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KAMLOOPS STUDY DAY - 2006

CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS

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Study #5: The Bible and the Exploits of Alexander the Great

Reading: Daniel 8:1-8

Well, good evening, and this is the kind of history that I love, because it is biblically related. It's got some real meaning and purpose in relation to the scriptures. I guess most of us are quite familiar with the story of Alexander the Great, I want to try and just demonstrate how important he was in the scheme of things, as far as God is concerned, and in fact, if you just turn a couple of pages (you won't need your bibles too much tonight), but just while you've got Daniel open, turn to chapter 11 and we read there at verse 2 and it says, 'Now will I show you the truth, behold, there shall stand up yet 3 kings in Persia, and the 4th shall be far richer than they all; and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia'. Then we read in verse 3, 'and a mighty king shall stand up that shall rule with great dominion and do according to his will, and when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken. It shall be divided toward the 4 winds of heaven and not to his posterity', and that's actually a reference to the breaking up of the empire of Alexander the Great. God describes him as a mighty king, and when you go back through history there are very few people who have had the impact upon the world that this man Alexander did! we are still today very much influenced by what he brought into the world in terms of its practices, its laws etc. (I'm going to refer to a few of those as we go through tonight) this man had an enormous influence on the world of his day; and of the people that have had that kind of influence, he probably rates right at the top of them!

When we go through his life, now we read the first 8 verses of Daniel 8, and we read there of a **ram** and a **he-goat**; so you've got your ram over here, this ram represents Persia, the 2 horns of it, one of which was higher than the other, represents the Medes and Persians. The Medes were the shorter horn obviously, the bigger horn were the Persians, that's because the Medes ruled for 2 years and the Persians for another 204 years. We've got the he-goat which represents Grecia which you'll notice has a notable horn, a prominent horn, so Daniel said in verse 5, 'while I was considering, behold, a he-goat came from the west on the

face of the whole earth'. Then he says, 'he touched not the ground', now most animals have to touch the ground to feed, but the figure is of rapidity, he was so rapid in his conquests of the Persian empire that it was breath-taking; in fact, people still rave about Alexander's victories today, and we'll see why - he was a brilliant tactician and God used him to bring to pass, His purpose. It says, 'he touched not the ground and had a notable horn between his eyes.' Now this notable horn is a reference to Alexander the Great himself. This is very interesting if you look at the coinage of the time, this is a coin from Alexander's era (slide #3) can you see the horn there? He's actually got a goat's horn on his head. They wouldn't have read Daniel, I'm sure, but he's got a goat's horn on his head. Now here's the notable horn; now this image here is from a mosaic that I think was found in Pompeii, which is round about 100 years after Alexander and they think it may have been designed on a painting from the era of Alexander. So it's probably as close as we're going to get. Now when you look at this face here which comes from a coin of the era and the other face there, there are similarities, so that's about as close as we're ever going to get, because we're never going to see this man again, but he's left his mark on history. Here he is, the notable horn on the he-goat.

However, as we know, he had about 12 years or so of conquests, and ultimately he died prematurely at the age of 33 in Babylon, and his empire was divided up amongst his 4 generals; none of his children succeeded him. There were attempts for that to happen, but as the scriptures said, in Daniel 11 verse 4, 'and not to his posterity', so when his kingdom was broken up, it didn't go to his posterity or to his children. One of the 4 segments of the Greek empire was Pergamum, it was bequeathed to Rome by Attalus III who reigned from 138 to 133 BC., and so here are the 4 horns that came up in the place of the notable horn that was broken off; so, Alexander dies and his 4 generals divide his empire up into 4 areas and in one of those areas at least, based over near Pergamum, grew up this little horn of the goat. This little horn of the goat represents the power in control of Constantinople, that became, of course, the Roman power because Rome eventually had its capital shifted to Constantinople. So, Daniel 8 is all about that history of that eastern Roman empire, and of course, coming right down to the days in which we live, Russia will conquer Constantinople and use it as its headquarters and go against Christ. So all of this is very important to bible prophecy. So the story of this man is very relevant to the scriptures. So here is his story!

