

11:18 Antiochus turned his attention to the **coastlands**, attacking Macedon, Thrace, and Greece. In 191 he was defeated by the Romans at Thermopylae and in 190 at Magnesia. He became a vassal to Rome. Antiochus IV, his younger son, was taken to Rome as a hostage.

11:19 Antiochus returned to Syria, the core of his empire. He was assassinated in 187, attempting to pillage the temple of Bel in Elymais.

11:20 Seleucus IV Philopator (187–175), Antiochus’s successor, was trapped beneath the burden of tribute imposed on his father’s empire. He appointed Heliodorus as finance minister to maintain Rome’s **royal splendor**. Seleucus died in 175, assassinated in a plot engineered by Heliodorus and Seleucus’s younger brother Antiochus IV (2 Macc 3).

D. ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES (11:21-45)

²¹**“He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. ²²Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. ²³After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. ²⁴When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time.**

²⁵**“With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. ²⁶Those who eat from the king’s provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be**

was of little consequence for Antiochus’s plan. When Ptolemy V died in 181, Cleopatra was appointed as queen regent.

swept away, and many will fall in battle. ²⁷The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. ²⁸The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.

²⁹At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. ³⁰Ships of the western coastlands^a will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

³¹His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. ³²With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

³³Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. ³⁴When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. ³⁵Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

³⁶The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. ³⁷He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. ³⁸Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.^b

⁴⁰At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with

chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. ⁴¹He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. ⁴²He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. ⁴³He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. ⁴⁴But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at^c the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

^a30 Hebrew of Kittim ^b39 Or land for a reward ^c45 Or the sea and

11:21 Since the defeat of Antiochus III at Magnesia, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–163) had been a political hostage in Rome. But in 175 Demetrius I, the oldest son of Seleucus IV, was sent to Rome to replace Antiochus IV as hostage there. Antiochus IV took power as guardian to and co-regent with Antiochus, the younger son of Seleucus IV. In 170 Antiochus died leaving Antiochus IV to rule alone.

11:22-24 A **prince of the covenant** is the high priest Onias III, replaced in 175 because of his Egyptian sympathies by Jason from the pro-Syrian Tobiad party.⁵ The Tobiads, who had emigrated from across the Jordan River some years before, benefited from this synergism by being beneficiaries of Antiochus's liberality on the basis of plunder (v. 24; 1 Macc 3:30). Jason and Onias were brothers. The Tobiads wanted to hellenize Jerusalem. Second Maccabees 4:7b-10 comments on these events: "Jason the brother of Onias obtained the high priesthood by corruption, promising the king at an interview three hundred and sixty talents of silver and, from another source of revenue, eighty talents. In addition to this he promised to pay one

⁵Archer is representative of those commentators who see Ptolemy VI Philometor as the "prince of the covenant." Antiochus made a treaty of friendship with Ptolemy VI aimed at uniting the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties under his authority. The alliance aided Ptolemy VI's attempt to dislodge his younger brother Physcon from power. The alliance wore so thin that Philometor made peace with Physcon ("Daniel," pp. 136-137).

hundred and fifty more if permission were given to establish by his authority a gymnasium and a body of youth for it, and to enrol the men of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch. When the king assented and Jason came to office, he at once shifted his countrymen over to the Greek way of life.”

11:25-26 These verses turn to Antiochus’s campaign against the South. In 170 an Egyptian army set off to recapture Palestine. Antiochus defeated this army, entered Egypt, took Ptolemy VI prisoner, and occupied much of Egypt. In the words of 1 Maccabees 1:17-19: “So he invaded Egypt with a strong force, with chariots and elephants and cavalry and with a large fleet. He engaged Ptolemy king of Egypt in battle, and Ptolemy turned and fled before him, and many were wounded and fell. And they captured the fortified cities in the land of Egypt, and he plundered the land of Egypt.”

