his daughter. He wanted to defeat the navy of Demetrius in Cyprus (once he feared the taking of the Phoenician possessions by Seleucus) and conquer the Aegean cities in order to master them.

Thus, Seleucus I Nicator, isolated and flanked by enemies, appealed to his former enemy Demetrius I Poliorcetes and took her daughter, Stratonice as wife (298 BC), performing the wedding on a large ship built by Demetrius to consolidate the covenant of his navy with the Seleucid empire. But later (about 296 BC), seeing the expansion of naval power of Demetrius in the Aegean Sea, Seleucus came back to unite with Lysimachus to expel Demetrius from Cilicia, who ended up retreating to Cyprus. With the death of Cassander, his two teenage children (Antipater II and Alexander V) stayed with the domain of Macedonia, dividing it into two administrative regions. This weakened it and gave way to Demetrius who, with the help of enemies, entered Athens

in 295 BC and took it. In the years that followed, Demetrius started showing his ambition openly, what caused many wars for the control of Macedonia and Greece, especially on Corinth and Athens, with the participation of the other Diadochi and Pyrrhus, king of Epirus. After many unexpected defeats and many humiliations, Demetrius I Poliorcetes abdicated in favor of his son Antigonus II Gonatas and died of disease. Antigonus Gonatas was nicknamed Gonatas due to have been born (319 BC) and raised in Gonnoi in Thessaly (a region bordering Macedonia, Epirus, Central Greece and the Aegean Sea), unless Gonatas is derived from the name of an iron plate (Gonu) protecting the genitals (In Ancient Greek, gonatos). Antigonus II Gonatas died at eighty-three years old and was succeeded by his son Demetrius (the same name as his deceased grandfather). Seleucus I Nicator killed Lysimachus in the battle of Corupedium, and at the end of his life he wanted to take possession of Macedonia and Thrace, but on the way he was assassinated by Ptolemy Keraunos, near Lysimachia (modern Greece) in September 281 BC.

Seleucus I Nicator was succeeded by his son **Antiochus I Soter** (reign: 281-261 BC). Antiochus I Soter was the son of Seleucus I Nicator with his wife Apama. He reigned over the eastern part of the empire (which corresponded to the territory between the Caspian Sea and India) between 292-281 BC, and later (281-261 BC) on its totality. Around 294-293 BC (before his reign) he married the other woman of his father, Stratonice, and had three children: Antiochus II, Stratonice and Apama. After the death of Seleucus I Nicator, he returned to make peace with his father's killer (Ptolemy Keraunos, king of Macedonia and son of Ptolemy I Soter). So he managed to resist the domestic unrest in his kingdom on the part of Syria and the northern Asia Minor. Around 275 BC Antiochus I Soter defeated the Galatians, a nomadic people who came to destroy the cities of Ionia (the region to the southwest of Turkey). For having spared the cities from the destruction of Galatians, he received the title of Soter ('Savior'). He was constantly attacked by his enemy from Ptolemaic dynasty, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, and in 279 BC lost to this one the city of Miletus, in Ionia. Years later, he repelled an Egyptian invasion in the north of Syria (First Syrian War – 274-271 BC), but in later years he lost Phoenicia to the Egyptians (273-272 BC). In turn, Pergamum (in Asia Minor, current Turkey) rebelled against Seleucid dominion in 266-261 BC and fought for its independence, putting the king Eumenes I as their ruler. In the fight against the Galatians in 261 BC, Antiochus I Soter died. Antiochus II came to power after his father's death with the name of Antiochus II Theos.

Antiochus II Theos ('God') reigned in the period of 261-246 BC, rising to power at 26 years old. Antiochus II Theos was the son of Antiochus I Soter and Stratonice. His sisters, Stratonice and Apama married, respectively, Demetrius II of Macedonia (son of Antigonus Gonatas and grandson of Demetrius Poliorcetes) and Magas of Cyrene (son of the first marriage of Berenice I and stepchild of Ptolemy I Soter). Magas was half-brother of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (legitimate son of Berenice I and Ptolemy I Soter) and had a daughter with Apama, also called Berenice. Antiochus II Theos had an older brother named Seleucus, who according to historical sources, died early, probably executed for treason. Antiochus II Theos allied with the king of Macedonia Antigonus Gonatas in the fight against Egypt (Ptolemy II Philadelphus) by the dispute of Syria during the Second Syrian War (260-253 BC). There were six Syrian Wars between the Seleucid Empire and Ptolemaic during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC (274-168 BC) in the region to the north of Syria, called Coele-Syria (or Coele-Syria), later taken by the Romans and Parthians. So Antiochus managed to recover a large part of Asia Minor, including the cities of Ephesus and Miletus, besides to regain the Phoenician coast, lost

to Egypt in the reign of his father. In the war in Miletus, for having vanquished the tyrant who ruled there, he came to be known by the people as a god, hence the name 'Theos' added to his birth name.

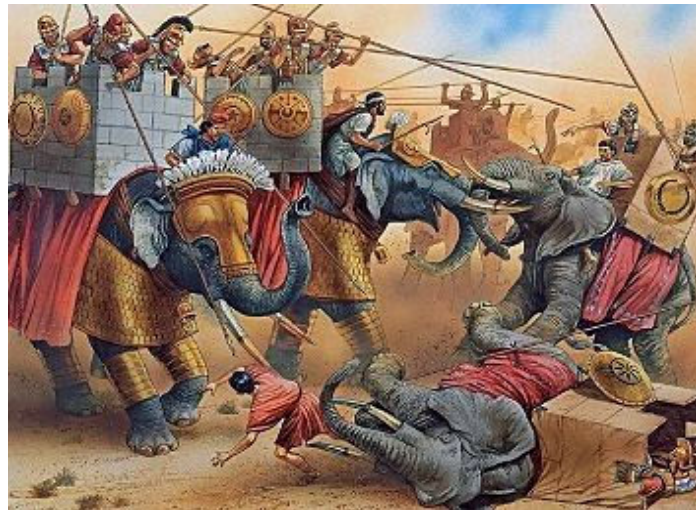
Antiochus II Theos had Laodice as his first wife, and in homage to her he founded the city of Laodicea. There is no information about her, except that her father was called Achaeus and she had two sons and two daughters with Antiochus II Theos: Seleucus II Callinicus, Antigonus Hierax (Also known as Antiochus Hierax). The daughters have supposed names: Apama and Laodice. Later, however, intending to make peace with Egypt in the Second Syrian War, he came to marry Berenice Syra, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe I (daughter of Lysimachus), and sister of Ptolemy III Euergetes and Lysimachus. So Antiochus II Theos divorced Laodice, transferring the succession to the son of Berenice Syra. Laodice was sent into exile in Ephesus, where she continued to foment intrigues in order to recover the crown. In 246 BC, with the death of Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt, Antiochus II Theos repudiated Berenice, leaving her alone with her son Antiochus in Antioch, and took Laodice back as wife and queen. Afraid that her husband changed his mind again, Laodice poisoned Antiochus II Theos, and gave Berenice and her son to be killed by two leaders of Antioch. This incident started the Third Syrian War (246-241 BC), against the brother of Berenice Syra (Ptolemy III Euergetes), now the Ptolemaic king. This one returned to invade Syria after the incident with his sister Bernice Syra and with his nephew. Antiochus II Theos died of disease in Ephesus in 246 BC, with the estimated age of 40 year or, according to other sources, poisoned by Laodice. He was succeeded by his son Seleucus II Callinicus (reign: 246-225 BC), appointed by his own mother Laodice. Her other son, Antiochus Hierax, had the nickname 'hawk', because of his ambitious character, and tried to reign over some territories, but after a war against his brother this one sought refuge with Ptolemy III. He was arrested and escaped but was killed by robbers while fleeing. There are very little historical information about Seleucus II Callinicus and his reign. Seleucus II Callinicus was succeeded by his son **Seleucus III Keraunos**.

Seleucus III Keraunos (243-223 BC) had the name of Alexander (birth name). His paternal grandparents were Antiochus II Theos and Laodice, parents of Seleucus II Callinicus and Antiochus Hierax. Seleucus III Keraunos had a brother called Antiochus III the Great. Alexander succeeded his father and took the name of Seleucus III Keraunos (Keraunos means 'thunder', because of his troops). After three years of reign (225-223 BC) Seleucus III Keraunos was treacherously attacked and killed in Phrygia. He was succeeded by his brother **Antiochus III**, also called **Antiochus III the Great**, who began to reign in 223 BC.

Antiochus III, also called Antiochus III the Great lived for 54 years (241-187 BC), and his reign was between 223-187 BC. During the reign of his brother Seleucus III Keraunos, Antiochus III was a satrap of Babylon. He married Laodice, daughter of King Mithridates II of Pontus, forming an alliance with this powerful kingdom. He had three children with Laodice: Seleucus IV Philopator, Cleopatra I and Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The kingdom of Pontus was located in the north of Anatolia (Turkey), in the southeast coast of the Black Sea. It was called the Euxine by Ionians (Greeks) that explored the region and settled it in the period of 1000-800 BC. His goal was to conquer Syria and parts of Palestine, so he fought the Ptolemaic kingdom (Ptolemy IV Philopator) in the Fourth Syrian War (219-216 BC), but was defeated in 217 BC at the Battle of Raphia, near Gaza. There was a new peace agreement with Egypt.



Antiochus III the Great



Battle of Raphia

After the death of Ptolemy IV Philopator in 205 BC, Antiochus III the Great and King Philip V of Macedonia made a deal to divide the Ptolemaic empire. Antiochus would get the south of Syria, Lycia, Cilicia and Cyprus, while Philip would get the western part of Asia Minor and the Cyclades (islands in the South Aegean). After defeating Ptolemy IV Philopator in the Battle of Panium (also known as Paneion, or Paneas) near Baniyas (northwestern Syria) in 200 BC, Antiochus III the Great seized Egypt, Palestine and Celesyria. Antiochus assured the Jews the freedom of worship and allowed them to collect taxes for the temple in Jerusalem. His ally Philip V, however, was involved in conflicts with Pergamum and Rhodes, who asked Rome for help. Antiochus (in 198 BC) invaded parts of the kingdom of Pergamum, and in 196 BC, Thrace. This invasion led him to problems with Rome that demanded the withdrawal of Antiochus from Europe, what he refused to do. The situation worsened when Antiochus III the Great received at his court an enemy of Rome defeated in the Second Punic War (218-201 BC), the Carthaginian statesman and general Hannibal (his name means: ‘Baal was kind’, or ‘Grace of Baal’, or else, ‘Baal is my lord’). Who had defeated him was Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder, a general and statesman of the Roman

Republic (life: 236-183 AC). Punic Wars was a series of three conflicts between the Roman Republic and the Republic of Carthage, a city-state of Phoenicia in the North of Africa (between 264-146 BC), disputing the lordship of the Mediterranean Sea. The Romans called the Carthaginians 'Punici', originated from the name 'Poenici', i.e., of Phoenician ancestry.

