

Daniel 10-12: The Vision of Great Conflict

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Introduction:

- I. The book of Daniel presents numerous difficulties.
- II. None of them are more daunting than that presented by the final vision, The Vision of Great Conflict (Dan. 10:1).
- III. It is a playground for Premillennialists seeking an “Antichrist.”
- IV. It used as an excuse by the critics to reject the authenticity, authority, and the real inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16) of the book (Montgomery, 465).
- V. This vision also presents a serious challenge to Christians.
 - A. What is the identity of the final “King of the North” in chapter eleven?
 - B. The facts of history coupled with a careful study of the text and context will provide us with the answer.

Body:

I. THE VISION

A. The Appearance Of The Angel.

1. The setting—the third year of Cyrus (Dan. 10:1).
2. Daniel’s preparation, mourning and praying for three weeks (Dan. 10:2-4).
3. The angel appears (Dan. 10:5-6).
4. Daniel is stunned (Dan. 10:7-9).
5. The angel gives reassurance (Dan. 10:10-14).
6. Daniel is strengthened (Dan. 10:15-19).
7. There is a revelation of angelic activity behind the scenes (Dan. 10:20-11:1).

B. The Conflicts Of The Kings To Come.

1. Four kings of Persia are foretold (Dan. 11:2).
2. A mighty king rules Greece (Dan. 11:3).
3. The Greek empire is divided (Dan. 11:4).
4. The angel relates a history of conflicts between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids (Dan. 11:5-20).
5. The career of Antiochus IV Epiphanes is described (Dan. 11:21-35).
6. The angel reveals the character of the king (Dan. 11:36-39).
7. The end of the king of the North finally comes (Dan. 11:40-45).

C. An Explanation Of The Time Of The End.

1. The angel summarizes (Dan. 12:1-3).
2. Daniel is to seal up the book (Dan. 12:4).

3. The question, "How long," is answered (Dan. 12:5-7).
4. Daniel asks for and receives a clarification (Dan. 12:8-12).
5. The prophet will rest and rise (Dan. 12:13).

II. THE VARIOUS VIEWS REGARDING THE FINAL KING OF THE NORTH.

A. Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

1. This is the view assumed by all critics, those who deny that Daniel wrote the book in the 6th century B.C.
 - a. They see a clear line drawn at the end of v. 39.
 - 1) Up to this point, the passage is the author's account of national history written as "prophecy."
 - 2) What follows from this point is an "imaginative prediction of Antiochus' death" (DiLella, 303). Thomson concludes that "here the author narrated his expectations, but these expectations were contrary to facts" (Pulpit, 323). "Verse 40 marks the transition from quasi-prediction based on historical facts to actual prediction [that] . . . does not correspond to actual events" (Goldingay, 305).
 - 3) The final section does not fit with known history.
 - a) There was no fourth (some call it a fifth) campaign against Egypt, it is alleged (Dan. 11:40). Porphyry, according to Jerome, does refer to such an expedition in the eleventh year of his reign, but most modern historians reject the idea.
 - b) Antiochus did not die in a battle in Palestine (Dan. 11:45).
 - b. By this means, the critics confidently date the writing of Daniel to 164 B.C.
2. The identity of the king as Antiochus is a position also held by some conservative scholars.
 - a. It is seen as being the most natural, "obvious, and . . . honest" reading of the passage. (Barnes, 247)
 - b. The fact that no extant secular sources describe a fourth campaign of Antiochus against Egypt does not mean that it didn't happen.
 - c. Much of Dan. 11:36-45 is seen as a summary or recapitulation describing Antiochus' career.

B. Herod The Great.

1. Herod is seen as the arrogant king at "the end" (Dan. 11:35) of the Jewish age. A similar view sees the Herodian dynasty ruling until "the end" of Daniel's people, i.e., the end of the Jewish national existence.
2. He ruled until "the appointed time" (Dan. 11:35) of the Messiah's appearance. Cf. "the fullness of time," (Gal. 4:4)
3. Herod then fights with (i.e. in alliance with) the king of the South (Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemies, with Mark Antony) against the king of the North (Caesar Augustus).
4. After a brief parenthesis describing Augustus (Dan. 11:41-43), attention returns to Herod, who received troubling news from the Magi who came "from the East." A

troubling message also arrived from the North, Rome.

