

ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES (Dan.11:21-35)

These verses (11:21-35) describe Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a son of Antiochus III the Great. This Seleucid who ruled from 175-163 B.C., is given as much attention as all the others before him combined. He is the little horn of Daniel 8:9-12. This long section in chapter 11 is devoted to him not only because of the effects of his invasion on the land of Israel, but more so because he foreshadows the little horn (king) of 7:8 & 8:23-25 who in the future "latter days" (the Tribulation) will desecrate & destroy the land of Israel.

DAN 11:21 AND IN HIS ESTATE SHALL STAND UP A VILE PERSON, TO WHOM THEY SHALL NOT GIVE THE HONOUR OF THE KINGDOM: BUT HE SHALL COME IN PEACEABLY, AND OBTAIN THE KINGDOM BY FLATTERIES.

[11:21] Antiochus IV took to himself the name Epiphanes which means "the Illustrious One" or "the Magnificent", as well as the title "Theos Epiphanes"...the god made manifest. But he was so contemptible to his contemporaries that they nicknamed him "Epimanes" - the madman.

Antiochus was not the rightful heir to the throne. Demetrius Soter, one of Seleucus IV Philopator's (187-176) two sons, was the legitimate heir to his murdered father's throne, but he was a hostage in Rome at that time. Meanwhile Heliodorus, the wily finance minister of the murdered king (v.20), was plotting another conspiracy to seize power under the pretext of acting as regent of the younger son of Seleucus. However, when Antiochus learned about the assassination of Seleucus IV, he rushed to Antioch of Syria, nullified the conspiracy and murdered the puppet king (his young nephew). Then by the use of flattery & intrigue, he quickly had himself proclaimed king without a fight (v.21). Thus he did not come to the throne by rightful succession.

DAN 11:22 AND WITH THE ARMS OF A FLOOD SHALL THEY BE OVERFLOWN FROM BEFORE HIM, AND SHALL BE BROKEN; YEA, ALSO THE PRINCE OF THE COVENANT.

[11:22] This verse predicts Antiochus' early military ventures which includes the scattering of Heliodorus' troops and the army of Egypt. Egypt prepared an army to march against him during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometer (181-145). Ptolemy was urged by two ambitious advisors to recapture Syria & Palestine which had been possessions of Egypt in an earlier period. The young Ptolemy foolishly heeded their counsel & began to prepare to invade. Antiochus learned of this and marched his Syrian army south completely routing this opponent (170 B.C.) on the Mediterranean seacoast halfway between Gaza & the Nile delta (v.25-26).

Antiochus had Onias III, the High Priest of Israel, slain and replace by Onias' brother, Jason (B.C. 172). Jason had wanted Greek culture established in Israel, but Onias had opposed this (2 Macc.4:7-15). Onias was called "the prince of the covenant" because he was the de facto head of the theocratic Jewish state at the time as high priest, and as such - it was his responsibility to see that Israel kept its covenant with God.

DAN 11:23 AND AFTER THE LEAGUE MADE WITH HIM HE SHALL WORK DECEITFULLY: FOR HE SHALL COME UP, AND SHALL BECOME STRONG WITH A SMALL PEOPLE.

[11:23] Antiochus made an alliance with Egypt in order to get it off its guard. He then proceeded to try to gain control of Egypt through guile, deceit, & crafty cunning. In spite of the small size to which Rome had reduced his Syrian kingdom (v.18 - Scipio, 190 B.C. - Battle of Magnesia etc.), Antiochus began to rise in power.

DAN 11:24 HE SHALL ENTER PEACEABLY EVEN UPON THE FATTEST PLACES OF THE PROVINCE; AND HE SHALL DO THAT WHICH HIS FATHERS HAVE NOT DONE, NOR HIS FATHERS'FATHERS; HE SHALL SCATTER AMONG THEM THE PREY, AND SPOIL, AND RICHES: YEA, AND HE SHALL FORECAST HIS DEVICES AGAINST THE STRONG HOLDS, EVEN FOR A TIME.