On the other hand, his former ally Philip V was defeated by the Romans in the Second Macedonian War, for Antiochus III refused to help him. Instead, he decided to attack Egypt again that could not be helped by the Romans. After having achieved the peace with Ptolemy V Epiphanes, the Seleucid kingdom definitely annexed the south of Syria and the Egyptian territories of Asia Minor (Fifth Syrian War – 202-195 BC). The peace with Ptolemy V Epiphanes (reign: 203-181 BC) was achieved through the marriage of the daughter of Antiochus III the Great, Cleopatra I, to the Egyptian king. Cleopatra's mother was Laodice III. The girl was born in Syria, and in 193 BC in Palestine she married Ptolemy V Epiphanes. This marriage was arranged when Cleopatra I was still a child because Antiochus III the Great was interested in the agreement with Egypt, for he was seeing the rise of Rome. As a wedding dowry he gave to the Egyptian king the region of Coele Syria. Later, the son of Antiochus III the Great and younger brother of Cleopatra I, Antiochus IV Epiphanes ('Illustrious' or 'honorable') went to war against the child of the union between his sister and the Egyptian king, that is, against his nephew Ptolemy VI Philometor, and denied that this agreement had existed (Sixth Syrian War – 170-168 AC). In 191 BC, Antiochus III the Great was defeated by the Romans at Thermopylae (in Greece), abandoning Europe. But he refused to leave the west region of the Taurus (in the mountains of Asia, at southeast of Turkey), being finally defeated in 189 BC at the Battle of Magnesia (on the plains of Lydia, now Turkey). Through the treaty of Apamea, he was obliged to abandon Europe completely and all of Asia west of the Taurus; he should have only twelve war-ships for the purpose of keeping his subjects under control (although he could have more if he was attacked). He was obliged to pay 15 thousand talents to Rome, to give all the elephants he had in the army and to hand over his son Antiochus IV Epiphanes as hostage along with nineteen persons (twenty persons every three years). Some historians say that Antiochus III the Great and several nobles were killed in battle in Susa in 187 BC. Others say he was killed in a temple of Baal, while trying to get part of the money he had to pay to the Romans. His son **Seleucus IV Philopator** reigned in his stead in the period of 187-175 BC.

Seleucus IV Philopator (Greek, 'who loves his father'), son of Antiochus III the Great, reigned in his stead in the period from 187-175 BC. Although the empire he inherited was not as big as his father's before the war against Rome (190-189 BC), it was still sizable consisting of Syria (including Cilicia and Palestine), Mesopotamia, Babylon, Persia and Media. His daughter Laodice married Perseus the Macedonian king. In the same year, he sent his son Demetrius I Soter as hostage to Rome; on the other hand, his brother Antiochus IV Epiphanes came back from there. In 175 BC, pressed by financial needs, he gave orders to his commander Heliodorus to collect taxes in the temple of Jerusalem in order to pay the war compensation demanded by Rome, but this one found opposition by the high priest and returned. In the same year, Seleucus IV Philopator was assassinated (poisoned) by Heliodorus. He was 60 years old when he died. As the true heir Demetrius I Soter, son of Seleucus IV Philopator, was being held as hostage in Rome, a child Antiochus, another son of Seleucus IV Philopator, was formally the king for a few years until his younger brother Antiochus IV Epiphanes who

had spent 14 years in Rome as a hostage, killed him. In returning from Rome he also killed Heliodorus and took the Seleucid throne (reign: 175-164 BC).

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (215-162 BC) – Antiochus Epiphanes (‘which manifests itself with splendor’ or ‘illustrious’) was the son of Antiochus III the Great and Laodice, and his siblings were: Seleucus IV Philopator and Cleopatra I. He ruled Syria in 175-164 BC and died in 162 BC at 53 years old. After his father’s defeat in 189 BC at the Battle of Magnesia against the Romans, Antiochus IV Epiphanes lived 14 years as an exile in Rome until 175 BC. He got involved in the **Sixth War of Syria** against Egypt (170-168 BC) and its kings, the brothers Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, conquering the strategic city of Pelusium (it was an ancient city of Lower Egypt, located in the northeast of the Nile delta, on the easternmost mouth of the Nile in a traditional Egyptian territory). He tried a second invasion of Egypt to take Alexandria in 168 BC, but was interrupted by intervention of Rome, who sent the consul Gaius Popillius Laenas to Alexandria. Antiochus IV, who had already taken Cyprus and Memphis, returned to Alexandria, but met with the Roman consul at Eleusis, on the outskirts of the capital. Eleusis was an ancient Greek city, full of mysticism and closely linked to Greek mythology. There, Gaius Popillius Laenas gave him an ultimatum on behalf of the Roman senate for him to leave Cyprus and Egypt immediately. History says that on that day, Popillius took a sugar cane, drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus (who was trying to gain time) and ordered him not to leave it till make a decision. Antiochus chose to obey. The ‘Day of Eleusis’ ended the Sixth Syrian War and to Antiochus’ hopes to conquer Egyptian territory.

After this episode, Antiochus focused his attention in Judea, also trying to take Hellenism there and annex it to Rome. During the reign of his father Antiochus III the Great, it was granted broad religious autonomy to the Jews who were divided into two parties, one ‘pious’ and another that favored hellenization and romanization, the latter being richer and composed of the most important people before society. Antiochus supported the latter party. In 168-167 BC, in the return from the war against Egypt, Antiochus IV Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem, which became permanently controlled by soldiers. In that place, Antiochus IV committed sacrilege by killing a pig (unclean animal) on the altar. He sought to establish Hellenism by force, introducing the destruction of copies of the Scriptures as law and forbidding the Jewish worship: the observance of the Sabbath, dietary prohibitions and even the circumcision. In the Temple of Jerusalem it was installed a statue of the Greek god Zeus (Jupiter to the Romans). This situation (Romanization and Hellenization of Judea) generated displeasure among the faithful Jews as Mattathias and his sons, John, Simon, Judas Maccabee, Eleazar, and Jonathan (the Hasmonean family, known as Maccabees). They live in a village called Modiín. The revolt, which began with a forced act of idolatry imposed by a Greek general, became a war where Mattathias died in old age (166 BC), and his son Judas Maccabee, was appointed general. The Maccabees drove out the troops of Antiochus IV from Jerusalem. Judas wanted to return to Jerusalem to purify the temple. But by reaching the holy temple, he found only desolation, ruins, statues and idols everywhere. Daniel’s prophecy (Dan. 8: 14) was referring to the time that elapsed from the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Seleucid king, until its purification by Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabean revolt lasted from 167 BC to 160 BC, that is, 2,300 days, or more precisely, 6 years, 3 months and 18 days. Judas Maccabee died and was succeeded by his brother Jonathan, who became high priest in Jerusalem. The Seleucid king reached the end of his reign in the year 164 BC, with a serious illness (it is thought that it was a cancer, with ‘no one to help him’) and died in

162 BC. It was succeeded by Antiochus V Eupator his son (164-162 BC). For Israel, it had already begun the Hasmonean Period (167-63 BC).

Antiochus V Eupator (173-162 BC) reigned after Antiochus IV Epiphanes (his father), between 164-162 BC. The name Eupator means 'born of good father.' He became king when he was only nine years old (some historians say twelve). He had a sister named Laodice VI. In 163 BC the Romans recognized him as king, in opposition to Demetrius I Soter his cousin, who was living as a hostage in Rome. Lysias, his tutor, became governor of Celesyria and Phoenicia. In 162 AC Lysias formed an army to attack the Jews, continuing the war of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Accompanied by the king, he came out against Judea and won a victory over the small group of Judas Maccabee in the battle of Beth-Zechariah. However, when Lysias learned of the return of Philip from Persia and Media (he was the official ruler of Antiochus V but he intended to assume the government), he made peace with the Jews and granted them freedom of worship. In 162 BC, Antiochus V Eupator and Lysias were killed by army soldiers who supported Demetrius I Soter, son of Seleucus IV Philopator and had returned from his exile in Rome, claiming the throne of the Seleucid kingdom. After killing the King Antiochus V Eupator (164-162 BC), his cousin (son of Antiochus IV Epiphanes), Demetrius I Soter established himself as king of the Syrian throne (161-150 BC), but could not win the sympathy of the Romans. A usurper of the Seleucid throne (**Alexander Balas**) ended up killing him and rose to power (150-145 BC).