5. After successfully dominating the Holy Land, Herod came to a horrible “end” (Dan. 11:45).
6. This was a time (end of first century B.C. and beginning of first century A.D.), according to chapter 12, of distress and an awakening.

C. The Roman Power.

1. Daniel’s earlier visions pointed to the time of the Romans.
 - a. Rome is the final empire represented by the statue of chapter 2.
 - b. Chapter 7 speaks of four beasts, the fourth representing Rome.
 - c. Therefore it is consistent to see this vision ending with Rome.
2. Roman rulers fit the description of arrogant power.
 - a. Roman rulers displayed an unparalleled arrogance, impiety, and hunger for power (Dan. 11:36-39).
 - b. Their conquests accord well with the descriptions of this king (Dan. 11:40-45).
 - 1) They dominated the Holy Land for many years.
 - 2) They conquered Egypt and “other countries” (Dan. 11:42).
 - c. Rome would eventually come to its end (Dan. 11:45).
3. This view fits in well with the depiction of Rome in the book of Revelation.
 - a. In both books of prophecy, Rome is portrayed as arrogantly blasphemous.
 - b. Rome is also seen as the great persecutor of God’s people.

D. The “Antichrist.”

1. Many conservative scholars see this picture of the king of the North as a description of the “Antichrist.”
 - a. The only place in Scripture where this term is used, is 1 Jn. 2:18, 22, 4:3, and 2 Jn. 7, where the reference is not to a future but a present (John’s perspective) trouble-maker.
 - b. Proponents of this interpretation of Daniel 11 are speaking of a larger-than-life dictator in the final days of the Christian age—an End-time Ogre.
2. Some commentators suggest there may be a vague reference to Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Dan. 11:36-39, followed by an unambiguous description of the End-time Ogre in Dan. 11:40-45.
3. The interpretations, in attempting to decipher which parts of the prophecy are literal and which are to be taken figuratively, vary with each commentator.

E. Additional Views.

1. Some see this as a prophecy of the **Papacy**.
2. Others interpret it as a reference to **conflicts with various Turkish or Islamic leaders**.
3. Some older rabbinical interpreters teach that this is a prophecy of **Constantine the Great**.

4. Another suggestion is that this is a “telescoping” of the future in which **all future oppressors** of God’s people are described.

III. THE PROBLEMS WITH THE VARIOUS VIEWS.

A. Antiochus Iv Epiphanes.

1. Many details do not seem to fit.
 - a. The Ptolemaic kings never attacked Antiochus, as per v. 40.
 - b. Antiochus did not then gain control of Egypt and all of its treasures, as per v. 42-43.
 - c. He never conquered Libya and Ethiopia, as per v. 43.
 - d. He did not die in Palestine, as per v. 45.
2. “As soon as the attempt is made consistently to apply these verses to the king last spoken of (Antiochus IV), the difficulties begin to become overwhelming.” (Leupold, as quoted by McGuiggan, 178)

B. Herod The Great.

1. Herod never warred against Egypt, nor Egypt against him.
2. While Herod was bad, he never came close to the measure of Antiochus in regard to blasphemy and persecution of God’s people.
3. To jump from Antiochus in v. 35 to Herod in v. 36ff is a problem.
 - a. The text does not suggest such a jump to a different character. There is no, “Then one shall arise . . . ,” language.
 - b. Such a transition would mean a leap of more than one hundred years, entirely passing over a century of Jewish independence and religious freedom.
 - c. The passage has been consistently speaking of the Ptolemaic king as “the king of the South,” and the Seleucid king as “the king of the North.” That consistent terminology now shifts with the Romans becoming “the king of the North.”

