

kingdom was parceled out toward the four points of the compass. It does not say that it was precisely divided into four sections. At one time there were five powerful contenders for the empire. After many years of fighting, a permanent situation was established in which three great dynasties ruled large portions of Alexander's empire, while a number of smaller sections maintained their independence.

The latter part of verse 4 was literally fulfilled. Within fifteen years after Alexander's death every member of his family had been killed. No part of his empire remained in the hands of anyone related to him, nor did the ruler of any part of it exercise power at all comparable to that which Alexander had wielded.

In verse 5 the phrase, "the king of the South" is a very natural way to indicate that ruler whose territory would be farthest south. This was Ptolemy Lagos, who gained control of the land of Egypt. He was the first of Alexander's successors to become well established and gain lasting strength.

Immediately after Alexander's death Ptolemy proved himself to be very shrewd. When the generals assigned members of their group to rule the various sections of the empire, he obtained Egypt as his area of control, thus securing a region that is easy to defend, since there are deserts on three sides. Only by sea could it be easily attacked. As long as Ptolemy could maintain a strong navy he would be almost impregnable.

A few years earlier Alexander had spent almost two years gaining control of Syria and Palestine in order to deprive the Persian navy of its bases in the Mediterranean and thus make his lines of communication secure. Before leading his army eastward against the main centers of the Persian empire, he had invaded Egypt. This might have been a very difficult undertaking had it not been for the fact that the Egyptian people were very ready to revolt against Persia, which had reconquered their land only ten years before, and they therefore looked upon Alexander as a deliverer. He had strengthened this attitude by declaring himself a successor to the ancient pharaohs and worshipping at the