The legitimate successor of Demetrius I Soter was his son **Demetrius II Nicator**. During a new battle between the Seleucid kingdom and the Ptolemaic at Antioch (145 BC), Ptolemy VI Philometor died, Demetrius II Nicator survived and Alexander Balas was also killed, falling from a horse and fracturing his skull (some versions of the story say something else: that Alexander had his head cut off by the Nabataeans when he tried to flee from Ptolemy VI Philometor, for the Nabataeans wanted peace with Egypt). Demetrius II Nicator rose to power (144-125 BC), but soon after, the general Diodotus Tryphon, the guardian of Alexander Balas' son (Antiochus VI Dionysus) entered Antioch, and the boy three years old at the time was crowned the king of Syria (144 BC). Demetrius II Nicator, unable to return to the capital, settled in Seleucia. Two years later, General Diodotus Tryphon deposed Antiochus VI Dionysus and sat on the throne of Syria, as another usurper, reigning between 142 and 139 BC. The dispute for the throne continued between him and Demetrius II Nicator. In 139 BC, however, this one was forced to go to war against the Parthians. Parthia was a kingdom that incorporated Media and Persia. Mithridates I (the king) took Demetrius as prisoner; and the Seleucid province of Babylon became part of Parthia. In Syria, however, the general Tryphon was overthrown by the brother of Demetrius II Nicator, Antiochus VII Euergetes (or Sidetes), who also married Cleopatra Thea (his sister-in-law) and reigned in the period of 139-129 BC. He was known as Sidetes, in reference to Sida, a city in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), where he was raised. Mithridates I kept Demetrius II Nicator alive, and arranged his marriage to a Parthian princess named Rhodogune, with whom he had children. However, he tried to escape from exile, but failed. He tried again, and was captured. In 129 BC, his brother Antiochus VII Euergetes marched against Parthia. The new king was Phraates II. He defeated Sidetes, who died in an attempt to free his brother from captivity. Demetrius managed to escape and returned to Syria, trying once again to retake the throne. But he was not welcome by the people. The queen of Egypt Cleopatra II also tried to involve him in a plot against his brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, preparing an army for him. Unfortunately, with the desertion of the troops of Demetrius, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II put on the throne of Syria another usurper,

Alexander II Zabinas (129-125 BC, supposedly the son of Alexander Balas), but who committed suicide with poison, after being defeated by Antiochus VIII Grypus, son of Demetrius II Nicator. Demetrius was defeated in a battle near Damascus, he tried to escape to Ptolemais, which denied his entry by orders of his own wife Cleopatra Thea. So he tried to flee to Tyre, but was killed while trying to escape by boat. He was succeeded by his wife Cleopatra Thea and then by his two sons, Seleucus V Philometor and Antiochus VIII Grypus in co-regency with their mother. She killed Seleucus V Philometor, and after 120 BC with the death of Thea, Antiochus VIII Grypus ruled alone until 96 BC, despite the dispute with his half-brother Antiochus IX Cyzicenus.

The wars continued between the Seleucid kingdom and Ptolemaic until 64 BC, when General Pompey annexed Syria to Roman Republic. The Jewish people suffered too much because of these successive wars, since their territory was used as passing and sometimes also as a battlefield for the two rival armies.

The Seleucid rulers during this troubled period were (see table at the end of the text):

- Cleopatra Thea – 125-120 BC
- Seleucus V Philometor – 125 BC (killed by the mother – Cleopatra Thea)
- Antiochus VIII Philometor (Antiochus VIII Grypus) – 125-96 BC – co-regent with the mother (Cleopatra Thea) till her death in 120 BC
- Antiochus IX Cyzicenus – 155-96 BC – dispute with Antiochus VIII Grypus
- Seleucus VI Epiphanes Nicator – 96-95 BC
- Antiochus X Eusebes Philopator – 95-90 BC
- Demetrius III Eucaerus (or Philopator) – 95-87 BC
- Antiochus XI Epiphanes Philadelphus – 95-92 BC
- Philip I Philadelphus – 95-84 (or 83 BC)
- Antiochus XII Dionysus – 87-84 BC – Antiochus Epiphanes Dionysus (the name minted in coins)
- Tigranes II of Armenia (Tigranes the Great) – intervention – 83-69 BC
- Seleucus VII Kybiosaktes or Philometor – 83-69 BC – reigning only over some cities that supported him.
- Antiochus XIII Asiaticus – 69-64 BC
- Pompey annexes Syria to Roman Republic – 64 BC
- Philip II Philoromaeus ('Friend of the Romans') or Barypous ('Heavy-Foot') – 65-63 BC
- End of Roman Republic and beginning of Roman Empire – 31/29 BC

Punic Wars was a series of three conflicts between the Roman Republic and the Republic of Carthage, a city-state of Phoenicia in the North of Africa (between 264-146 BC), disputing the lordship of the Mediterranean Sea. The Romans called the Carthaginians 'Punici', originated from the name 'Poenici', i.e., of Phoenician ancestry. The Punic Wars during the Roman Republic were restricted to the dominion of Rome on northern Africa, involving the Iberian Peninsula and some islands of the Western Mediterranean. The First Punic War was in 264-241 BC. The second, in 218-202 BC; and the third, in 149-146 BC. In 146 BC there was annexation of the Greek Peninsula and its islands to the Roman Republic. And this also contributed to the end of the Seleucid Empire and Ptolemaic. For Israel it was also the beginning of a new age, with the end of Hasmonean period (167-63 BC) until the final taking of Jerusalem by Pompey in 63 BC and the subsequent installation of the Roman Empire (31 BC), which

lasted for about 500 years in the West (476 AD), and nearly a thousand years in the East (until 1453), with the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

Syrian Wars:

There were six Syrian Wars between the Seleucid Empire and Ptolemaic during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC (274-168 BC) in the region to the north of Syria, called Coele Syria (or Coele-Syria), later taken by the Romans and Parthians.

1) First Syrian War (274-271 BC) – Antiochus I Soter repelled an Egyptian invasion in the north of Syria by Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

2) Second Syrian War (260-253 BC) – Antiochus II Theos allied with the king of Macedonia Antigonus Gonatas in the fight against Egypt (Ptolemy II Philadelphus) by the dispute of Syria. Intending to make peace with Egypt, he came to marry Berenice Syra, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and sister of Ptolemy III Euergetes.

3) Third Syrian or Laodicean War (246-241 BC) – between Ptolemy III Euergetes and Antiochus II Theos, because of the death of Berenice Syra and his son

4) Fourth Syrian War (219-216 BC) – between Antiochus III the Great and Ptolemy IV Philopator – the first one wanted to regain Syria and parts of Palestine, but was defeated in 217 BC at the Battle of Raphia near Gaza.

5) Fifth Syrian War (202-195 BC) – between Antiochus III the Great and Ptolemy V Epiphanes still young, after the death of his ministers. The peace was achieved by the marriage between Cleopatra I, daughter of Antiochus III the Great, and Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

6) Sixth Syrian War (170-168 BC) – between Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his nephew Ptolemy VI Philometor (son of Cleopatra I and Ptolemy V Epiphanes). Antiochus IV Epiphanes denied any peace agreement between the two kingdoms.

Conclusion and learning with these dynasties:

Regarding our study about the Intertestamental Period, we can say that this was a period of great darkness for humanity, with all peoples living in idolatry and influencing each other not only with distorted religious concepts, but aggravating the sinful moral patterns of many centuries: incest, adultery, futile wars, murders, struggle for the throne, ambition, birth defects and other diseases due to consanguineous marriages and practically among adolescents without full hormonal maturity, a literature fully focused on mysticism and idolatry and immorality; in short, all kinds of perversion that can be found in a human being due to separation from God by disobedience to His voice through the prophets. If Jesus had not been born at that moment determined by God to bring us Salvation and Light, there would be no chance of redemption for the planet.

I found it interesting throughout this study that the wisdom of God and His vision of the whole are beyond our comprehension, moving people and kingdoms according to His will and using prophets like Daniel, who had already received the revelation of what would happen with his people after the Babylonian captivity and in the distant future, like what we are living today.

What was God thinking when He saw all this violence and still looking for some faithful remnants willing to do His will and urge people to turn to Him? What He must feel today, watching the same violence in humanity, but waiting with great patience and mercy that men realize their mistakes and repent? He could wipe out the planet right now, if He wanted to; however, He remains faithful to His own word always giving to men a chance of salvation.

In writing this study I had my mind broadened to realize the power of God. Those characters were there as if within a scenario, playing a role, but totally unaware of what happened to other people, with their enemies in another kingdom or with their own friends living far away or even as prisoners of war. In short: without the vision of the divine plan behind it all. God, however, was watching the planet from outside; or rather, from above, and with total control over the hidden purpose in every heart. We are less than a grain of sand before His eyes, but, as the apostle Paul says (2 Cor. 4: 7-11), having a treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

Other thing that I realized was the force that was used in the conquest of territories by all these empires; how many soldiers died in battle so that the name of a single man was exalted! How much blood was shed! Transporting this to our days, we begin to understand the words of Jesus. His kingdom is greater than all that ever existed, and our enemy is not flesh and blood, but rulers and authorities, the cosmic powers of the darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph 6: 12), and that were also faced by Daniel so he could receive the revelation from God (Dan. 10: 3; 13; 20-21). Therefore, our promises are available to us (Eph. 1: 3), the blood of only ONE (the blood of Jesus) has been poured in place of many, but it's up to us to pay the price for the taking of possession of our land, of our promises (Gal. 3: 8b; 11b), the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world. That's why our dreams delay to be a reality. It is because we are in a war for possession of our territory, until we can put in it the mark of our lordship, or rather, the lordship of Jesus on it. The Lord told us to make His kingdom on earth prevail. That is our mission.

Table of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings (Before Christ):

* Ptolemy VII Neos Philometor was killed by his uncle Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II

** Ptolemy XV Philopator Philometor Caesar (47-30 BC), better known as Caesarion (Greek: Kaisariōn, literally 'little Caesar'; Latin: Caesariō) and Ptolemy Caesar, reigned along with his mother (Cleopatra VII) from 44 BC. He only held the position of sole ruler for some days (August 12th, up to August 23rd, 30 BC), after the suicide of Cleopatra, at the time when his death was ordered by Octavian, who would become the Roman emperor Caesar Octavian Augustus. Cleopatra VII was sister and wife of her two brothers: Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV

*** Seleucus V Philometor was killed by his mother Cleopatra Thea

Philip II Philoromaeus (Ancient Greek: Φίλιππος ὁ Φιλορωμαῖος, 'Friend of the Romans') or Barypous (Βαρύπους, 'Heavy-foot'), a ruler of the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire, was the son of the Seleucid king Philip I Philadelphus, and the last Seleucid king.