Alexander, the notable horn, was born in 356 BC, the son of Philip of Macedon and of a lovely pretty woman called Olympias who was however, a dyed-in-the-wool, idolater. From the moment Alexander was born, she tried to impress upon him that he was the son of the gods. He wasn't the son of Philip, he

was the son of the gods, and Alexander grew up believing that as we shall see a bit later on. 16 years later, he became famous for taming Bucephalus (we'll talk about that a little later on), he was educated by Aristotle (slide#5).

In 336 his father, Philip, was assassinated and Alexander became the ruler of Macedonia at the age of 20, (quite a young age to start - I've got a son aged 20, I don't know if I want to give him the rulership of Australia) but anyway that's what happened to Alexander.

In 334 BC. he crossed into Asia Minor to attack Persia and the battle of Granicus occurred (a bit more about that later). It was the first defeat of the Persian army and he subdued all the coast of Asia Minor.

In 333 BC. he fought the battle of Issus, this is the second time he defeated Darius the Persian.

In 332 BC. he destroyed Tyre after a 7 month siege, when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar had besieged Tyre for 13 years, and Nebuchadnezzar had retired basically defeated by the Tyrians, they had held out against Nebuchadnezzar, the great king. Alexander comes along and in 7 months, the place is gone. That's the kind of man he was!

In fact, I should step back there a bit, shouldn't I? because he then left Tyre, came down the coast and visited Jerusalem and you probably heard the story of how he arrived; he had a dream (and we don't know if this is right or not) but he had a dream apparently, and that he'd see a priest or priests coming out dressed in white gowns and that he'd get off his horse and that's apparently what happened. The priests came out to submit to him, he said, 'oh, my dream's being fulfilled', so he got off his horse and he came into Jerusalem not as a conqueror, he spared the city but he did not spare Gaza down the road. Gaza closed the doors to him and in a siege of 2 months he overthrew it and completely and utterly destroyed the people of that city. He was telling the world, you don't stand in the way of Alexander.

In 331 BC he subdued Egypt; he then visited the Ammon sanctuary which we'll talk about later. He order the building of Alexandria which was just one of 13 cities named after him (there were all sorts of Alexandrias around the place). In that year, there was the 3rd and decisive victory over Darius at Gaugamela.

In 330 BC he took all 4 royal cities of Persia including Babylon which he made his capital temporarily. He commenced a conquest of the east, and he was turned back from India by the mutiny of his army in India 4 years later; he crossed the

desert and returned to Babylon to establish his capital and in 323 BC before he could undertake too many projects; he died at the age of 33 in Babylon of malarial fever.

He built 70 cities over 30 years and ruled over a multitude of diverse nations and peoples. In anybody's language that is an enormous achievement, particularly in those days when most of the travel was done on foot. We're going to see the enormous distances that he covered.

So it all began back here in Macedonia. Now we read of the Grecian empire but you have to understand that Philip and his successor, Alexander, were Macedonians; they actually then conquered the Grecian cities: they were independent city states; Athens was very independent; there were Greek cities along here in Asia Minor, what we call Turkey today; they like to be independent. They took all of those over. Philip began that process and Alexander finished it off and eventually they established the Grecian empire. This is the extent of it. You can see the red line here with this dotted pattern, that was the extent of the Grecian empire up into Macedonia (Slide #7); mainly to the east of this, conquests were undertaken. It is, as you can see, a huge piece of land.

However, before all of that could happen, there was a lead-in to the times of Alexander the Great. The Greeks had been under the heel of the Persians for a long time. The Persian kings continuously crossed the Aegean Sea to keep the Greeks under control. Artaxerxes, the Persian king was finally tricked into a battle with the Greek navy in 480 BC. at the battle of Salamis; it was the turning point for the Greeks and the Macedonians; he lost 200 ships and the war and had to withdraw from Greece and Macedonia. He didn't give up, but he had to withdraw, this allowed for the development of Athens, a city of idolatry and philosophy which Paul came to, of course, and Paul spoke on the Areopagus, which when I get my bearings straight, is about here (the Areopagus), the hill or rock there, and they called it the Areopagus where Paul stood on Mars' Hill in Acts 17 and debated with the philosophers of Athens. This was a city state, a very powerful city state at the height of its glory in the time of Alexander.

