(Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4)

2-A: The Telescoping Prophecy
2-B: The Next 200 Years – Fall of Persia and Fall of Alexander (11:2-4)
2-C: Superpower Rivalry – Kings of the North and South (11:5-20)

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2-A: The Telescoping Prophecy

The progression of events in Daniel 11 could be thought of in terms of how a telescope works. A telescope may focus first on nearby objects, and then extend its focus on objects further away. So this might be a helpful way to understand how the Lord, and Gabriel, were viewing the landscape of history in Daniel 11.

In chapter 10 *"the man clothed in linen"* (Jesus Christ) made his appearance, after which the angel Gabriel announces that he has come to reveal the future to Daniel. Then Gabriel takes his "telescope" and looks into the very near future, panning quickly through the landscape of history and covering about 200 years: from 534 B.C. (the date of this prophecy) through the rise and fall of Persia to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. and the ensuing break-up of the Greek empire. Eventually, there emerged, out of the ongoing turmoil and rivalry amongst the Greek generals, two "superpowers" who dominated the Mid East world.

At this point Gabriel's telescope seems to turn into a microscope as he zeroes in to get a remarkable, detailed picture of the stormy history of events occurring around the land of Israel in inter-Testament times prior to the coming of Christ. As the angel of God, we could suppose that Gabriel would be quite capable of seeing the future progression of history like this – skimming quickly through the centuries in verses 2-4, then zeroing in for a close-up picture in order to highlight a certain crucial period of Jewish history, a period that was relevant to the Jews, and to

some extent, the people of God of all ages.

To summarize briefly this next period of history: During the 100 years after 301 B.C., Egypt (under the Greek dynasty of the Ptolemies) ruled Palestine; Alexandria in Egypt became an important center for Jewish culture, and the Jewish people flourished under the tolerant rule of the Egyptian-Greek Ptolemies, as they had under Alexander, and before that, the Medo-Persian kings. But in about 200 B.C., things began to change, and another Greek dynasty, the Seleucids based in Syria, conquered Israel and proved themselves far less tolerant than their previous rulers. Then, as the remnants of the Greek empire began to crumble, history repeated itself with the rise of a new superpower that took the place of the old – the Roman empire.

So in the following verses 5 to 20, the telescope (or microscope) focuses on the landscape of the near future (relative to Daniel's time) and lingers there for awhile in this pre-Roman age of history. These events took place long ago and have little bearing on modern day events. (Except they do give us a preview in an ancient time of the state of the world prior to the rise and rule of the final Antichrist.) As the saying goes, "history repeats itself", and there is much we can learn from this unusual near-future-account of inter-Testament events.

This detailed message was given for the Jews' encouragement and guidance in those days – a time when God did not send any more prophets into the land of Israel; Malachi was the last, during the days of the Persian empire, along with Nehemiah, Israel's governor. However, we can marvel at the amazing detailed nature of Gabriel's prediction of those past events, and this does encourage our faith that his detailed description of other more distant future events will also unfold before our eyes in these modern times.

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