[11:24] Antiochus robbed the richest parts of his own kingdom quite unexpectedly. He did not spend these funds directly upon himself, as his ancestors had done. Instead, he generously redistributed it among his poorer subjects in order to gain their support, as well as favoring much of it upon his cronies (1 Macc.3:30; Josephus Antiquities 12.7.2). He did this in advance of his attack upon Egypt, whereupon he planned to take her fortresses to serve his ends.

DAN 11:25 AND HE SHALL STIR UP HIS POWER AND HIS COURAGE AGAINST THE KING OF THE SOUTH WITH A GREAT ARMY; AND THE KING OF THE SOUTH SHALL BE STIRRED UP TO BATTLE WITH A VERY GREAT AND MIGHTY ARMY; BUT HE SHALL NOT STAND: FOR THEY SHALL FORECAST DEVICES AGAINST HIM. DAN 11:26 YEA, THEY THAT FEED OF THE PORTION OF HIS MEAT SHALL DESTROY HIM, AND HIS ARMY SHALL OVERFLOW: AND MANY SHALL FALL DOWN SLAIN.

[11:25-26] After consolidating his kingdom, Antiochus IV moved his massive army, supported by chariots, elephants, cavalry & a great navy, to the very border of Egypt (see v.22 above). He was met by Ptolemy VI Philometer (181-145 B.C.) and his huge army at Pelusium (170), east of the Nile delta. Ptolemy was soundly defeated, because some of his own men from his royal court plotted against him and aided the Syrian cause. Many Egyptian soldiers were slain, Ptolemy was overthrown as king & taken captive by Antiochus.

DAN 11:27 AND BOTH THESE KINGS'HEARTS SHALL BE TO DO MISCHIEF, AND THEY SHALL SPEAK LIES AT ONE TABLE; BUT IT SHALL NOT PROSPER: FOR YET THE END SHALL BE AT THE TIME APPOINTED.

[11:27] The Greek overlords of Egypt quickly crowned Ptolemy VI Philometer's brother, Ptolemy VII Euergetes (Benefactor) as king at Alexandria. In light of this new development, Antiochus pretended to befriend his defeated nephew in order to obtain his help against Euergetes VII. Thus, they exchanged lies "at one table" and dealt treacherously with each other. Antiochus promised to reconquer Egypt for Philometer and reinstall him as king, courting his favor while double dealing hoping to exploit the situation to weaken Egypt by strengthening an internal rivalry. Philometer pretended to believe

Antiochus, but both intended to use the other to gain control of all Egypt. The intentions of both failed ("it shall not prosper").

Antiochus did conquer the city of Memphis but failed to take Alexandria. Philometer became king of Memphis, and subsequently Antiochus' two nephews reconciled & Philometer had to settle for a joint rule of Egypt with his brother. Their intentions failed because God's appointed time for the end of the Syrian-Egyptian wars had not yet come. God in His sovereignty was using these wars as part of His indignation against Israel...since Israel was located on the land bridge between these two Gentile powers, it suffered greatly during the course of these wars (cp. Dan.10:14).

DAN 11:28 THEN SHALL HE RETURN INTO HIS LAND WITH GREAT RICHES; AND HIS HEART SHALL BE AGAINST THE HOLY COVENANT; AND HE SHALL DO EXPLOITS, AND RETURN TO HIS OWN LAND.

[11:28] Although he had not conquered all of Egypt, Antiochus did take much wealth from her home to Syria (1 Macc.1:19-20). One reason for leaving Egypt with only part of his plans accomplished was the arrival of a report of turmoil in Jerusalem. This uproar was the aftermath of Antiochus' interference in the office of the Jewish high priest. Having deposed Onias III, the high priest who opposed his hellenizing policies, and replaced him with Onias' pro-hellenizing brother, Jason (see v.22 above); Antiochus IV had removed Jason & replaced him with Menelaus. Menelaus had obtained this position by offering Antiochus more tribute money than Jason (2 Macc.4:23-27). While Antiochus was fighting in Egypt, Jason heard a false rumor that Antiochus was dead. Jason raised a Jewish force & attacked Jerusalem to overthrow Menelaus. Though Menelaus beat off the attack, Antiochus interpreted Jason's act as a general insurrection to his authority. Thus while returning home through Israel, the enraged king determined to teach the Jews a lesson, vented this frustration - along with that of his failure to take all of Egypt as he had intended - out in full measure. He invaded Jerusalem, slaughtered 40,000 Jews, sold many into slavery, plundered the Temple and carried its sacred things of Jehovah as treasures back to his Capitol, Antioch (1 Macc.1: 20-24; 2 Macc.5:5-21). This showed his personal contempt for Israel's covenant relationship with the LORD.