C. The Roman Power.

1. The passage describes “the king,” as though he were one individual (as was the case with Antiochus Epiphanes, *et al.*), but this view sees the fulfillment not in any individual, but in the entire empire, including the various deeds of emperors, senators, generals and others.
2. The Romans did not exalt themselves above every god, as per v. 36.
3. There was no “end” of the Romans at this time, as per v. 45.
4. To jump from Antiochus in v. 35 to Rome in v. 36ff is a problem, as we saw with the proposed jump to Herod.
 - a. The text does not suggest such a jump to a different character.
 - b. To do so would mean a leap of more than one hundred years, entirely skipping over a century of Jewish independence and religious freedom.
 - c. The passage has been consistently speaking of the Ptolemaic king as “the king of the South,” and the Seleucid king as “the king of the North.” That consistent terminology now shifts with the Romans becoming “the king of the North.”

D. The Antichrist.

1. Any view that is best espoused by the use of a flagrant anachronism (the term, “Antichrist”), is suspect from the start.
2. The concept of an End-time Ogre is most commonly found in a system of Premillennialism, a system which is itself contrary to the Scriptures.
3. This view, by its very nature, is based on no historical fact.
 - a. All is speculation and imagination.
 - b. The distinction between the figurative and the literal is entirely at the discretion of the commentator. For example, one on-line study guide asserts at 11:40, with no justification, “The ‘chariots’ will be tanks.”
4. All of the difficulties connected with a proposed jump in subject and time to Herod or to Rome are present and multiplied.
5. If an End-time Ogre is here described, one can say with confidence that Jesus could not possibly return tomorrow—the end is not imminent (cf. Matt. 25:13).
6. As DiLella observes with great accuracy but little tact, “The Antichrist interpretation of these verses is exegetically witless and religiously worthless” (303). According to Smith, it is “sheer imagination” (624).

E. Additional Views.

1. None of these views has many (any?) current advocates.
2. They all require leaps in time and in imagination.

IV. TEXTUAL CLUES TO THE KING’S IDENTITY.**A. Any Of The First Three Views Can Fit The Passage.**

1. All three views—Antiochus, Herod, and Rome—have difficulties.
2. Yet the language in chapter 11 is “loose” enough that it can be made to fit any of these interpretations.
3. The solution then must be sought in the larger context.

B. What Clues Are Found In Chapter Ten?

1. The vision is about a time of “great conflict” (10:1).
 - a. There were times of peace for the Jews during the period embraced by the vision (e.g., under the Persians), but the vision’s aim is at a time of great conflict.
 - b. The vision begins with broad strokes (11:2 covers over 50 years; 11:3 over 100 years), but then narrows to the time of Antiochus the Great (11:10-20) and even more to Antiochus Epiphanes (11:21-35 or 39). Does the vision then lose its focus by jumping ahead more than a century to a completely different character?
2. The vision was intended to explain what was to happen to Daniel’s people in the latter days (10:14; cf. 8:23).
3. The angelic messenger is going to fight against “the prince of Persia,” and “the prince of Greece” (10:20-21). Where is the mention of battling the prince of Rome?

C. What Information Is In Chapter Eleven?

1. The “end time” is the same term in 11:35 and 11:40.
2. The “indignation” of 11:36 is the same term as the rage in 11:30.