According to 25b-26a Ptolemy will be the victim of treachery. Goldingay summarizes the possibilities of this treachery: “Perhaps the reference is to people who betrayed Pelusium [a border fortress] to Antiochus, or perhaps to Ptolemy’s advisers who brought about the Egyptian defeat by urging the attack on Palestine, his capture by urging him to flee from Antiochus, and his deposition by then crowning his brother as Ptolemy VII in Alexandria in 169 B.C.”⁶

11:27 Antiochus IV and Ptolemy VI will then unite (**sit at the same table**) to regain the throne for the latter, as a Seleucid puppet. Each king is clearly motivated by his own interests, but neither will achieve the ultimate purpose (**but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time**).

11:28 During a visit to Jerusalem in 169, Antiochus IV confiscated some of the temple treasury. The **holy covenant** denotes the holy land and the covenant people. First Maccabees 1:21-23 reads: “He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. He took the silver and the gold, and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures which he found.”

⁶Goldingay, *Daniel*, p. 301.

11:29-30a In the meantime, the two Ptolemies (VI and VII) agreed to reign jointly. So in 168 Antiochus invaded again. The Roman consul Gaius Popillius Laenas (**ships of the western coastlands⁷ will oppose him**) intercepted Antiochus and ordered him out of Egypt. He drew a circle round him and ordered him to respond before stepping out of it. Antiochus withdrew and returned via Judea.

11:30b-31 Responding to a rumor that Antiochus had died in Egypt, Jason, whom Antiochus had earlier deposed in favor of Menelaus (2 Macc 4:23-29), returned to Jerusalem and led a rebellion against the latter and the Tobiad ruling party (2 Macc 5:5-10).

Antiochus put down the rebellion and reestablished the authority of the Tobiad priesthood. Again, in the words of 2 Maccabees: “When news of what had happened reached the king, he took it to mean that Judea was in revolt. So, raging inwardly, he left Egypt and took the city by storm. And he commanded his soldiers to cut down relentlessly every one they met and to slay those who went into the houses. Then there was killing of young and old, destruction of boys, women, and children, and slaughter of virgins and infants. Within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting; and as many were sold into slavery as were slain” (5:11-14).

In addition to this **fury** (v. 30), he stopped the daily temple sacrifice (Num 28:2-8) and set up the **abomination that causes desolation** (v. 31; cf. 8:11-13). The abomination was, of course, the heathen altar erected on the altar of burnt offering (1 Macc 1:54).

11:32 Menelaus and his followers, “those who forsake the holy covenant” (v. 30), did not object to either the ransacking of the temple or of the faith. Instead, they sided with the tyrant who had put them in power.

11:33-34 These verses suggest that God’s people would endure the sword (1 Macc 2:9,31-38), fire (2 Macc 6:11; 7:1-41), captivity (1 Macc 3:41), and being plundered (1 Macc 1:31).

The persecuted would be comforted (**receive a little help**) by the discerning (**those who are wise**) coming to share their commitment

⁷“Western coastlands” is literally *kittim*. Kittim is an ancient name for Cyprus (Isa 23:1). Here it is used of the islands and coastlands west of Palestine (cf. Num 24:24).

(1 Macc 2:42). Martyrdom would test how real the commitment to the resistance really was. Some, however, joined the resistance from insincere motives (**and many who are not sincere will join them**).

11:35 The persecution has its purpose in God's plan (**they may be refined, purified, and made spotless**), and He will bring it to its appointed end (**it will come at the appointed time**).

Mattathias led a group of heroic patriots in the struggle for independence against Antiochus IV and the Seleucid Empire (cf. Zech 9:13; Heb 11:33-35). He was the father of five sons: John Gaddis, Simon Thasi, Judas Maccabaeus, Eleazar Avaran, and Jonathan Apphus. Their victory is commemorated in the festival known as Hanukkah (1 Macc 4; John 10:22). In turn a strong Jewish kingdom was founded by John Hyrcanus (134–104) and enlarged by his son Alexander Jannaeus (103–76).