There was a prominent man in Athens called Demosthenes, now does any one know what his means? demo - we get our word 'democracy' from it. 'Demo' = people, the people. So here was a man who thought he was the representative of the people. He lived from 384 to 322 BC. Now that's about the death of Alexander! He was the greatest orator of ancient Greece who led Athenian opposition to Macedonia. So this was one of Alexander's enemies, who stirred up the Greek cities, particularly Athens, against the rule of the Macedonians; so, they had a few problems there.

So I want to talk about Greek life in general; now this is mainly for the young people. Anyone going to school here? Okay, this is what it was like to go to school in Sparta. Sparta was one of the Greek city-states. Every Greek boy was escorted to and from school and supervised for the whole day in class by a slave known as a pedagogue; this is what Paul is talking about in Galatians 4 when he talks about 'the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ'; a pedagogue! Now I wouldn't want a job like that (slide #12). This was a slave, his job was to take this young lad from home to the school, to sit behind him every day with a stick; okay? and if the lad got out of line, whack! that's his job. I wouldn't want that job! Then you took him home. So this is the pedagogue, this is what life was like for young people in Greece. But they loved their sports, and sports arenas like this in Sparta (slide #13) and you see these young boys here carrying something round, and they're running around, usually they were naked, that's the way they did their sports in those days (now they want to go back to that on the beaches), but this was their gymnasium; our word 'gymnastic' comes from the Greek for that sporting exercise. So when you go to a gym, you see, it's a place where you did what was done back in the days of the Greeks. We don't realize it, but a lot of our practices and culture and way of life have come from this culture and era of time.

This one probably fortunately hasn't been passed down. In those days boys were routinely whipped to toughen them up against pain, so they would have a man (you can see this man, a kind of hearty soul) and it was his job to get a whip and he'd say, 'alright boys, it's whipping time'. Have you heard of a whipping boy? whack, whack, and if they cried, the boys would throw rotten eggs and tomatoes at them, and laugh and say, 'you're a wimp' and such like words; they would cast scorn on these boys that were being whipped. Now what's it doing to these fellows? it's toughening them up, it's making them hard and tough from an early age. Their initiation before they could become a soldier was that they had to go out and kill a wild animal and bring it back as proof (slide #14). You can see here that he's got his cloth on his arm and his spear and he's going to shove his arm in its mouth and kill him with the spear and bring that back over his shoulder, and he's initiated! and ready to go to war. When he went to his mother (it looks there, rather gentle, but she's not that gentle), she would hand her son his shield and say, 'come back with this shield, or on it, but don't come back a loser, don't you dare come into this house a loser.' Now this is the kind of education that Alexander the Great got. This is why he never gave up in the face of danger and we'll talk about that in a moment, he faced some staggering and enormous odds and he never thought of running. He fought and if he died it was too bad! he was going to win, that's the kind of education that he was given.

He also got this kind of education. This is a temple dedicated to the gods in the

time of Alexander; he spent a lot of time in temples like this, praying and offering incense to his god, which of course, were the Greek gods, the demi-gods of the heavens. Men, gods like Apollo and others, but education, sports, military training and worship of the gods was dominate in the life of young people in ancient Greece and Macedonia. This is what brought about the product of Alexander. So the time came when he was 16 years of age, some horse traders came to his father Philip trying to sell horses, and one of those horses was spooked and no one knew why it just wouldn't settle down. So Alexander noticed that the horse was spooked by its own shadow, so he grabbed the horse and he turned him into the sun, the horse settled, he jumped up on it and rode him off into the sunset, so to speak! That horse became his companion for the rest of his life, virtually for the rest of his life, it fell in battle in India 15 years later. He called that horse Bucephalus, it had a head somewhat like an ox and Bucephalus means 'ox head'; not a very attractive name, but anyway, that was the name of the horse (Slide 16). Still there, in a sense, there was a place in India called Bucephalia, that was named after Bucephalus.