D. What Evidence Is Found In The Twelfth Chapter?

1. “At that time” there would be unprecedented distress for Daniel’s people (Dan. 12:1).
 - a. There was such distress in the Maccabean period.
 - b. If this describes the time of the Romans, are “the sons of your people” the Jews or the Christians? (See Dan. 9:15-19, 24; 10:14; 11:14).
2. There would be an awakening of those who sleep in the dust of the ground (Dan. 12:2).
 - a. This context has nothing to do with the final resurrection at the return of Christ. The time frame is the time of the Maccabees, the Herods, or the Romans.
 - b. One might compare this awakening with that described by Daniel’s contemporary, Ezekiel (Ezek. 37:1-14). It is speaking of a revival and restoration of God’s people.
 - c. This awakening involves “those who have insight . . . and those who lead the many to righteousness” (Dan. 12:3). This is the same language used in Dan. 11:33-35.
3. The question is posed, “How long until the end of these wonders?” (Dan. 12:6).
 - a. It would be for “a time, times, and half a time” (Dan. 12:7).
 - b. Further, it would be completed, “as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people” (Dan. 12:7).
 - 1) Antiochus persecuted “the holy people,” the Jews.
 - 2) If the Jewish war of A.D. 70 is in view, the holy people would have to be the Christians, not the Jews. Was their power shattered by the Romans?
4. The outcome of these things (Dan. 12:8) was to involve those who would be “purged, purified and refined” (Dan. 12:10; cf. 11:35), and “those who have insight” (Dan. 12:8; cf. 11:33).
5. From the time the sacrifice is abolished and the “abomination of desolation” is set up, there would be 1290 days (Dan. 12:11). The period is extended to 1335 days, an additional 45 days (Dan. 12:12).
 - a. This is roughly equivalent to 3 ½ years, or a time, times, and half a time (Dan. 12:7).
 - b. Three and one half years passed from the arrival of the Roman armies at Jerusalem (Nov. A.D. 66) until the time the daily sacrifice ceased (Jul. 14, A.D. 70). This is 3 ½ years between the “abomination of desolation” and the end of the daily sacrifice (note the splitting of the two events and the reversal of direction). Jerusalem was burned a short time later (Aug. 6, A.D. 70).
 - c. Antiochus defiled the Temple on Dec. 7, 167 B.C., and died approximately 3 ½ years later in 163 B.C. Within a short time, the Greeks were removed from Palestine and Jewish independence was awakened (Dan. 12:2-3).

E. Does This Explanation (Antiochus) Fit Well With The Rest Of The Book?

1. Chapter eight, with the depiction of the goat and the “rather small horn” (Dan. 8:9), clearly describes the time of Antiochus. There are strong connections between that

chapter and this vision.

- a. Dan. 8:10 speaks of the defeat of some of the host of heaven. (cf. Dan. 11:33-35).
 - b. Dan. 8:11 predicts that the “small horn” would magnify himself to be equal with God, the “Commander of the host.” (cf. Dan. 11:36).
 - c. Dan. 8:17 says that “the vision pertains to the time of the end.” (cf. Dan. 11:35, 40).
 - d. Dan. 8:19 indicates that the time of Antiochus is “the final period of the indignation,” and “the appointed time of the end.” (cf. Dan. 11:27, 35-36, 40).
2. The theme of the entire book of Daniel is, “God is Judge.” It would be strange if the vision of chapter eleven described in detail this great persecutor of God’s people but failed to speak of his being judged (brought to his end) by God.
 3. While it is true that the visions of chapters two and seven end with a picture of the Roman empire, there is a difference between them and the vision of chapter eleven. The earlier visions deal with successive world empires, while this one ignores (for the most part) the great powers of the ancient world, and deals instead with the localized conflict God’s people were to face.
 4. In the earlier visions which include the period of the Roman empire, the messages describe the establishment of God’s eternal kingdom (Dan. 2:44, 7:14, etc.). If this vision includes the first century A.D. and the time of Roman domination, why is the establishment of the Kingdom omitted?

Conclusion:

- I. While there are certain problems of interpretation, the language of Dan. 11:36-45 will fit the history of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the powerful and blasphemous enemy of God’s people.
- II. The contextual clues of chapters ten and twelve, as well as the indicators found in the rest of the book, point clearly to Antiochus.
- III. This Vision of Great Conflict provides us with a powerful message.
 - A. **God is in control of all history**, and to foretell the course of events for centuries to come is no difficulty for Him. We have the confidence that God holds our future in His hands.
 - B. **God is judge!** While the ungodly may seem to succeed in their opposition to righteousness, and God’s people frequently suffer at the hands of the wicked, God will ultimately judge all men, delivering some to the “disgrace of everlasting contempt,” and others “to everlasting life” (Dan. 12:2).
- IV. May all of the people of God share Daniel’s trust and confidence in the judgment of God.