11:36-39 These verses evaluate Antiochus's religious attitudes.⁸ His egotism (vv. 36,37) was reflected in the title Epiphanes, "[God] Manifest," his use on coins of the title "God," his plundering of temples and suppressing of other religions. In light then of this self-glorification, he came into sharp conflict with the **God of gods**, the God of Israel (cf. 1 Macc 1:24).

When Antiochus replaced Apollo with Zeus as the god of the dynasty, he **show[ed] no regard for the gods of his fathers** (vv. 37, 38). **The one desired by women** is possibly a deity favored in Egypt – Adonis or Dionysus, who was slighted by Antiochus's politics.

Antiochus's favorable treatment of Tobiad leadership is example enough of how he **honor[ed] those who acknowledge[d] him** (v. 39; cf. 1 Macc 3:36).

The reference to **fortresses** in verse 39 finds a possible parallel in 1 Maccabees: "Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and *strong towers*, and it became their *citadel*. And they stationed there a sinful people, lawless men" (1:33-34a). Later, speaking of the citadel, from it Gentiles "used to sally forth and defile the environs of the sanctuary and do great damage to its purity" (14:36).

Antiochus's success (cf. 8:4; 11:3,16) is permitted **until the time of wrath is completed** (v. 36).

⁸Calvin opines that verses 36-45 relate to the Roman Empire.

11:40-45 Since the expression **at the time of the end** (v. 40) was used at verse 35 in connection with Antiochus, the reference here applies to the end of the reign of Antiochus. Verses 40-45 summarize the career of and depict then the doom of Antiochus.⁹ At the moment of his triumph (vv. 42-43), Antiochus will be called away by disturbing reports (v. 44; cf. 2 Kgs 19:7). In a fury, he will march north and east (where the Parthian threat loomed large) and meet his end (v. 45).

Since Antiochus died at Tabae in Persia, verse 45 only suggests that he would pitch his royal tents between the sea [Mediterranean] and the beautiful holy mountain [Jerusalem], not die there.

Daniel 11 predicted a time of religious persecution for God's people. Persecution is also an important theme in the New Testament.

Like the prophets (Matt 5:12; Acts 7:52), Jesus was persecuted (John 5:16). Jesus suggests that his followers will also be persecuted: "All men will hate you because of me" (Matt 10:22; cf. 23:33-36; Luke 11:47-51; 21:12-19). "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20). Paul echoes this thought: "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim 3:12). Jesus calls the persecuted one "blessed" (Matt 5:10,11), perhaps because "great is your reward in heaven" (Matt 5:12). Paul exhorts us to "bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (Rom 12:14). Jesus also demands that we "pray for those who persecute" us (Matt 5:44).

⁹Most conservative commentators relate verses 40-45 to the Antichrist. But there is nothing in the text to indicate a change of subjects. Less than conservative commentators point to v. 40 as a transition from *ex eventu* prophecy to real and erroneous prediction. These commentators assume that v. 45 suggests that Antiochus would die in the Holy Land, which, if Polybius be believed, would be mistaken. Polybius writes, "In Syria, King Antiochus, wishing to provide himself with money, decided to make an expedition against the sanctuary of Artemis in Elymais. On reaching the spot he was foiled in his hopes . . . and on his retreat he died at Tabae in Persia, smitten with madness as some people say. Owing to certain manifestations of divine displeasure when he was attempting this outrage on the above sanctuary" (31.9). But does v. 45 necessarily say that Antiochus will die between the Mediterranean and Jerusalem? I do not think so.

Christians were persecuted by Saul (Acts 8:1; 22:4-5; 26:9-11; 1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13,23; Phil 3:6; 1 Tim 1:13). Paul was himself persecuted (Acts 13:50; 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor 4:9; Gal 5:11; 2 Tim 3:11).

The persecution of Christians advanced the proclamation of the gospel: "Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:19-21).

The persecution of Christians also resulted in a greater awareness of the power of Christ. "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9b-10).

Persecution also resulted in greater faith (2 Thess 1:3-4), endurance (Rom 5:3; Jas 1:2), and comfort (2 Cor 1:5).