Kings of the South (Ptolemies) – reign	Kings of the North (Seleucids) – reign
Ptolemy I Soter – 305-285	Seleucus I Nicator – 305-281
Ptolemy II Philadelphus – 285-246	Antiochus I Soter – 281-261
	Antiochus II Theos – 261-246
Ptolemy III Euergetes – 246-221	Seleucus II Callinicus – 246-225
Ptolemy IV Philopator – 221-205	Seleucus III Keraunos – 225-223
	Antiochus III the Great – 223-187
Ptolemy V Epiphanes – 205-180	Seleucus IV Philopator – 187-175
Ptolemy VI Philometor – 180-170 – 1°	Antiochus IV Epiphanes – 175-164
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II – 170-163 – 1°	Antiochus V Eupator – 164-162
Ptolemy VI Philopator – 163-145 – 2°	Demetrius I Soter – 161-150
	Alexander Balas (usurper) – 150-145
Ptolemy VII Neos Philometor * – 145	Demetrius II Nicator – 145-144
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II – 145-116 – 2°	Antiochus VI Dionysus – 144-142 + Diodotus Triphon – 142-139
	Antiochus VII Euergetes – 139-129
	Alexander II Zabinas (usurper) – 129-125 / Demetrius II Nicator – 129-125
	Cleopatra Thea – 125-120
	Seleucus V Philometor – 125 ***
	Antiochus VIII Philometor (Grypus) – 125-96
Ptolemy IX Soter II – 116-107 – 1°	Antiochus IX Cyzicenus – 115-96 (dispute with Grypus)
Ptolemy X Alexander I – 107-88	Seleucus VI Epiphanes Nicator – 96-95
	Antiochus X Eusebes Philopator – 95-90
	Demetrius III Eucerus Philopator – 95-87
	Antiochus XI Epiphanes Philadelphus – 95-92
	Philip I Philadelphus – 95-84/83
Ptolemy IX Soter II (88-80) – 2°	Antiochus XII Dionysus – 87-84
Ptolemy XI Alexander II (80)	Tigranes II of Armenia (83-69)
Ptolemy XII (80-51)	Seleucus VII Kybiosaktes – 83-69
	Antiochus XIII Asiaticus – 69-64
	Syria annexed to Roman Republic – 64
Cleopatra VII (51-30)	Philip II Philoromaeus – 65-63
Ptolemy XIII (51-47) + Cleopatra VII	
Intervention – Julius Caesar (47/46)	
Ptolemy XIV (44-40) + Cleopatra VII	
Ptolemy XV Caesar (44-30) **	
Beginning of Roman Empire – 31/29	Beginning of Roman Empire – 31/29

Part 3 - Revelation of Daniel chapter 11

Now that we know how long the nations reigned during the Intertestamental Period and the story of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings (the kings of the north and south), let's go to the revelation of the prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 11:1-45), that is, its interpretation.

The Bible version most used here is NRSV, sometimes completed by NIV.

• Dan. 11:

1 As for me [*who was speaking was the angel sent by the Lord, Gabriel or other angel*], in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to support and strengthen him [*to strengthen Darius*].

2 Now I will announce the truth to you. Three more kings shall arise in Persia. The fourth shall be far richer than all of them, and when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.

3 Then a warrior king [NIV, a mighty king] shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and take action as he pleases.

4 And while still rising in power, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted and go to others besides these.

5 Then the king of the south shall grow strong, but one of his officers shall grow stronger than he and shall rule a realm greater than his own realm.

6 After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to ratify the agreement. But she shall not retain her power, and his offspring shall not endure. She shall be given up, she and her attendants and her child and the one who supported her.

7 In those times a branch from her roots shall rise up in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall take action against them and prevail.

8 Even their gods, with their idols and with their precious vessels of silver and gold, he shall carry off to Egypt as spoils of war. For some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north;

9 then the latter shall invade the realm of the king of the south, but will return to his own land.

10 His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall advance like a flood and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress.

11 Moved with rage, the king of the south shall go out and do battle against the king of the north, who shall muster a great multitude, which shall, however, be defeated by his enemy.

12 When the multitude has been carried off, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall overthrow tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail.

13 For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, larger than the former, and after some years he shall advance with a great army and abundant supplies.

14 In those times many shall rise against the king of the south. The lawless among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail.

15 Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks, and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, not even his picked troops, for there shall be no strength to resist.

16 But he who comes against him shall take the actions he pleases, and no one shall withstand him. He shall take a position in the beautiful land, and all of it shall be in his power.

17 He shall set his mind to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of peace and perform them. In order to destroy the kingdom, he shall give him a woman in marriage; but it shall not succeed or be to his advantage.

18 Afterward he shall turn to the coastlands, and shall capture many. But a commander shall put an end to his insolence; indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him.

19 Then he shall turn back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.

20 Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an official for the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be broken, though not in anger or in battle [NIV: His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle].

21 In his place shall arise a contemptible person on whom royal majesty had not been conferred; he shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom through intrigue.

22 Armies shall be utterly swept away and broken before him, and the prince of the covenant as well.

23 And after an alliance is made with him, he shall act deceitfully and become strong with a small party.

24 Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province and do what none of his predecessors had ever done, lavishing plunder, spoil, and wealth on them. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.

25 He shall stir up his power and determination against the king of the south with a great army, and the king of the south shall wage war with a much greater and stronger army. But he shall not succeed, for plots shall be devised against him

26 by those who eat of the royal rations. They shall break him, his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall slain.

27 The two kings, their minds bent on evil, shall sit at one table and exchange lies. But it shall not succeed, for there remains an end at the time appointed.

28 He shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. He shall work his will, and return to his own land.

29 At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but this time it shall not be as it was before.

30 For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall lose heart and withdraw. He shall be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay heed to those who forsake the holy covenant.

31 Forces sent by him shall occupy and profane the temple and fortress. They shall abolish the regular burnt offering and set up the abomination that makes desolate.

32 He shall seduce with intrigue those who violate the covenant; but the people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm and take action.

33 The wise among the people shall give understanding to many; for some days, however, they shall fall by sword and flame, and suffer captivity and plunder.

34 When they fall victim, they shall receive a little help, and many shall join them insincerely.

35 Some of the wise shall fall, so that they may be refined, purified, and cleansed, until the time of the end, for there is still an interval until the time appointed.

36 The king shall act as he pleases. He shall exalt himself and consider himself greater than any god, and shall speak horrendous things against the God of gods. He shall prosper until the period of wrath is completed, for what is determined shall be done.

37 He shall pay no respect to the gods of his ancestors, or to the one beloved by women; he shall pay no respect to any other god, for he shall consider himself greater than all.

38 He shall honor the god of fortresses instead of these; a god whom his ancestors did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.

39 He shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall make more wealthy, and shall appoint them as rulers over many, and shall distribute the land for a price.

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. He shall advance against countries and pass through like a flood.

41 He shall come into the beautiful land, and tens of thousands shall fall victim, but Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites shall escape from his power.

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 riches of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train.

44 But reports from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to bring ruin and complete destruction to many.

45 He shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with no one to help him.

Let's find out, then, what all this means:

- Dan. 11: 1: "As for me [*who was speaking was the angel sent by the Lord, Gabriel or other angel*], in the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to support and strengthen him [*to strengthen Darius*]".

In 539 BC, Cyrus II, or Cyrus the Great, invaded Babylon and incorporated the kingdom into the Medo-Persian Empire, making it a satrapy under the rule of Darius the Mede, his maternal uncle, who was 62 years old at the time (the moment of this prophecy). This Darius the Mede is a different person from Darius II (Neh 12:22), known as Darius the Persian, who ruled Babylon and Persia (424-404 BC) after Artaxerxes. He is also distinct from Darius I, the successor to Cambyses II, who reigned from 522 to 486 BC, the period when the construction of the Jerusalem temple took place (520-516 BC).

- Dan. 11: 2-4: "Now I will announce the truth to you. Three more kings shall arise in Persia (*Cyrus, Cambyses II and Darius I*). The fourth (*Xerxes*) shall be far richer than all of them, and when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. Then (*After the reign of Xerxes' descendants*) a warrior king [NIV, a mighty king] shall arise (*Alexander the Great*), who shall rule with great dominion and take action as he pleases. And while still rising in power, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven (*among his four generals*), but not to his posterity, nor according to the dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted and go to others besides these." (*Alexander's son by his wife Roxanne, Alexander IV, was murdered at 13 years old, as well as the mother of Alexander the Great, Olympia, all killed by his general Cassander*).



Here, the Bible refers to Alexander the Great (332 BC). This fact is also reported in Dan. 8: 5-8; 20-22, where the Bible says that the ram with two horns symbolizes Media and Persia, and the male goat symbolizes Greece. A single horn speaks of Alexander's power, breaking and giving place to four horns (symbol of his four generals), and then, out of one of them comes another horn, a little one, which grows exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the beautiful land (Dan. 8: 9 = Israel), symbolizing Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC).

The kingdom of Greece is also symbolized in the book of Daniel by another animal:

- Dan. 7: 6: "After this, as I watched, another appeared, like a leopard. The beast had four wings of a bird on its back and four heads; and dominion was given to it."



- Dan. 11: 5: "Then the king of the south shall grow strong, but one of his officers shall grow stronger than he and shall rule a realm greater than his own realm" (NRSV);

“The king of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become even stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power” (NIV).

The kingdom of the south refers to Egypt, south of Palestine. “The king of the south shall grow strong” = Ptolemy I Soter; “but one of his officers”, or “but one of his commanders” = one of Alexander’s generals: Seleucus I Nicator (to whom Syria was given), who reigned with greater power than Ptolemy I Soter.

- Dan. 11: 6: “After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to ratify the agreement. But she shall not retain her power, and his offspring shall not endure. She shall be given up, she and her attendants and her child and the one who supported her.”

“After some years” = about 50 years later (the grandson of Seleucus I Nicator: Antiochus II Theos); “they shall make an alliance” = the descendants of Ptolemy I Soter and Seleucus I Nicator, respectively, Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Antiochus II Theos.

“the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to ratify the agreement” = the marriage of Berenice Syra (daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe I) to Antiochus II Theos, the third Seleucid king (261-246 BC) to make peace with Egypt in the Second Syrian War.

- Dan. 11: 7-9: “In those times a branch from her roots shall rise up in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall take action against them and prevail. Even their gods, with their idols and with their precious vessels of silver and gold, he shall carry off to Egypt as spoils of war. For some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north; then the latter shall invade the realm of the king of the south, but will return to his own land.”

“A branch from her roots” = Ptolemy III Euergetes, the brother of Berenice Syra, returned to invade Syria, Cilicia and conquered all the lands till the river Euphrates (Third Syrian War or Laodicean War).