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APPENDIX A

Rulers and Dates Connected with the Book of Daniel Chapters 10-12**Persia**

559-530 Cyrus
 530-522 Cambyses
 522-521 Smerdis
 521-486 Darius I Hystaspis
 486-465 Xerxes I
 465-423 Artaxerxes I Longimanus
 423-404 Darius II Nothos
 404-359 Artaxerxes II Mnemon
 359-338 Artaxerxes III Ochus
 338-336 Arses
 336-331 Darius III Codomannus

Alexander

334-331 Conquests of Alexander
 323 Death of Alexander

Ptolemies

323-285 Ptolemy I Soter
 285-245 Ptolemy II Philadelphus
 247-221 Ptolemy III Euergetes
 221-203 Ptolemy IV Philopater
 203-181 Ptolemy V Epiphanes
 181-145 Ptolemy VI Philometor
 145-116 Ptolemy VIII Physcon

Seleucids

312-281 Seleucus I Nicator
 281-261 Antiochus I Soter
 261-246 Antiochus II Theos
 246-226 Seleucus II Callinicus
 226-223 Seleucus III Ceraunus
 222-187 Antiochus III the Great
 187-175 Seleucus IV Philopater
 175-163 Antiochus IV Epiphanes
 163-162 Antiochus V Eupator
 162-151 Demetrius I

These dates are taken from *Israel and the Nations*, by F. F. Bruce (Eerdmans, 1975). The numbers found in other sources may differ by a year but rarely by more.

APPENDIX B

Daniel Eleven: Historical Fulfillment

The following is the text of the vision of Daniel chapter 11 (NASB) with a brief description of the historical fulfillment of the prophecy.

11:1 “IN the first year of Darius the Mede, I arose to be an encouragement and a protection for him.

2 And now I will tell you the truth. Behold, three more kings are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth will gain far more riches than all of *them*; as soon as he becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole *empire* against the realm of Greece.

Three more kings were to arise. Following Cyrus, who was reigning at the time this message was given (10:1), there would be Cambyses (530-522), Smerdis (522-521), and Darius Hystaspis (521-486). These three would be followed by a fourth, whom almost all scholars agree to be Xerxes (486-465) who attempted to conquer Greece in 480 B.C.

3 And a mighty king will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.

While there may be some dispute among various writers about the identities of the kings in v.2, this is undeniably Alexander the Great, who was indeed a mighty king, exercising great authority.

4 But as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom will be broken up and parceled out toward the four points of the compass, though not to his *own* descendants, nor according to his authority which he wielded, for his sovereignty will be uprooted and *given* to others besides them.

As soon as he had arisen, at the height of his career, Alexander died, and his kingdom was broken up. His own descendants were not the recipients of his domain. Instead it was parceled out toward the four winds. Four of Alexander's generals seized control of his shattered kingdom—Lysimachus, Antipater (Casander), Antigonus (soon to be replaced by Seleucus), and Ptolemy. Of these, the two who command our attention are Seleucus I Nicator (312-281), and Ptolemy I Soter (323-285).

5 Then the king of the South will grow strong, along with *one* of his princes who will gain ascendancy over him and obtain dominion; his domain *will be* a great dominion *indeed*.

Ptolemy, the king of the South, was certainly powerful, as was Seleucus who

was one of his princes or generals. Together they fought against Antigonus, defeating him in 312 B.C. Seleucus then gained control of Eastern Persia, and in 281 won Asia Minor. Ultimately, the dominion of the Seleucids greatly exceeded that of the Ptolemies.

6 After some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will come to the king of the North to carry out a peaceful arrangement. But she will not retain her position of power, nor will he remain with his power, but she will be given up, along with those who brought her in and the one who sired her as well as he who supported her in *those* times.

After some years of conflict between the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid kings (280-253), an alliance was formed and peace was made by the marriage of Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, to Antiochus II Theos in 252 B.C. Antiochus, in order to marry Berenice, had to divorce his first wife, Laodice. But Berenice was not to retain her position of power, for Antiochus left her to reunite with Laodice. Antiochus himself did not continue long in power, as Laodice, fearing he would turn again to Berenice, poisoned Antiochus, then arranged for the murders of Berenice and her sons. This paved the way for the son of Laodice, Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226) to assume the throne in Babylon.

