



## Daniel 11.21-45

In previous visions it had been revealed to Daniel that future rulers and kingdoms would continue to oppress his people. In chapter 7 he was told that rulers of the 4th kingdom would wage “war with the saints and overpower them” (7.21). In chapter 8 Daniel was told that a Greek ruler would “destroy mighty men and the holy people” (8.24). And in chapter 9 it was revealed that in the future the Messiah would be cut off and Jerusalem destroyed (9.26-27). Chapters 10-12 contain the last vision revealed to Daniel, a vision where he would come to understand what would “happen to your people in the latter days” (10.14). In our study of Daniel 11.1-20 we’ve had a brief sketch of Persian (11.1-2) and Greek rule (11.3-20), focusing mainly on the conflicts between the kings of the South (Ptolemies) and the kings of the North (Seleucids). But starting with 11.21 we see how some of these rulers would oppress God’s people.

### ***Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Daniel 11.21-35 NASB95)***

This king was already the subject of a vision, the ruler who would “destroy mighty men and the holy people” (8.23-26). Yet, the rule of Antiochus IV would not have seemed certain to most. We noted in 11.18-19 that Antiochus III the Great was soundly defeated by the Romans in 190 B.C. Besides a huge indemnity which was placed on Antiochus, he was forced to send hostages to Rome. These hostages would not be released until the indemnity was paid in full. One of the hostages was Antiochus IV. Yet, this son would become king and his zeal for power would have ramifications not only for the king of the South, but for God’s people.

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 had been released, in exchange for another hostage, shortly before Seleucus IV was murdered by Heliodorus (vs. 20). The legal heir to the throne was Demetrius, son of Seleucus IV, but it was Demetrius who was sent to Rome as hostage in place of Antiochus IV.
- Antiochus IV arrived with an army and Heliodorus fled. Antiochus was supposedly ruling as coregent with his nephew, but the nephew was murdered a few years later, leaving Antiochus IV as king.

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

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.

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 III’s policy of allowing the Jews self-government made the high priest the local ruler. When Antiochus IV came to power, the high priest was Onias III. He opposed the inroads of Hellenism in Judea. Soon after Antiochus IV’s accession, Onias’s brother Jason offered the king a large bribe and the promise that he would pursue a policy of hellenization if he were made high priest. Antiochus agreed and deposed Onias. In 172 B.C. Menelaus, who was not of the high priestly family but from the rival Tobiad family, offered the king an even bigger bribe, and he was made high priest in Jason’s place. Onias publicly accused Menelaus of stealing some golden vessels from the temple and fled to the sanctuary at Daphne for safety. Menelaus had him lured from the sanctuary and murdered in 171. This seems to be the one specifically identifiable event in verses 22–24, which otherwise seem to give an overall impression of Antiochus IV’s rule.” (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary)

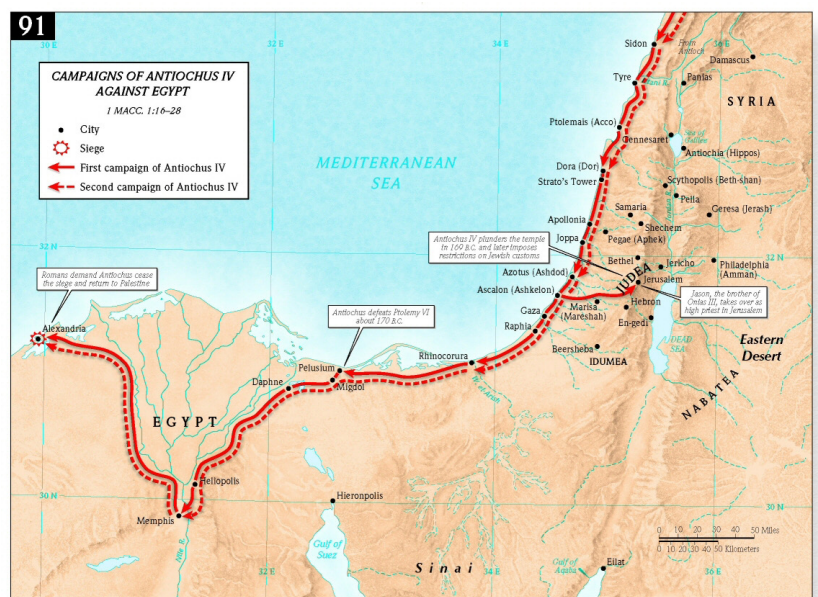
25“He will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South with a large army; so the king of the South will mobilize an extremely large and mighty army for war; but he will not stand, for schemes will be devised against him.

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

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.

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.

- These verses detail the first invasion of Egypt by Antiochus IV in 170 B.C.
- Ptolemy VI was very young when he was made king of Egypt. Two of his counselors provoked him to try and recover Palestine (vs. 26), which may



have been what provoked Antiochus' invasion.

- Antiochus IV invaded in 170, defeated an Egyptian army near Pelusium and then captured Memphis (vs. 25). Alexandria did not fall to Antiochus and they declared Ptolemy VII, younger brother of Ptolemy VI, as the new king of Egypt.
- Antiochus set Ptolemy VI as a puppet king in Memphis, but Ptolemy VI and VII allied with each other, becoming joint rulers of Egypt (vs. 27)
- On his way back to Syria, Antiochus IV stopped in Jerusalem and raided the Temple treasury (vs. 28).

