

was a very long distance away from its home base. The Greeks were desperately fighting for the liberty of their homeland. Some important mistakes in strategy were made by Persian leaders, and weather conditions assisted the Greeks. The great attack against Greece was repulsed, and for nearly two centuries thereafter the Greeks continued to celebrate their deliverance from Persia, and to wish to prostrate the power of Persia, the nation they had come to regard as their great enemy.

Verse 3 tells of the Greek counterattack, a century and a half after the great Persian expedition. It says: "Then a mighty king will appear, who will rule with great power and do as he pleases." These words briefly summarize the vast conquests so vividly described in the picture of the beginning of the third kingdom in Daniel 8:5-7. All interpreters agree that verse 3 refers to Alexander the Great.

The interval of more than a century and a half between verses 2 and 3 is in no way indicated in the prophecy. This fact should make us cautious about taking it for granted that two predicted events immediately follow one another, simply because they are stated in succession.

### **The Breakup of Alexander's Empire**

(4) After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out toward the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others. (5) 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.

The breakup of Alexander's realm has already been briefly summarized in chapter 8. Alexander had barely completed his conquest of the Persian empire, his march through its eastern areas and his return as far as Babylon, when he died. As the verse points out, during the next forty years his