7 But one of the descendants of her line will arise in his place, and he will come against *their* army and enter the fortress of the king of the North, and he will deal with them and display *great* strength.

Ptolemy III Euergetes (247-221), Berenice's brother, took the place of Ptolemy II, and in retaliation for the murders of Berenice and her sons, came against *their* army, attacking the Seleucid realm, putting to death Laodice, and extending his reach as far as Babylon.

8 Also their gods with their metal images *and* their precious vessels of silver and gold he will take into captivity to Egypt, and he on his part will refrain from *attacking* the king of the North for *some* years.

Ptolemy III captured many of their gods and metal images that were kept in Babylon, including some Egyptian gods that had been taken by Cambyses in 525 B.C., over 250 years earlier. Notice the connection between war-making with the greedy seizure of silver and gold.

9 Then the latter will enter the realm of the king of the South, but will return to his own land.

Seleucus II Callinicus marched against the king of the South, Ptolemy III, in a campaign that began in 242 and ended in 240 B.C. When Seleucus was completely defeated and forced to return to his own land with a decimated army.

10 His sons will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces; and one of them will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he may again wage war up to his very fortress.

The sons of Seleucus II Callinicus, Seleucus III Ceraunus and Antiochus III the Great, assemble[d] a multitude of great forces in order to wage war against the South. Seleucus III died in battle in Asia Minor (223 B.C.), leaving only one of them to carry on the war against Egypt.

11 The king of the South will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North. Then the latter will raise a great multitude, but *that* multitude will be given into the hand of the *former*.

Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-203 B.C.), enraged by the attack of Antiochus III in Phoenicia and Palestine, marched forth to oppose him. Both sides mounted enormous forces: Ptolemy had 70 thousand infantry, 5 thousand cavalry, and 73 war elephants; Antiochus responded with 62 thousand infantry, 6 thousand cavalry, and 102 war elephants. Antiochus was defeated by Ptolemy at the battle of Raphia in 217 B.C.

12 When the multitude is carried away, his heart will be lifted up, and he will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he will not prevail.

Ptolemy IV, his heart lifted up because of his victory, granted terms of peace to Antiochus III, and therefore he gained no lasting advantage over the Seleucid power.

13 For the king of the North will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he will press on with a great army and much equipment.

The peace allowed Antiochus the Great (222-187 B.C.) time and freedom to consolidate his domain. He was then able to raise a large army, and in alliance with Philip V of Macedon, he launched himself once more against the Egyptian territory of Phoenicia and Palestine in 202 B.C. By this time Ptolemy IV had been succeeded by his four-year-old son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

14 Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South; the violent ones among your people will also lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they will fall down.

Many of the Jews, violent ones, would rise up against the king of the South, who was ruling Judea, and would side with Antiochus III the Great and his allies. Yet the Egyptians, led by general Scopas launched a counteroffensive, during

which the leaders of the pro-Antiochus Jews were punished.

15 Then the king of the North will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city; and the forces of the South will not stand *their ground*, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand.

Scopas, after being defeated at Pnias, sought refuge at Sidon, but Antiochus III attacked and captured this well-fortified city in 198 B.C. This left all of Palestine in the control of the Seleucids.

16 But he who comes against him will do as he pleases, and no one will *be able to* withstand him; he will also stay *for a time* in the Beautiful Land, with destruction in his hand.

Antiochus fought against Scopas and was victorious; no one was able to withstand him. He passed through his newly acquired territories, coming to Jerusalem where he was cordially welcomed. Although he had the power to destroy, he instead granted tax relief to the city.

17 He will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom, bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he will also give him the daughter of women to ruin it. But she will not take a stand *for him* or be on his side.

A treaty was worked out between the two powers, Antiochus offering his daughter, Cleopatra I, as wife to Ptolemy V. The marriage took place in 194 B.C., however Cleopatra came to be loyal to her husband rather than her father, resulting in an alliance between Ptolemy V, Cleopatra I, and Rome.