- Dan. 11: 10-14: “His sons shall wage war [His sons will prepare for war – NIV] and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall advance like a flood and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress. Moved with rage, the king of the south shall go out and do battle against the king of the north, who shall muster a great multitude, which shall, however, be defeated by his enemy. When the multitude has been carried off, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall overthrow tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail. For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, larger than the former, and after some years he shall advance with a great army and abundant supplies. In those times many shall rise against the king of the south. The lawless among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail.”

“His sons shall wage war” [His sons will prepare for war – NIV] = wars between the Seleucid kingdom and Ptolemaic by Egypt, Syria and Palestine, especially among the reigns of the Seleucids kings: Seleucus II Callinicus and Seleucid III Keraunos and Antiochus III (246-187 BC), and the Ptolemaic kings: Ptolemy III Euergetes, Ptolemy IV Epiphanes and Ptolemy V Epiphanes (246-181 BC).

- Dan. 11: 15-16: “Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks, and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, not even his picked troops, for there shall be no strength to resist. But he who comes against him

shall take the actions he pleases, and no one shall withstand him. He shall take a position in the beautiful land, and all of it shall be in his power.”

“The king of the north” = Antiochus III the Great in 200-198 BC, who takes hold of Egypt, Palestine and Coele-Syria (Coele-Syria).

- Dan. 11: 17: “He shall set his mind to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of peace and perform them. In order to destroy the kingdom, he shall give him a woman in marriage; but it shall not succeed or be to his advantage” (NRSV);

“He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed or help him” (NIV).

“He shall give him a woman in marriage” or “He will give him a daughter in marriage” = reference to the marriage of Cleopatra I (daughter of Antiochus III the Great) to the Egyptian king Ptolemy V Epiphanes (reign: 203-181 BC).

- Dan. 11: 18-19: “Afterward he shall turn to the coastlands (in other versions: ‘unto the isles’), and shall capture many. But a commander shall put an end to his insolence; indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him. Then he shall turn back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found”;

“Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back on him. After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more” (NIV).

“Coastlands or isles” = isles of Greece. “But a commander” = reference to Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder, a Roman general during the Second Punic War (218-202 BC) and a statesman of the Roman Republic (life: 236-183 AC), what it is in accordance with the date of the government of Antiochus III the Great (reign: 223-187AC). The presence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus there symbolizes Rome entering the east for the first time.

- Dan. 11: 20: “Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an official for the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be broken, though not in anger or in battle”;

“His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle” (NIV).

“An official” or “a tax collector” = a reference to Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 BC), son of Antiochus III the Great. He gave orders to his commander Heliodorus to collect taxes in the temple of Jerusalem in order to pay the war compensations demanded by Rome (because of what his father had done), but this one found opposition by the high priest and returned. In the same year, Seleucus IV Philopator was assassinated (poisoned) by Heliodorus. He was 60 years old when he died.

- Dan. 11: 21-28 (NRSV): “In his place shall arise a contemptible person on whom royal majesty had not been conferred; he shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom through intrigue. Armies shall be utterly swept away and broken before him, and the prince of the covenant as well. And after an alliance is made with him, he shall act deceitfully and become strong with a small party. Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province and do what none of his predecessors had ever

done, lavishing plunder, spoil, and wealth on them. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time. He shall stir up his power and determination against the king of the south with a great army, and the king of the south shall wage war with a much greater and stronger army. But he shall not succeed, for plots shall be devised against him by those who eat of the royal rations. They shall break him, his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall slain. The two kings, their minds bent on evil, shall sit at one table and exchange lies. But it shall not succeed, for there remains an end at the time appointed. He shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. He shall work his will, and return to his own land.”

(NIV): “He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time. With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. Those who eat from the king’s provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.”

“A contemptible person” = Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) made use of all kinds of device of lie, deceit, cunning, flattery and cruelty, as no one had done before him. Epiphanes means: ‘illustrious’ or ‘which manifests with splendor.’ In order to stay in power, he had no scruple. His ascension to the throne of Syria was through intrigues and deceit and was thirsty for conquest, spilling the blood of his enemies in many wars. He enriched with the spoils of war, when he fought against Egypt. The Bible calls him “A contemptible person” or “vile person” because, pretending friendship and alliance, he entered Egypt and took possession of the kingdom of Ptolemy VI Philometor (“the prince of the covenant”).

“The king of the south shall wage war with a much greater and stronger army” or “The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him” = Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II or Ptolemy VIII Physcon – 182-116 BC. He really had a great and mighty army around him and could win Antiochus Epiphanes, as History says; but his plan was thwarted by treason within his own army, for his generals disagreed with his ambition of incorporating his kingdom to the Seleucid kingdom. On both sides there was great multitude, both armies extremely numerous. However, the ambition prevailed, and the king of the South (Egypt) was the most involved (“But he shall not succeed, for plots shall be devised against him by those who eat of the royal rations (his generals). They shall break him, his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall slain”).

For some years, the Ptolemies and Seleucids made several treaties, in order to find peace between the two empires, but their hearts had one purpose: to deceive each other

(“The two kings, their minds bent on evil, shall sit at one table and exchange lies”). These two kings (North and South), according to some historians, again refer to Antiochus and Ptolemy VI Philometor. “The king of the North will return to his own country” = the first expedition of Antiochus IV Epiphanes against Egypt in 170 BC, when he conquered Pelusium in the Nile delta. But difficulties in his homeland (betrayal by his own people against him) forced him to leave Egypt. On the way back (taking too great spoil) he plundered Jerusalem and the Temple treasure. He tried a second expedition against Egypt to take Alexandria in 168 BC, but was interrupted by intervention of Rome, through the consul Gaius Popillius Laenas.

- Dan. 11: 29-30: “At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but this time it shall not be as it was before. For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall lose heart and withdraw. He shall be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay heed to those who forsake the holy covenant.”

“He shall return and come into the south” = the second expedition of Antiochus IV Epiphanes against Egypt, but interrupted by the intervention of Rome (consul Gaius Popillius Laenas). “Ships of Kittim” is a likely reference to Rome or Greece. Kittim was one of the sons of Javan (son of Japheth, son of Noah – Gen. 10: 4; 1 Chr. 1: 7), ancestor of the Greeks, and whose descendants settled in Cyprus and were engaged in maritime trade. The Septuagint translates the word ‘Kittim’ in the Book of Daniel 11: 30 as ῥωμαῖοι = romaíoi = Romans.

- Dan. 11: 31: “Forces sent by him shall occupy and profane the temple and fortress. They shall abolish the regular burnt offering and set up the abomination that makes desolate” (NRSV);

“His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation” (NIV).

Jesus reported the same fact in Matt. 24: 15 with the words: “So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand)” and Mk. 13: 14: “But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand).” The term “the abomination that makes desolate” or “the abomination that causes desolation” (NIV) means desolation, grief, sadness, devastation; to stun, stupefy, make amazed, be astonished, be an astonishment, be destitute, destroy (self), waste.

Antiochus IV sent a large army against Jerusalem (168-167 BC) and took it by a sudden attack; he killed 40,000 people; sold many Jews as slaves; installed the statue of Zeus in the temple to be worshiped; committed sacrilege by killing a pig (unclean animal) on the altar and then its blood was sprinkled on the temple. He broke into the Holy of Holies and plundered the golden vessels and other utensils of the temple, equivalent to a thousand talents; he also interfered in the choice of the high priest and the governor of Judah, and this way, with the introduction of Hellenism in Judea, he finished with the sacrifices made in the temple of Jerusalem.

Dan 8:14 writes, “It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.” He was referring to the time elapsed between the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV and its purification by Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabean Revolt lasted from 167 BC to 160 BC—that is, 2,300 days (6 years and 3 months), or more precisely, 6 years, 3 months, and 18 days.

This would be repeated with the destruction of the Temple by Titus, who abolished the Mosaic Priesthood once and for all in Israel (Dan. 9: 26-27).

- Dan. 11: 32: “He shall seduce with intrigue those who violate the covenant; but the people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm and take action.” (NRSV)

“With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.” (NIV)

“Those who have violated the covenant” = some unbelieving Jews that facilitated the infiltration of Antiochus Epiphanes into the Holy City.

“The people who are loyal to their God shall stand firm” or “the people who know their God will firmly resist him” = it refers to the Maccabees, from 167 BC who challenged the hostile power of Antiochus IV Epiphanes even if it costed them their lives.

- Dan. 11: 33-35: “The wise among the people shall give understanding to many; for some days, however, they shall fall by sword and flame, and suffer captivity and plunder. When they fall victim, they shall receive a little help, and many shall join them insincerely. Some of the wise shall fall, so that they may be refined, purified, and cleansed, until the time of the end, for there is still an interval until the time appointed.”

“Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.” (NIV)

“The wise among the people” = in the time of the Maccabees, the wise were men with spiritual insight circulated among the people, teaching the Scriptures and continued preaching, even under persecution and death. Many of these wise men were killed but those who survived remained pure until the end. Sword, flame, captivity and plunder are a summary of the life tribulations and sufferings of the faithful men and women from the resurrection of Jesus until today, in all parts of the world, during the process of purification of their souls, the same way as it happens to us. Wise are those who understood the purposes and the right ways of God, those who take pleasure in them, and share their wisdom and experience with other people so that they can also receive the eternal life. In the eyes of God, wise is he who knows and puts His word into practice. They will live forever in the presence of their God.

“The appointed time” = it refers to the time of the Gospel of Christ, at the time of the Holy Spirit and the growth of the Early Church.

- Dan. 11: 36-39: “The king shall act as he pleases. He shall exalt himself and consider himself greater than any god, and shall speak horrendous things against the God of gods. He shall prosper until the period of wrath is completed, for what is determined shall be done. He shall pay no respect to the gods of his ancestors, or to the one beloved by women [NVI: for the one desired by women]; he shall pay no respect to any other god, for he shall consider himself greater than all. He shall honor the god of fortresses; instead of these; a god whom his ancestors did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. He shall deal with the strongest fortresses [*the walls of Jerusalem*], by the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall make more wealthy, and shall appoint them as rulers over many, and shall distribute the land for a price.”

- The God of gods = The God of Israel.