Alexander ruled Macedonia from 336BC and this is how it came about. Educated by Aristotle the founder of (look at this!) biology, psychology, physics, zoology and literary theory. Now, we still talk about biology, psychology, zoology, well, this man actually invented most of that, he being the founder. So Alexander was educated by this old wise man called Aristotle.

He joined the companion calvary in 338 BC and saw his first combat at Coronia; it wasn't terribly exciting because he ended up getting knocked out and didn't know what was going on. Two years later, when Philip was making progress and was subduing the Greek city states, he was assassinated. His wife, Olympias, was to be behind the assassination of her husband, she had been rejected and wanted Alexander to be the ruler, so it's thought that she might have arranged for the death of Philip. However, after an inquiry, Alexander was made king of Macedonia at the age of 20. He established his power very rapidly. He was surrounded by enemies, so he took the initiative and he rounded up and executed the conspirators at home. In 336 BC he put down a revolt of partisans in Thessaly. He was elected ruler of the Greek city states in the war against the Persians; he lead a brilliant campaign against Tracian rebels near the Danube in 335 BC; and he ruthlessly crushed a revolt by the city of Thebes and he burnt the city, destroyed it absolutely, and enslaved 30,000 of its inhabitants. It was a signal, a message to the rest of the Greek city states, that you do not stand in my way. You stand in my way and this is what will happen to you, look at Thebes and you will find out what your destiny will be!

The bible, we said, describes him 'as a mighty king' and we've read that passage,

'when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken', it says. So here's the king that God foresaw that would come! He describes him in Daniel 7, at least his empire, as a leopard. We're familiar with this, aren't we? We've got **a leopard with 4 heads and 4 wings**, this was the Grecian empire from 334 BC to 67 BC when it was overtaken by the Romans. The 4 heads represent the division of Alexander's empire into 4 sections, the 4 wings, Alexander's army's rapid conquest of the empire.

Now let's have a look at this, here is a map of his travels, of his exploits. He started over here in Pella which was the capital of Macedonia, and he ended up right over here in India, he came back by way of the desert to Babylon and died there. It is about 4,500 kilometres from here as the eagle flies, to this; so you can see he took a lot of zigzags and turns (slide 21). If you start calculating the amount of territory that this man covered, and then come to appreciate that the bulk of his army actually walked the whole way - Alexander rode a horse from time to time, but his army carried their baggage, their pack the whole way, and there were some men who were with him at the end, so they had come from Pella, right around here and around there in the course of 12 years. It's staggering really, isn't it? it's like if I asked you to walk to Toronto. There wouldn't be too many takers, would there? but that's what they did.

So then, we see Alexander here, beginning his exploits. He crosses the Hellespont and enters into Asia, and here's an illustration of Alexander's jumping off the boat ahead of his army, coming into Asia Minor (slide 22) which is Persian territory. So he crosses the Dardanelles in 334 BC and he was only 22 years of age and he'd never go home again. He won the battle of Granicus, and Granicus was fought at the river Granicus obviously, against a Persian army numbering, they think, around over the 30,000 and they think there were Greek mercenaries there as well. Darius thought, 'well, this upstart king in Macedonia who has an army of about 28,000 men, he isn't going to be a problem to my army, so he sent this army of 30,000 and Alexander wiped it out, and I mean he wiped it out; the Greek phalanx, so there were Greeks in the army of the Persians, they were paid soldiers, they would not capitulate fast enough so Alexander ordered their decimation, so they were wiped out at the battle of Granicus. So it was the first major victory fought here at the river Granicus (slide 23).

Then he moved down the coast; he came down the coast and he conquered the Greek cities in that area. He stayed awhile there, then he moved up to Gordian and the Gordian knot which was referred to a bit earlier. You've all heard about the Gordian knot. They presented the Gordian knot to him because the prophecy was, that there would come along a mighty king who would undo this knot which no one else could undo. They presented it to Alexander, he looked at it and said,

'there's no way in the world that anyone can undo that'. He took his sword out and went bong and it fell apart, but he couldn't leave without undoing the Gordian knot.