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.

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.

- Antiochus returned to Egypt in 168 B.C., quickly subdued Memphis again and then lay siege to Alexandria.
- However, Egypt had appealed to Rome for help and the Roman consul Gaius Popillius Laenas arrived as Antiochus was laying siege to Alexandria. The mention of “ships of Kittim” in vs. 30 refers to this force from Rome. The Roman consul demanded that Antiochus leave Egypt, and when Antiochus replied that he must first consult with his advisors the consul drew a circle in the dirt around Antiochus and said he must give his answer before leaving the circle. Humiliated, Antiochus retreated to Syria.
- Rumor reached Jerusalem that Antiochus had been killed. Jason, the former high priest, took this as an opportunity to rebel against the current high priest, Menelaus. Antiochus put the rebellion down, massacring tens of thousands of Jews. It was probably at this time that the citadel of Syrian soldiers was set up at the edge of the Temple Mount.

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.

- This verse details how Antiochus IV turned his full fury against the Jews.
- “According to the book of Maccabees, an individual named Geron was sent by Antiochus to dismantle Jewish religious practice. It is possible that the Syrian military contingent, seeking accommodation for their own worship practice, was partially responsible for some of the changes described in the temple. In December 167 a systematic program of instituting Greek religious practices at the expense of Jewish ones began in earnest. The sacrificial system and the Sabbath and festival observances were halted. Worship sites were set up around the country and circumcision was forbidden. The temple was consecrated to Zeus and became a center of poly-



theism and prostitution." (IVP Bible Background Commentary)

- On the 15th of Chislev, 167 B.C. an object of sacrilege was erected on the altar of burn offering. This is usually taken to be an idol of Olympian Zeus. Here, it is referred to 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.

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.

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

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.

- There were many Jews who favored the Hellenization process, foremost of whom was Menelaus the high priest. However, many others rebelled.
- "The main organized rebellion was led by the Hasmonean family. When a Syrian envoy came to their town, Modein, to enforce Antiochus's edict, the head of the family, a priest named Mattathias, killed him. The family fled and became the rallying point for other rebels. Judas, one of Mattathias's five sons, became the military commander and gained the nickname "Maccabeus" ("hammer") because of the defeats he inflicted on the Syrian forces sent against the rebels. In December 164 B.C., about three years after the desecration of the temple, Judas regained control of Jerusalem, purified the temple, and resumed the sacrifices. This event is not recorded in Daniel 11." (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary)



### ***The King (Daniel 11.36-45 NASB95)***

Opinions differ on the identity of "the king" in these verses. Perhaps the most natural reading of the text would be to see these verses as still relating to Antiochus IV. Indeed, there are several points that fit:

- Antiochus began including "God manifest" (Epiphanes) on his coins, thus exalting himself above every god (vs. 36).
- Antiochus promoted the worship of Olympian Zeus, whereas his forefathers viewed Apollo as their patron. Thus, he did not worship the god of his fathers (vs. 37).

- Worshipping a god of fortresses (vs. 38) may refer to Antiochus' quest for power, thus ambition was his true god.

However, there are many aspects of this passage that do not point to any known aspect of Antiochus' rule. Thus, many conservative commentators believe that the focus of the passage has shifted from Antiochus to Rome. This makes sense in the overall scheme of the book as the visions of chapters 2 and 7 foretold of four world empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome). Furthermore, the 70 weeks prophecy encompassed events of the Roman Empire (9.26-27). So, it would make sense that this final vision also encompasses what would happen to God's people during Roman rule.

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.

- Pompey took control of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. Thousands of Jews were killed and Pompey forced his way into the holy of holies.
- Various Roman emperors would continue the process of magnifying themselves above all other gods and opposing the true God.
- However, as this passage makes clear, the power of Rome would come to an end (Daniel 2.44; 7.11,26).

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.

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.

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.

- The chief god of Roman emperors was power. In their quest of power, they would magnify themselves above all other gods.
- Receiving the help of “a foreign god” may reference Rome's willingness to ally herself with other nations to achieve her aims. It could also reference the fact that Jehovah God was still sovereign and so what came to pass was by His permission.
- Herod was one such vassal of Rome who received “great honor” and the right to “rule over the many” because of his alliance with Rome.

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.

- The “end time” here could refer to the end of the Egyptian kingdom.
- The Ptolemies moved against the Romans, led by Cleopatra and Mark Antony. However Octavian was victorious over Mark Antony at the Battle of Actium 31 B.C., bringing an end to the Ptolemy kingdom.

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.

- Roman rule over Palestine was reaffirmed following the battle of Actium.
- Herod, who had been a friend and ally of Mark Antony, swore fidelity to Octavian and received the right to rule over Palestine.
- This verse may refer to the fact that there was no formal action against Edom, Moab and Ammon, or that since they were located in the desert they did not figure into Roman plans.

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

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.

- These verses have no parallel in the life of Antiochus IV, and so give weight to Rome being the correct interpretation.
- Only Rome gained control over all of these regions.

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.

- A possible reference to the numerous troubles the Romans would have with the Parthians (east) and Barbaric tribes (north) through the years.

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.

- Homer Hailey sees this verse as referring to AD 70 when a Roman encamped around Jerusalem and then destroyed it. This event was also foretold in Daniel 9.26.
- Yet, Rome would not rule forever. Its rule would come to an end, and since that end was decreed by God, no one could help.