- He shall pay no respect to the gods of his ancestors = all the Syrian gods, not even Baal.

• Or to the one beloved by women [NVI: for the one desired by women] = here, by the fact that the context is talking about gods, is very likely to be referring to Adonis, the Greek god also called Tammuz (in Babylonian; or Dumuzid, the Mesopotamian god of the shepherds, and also linked to the growth of the plants), worshiped by women, even by Jewish women (Ezek. 8: 14: “Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the Lord; women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz”). In this verse the prophet Ezekiel receives revelation from God about the abominations committed in Jerusalem, including the attitude of women who were crying in the temple because of this foreign god. The cult of Tammuz of Mesopotamia was accepted by the Jewish exiles. Tammuz is the one who dies and is reborn each year, the god worshiped by Jewish women. The proof of this is that the name of the fourth Jewish month post-exile, which corresponds to June-July of our Christian calendar, is precisely ‘Tammuz’, coinciding with the time of grapes harvest. ‘Tammuz’, in Hebrew, means ‘hidden’, ‘son of life.’

Strong evidence that Tammuz was the same Greek god Adonis is a festival called ‘Adonia festival’, commemorated with flowers and fruit, as it was said above in relation to the name of the Jewish month corresponding to June-July of our Christian calendar. Adonis (Greek: Ἀδωνίς) is a hero of Greek mythology in the Hellenistic period, loved by Aphrodite and Persephone. He was born of an incestuous relationship between Myrrha and her father Kinyras (or Theias), King of Cyprus (or Assyria / Syria), and spends part of his time in the kingdom of the living and the other in the underworld (or in the kingdom of the dead). He was killed still young by a wild boar while hunting. Artemis (to the Greeks) or Diana (to the Romans) was the goddess of the moon and hunting. She sent a wild boar to kill Adonis as punishment for his arrogance in saying that he was better hunter than she.

Adonia festivals in Athens, Alexandria and the Roman world (5th to 4th century BC) celebrate both his death at the hands of Artemis and his love for Persephone (from the kingdom of the dead) and Aphrodite (from the kingdom of the living). These festivals were characterized by the high number of women participating, for their joy and debauchery (Aphrodite or Venus was the goddess of love, beauty and sexuality), and their ritual of mourning. The gardens of Adonis were well-known, where plants after being cut were placed in pots with his image, made of wood, and soon withered (Persephone was the goddess of herbs, flowers, fruit and perfumes). The cult of Adonis was designed as a god dying and rising. The city of Byblos in Phoenicia was dedicated to Adonis. The worship of Adonis in Byblos was practically the same Phoenician / Canaanite cult to ‘Baal.’ This god was not only a spring deity or a spirit of vegetation, but an important city god, comparable to Baal-Melcart in Tyre and Eshmun in Sidon. In Syria and Palestine, Adonis was called by a title (Baal, Adon = lord) instead of a proper name.

- He shall pay no respect to any other god = the gods of other nations.
- For he shall consider himself greater than all = He will consider himself a god.
- The god of fortresses = this seems to be Jupiter or Zeus, the supreme god of the Romans and Greeks. In Strong’s Concordance, the Hebrew word used for ‘fortress’ can be written in several ways: ma’owz or mauwz or mahoz or mauz; the best known is ‘mahoz’, and whose plural is Mahuzzim (‘fortresses’). It has several meanings: a fortified place; a defense, force, fortress (a military stronghold, especially a strongly fortified town fit for a large garrison), rock, strength, strengthen, strong, stronghold (a place that has been fortified so as to protect it against attack). Besides symbolizing the strength of the glory and money of Rome, the ‘god of fortresses’ (Zeus, in Greek, or Jupiter, its Roman equivalent) can be called the God of forces of nature, because Zeus,

in Greek mythology, is the father of gods and men, and who exercised authority over the other Olympian gods. He is the god of lightning in Greek mythology, king of the gods, the god of heaven, thunder and lightning, the god of law, order and justice. In Syria, Phoenicia and Canaan, Baal was considered the supreme god, including having power over the forces of nature and the atmospheric phenomena.

- A god whom his ancestors did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts = Jupiter (a god that the ancestors of Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria did not know) would be worshiped with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things, because, through this, all men would admire him for his power and wealth.

- By the help of a foreign god = it means the Greek-Roman gods that Antiochus IV Epiphanes adopted, as the Greek god Zeus (Jupiter to the Romans), whose statue he placed in Jerusalem. Jupiter was the son of Saturn and Cybele, and known as the Roman god of the day, often identified with the Greek god Zeus. He was also called Jovis. Jupiter married Juno, the favorite daughter of Cybele. His children were: Mars, Minerva and Venus. In Roman mythology, Mars is the father of Romulus and Remus the legendary founders of Rome.

- He shall deal with the strongest fortresses, that is, the walls of Jerusalem and that of the temple. The Hebrew word for 'fortresses' remains *ma'owz* or *mauwz* or *mahoz* or *mauz*, with the same meaning: a fortified place; a defense, force, fortress, rock, strength, strengthen, strong, stronghold. However, the whole expression 'the strongest fortresses', can be understood as: 'fortresses of munitions', a fortification, castle, or fortified city; figuratively, a defender, surrounded by a fence, fortress, stronghold. From a primitive root = *batsar* = to be isolated (unassailable, i.e., inaccessible by height or fortification), cut off, defense or fence, fortify, mighty things, to restrain, strong, wall up, withhold. In this verse, the expression 'strongest fortresses' refers to the temple of Jerusalem and its walls, for in v. 31 he is called 'the sanctuary of strength' [KJV: "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate"]. There, Antiochus placed the statue of this strange god (Jupiter of Olympus).

- Those who acknowledge him ("those who violate the covenant" – Dan. 11: 32), he shall make more wealthy, and shall appoint them as rulers over many (perhaps even the high priest and the governor of Judah); and shall distribute the land for a price = Antiochus will cause that those who minister to this idol may reign over many, he will put them will in positions of power and trust, and shall distribute the land for a price [NRSV; or KJV: "shall divide the land for gain" (gain = price)], that is, they will receive an extra 'wage' for worshipping the foreign god. In other words, 'the glory and the money of Rome', because money is a force and a god. So, those people not faithful to God ('those who violate the covenant') will honor the god of fortresses with vast treasures dedicated to him (or 'the gods of the fortresses': *Mahuzzim*).

The actions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes also remind us of the destruction of the Temple by Titus in 70 AD.

And verse 36 (Dan. 11:36) also refers to the eschatological Antichrist: "The king shall act as he pleases. He shall exalt himself and consider himself greater than any god (cf. 2 The 2: 3-4), and shall speak horrendous things against the God of gods (cf. Rev 13:5-6; Dan 7:8; 25). He shall prosper until the period of wrath is completed, for what is determined shall be done."

"The king" refers to a ruler who will act according to his own will, a man who rises to power, prospers, grows in strength, and then turns against the God of Israel and His saints. This king assumes the role of a deity:

2 The 2:3-4: “Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness [Some manuscripts: sin] is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”

The Antichrist opposes Jesus and assumes all power in heaven and on earth, making his own laws in place of Christ’s laws, teaching false doctrines and demanding worship of himself, as mentioned by Daniel and John, blaspheming against the very name of God (Dan 7:7-8; 24-25; Dan 11:36; Rev 13:5-6)

“So that he sets himself up in God’s temple” (2 The 2:4) – This temple mentioned by Paul does not refer to the physical reconstruction of the Third Temple in Jerusalem, as believed by Dispensational Premillennialist Christians and Jews. Nor does it refer to the Jerusalem Temple that would be destroyed by Titus in 70 AD. Rather, it refers to the Church of God (Rev. 11:1–2: “the sanctuary of God” or “the temple of God” = the true Church of Christ), that is, the believers (1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16), for the Antichrist will affront and attempt to destroy the faith of God’s own children (Dan. 7:21, 25).

- Dan. 11: 40-45: “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. He shall advance against countries and pass through like a flood. He shall come into the beautiful land, and tens of thousands shall fall victim, but Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites shall escape from his power. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall become ruler of the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the riches of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall follow in his train. But reports from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to bring ruin and complete destruction to many. He shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with no one to help him.”

Antiochus IV Epiphanes got involved in the Sixth War of Syria against Egypt (170-168 BC) and its kings (the brothers Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II), conquering the strategic city of Pelusium (in the northeast of the Nile delta). Libyans and Ethiopians helped him. He tried a second invasion of Egypt to take Alexandria in 168 BC, but was interrupted by intervention of Rome, which sent the consul Gaius Popillius Laenas to this city. Antiochus IV, who had already taken Cyprus and Memphis, returned to Alexandria, but met with the Roman consul at Eleusis, on the outskirts of the capital. There, Gaius Popillius Laenas gave him an ultimatum on behalf of the Roman senate for him to leave Cyprus and Egypt immediately. Antiochus chose to obey.

In 168-167 BC, in the return from the war against Egypt, Antiochus IV Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem, which became permanently controlled by soldiers. He established His palatial tents between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea, in Israel, in the city of Emmaus, near Jerusalem. From there he granted all the power to his captains to continue the war against the Jews with rigor. He placed his tent there as if he had taken possession of the glorious holy mountain. He didn’t care with Edom, Moab and the Ammonites because they were his allies, helping him to invade Israel.

The situation of Romanization and Hellenization of Judea generated displeasure among the faithful Jews like the Hasmonean family, known as Maccabees (or Maccabeus). The Maccabees ended up driving out the troops of Antiochus IV from Jerusalem. The Maccabean Revolt lasted from 167 to 160 BC. The Seleucid king

reached the end of his reign in the year 164 BC, with a serious illness (it is thought that it was a cancer – “with no one to help him”) and died in 162 BC.

- Dan. 8: 14 writes: “For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.” He was referring to the time elapsed from the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Seleucid king (around 168-167 BC) until its purification by Judas Maccabeus. The Maccabean revolt lasted from 167 BC to 160 BC, that is, 2,300 days, or more precisely, 6 years, 3 months and 18 days.