Then he moved down to Issus, now Issus is the place of the second major battle against the Persians; and here is Issus. He left many of the wounded soldiers at Issus and went south with about 28,000 men. Meanwhile the Persian army, Darius III had formed an army they say, around a half a million men and he marched through Syria and came to Issus; he massacred the Macedonian soldiers who had been left behind and set himself up here, knowing that Alexander would hear about this and return, and that's exactly what Alexander did. He came back to meet the Persian army at Issus. He was outnumbered by staggering odds. Let's just say that it was 500,000 against 28,000 - that's not terribly good odds. So this was going to be an amazing battle if it was to be won by the Macedonians and the Greeks.

This was the situation on the morning of the battle (slide 26): here's the town of Issus, there were mountains here, a little bit like British Columbia, you have narrow passes through which you can enter and this was the coastal plain. Alexander had come from the south, the Persians dominated the plain between the town and Alexander's army. The main Persian army (that's the army that's actually going to fight) was here right across that plain and the army reserve was over here. So the 'great' king as he was called, Darius, had great confidence that he would win this battle, and he positioned himself in a chariot between the main Persian army and the army reserve, thinking, 'well, if this doesn't go that well, I can always call on the reserve and they'll look after me'; but, Alexander knew that Darius was a coward and that he would not stand and fight if it looked like he was going to be defeated. So he planned this battle on this basis, he positioned his weaker forces on the left hand side; their job was not to move forward but not to give ground, they were to hold this coastal strip along the beach, so the Persian army could not come around behind them, that was their sole job!

Alexander himself positioned his companion calvary behind another force here, you can see we've got Alexander with the companion calvary who took up a position behind the right flank. The left flank was left weak or apparently weak, the Thessalian Horse (slide 37) were over here to reinforce them if they failed to hold the Persians. The Tracian Horse went over with the Cretan archers with Alexander concealed behind them. That was the set up before the battle began; his centre phalanx and right flank moved forward and echeloned to the right (slide 28) and that means you 'step up' and you watch Alexander's forces down here and see what happens to them. That right flank moves up and echelons, and hits the bulk of the Persian army and they began to push them out of shape. They began to weaken the right flank of the Persians, so the Persians then started to

pour down here against the left flank of the Macedonians. For a while it looked as though they would break through, but Alexander waited until he could strike; he waited until the forces on the right had pushed a gap in the Persian army. They were greatly outnumbered but they made this gap and then he plunged the companion cavalry through that gap aiming for Darius the king. And this is what that depiction was about, that depiction you saw in the mural or the mosaic in Pompeii (here it is, I mean they've lost a few of the tiles) (slide 29), as you can see there are some big gaps in it. But here is Darius in his chariot and here is Alexander pressing towards him. So as Alexander charged towards Darius, Darius decided that this was time to retire, so he turned his chariot and got away.

So he fled from the battle! he fled out through the gap, he left behind his family, all his pavilions, huge pavilions for dining, for sleeping, for bathing; he had pavilions for a bathroom. There was a gold bath there, solid gold, Alexander had a bath in it later on! He left his wife, his mother, his children, he just fled! Well, of course, when the Persian army that was sort of left, and the reserve army saw Darius go, guess what they did? They said, 'there goes our king', and they followed him. The unfortunate thing was, there were ½ a million of them, and a ½ million men couldn't get through that narrow a gap, so when the Macedonians and the Greeks came, after the Persian army had fled, when they finally came up here, they found bodies lying together on the ground a metre high, bodies piled high, men just climbed up and ran across the top of them, some of them didn't make it and ended up in the pile. There were hundreds of thousands of Persians, perished, trying to escape on that day. This was a great victory by Alexander and there's no doubt that this was the turning point as far as the rest of the world was concerned, this was a man to be reckoned with!