18 Then he will turn his face to the coastlands and capture many. But a commander will put a stop to his scorn against him; moreover, he will repay him for his scorn.

Antiochus, at the instigation of Hannibal, turned his attention to the coastlands to the west: he invaded Asia Minor in 197 B.C., Thracia in 196, and Greece in 192. A Roman commander, Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus, put a stop to his conquests, defeating him at Magnesia in 190 B.C. Antiochus then suffered the indignity of a tribute levied by Rome—15 talents of silver, the surrender of all of his possessions west of the Taurus mountains, and his son, Antiochus IV, was sent to Rome as a hostage.

19 So he will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble and fall and be found no more.

In order to pay the onerous assessment, Antiochus the Great turned to plundering temples in his own land. He died shamefully engaged in this activity in Elymais in 187 B.C.

20 Then in his place one will arise who will send an oppressor through the Jewel of his kingdom; yet within a few days he will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle.

Seleucus IV Philopater (187-175 B.C.) succeeded his father and inherited the burden of this massive debt. He sent an oppressor, Heliodorus, to Palestine to seize the funds of the Temple treasury (however, he failed in this effort). Soon after the money-raising expedition, Seleucus met an untimely death, apparently being poisoned by Heliodorus.

21 In his place a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom by intrigue.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.) was the most despicable person to arise and exercise a reign of terror over God's people. The honor of kingship should have gone to the son of Seleucus IV, Demetrius I Soter, but because he was a hostage in Rome, Antiochus seized the opportunity to be made king. Among his intrigues designed to achieve this end were his involvements in the deaths of Seleucus IV and his son.

22 The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant.

Antiochus scored a number of victories in battles to consolidate his power. Then in 175 B.C. the High Priest Onias III was deposed by Antiochus, later being assassinated (171 B.C.) as a result of political intrigues. [Note: Others take this to be "a covenanted prince," i.e., the young king, Ptolemy VI Philometor, with whom Antiochus III had made a treaty.]

23 After an alliance is made with him he will practice deception, and he will go up and gain power with a small force of people.

Many leaders made alliances with Antiochus only to become victims of his treachery. He rose to a position of great power even though Syria itself was a small nation and his collaborators were few.

24 In a time of tranquility he will enter the richest parts of the realm, and he will accomplish what his fathers never did, nor his ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them, and

he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but *only* for a time.

Antiochus launched invasions against the richest provinces, such as Lower Egypt and Bactria, at a time when they felt secure; he gained riches and practiced bribery and betrayal to an extent unknown to his predecessors.

25 He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes conducted a second (although some number it the first) campaign against Egypt in 170 B.C. Ptolemy VI responded with a large force, but because of the treachery of those who claimed to support him he did not stand.

26 Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain.

Members of Ptolemy's own court (some suggest specifically Eulaeus and Lenaeus, royal advisors to the young king), through their foolish advice, led to his downfall. He attempted to invade and recapture Palestine in 169 B.C., but suffered a disastrous defeat. Philometor lost Pelusium and Memphis and was himself captured by Antiochus IV.

27 As for both kings, their hearts will be *intent* on evil, and they will speak lies *to each other* at the same table; but it will not succeed, for the end is still *to come* at the appointed time.

Antiochus and his nephew-prisoner, Ptolemy VI Philometor, pretend friendship in alliance against the newly crowned Ptolemy VIII Physcon, but in reality they plot against each other (cf. Psa. 41:9). Their alliance ultimately failed.

28 Then he will return to his land with much plunder; but his heart will be *set* against the holy covenant, and he will take action and *then* return to his own land.

Returning to Palestine in 169 B.C. after his victory in Egypt, Antiochus IV sought to replenish his depleted treasury by sacking the Temple in Jerusalem and stripping it of its gold, before going home to Syria (1Macc. 1:20ff). This is the beginning of the serious oppression of the Jews in Judea.

29 At the appointed time he will return and come into the South, but this last time it will not turn out the way it did before.