Part 4 - Prophecies of Daniel and Apocalypse

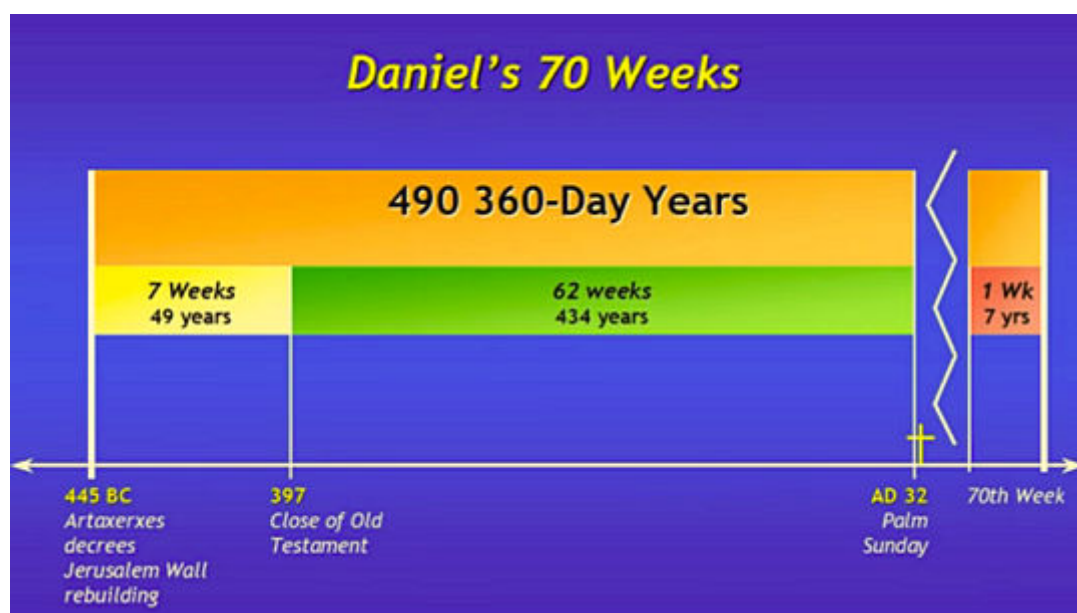
In chapter 9, Daniel prays to God for himself and for the people, recognizing their sin, and therefore the cause of the captivity of seventy years. Here it is given him a revelation through the angel Gabriel (Dan. 9: 21 cf. Dan. 8: 16) about the seventy weeks that were determined on the people of Israel (Dan. 9: 24).

²⁴ “Seventy ‘sevens’ [Or ‘weeks’] are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish [Or restrain] transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. [Or Most Holy Place; or most holy One]

²⁵ Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree [Or word] to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, [Or an anointed one] the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens’, and sixty-two ‘sevens’. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

The seventy weeks represent a time (according to some theologians, the years after the rebuilding of Jerusalem walls in 445 BC plus God’s period of silence, after the prophet Malachi – 400 years), until the death and ascension of Jesus Christ, having the six divine targets fulfilled with His death on the cross (Dan 9:24):

- To make the transgression cease.
- To put an end to sins.
- To make atonement for iniquity.
- To bring the everlasting justice.
- To seal the vision and the prophecy (in Jesus the prophecies about the messianic restoration over Israel were finished).
- To anoint the Holy of Holies.



Source: YouTube Video – The Bible: Daniel; by ProclaimHisWord

In the image below (cf. Dan 9: 25) the angel separates the seven weeks (forty-nine years, which goes from the construction of Jerusalem to the beginning of the Intertestamental Period, and the other four hundred and thirty-four years, that is, sixty-two weeks, until the death and ascension of Jesus). The space with the zigzag line, in white, corresponds to the period between the 1st and 2nd coming of Christ, the church period, where there was the destruction of the temple by Titus in 70 AD. And the last week (seven years) at the end of the figure corresponds to the Great Tribulation and will complete the seventy weeks (four hundred and ninety years) described by the prophet in Dan. 9: 24. Therefore, this vision not only concerns the first coming of Christ, but also to His second coming.

• Dan 9: 26-27 (NIV)

²⁶ After the sixty-two ‘sevens’, the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. [Or off and will have no-one; or off, but not for himself] The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven’. [Or ‘week’] In the middle of the ‘seven’ [Or ‘week’] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him [Or it].” [In the original document in Hebrew, according to the footnote in NIV, it is written: “And one who causes desolation will come upon the pinnacle of the abominable temple, until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolated city.”]

“Anointed One will be cut off” – it refers to the first coming of Jesus and His death.

“The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary” – it refers to Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

“The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed” – like a flood of bloodshed in war after war. Israel and Jerusalem will suffer wars until the end times; that is what it means.

Verse 26: We can say that this occurred during the First Jewish-Roman War (66–73 AD) against the Roman Empire. Roman legions under the command of Titus (Titus Flavius Vespasianus Augustus) besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the center of rebel resistance on August 1, 67 AD, culminating in the destruction of the Temple sometime in August 70 AD and the defeat of the remaining Jewish forces [3½ years]. During the final 3½ years, the Fortress of Masada, occupied by the Sicarii rebels at the time of its destruction by the Romans, was destroyed on April 16, 73 AD.

The gospel of Christ was preached exclusively to the Jews until 33 AD, completing the sixty-nine weeks of Dan. 9: 24-26, when the first martyrs like James and Stephen appeared. After Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans (Titus), the time of God’s covenant with the Jews was finished and the time of God’s reign began for the Gentiles (Matt. 21: 43; Lk. 21: 24; Rom. 11: 25). Thus, the covenant with Israel will only be restored at the second coming of Christ, when through repentance, they begin to cry out for the name of Jesus (Lk. 13: 34-35, Matt. 23: 39, Acts 1: 6-7, Rom. 11: 26-37). “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (Lk. 13: 34-35).

Many theologians argue that there is a time gap between verse 26 (which speaks of Jesus' first coming) and verse 27 (which corresponds to the 7th of the 70 weeks mentioned in verse 24). This interval corresponds to the period of the church, between the first and second coming of Christ. The phrase "He will confirm a covenant with many for one week" (Dan. 9:27) refers to the Antichrist (the beast rising out of the sea) and his alliances with the ten kings (horns) mentioned in Daniel 7:7–8, 20–21; 24–25, and Revelation 17:12.

Dan 9: 27

²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. [Or 'week'] In the middle of the 'seven' [Or 'week'] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him [Or it]."

[In the original document in Hebrew, according to the footnote in NIV, it is written: "And one who causes desolation will come upon the pinnacle of the abominable temple, until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolated city."]

This verse speaks clearly about the eschatological Antichrist: he will act as a king or ruler. During the first half of the Great Tribulation (3½ years), the Antichrist will appear favorable, attempting to unify nations and bring peace to the world while promising solutions to global problems; however, in the second half, he will reveal his true character. He will unite all nations under his economic, political, and military power against the true Church of Christ, but the Messiah (Jesus) will defeat him.

Just as Antiochus IV Epiphanes installed the statue of Zeus in the temple for worship, Titus did something similar. Some scholars relate the expression "on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation" or "And one who causes desolation will come upon the pinnacle of the abominable temple" to the Roman ensigns (eagles) brought to the east gate of the temple, and eagles (birds) being sacrificed on the south wall by his soldiers.

"Wing or pinnacle" – the Hebrew word is *kanaph* (כִּנָּף) – Strong #3671. It has several meanings: mantle, cloak, shirt, skirt, corner (of a garment or bed-clothing), border, an edge or extremity (of a bird or army), flap, wing, winged (bird), a pinnacle, covering, protection.

Regarding the eschatological Antichrist, some Dispensationalists suggested an idol placed on a 'wing' of the new Jewish temple (3rd temple) where he will demand worship, establishing worship for himself. But neither Jesus, nor the NT letters, nor the prophets suggest the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem (a third temple). In the original document in Hebrew, according to the footnote in NIV, it is written: "And one who causes desolation will come upon the pinnacle of the abominable temple, until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolated city." This can suggest that the Antichrist himself will build an abominable temple where he can be worshiped.

Jesus said in Matthew 24:15: "So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand)".

"So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand)" or "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' [Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11] standing where it [Or he; also in verse 29] does not belong" (Mk. 13:14) or else "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near" (Lk 21:20) – This refers to Titus entering the Temple, profaning it, and sacrificing eagles on the southern wall, just as Antiochus IV Epiphanes did in the past [he erected an altar to Zeus in place of the altar of the Lord (1 Maccabees 1:54–59; 1 Maccabees 6:7; 2 Maccabees 6:1–5)]. In the case of the eschatological Antichrist, it will be some horrible form of idolatry.

The Antichrist is not yet a person; it is a symbol of an evil power opposed to everything that represents Christ (the Spirit of God's love), and in our day, it manifests as a spirit contrary to Jesus—under the influence of Satan, Principalities, and Powers—utilizing worldly elements such as science, technology, money, knowledge, fame, influential rulers, and even religion (religious leaders). It leads masses of people into deception through new doctrines, false teachings, and false prophecies; in short, it is anything that claims to be stronger than the true God and sets itself up as a god within people's spirits and lives, drawing them away from the truth and simplicity found in Jesus.

John also called this antichristian force Babylon, referring not only to the ancient city of Chaldea or to Rome, but also to the confused, wicked, and profane world system, antagonistic to the Kingdom of God, using not only religion (the apostate church, prostituted with worldly abominations, that is, the religious system of the Antichrist, which began with Romanism in the NT), but also secular powers (such as the world monetary system, commerce, and politics) to oppress and try to steal faith in the word of God preached by Jesus.

The animals seen by Daniel and John, especially the fourth animal of terrifying appearance, referred to Rome, which, even after its empire had collapsed, continued to maintain its influence and will be restored in the last days.

Part 5 - The Great Tribulation

This theme continues the study about the prophecies of Daniel in relation to the Apocalypse. Jesus' prophecies speak of the time of the Great Tribulation and the Rapture.

“Will the people of God stay here on Earth during the Great Tribulation?”