But he wasn't finished! He moved from Issus down to Tyre. Now Tyre, as I said earlier, held out for 13 years against Nebuchadnezzar, they resisted Alexander. What they'd done was the city of Tyre had been on the mainland here (slide 32), but when Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city, they decided that wasn't terribly comfortable, so they moved the city out to the island off the coast; there was no causeway there then, that was built by Alexander. They thought that they were secure, they had huge walls, they had a harbour up here and one down here so they could circle the city with their ships, and they thought that they were impregnable, they didn't bank on being attacked by Alexander. He took what was left of the old city, threw it into the sea; he built a causeway, but it's a mistake that's made by some, because he actually captured Tyre **before** the causeway reached the island. There was still something like 15 metres to go when he sent his ships - he actually built a navy while he was here for 7 months - he sent his ships against the two harbours, that northern one in particular, and they eventually bashed their way through, and they got inside the city and 10,000

perished; many of them, in fact, were thrown over the wall into the sea. So Nebuchadnezzar had failed but Alexander took it in just seven months. Tyre had fallen! and that, of course, was a prophecy of Ezekiel and others.

So he then moved on! As we pointed out, he came down to Jerusalem, to Gaza and he destroyed that! He moved on into Egypt and here in Egypt he did something very interesting. He took a journey from Egypt (now do you see this line going out over here), out through the desert to the Ammon Sanctuary, why would he go there? Well, he went there because his mother had taught him that he was the son of the gods; when he arrived in Egypt and conquered it, he became the ruler of Egypt, and the ruler of Egypt was their god, so the Egyptians accepted him as a god. He thought he was the son of God, and we know there is a chapter in the bible devoted to this subject, it is Zechariah 9, it presents on the one hand the mighty conquests of Alexander, a man who could not control himself but who could conquer the world, in contrast with the son of God who rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass **saving Himself**. So there is contrast presented in Zechariah 9 between the mighty conqueror who got off his horse and walked into Jerusalem and One who came later riding upon the symbol of royalty because He would be King of Jerusalem and King of the world because He could do what Alexander couldn't do, who truly was the son of God, and He was able to conquer Himself. The day will come when like Alexander, He will conquer the world!

So Alexander took his trip over to the Ammon sanctuary and it was a very dangerous trip. When he got there the prophets who were there, declared him to be, the son of God and so on. So he went on then, in the knowledge that he would conquer the world! So he goes on then to Gaugamela and this battle that was fought here, the 3rd and final battle against Darius, is sometimes called the battle of Arbela - Arbela was some 50 odd miles away. Here's the thing about the Ammon sanctuary, we've already talked about that. He went to the sanctuary of Ammon-Re the Egyptian god of the sun; they declared him to be the son of Ammon-Zeus, the Greek god, Ammon was the god of the Egyptians, but Zechariah 9 tells us all about that. While he was in Egypt preparing his battle of Gaugamela, this is the kind of thing he did because the Greeks were keen on sports, he employed the Greek's soldier's games as a means of hardening and preparing his soldiers for the quest of the world. So he would dress them up in all their armour with these huge brazen shields, and he would make them run a couple of hundred metres to see who would get there first, and of course, soldiers being soldiers, nobody wanted to lose; and that's the message of the New Testament, isn't it? Paul talks about gaining the victory - he says, 'so run that ye may gain the victory', so it should be with us in the hardening that we undergo against the enemy (slide 35).

