

• After Antiochus III – his son Seleucus reigned briefly subject to Rome

Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) – a very significant figure

• Dishonest brother of Seleucus

• Constantly at war – Egypt defeated

• Steadily gained power over Israel and Jerusalem

• A lavish spender of money on his supporters

• A limited time – 20 years

• Campaign against Ptolemy VI of Egypt

After Antiochus III, his son Seleucus became king of Syria. ²⁰*Then there will arise in his place someone who will send a raiser of taxes, for maintaining the glory of the kingdom. In a few years however the king will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.* It was Seleucus IV who came into the position once occupied by his father. He had to pay taxes to Rome, and sent his tax official, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem with instructions that the temple funds should be seized. However, at the last moment Heliodorus experienced some kind of vision^{□1} and failed to rob the temple. A short time later Seleucus IV suddenly died (perhaps through being poisoned).

Now the text moves to a very significant figure: Antiochus Epiphanes. ²¹*Then there will arise in his place a despicable person, to whom the honour of the kingdom has not been given, but he comes into it quietly and takes hold of the kingdom by intrigues.* It was Antiochus IV or Antiochus Epiphanes who came into the position once occupied by his brother, Seleucus. The position ought to have gone to Demetrius, the son of Seleucus, but Antiochus pretended to be a guardian to the young Demetrius and slowly and dishonestly stole the kingship for himself.

²²*Great and overwhelmingly large military forces will be swept away before him. They will be utterly defeated. So also will the leader of the covenant be utterly defeated.* Antiochus IV was constantly at war. Large armies were defeated including those of Egypt, and Ptolemy VI (185–145 BC). The 'leader of the covenant' seems to be the Jewish high priest Onias III, whom Antiochus deposed, and kept in captivity in Antioch.

²³*From the time when he joins himself to them he will work deceitfully. With only a few supporters he will steadily gain power.* Antiochus pretended friendliness towards Egypt, but as he did so he was pursuing his own advantages. He gained power slowly over Israel and Jerusalem.

'Without warning he will enter the richest areas of the land.' He would abruptly come to the most fertile areas of Syria and of Judea and grab what he wanted for his own purposes. *'He will do that which his fathers have never done, nor his fathers' fathers. He will distribute among the people the spoil, the goods and the possessions.'* Antiochus was lavish in his spending of money on those he wanted as his supporters. ²⁴*He will devise plans against fortresses – but only for a limited time.* Antiochus would make sure that no enemy had fortresses that could be used to undermine his power. Yet all of this arrogance and self-will would only last for a limited period. Antiochus's entire rule would last only twelve years.

Daniel 11:25–28 refers to a military campaign conducted by Antiochus against Egypt. ²⁵*He will stir up his energy and his courage against the king of the south, preparing a great army. And the king of the south will arouse himself for battle with a great and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand undefeated because of the plots devised against him.* The southern king would be Ptolemy VI.

□1 see Maccabees 3:24-30

• Antiochus and Ptolemy VI would hold consultations in which they tried to deceive each other

• Invaded Jerusalem and stole its treasures on the way to Syria

• Another but unsuccessful military campaign against Egypt

• Further attack and plundering of Jerusalem

The purpose of the prediction

• To give understanding that before the kingdom of God comes in power God's people will have to persevere in faith through a period of horrible sacrilege and persecution

²⁶ Those who eat his food will destroy him, and his army will be swept away and many will be killed in battle. ²⁷ In the case of both of these kings, their hearts will be set on doing evil. They will sit at one table and speak lies to each other! But it will not bring either one anything good, for the end of the matter is appointed for some time ahead.' Antiochus and Ptolemy VI would hold consultations in which they tried to deceive each other. No good would come of it for God's appointed time for the end of the war between them had not yet come. ²⁸ 'Then the northern king will return to his land with much wealth and his heart will be hostile to the holy covenant and he will accomplish his intention and return to his own land.' Antiochus returned from Egypt. On the way he invaded Jerusalem and stole its treasures before proceeding to Syria.

Daniel 11:29–35 refers to another military campaign against Egypt. ²⁹ 'At the time appointed the northern king will again come into the south, but this time it shall not be as it was before.' This military campaign was not successful. 'For ships from the western coastlands will come against him, and so he will be disheartened.' As Antiochus was about to invade Egypt he was intercepted by Roman forces in boats from the western coastlands of the Mediterranean Sea. They forbade him to invade Egypt and Antiochus was unable to withstand Roman power. ³⁰ 'He will turn back and act with fury against the holy covenant. He will take strong action and will favour those who forsake the holy covenant.' Furious with rage at being resisted, Antiochus marched to Jerusalem, entered it unresisted, killed many people, took large sums of money, some of which was distributed to his supporters, and then went home to Antioch.

Antiochus came back. ³¹ 'Soldiers sent by him will arrive on the scene' (said the angel). 'They will profane the sanctuary, the fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifices, and they will set up the abominable thing that causes desolation.' It happened as the angel said. Antiochus banned the sacrifices, and built a pagan altar inside the temple upon which he offered pigs in sacrifice. The angel lets Daniel know that before the kingdom of God comes in power God's people will have to persevere in faith through a period of horrible sacrilege and persecution.



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