“Yes! The Church of Christ will face the Great Tribulation.” (Lk. 21: 35). But the Lord will not allow His people to be afflicted before they have His seal on their foreheads, that they may be prepared against all the conflicts – Rev. 7: 3b; Rev. 9: 4b; Rev. 14: 1; Rev. 22: 3b-4; cf. Ezek. 9: 4-6. The seal of the Spirit will be clearly visible both by friends and enemies. Then, the Lord will come to fetch her (Matt. 24: 29-31). After the rapture, it will be the time of the plagues for those who didn't repent of their sins and carry the mark of the Beast on the foreheads and hands (Rev. 13: 16; 18). The Beast will be defeated by Jesus.

God always protected His people from the calamities that He Himself brought to the wicked. He delivered those who were His from His wrath but He did not take them from the place where they were. He left them there to see His action, His judgment and His justice. The people witnessed the plagues of Egypt, watched God's judgment on Babylon before they were delivered from there but they were not removed by Him before His work was completed. The people survived Haman's death decree against the Jews in Susan, Persia, but through struggle. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not bow to the statue erected by Nebuchadnezzar but were freed from death, for believing in Him and resisting oppression. Jesus said: “I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world” (Jn. 17: 15-16). He also taught us to pray: “and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Matt. 6: 13). Ps. 30: 1-2 says: “I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.”

The Great Tribulation will be a period of unprecedented difficulties in the second half of the week described in Dan. 9: 26-27; Dan. 12: 1-2; Dan. 12: 9-12; Rev 7: 14, involving the whole Earth (Lk. 21: 35; Rev. 3: 10), with its apex in the Holy Land (Israel – Rev. 11: 1-2), where the Antichrist (the beast rising out of the sea) will be known in the form of a man (In the first half of Daniel's week, that is, in the first half of the Great Tribulation, he will appear favorable to all peoples), receiving power and authority directly from Satan (Rev. 13: 4-5) and exercising a cruel reign (in the second half, when he will reveal his true character). During this period there will be a big activity of demons who are allowed to torment men (Rev. 9: 2-11), along with the judgments of God (the plagues or bowls) against those who have the mark of the Beast and we not caught up. Thus, the Great Tribulation will be immediately followed by the return of Christ (The Rapture of the Church: Matt. 24: 15-31; Mk. 13: 1-27; Lk. 21: 5-28; Lk. 17: 20-36). The seventh trumpet mentioned in Rev. 11: 5 is the moment of the Rapture of the saints and the beginning of God's judgments over the wicked, that is, the plagues, the bowls of God's wrath).

- Rev. 11: 13-14: “At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.”

This scene speaks of Jesus' second coming (cf. 1 The. 4: 16-17), the moment of the Rapture, when the saints ascend with the Lord and the wicked are frightened by His judgment and what happens to nature around them.

- Rev. 11: 15: "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet (The 7th trumpet), and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.'"

Now the glory of the kingdom of God has come over all, hence the songs of praise. Here the power of Christ is seen in its fullness. The 7th trumpet is not just an event, but it leads to the seven plagues of God's total wrath (Rev. 15–16), hence the despair of the wicked (Rev. 11: 11; 13). Thus the seventh trumpet heralds the time of the end; the kingdom of the world became Christ's.

- 1 The. 4: 16-17: "For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever."

NIV: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

- Dan. 12: 1-2: "At that time Michael, the great prince, the protector of your people, shall arise. There shall be a time of anguish, such as has never occurred since nations first came into existence. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who is found written in the book [*The bible was referring to the book of Life*]. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

- Rev. 7: 14: 'I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'these are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

- Rev. 3: 10: "Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth".

Jesus' prophecies

- Matt. 24: 1-31:

1 As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple.

2 Then he asked them, 'You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down'.

3 When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?'

4 Jesus answered them, Beware that no one leads you astray.

5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will lead many astray.

6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, **but the end is not yet.**

7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places:
 8 all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.
 9 Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name.
 10 Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another.
 11 **And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.**
 12 And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold.
 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
 14 And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; **and then the end will come.**
 15 **So when you see the desolating sacrilege** standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand),
 16 then those in Judea must flee to the mountains;
 17 the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house;
 18 the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat.
 19 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days!
 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath.
 21 For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.
 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; **but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.**
 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!' – do not believe it.
 24 **For false messiahs and false prophets will appear** and produce great signs and omens, **to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.**
 25 Take note, I have told you beforehand.
 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness', do not go out. If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms', do not believe it.
 27 **For as the lightning** comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, **so will be the coming of the Son of Man.**
 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.
 29 **Immediately after the suffering of those days** [*The Great Tribulation, that's what it means*] the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.
 30 **Then** the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**
 31 **And he will send out his angels** with a loud trumpet call, and **they will gather his elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

• Mk 13: 1-27:

1 As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!'
 2 Then Jesus asked him, 'Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down'.
 3 When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately,
 4 'Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?'

- 5 Then Jesus began to say to them, Beware that no one leads you astray.
- 6 Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray.
- 7 **When you hear of wars and rumors of wars**, do not be alarmed; this must take place, **but the end is still to come.**
- 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.
- 9 As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them.
- 10 **And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations.**
- 11 When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.
- 12 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death;
- 13 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.
- 14 But when you **see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be** (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains;
- 15 the one on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away;
- 16 the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat.
- 17 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days!
- 18 Pray that it may not be in winter.
- 19 **For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been** from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be.
- 20 And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days.
- 21 And if anyone says to you at that time, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'Look! There he is!'—do not believe it.
- 22 False messiahs and false prophets will appear and **produce signs and omens**, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.
- 23 But be alert; I have already told you everything.
- 24 But in those days, **after that suffering**, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,
- 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
- 26 **Then they will see the Son of Man** coming in clouds with great power and glory.
- 27 **Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect** from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

• Lk 21: 5-36:

- 5 When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said,
- 6 'As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down'.
- 7 They asked him, 'Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?'
- 8 And he said, Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them.

9 When you hear of **wars and insurrections**, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, **but the end will not follow immediately.**

10 Then he said to them, Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;

11 there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

12 But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name.

13 This will give you **an opportunity to testify.**

14 So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance;

15 for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.

16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death.

17 You will be hated by all because of my name.

18 But not a hair of your head will perish.

19 By your endurance you will gain your souls.

20 When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near.

21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it;

22 for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written.

23 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days!

For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people;

24 they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; **and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled** (cf. Matt. 21: 43; Rom. 11: 25; Rev. 11: 2).

25 There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, **for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.**

27 Then **they will see the Son of Man** coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, **because your redemption is drawing near.**

29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees;

30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near.

31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.

33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34 Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly,

35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.

36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Important comments on the three passages above

1) There are passages that apply to all eras of Christianity between the 1st and 2nd coming of Jesus, for there have always been wars, persecutions of His followers, famines, epidemics and natural events, but we know that these will intensify as the end approaches: Matt. 24: 1-14; Mk. 13: 1-13; Lk. 21: 5-19.

2) In the verses of Matt. 24: 15-21, Mk. 13: 14-19 and Lk. 21: 20-24, Jesus speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the interesting thing is that Lk. 21: 22 says: “for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written.” This was not a coincidence, but rather a consequence of the sin and unbelief of the Jews and an evident rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. He had already warned them about this punishment from God:

- Lk. 13: 34-35: “Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem. ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!’”

- Lk. 19: 41-44: “As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, ‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.’”

“But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be” or “So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel” or “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near” – this refers to Titus entering the Temple, desecrating it, as Antiochus IV Epiphanes did in the past.

The Jews who had the chance fled to the mountains or to Pella, in the Decapolis region, or towards the Mediterranean, and managed to escape the Roman massacre. Entering the city was also dangerous for those who were outside (“the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat”; “those out in the country must not enter it”). That is why Jesus was already warning them not to worry about trivial things (“the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house”), because they had to leave in a hurry. Pregnant and nursing women would have difficulty fleeing or defending themselves, because the violence of the Romans would not spare their newborn babies or those still in the womb. And this was under God’s control because of their rebellion and hardened hearts in the face of the chance for salvation that He had given them through Jesus (“for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written... For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people”).

This makes us reflect on what God feels about attitudes of idolatry, rebellion and rejection of Jesus Christ by a person and on the strength of His wrath against evil in all ages of humanity, even more so in the last days!

Indeed, it was one of the great disasters in Jewish history, remembered to this day (“For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be”; “they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations, that is, the Diaspora”). It is not known what day of the week the siege of the city began or the major destruction occurred. What is known is that it was Passover time when the siege began, around April 14th, and lasted until September 8th, 70 AD – 4 months, 3 weeks and 4 days; on August 1st, 67 AD

they destroyed the center of rebel resistance in Jerusalem, culminating in the destruction of the temple sometime in August 70 AD (some rabbis say it was a little earlier). Herod's Palace fell on September 7th, and the city came completely under Roman control on September 8th. According to Flavius Josephus [*The War of the Jews* book IV, chapters 1 to 4] it was the seventeenth of Tammuz (June-July) when the first breach was made in the wall by the Romans, and three weeks later, on the 9th of Av (July-August), their army managed to penetrate the Temple, plunder it and destroy it. Therefore, we are certain that it did not occur in winter, as mentioned by Jesus ("Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath"), but we do not know whether it was on Sabbath. And finally, He adds in Lk. 21:24: "and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (cf. Matt. 21: 43; Rom. 11: 25; Rev. 11: 2).

3) In the last group, Jesus speaks about the period of the Great Tribulation: Matt. 24: 22-31; Mk. 13: 20-27 and Lk. 21: 25-36. More than that, He says that everything will be unexpected (Matt. 24: 27): "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man." Only God knows the exact date of all the events. What would be the use if the wicked knew the date and prepared themselves? But His children will know when the time draws near:

- Dan. 12: 10: "Many shall be purified, cleansed, and refined, but the wicked shall continue to act wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand."

4) "So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand)" or "When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' [Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11] standing where it [Or he; also in verse 29] does not belong" (Mk. 13:14) or else "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near" (Lk 21:20) – This refers to Titus entering the Temple, profaning it, and sacrificing eagles on the southern wall, just as Antiochus IV Epiphanes did in the past [he erected an altar to Zeus in place of the altar of the Lord (1 Maccabees 1:54–59; 1 Maccabees 6:7; 2 Maccabees 6:1–5)]. In the case of the eschatological Antichrist, it will be some horrible form of idolatry.

The verse that most sustains the faith of the Christian is: "Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Lk. 21: 28).

- Rev. 21: 1-5: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'"