The third and decisive victory over Darius at Gaugamela occurred in 331 BC. The Persians had over 250,000 men - 230,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry. They also had 200 scythed chariots (chariots with big swords, curved swords coming out of their wheels) and many war elephants. So here's the Persians in the red, that's their forces, they've got plenty of reserves back here, here's Darius, he's behind these phalanx and cavalry here, you've got your chariots here, and then you've got your war elephants behind them (slide 36). Then here are the Macedonians, here are their phalanx - those are the soldiers with huge long spears, beside them you've got the cavalry, and over here you've got Alexander. Alexander was behind this little phalanx here; now there's a design in this, similar to what he did at Issus, because the idea was, that even though he was completely outnumbered and looked as if he'd be destroyed, he had about 50,000 men vs. 250,000 men and this was flat ground, in fact, so flat that it had been deliberately prepared for use of chariots. Darius, before the battle, had chosen the spot where he would fight Alexander and he didn't budge from it. He had the whole area ploughed, all the trees and shrubs and bushes and rocks were removed and it was made flat like a football field because he wanted to use his chariots, and he thought he would win. But he proved to be a coward again, and fled as soon as Alexander's cavalry drew near to his position. If he had stood his ground, he might have won, because in fact, the Persians broke through as you can see with the red lines, they broke through the Macedonian lines and they actually ransacked the camp of the Macedonians. So Alexander lost a lot of his stuff because they got down there. This side also was under enormous pressure, Parmeneia one of his generals sent out a distress call because he was under severe attack (slide 37), but Alexander knew that if he could get somewhere near Darius, then Darius would flee, and that's exactly what happened, he ran away again and so his 250,000 men when they saw their king go, decided it was time to leave for home. It was over!

Alexander then went from Gaugamela through to India via Babylon. So we follow his route! He goes down from the victory here at Gaugamela. By the way, Darius was actually killed by his own men over here a little later on, Alexander pursued after him and they found him dead. He conquered Babylon without a fight, they opened to him, they knew it was pointless to fight; he moved on to Shushan, that's Susa the palace, Persepolis and then Ecbatana. These were the 4 Persian capitals - Babylon, Shushan, Persepolis and Ecbatana - the 4 kings had 4 capitals one for each season of the year. He then moved across what we would call today, Afghanistan. Afghanistan proved to be just as difficult for Alexander as it proved for the Russians, and now of course, for the Americans and others who are in there. A very difficult country to conquer and many interesting stories but we haven't got time to deal with those tonight, except perhaps to refer to one.

There was one particular Bactrian king who was living right up on a high mountain (like the British Columbian mountains) where, you know, there was just one path up to this city and they could easily protect it. Alexander came up as close as he could, and he negotiated with the Bactrian king who said, 'look, if you had soldiers with wings, you couldn't take this city'. So Alexander went down and that night he got his troops around the campfire and he asked for volunteers; 50 men put their hands up, he got his engineers to get feathers as they could, from eagles or whatever else it might be, and he made wings and stuck them to the backs of these men and got them to climb up virtually sheer cliffs with ice and snow, so that in the morning when the sun arose and the Bactrian king looked over the wall, across next to his city and above him, he'd see soldiers with wings! Something like 20 or 30 got through. They tried to flap their wings but it didn't work and they went down, but enough of them got up there that when the Bactrian king got up, below that king, down there, and he saw soldiers with wings, he sent down an ambassador straightaway and said, 'we give up'. So they surrendered. That's just one story of many that comes out of Afghanistan.

His campaigns in Afghanistan and India were driven more by desire to explore! Alexander, you know, is the great conqueror but in actual fact, he was a scientist. Aristotle had imbued him with a desire to explore. He just wanted to go there just like we want to come to Canada to see it. So he wanted to go around but he was harassed by mountain tribesmen and spent over 2 years in Bactria; here he married Roxana, a Bactrian princess and he had a child by her. His campaigns in India were fraught with danger and loss; in fact, he was seriously injured in one of those battles when he climbed over the wall too early. He said to his troops, 'we're going to take this city, come on, follow me!' They put ladders against the walls, they had fellows firing arrows all over the place, he climbed the ladder and he got over with a couple of his men, looked around for support, none there! So he kept on fighting and he got seriously wounded, he got a sword through his chest; thereafter he had difficulty breathing because there was air coming out of his chest through his lung. He kept on fighting and eventually his men came over and he said, 'where have you been?' and they won that battle. But that's the kind of fellow he was! The aging Bucephalus died under him at the battle of the river Jhelum, and he built a town called Bucephala after the victory (slide 39).

Pressing onwards eastwards, his army finally mutinied and said, 'look, enough with exploration, we're tired, we want to go home. We've been away for 10 years', and they demanded to return to Macedonia. Well, he went home but he went via the south: so he went down the river Indus and built some boats, sailed down the river, came to the ocean. He sent his navy along the coast because he intended to go back to Babylon via the coast. He wasn't going to go back the way he came, he wanted to explore! He lost about 30,000 men in that journey, perished with

hunger and thirst.

