

# DANIEL 11

## Medo-Persian Empire



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“And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him. Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more kings will appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.”

Verses 1 & 2

(Historical note: It appears that Darius the Mede only ruled Babylon while Cyrus was the King of all the Medes and the Persians. While Cyrus was fighting the nation's battles, Darius was keeping things under control at Babylon.)

Historically we can see the fulfillment of this prophecy. As with most of Daniel, Daniel is given a prophetic outline of future events. We have a starting point, “the first year of Darius the Mede.” That would put this vision about 538 BC. The vision goes on to say that three more kings would appear and then a fourth who would be far wealthier.

“The Medes also subdued the Persians and other Iranians on the plateau, but the Median empire lasted only until 549, when the last Median king, Astyages (r. 584-549), was defeated by his Persian vassal CYRUS THE GREAT, who became the heir of the Median king and ruled an even greater empire from 549 to 530 BC. His son CAMBYSES II, who ruled from 530 to 522, invaded Egypt. Following an interregnum of a year, DARIUS I took power by killing the usurper Smerdis and established the Achaemenid empire on a firm basis. He consolidated and further extended Persian conquests (so that the empire stretched from Egypt and Thrace in the west to northwestern India in the east); established the system of satraps (local governors) under firm centralized control; encouraged the spread of

ZOROASTRIANISM; and was a great patron of the arts. Darius's son XERXES I (r. 486-465), after his defeat by the Greeks in the PERSIAN WARS, retired from active government and set a precedent for future kings who were kept in power by the efficient bureaucracy organized by Darius." *Collier*

"In 539 b.c. Cyrus occupied Babylonia; by the end of his reign, he had extended his conquests from the Mediterranean to the eastern fringes of the Iranian plateau, with his capital at Pasargadae in southwest Iran." *Collier*

"Cyrus' son Cambyses, who had conquered and occupied Egypt, proclaiming himself pharaoh, died in 522 b.c.— some say by his own hand—and the Persian throne was seized by a Median magician. But a revolt headed by Darius, prince of a younger branch of the Achaemenid line, deposed the usurper after a few months. Darius (r. 521-485 b.c.) was the greatest of the Persian rulers—a builder and administrator as well as a conqueror. He brought under Persian sway northwest India as far as the Indus River and Armenia as far as the Caucasus. He also campaigned in Thrace (modern European Turkey and Bulgaria) but was turned back from the Danube River by the Scythians." *Collier*

"Persian ruler of the Achaemenid empire from 486 to 465 BC, Xerxes was the son of DARIUS I and Atossa, daughter of Cyrus the Great." *Collier*

"Although he was not Darius's eldest son, he was designated crown prince about 498. Xerxes, meaning 'ruler over heroes,' was his throne name. At the beginning of his reign he put down a revolt in Egypt and also in Babylon, where he razed the walls and plundered the city." *Collier*

To sum up the above historical accounts, it goes something like this. After Cyrus the Great, three more kings would rule:

1. Camabyses II: 530-522
2. Smerdis, an usurper killed by Darius I: 522-521
3. Darius I, known as Darius I the Hystaspes: 521-486

Then we are told that a fourth king would rule who was “far richer than all the others.” To get some idea of his wealth, read Esther 1:1-8. This king would “stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.”

“In 480 b.c. the Persians under King Xerxes again attacked Greece, this time by both land and sea. The Hellespont was bridged with boats and a canal was cut through the isthmus of Mount Athos, to avoid a repetition of the disaster of 492 b.c.” “His most important action, however, was the invasion of Greece that ended in defeat at the Battle of Salamis in 480.” *Collier*.

“The Greek historian Herodotus gives as the combined strength of Xerxes’ land and naval forces the incredible total of 2,641,610 warriors. Xerxes is said to have crossed the Hellespont by a bridge of boats more than a kilometer in length and to have cut a canal through the isthmus of Mount Athos. During the spring of 480 bc he marched with his forces through Thrace, Thessaly, and Locris. At Thermopylae 300 Spartans, under their king, Leonidas I, made a courageous but futile stand, delaying the Persians for ten days. Xerxes then advanced into Attica and burned Athens, which had been abandoned by the Greeks. At the Battle of Salamis later in 480 bc, however, his fleet was defeated by a much smaller contingent of Greek warships commanded by the Athenian Themistocles. Xerxes thereupon retired to Asia Minor, leaving his army in Greece under the command of his brother-in-law, Mardonius (fl. 500-479 bc), who was slain at Plataea the following year. Xerxes was murdered at Persepolis by Artabanus (d. 464 bc), captain of the palace guard; he was succeeded by his son Artaxerxes I (r. 465-425 bc).” *Infopedia*

We see here the fulfillment of the prophecy. Xerxes began to meddle in the affairs of Greece. Greece did not like that. He stirred up a hornets nest that Persia would come to regret. Verse 3 tells us that “a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases. ”After Xerxes died, Alexander fulfilled the prophecy of verse 3.