Scarcely a year later in 168 B.C., Antiochus, learning that Philometor and Physcon had been reconciled and were reigning jointly (see note v.21), launched another assault on Egypt. This time he was not successful.

30 For ships of Kittim will come against him; therefore he will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action; so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.

Rome came to the aid of Egypt. The Roman envoy, Popillius Laenas encountered Antiochus just outside of Alexandria and handed him an order to withdraw from Egypt. When Antiochus asked for time to consider, the Roman drew a circle around him in the sand and told him to take as much time as he wanted, but to give his answer before leaving the circle. Humiliated, he left Egypt. On his return, he decided to strengthen his hold on Palestine, ordering a massacre of pious Jews, but exempting those Hellenizing Jews who abandoned the Law.

31 Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.

Antiochus Epiphanes stationed Syrian troops at the Akra, near the Temple. Having this control over the sacred precincts the king desecrated the holy place in every way imaginable. On December 7, 167 B.C., he erected an altar to Zeus on top of the Temple's altar (perhaps accompanied by an idol of the deity), which was identified by the author of 1 Maccabees (1:54) as "the abomination of desolation."

32 By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength and take action.

Antiochus would, through various enticements, lead many to abandon God's Law, but many others would remain strong and loyal through it all. Soon Mattathias and his sons would lead an armed resistance among the Jews.

33 Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days.

Many in Israel would refuse to submit to the king's policies, accepting death rather than defilement.

34 Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy.

The plight of the Jews was alleviated somewhat by the military successes of the Maccabees and the guerilla resistance and by political help from Rome. Because they often employed harsh and brutal tactics against the Greeks and the Hellenizing Jews, many Jews joined with them as a matter of convenience.

35 Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because *it is still to come* at the appointed time.

The frenzied persecution by Antiochus would mean death for many of those loyal to God's Law (cf. Heb. 11:35-38), but this would last only as long as God allowed.

36 Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

Antiochus acted without restraint, showing crass disregard for all gods, even blaspheming the true God. He would continue in this course until God's plan was completed.

37 He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any *other* god; for he will magnify himself above *them* all.

The king demonstrated his arrogant impiety toward the gods of his ancestors, the gods sought by women, indeed toward all gods. No temple of any deity was safe from his rapacious grasp. He even went so far as to identify himself as the chief of the gods, "Zeus Manifested."

38 But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor *him* with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures.

The only deity that reigned in his life was the god of war and conquest; he worshiped power alone. To this idol he devoted all his resources.

39 He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with *the help* of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge *him* and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.

By means of this strange god, Antiochus would launch himself against strongholds in various lands. He honored, elevated, and enriched those who allied themselves with him.

40 At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow *them* and pass through.

In this time of the end of God's wrath against His people, there would be continual conflict between Egypt and Syria. Antiochus would subdue numerous other lands as well.

41 He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many *countries* will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.

Judea in particular would suffer his rage—many of the covenant people would die. Yet the lands of the trans-jordan would largely escape his domination.

42 Then he will stretch out his hand against *other* countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape.

The dominion of Antiochus would extend across the ancient world, from Persia to Egypt.

43 But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians *will follow* at his heels.

The king sacked and looted temples in Egypt and was poised to invade Libya and Ethiopia.

44 But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.

Messages from Parthia to the East and Armenia to the North would draw him back from Egypt and Palestine.

45 He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

While in his arrogance he had established his royal presence in the Holy Land, he would not succeed in his designs on Palestine. While in Persia, in May of 163 B.C., he became distressed at the news of the Maccabean successes, fell ill, went mad, and died.

Annotated Bibliography

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Z★ckler, Otto. "The Book of the Prophet Daniel." *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*. Zondervan. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1876. This author takes a modified critical view of the authorship of Daniel. The first part of chapter eleven is "the product of the interpolating activity of a pious Jew in the Maccabean period, while we consider vs. 40-45 as being a portion of Daniel's original prophecies uttered during the era of the Captivity" (254). He concludes, therefore, that the passage describes Antiochus.