So he follow his journey then back to Babylon, and he came back here to consolidate his power and he began to act like a Persian. And, that blue line, by the way, is Nearchus and the fleet (slide 40), so Alexander went by land across the Mekran desert and Nearchus took the fleet along the coast. The idea was that every now and then they'd meet up, and you see, Nearchus had the stores on the boats, he would drop off the supplies and Alexander could go on with water and food. It didn't happen! some food left on a beach, but they never saw Nearchus until they got back to Babylon, and he lost the majority of his army over the length of the blue line. This was devastating, but if you go there today, and you may have seen pictures when the Americans landed there in 1980 trying to rescue the hostages in Iran, remember that? it's just like flat desert, like the middle of Australia, nothing there, no water, no supplies. So it was madness really, but that's the kind of determination he had!

They called him Alexander the Adaptable! He had a knack of taking people as he found them and difficulties as they came; obstacles seemed to cause him less anxiety than his followers. But he began to adopt Persian ways and that undermined his authority with the Macedonian elements of his army. They were rugged Macedonian hills men and they weren't going to take on these sophisticated Persian ways, you know, wearing long silk gowns like the sort that had gold baths, and that sort of thing, they just weren't inclined that way! He did encourage and he compelled his men to marry into Persian families so there would be a meeting of peoples. He tried to take Greek culture to the world but he also was prepared to take the culture of the nations he conquered into the Greek culture and this caused a lot of anger amongst his followers. So his work was near an end, he didn't know that! his body and his mind were worn out, 10 years of incredible activity and achievement. His death was probably due more to physical exhaustion and unhealed wounds like the one he had in his chest, than to the fever. Long drinking bouts, he used to stay up very late at night, in fact, he wouldn't go to bed until 4 or 5AM in the morning and sleep in till 9 or 10AM. He didn't need all that much sleep, he spent the whole night sitting around campfires with his soldiers drinking, laughing and joking; he really was very much a soldier's leader. He was one of the soldiers! So his long drinking bouts and his unusual sleeping habits contributed to his failing health and because he had picked up some kind of malarial fever in the rivers to the north of Babylon, so they think, the time had come for this man to disappear. In the economy of God he was going to die at the age of 32 years and 8 months; that's just a little younger than the Son of God Himself. The man who was taught by his mother that he was the son of God, died a conqueror of the world, not of himself.

His men, hearing that he was near death in Babylon, asked to see him for the last time, and so they filed past him. This is a depiction of that (slides 42+43), here are the soldiers who had been with him through his campaigns. He couldn't speak but he laid there and waved his hand as each one went past and finally he died. His empire was divided up into 4 parts (slide 44): the colours there, the orangy-yellowish colour, the green, the Seleucid kingdom and the colours over here represent what was left of Macedonia, and Egypt, of course, became the territory of the Ptolemies. These were the kings of the north and south which played such an important part in the history of Israel in the times leading up to Christ. So God had made use of this man, but when his time was come, he was taken out of the way.

His effect on the world though was dramatic. One commentator says, 'He lifted the civilized world out of one groove and set it in another'. He started a new epoch, nothing could again be as it had been, and it hasn't been! The scripture proved to be true, Yahweh changeth the times and the seasons, he removes kings, sets up kings. Daniel 4 verse 17, 'to the intent that the living might know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it, the basest of men'. Yahweh proved that He was in charge! He could use men, He could use brilliant men like Alexander for his purpose and then take him out of the way when his work was done. Here was a man who ruled the world but could not rule his spirit. The Proverbs say, Proverbs 16 verse 19, 'Better is it to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divided the spoil with the proud'; for there were many who divided the spoil in the times of Alexander, but none of them, not one of them will be in the kingdom of God. But, there was a man who was truly the Son of God who came and ruled His spirit, far better than taking a city, and those who follow Him will one day rule the world, because they have firstly ruled themselves.