

Daniel 11:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Analysis

The prophecy continues: "And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to the dominion which he ruled." This predicts Alexander's empire's immediate fragmentation at his death (323 BC). "Broken" (Hebrew: tishabar, תִּשְׁבַּר) means shattered or destroyed—not gradual decline but sudden dissolution. The phrase "divided toward the four winds" indicates comprehensive fragmentation in all directions, fulfilled by his generals establishing kingdoms north, south, east, and west.

"Not to his posterity" accurately predicts that Alexander's descendants wouldn't inherit his empire. His half-brother Philip III Arrhidaeus and infant son Alexander IV were nominal rulers but powerless, eventually murdered. His generals (Diadochi) seized power, ending his dynasty almost immediately. This demonstrates human glory's fragility—history's greatest conqueror couldn't ensure his family's succession. "Nor according to the dominion which he ruled" predicts the successor kingdoms wouldn't match his power; indeed, though significant, none approached Alexander's unified empire in strength or extent.

Theologically, this teaches that earthly kingdoms, however impressive, cannot

endure apart from God's blessing. Human achievement proves temporary; death ends even greatest conquests. This contrasts with God's kingdom established through Christ—death didn't end but inaugurated His reign, and His kingdom grows eternally. Where Alexander's empire immediately fragmented, Christ's kingdom progressively expands, unified under His eternal headship. Only what God builds endures; human kingdoms rise and fall according to divine purposes.

Historical Context

After Alexander's death in Babylon (323 BC), his empire fragmented during brutal Wars of Succession (322-281 BC). His family was murdered—half-brother executed, mother killed, wives murdered, son assassinated. The four major kingdoms emerged: Ptolemaic Egypt, Seleucid Syria/Mesopotamia, Antigonid Macedonia, and (briefly) Attalid Pergamum. This precise fulfillment of Daniel's 213-year-old prophecy validates Scripture's supernatural origin. The fragmentation also prepared for Roman consolidation, which provided infrastructure for gospel spread, demonstrating God's comprehensive sovereignty over history.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does Alexander's inability to secure his posterity's inheritance teach us about human achievement's futility apart from God's blessing?
2. How does the immediate fragmentation of history's greatest empire warn against false security in earthly power and success?

3. In what ways does the contrast between Alexander's fragmented empire and Christ's eternally growing kingdom demonstrate different foundations of power?

Interlinear Text

וְעַמְדוּ	תִּשְׁבֶּר	מֶלֶכְתִּי	וְתִּמְדַּר
And when he shall stand up	shall be broken	for his kingdom	and shall be divided
H5975	H7665	H4438	H2673
לְאַרְבָּעָה	וּמִן	לְאַחֲרִית	וְאַל
toward the four	winds	of heaven	and not to his posterity
H702	H7307	H8064	H319
כְּמַשְׁלוֹן	אֲשֶׁר	מַשְׁלָח	תִּנְתַּשֵּׁשׁ
nor according to his dominion	H834	which he ruled	shall be plucked up
H4915	H4910	H3588	H5428
אֱלֹהִים	מִלְבָד	וְלֹאֶחָר	מֶלֶכְתִּי
for his kingdom	even for others	H905	H428
H4438	H312		

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 8:22 (Kingdom): Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

Daniel 8:8 (Parallel theme): Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

Jeremiah 12:17 (Parallel theme): But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 18:7 (Kingdom): At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

Jeremiah 12:15 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

Daniel 7:8 (Kingdom): I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Daniel 7:2 (Parallel theme): Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

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