DAN 11:29 AT THE TIME APPOINTED HE SHALL RETURN, AND COME TOWARD THE SOUTH; BUT IT SHALL NOT BE AS THE FORMER, OR AS THE LATTER. DAN 11:30 FOR THE SHIPS OF CHITTIM SHALL COME AGAINST HIM: THEREFORE HE SHALL BE GRIEVED, AND RETURN, AND HAVE INDIGNATION AGAINST THE HOLY COVENANT: SO SHALL HE DO; HE SHALL EVEN RETURN, AND HAVE INTELLIGENCE WITH THEM THAT FORSAKE THE HOLY COVENANT.

[11:29-30] When Antiochus learned that Ptolemy Philometer had formed a coalition with Ptolemy VII Euergetes to rule Egypt jointly, he felt betrayed. He invaded Egypt for the third time in 168 B.C. The Angel informed Daniel that the time for this incursion had been appointed sovereignly by God. This third attempt to capture Egypt did not meet with the same success as did the former 170 campaign. Just as Antiochus was laying siege to Alexandria, a large fleet bringing a Roman force under Gais Popillius Laenas arrived. Laenas presented Antiochus with a letter from the Roman senate forbidding him to engage in war with Egypt. When Antiochus asked for time to consider, the emissary drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus & demanded that he give his answer before he stepped out of the circle or do

battle with Rome. Fearful of Rome's power, he left in humiliation & dejection at the check upon his ambitions.

With great bitterness of heart, he again vented his wrath upon the people of Israel who were opposing his efforts to enforce Greek culture upon that nation. He took into his confidence & gave favor to Menelaus and his apostate followers along with other renegade Jews who abetted Antiochus in his persecution against the true worship of God (1 Macc.1:11-15; 1 Macc.2:18; 2 Macc.4:4-17; 2 Macc.6:1).

DAN 11:31 AND ARMS SHALL STAND ON HIS PART, AND THEY SHALL POLLUTE THE SANCTUARY OF STRENGTH, AND SHALL TAKE AWAY THE DAILY SACRIFICE, AND THEY SHALL PLACE THE ABOMINATION THAT MAKETH DESOLATE.

[11:31] Antiochus ordered his general, Apollonius and 22,000 soldiers, to stamp out every trace of Judaism & to enforce Hellenism. They entered into Jerusalem on the Sabbath on what was purported to be a peace mission. Many were killed, women & children were taken as slaves, and the city was plundered. An edict was made that all nationalities in Antiochus' kingdom were to be fused into one people. All were to worship Greek deities. An Athenian philosopher was sent to Jerusalem to enforce the edict. The Temple sacrifices to Jehovah were stopped, copies of the law were burned, circumcision was forbidden on penalty of death, Syrian soldiers & harlots performed licentious heathen rites in the Temple courts, and Jews were required to participate in a drunken orgy in honor of Bacchus (Nimrod), the god of wine. Finally, on December 16, 167 B.C., an altar was erected on the altar of burnt offering outside the Temple and dedicated to Zeus. A sow was then offered on the altar, its remains were spread inside the Holy Temple, the Temple was rededicated to Zeus and a large idol (apparently of Zeus) was set up in the holy place for the people to worship ("the abomination of desolation"). The Jews were forced to offer a pig on the 25th of each month to celebrate Antiochus Epiphanes birthday.

DAN 11:32 AND SUCH AS DO WICKEDLY AGAINST THE COVENANT SHALL HE CORRUPT BY FLATTERIES: BUT THE PEOPLE THAT DO KNOW THEIR GOD SHALL BE STRONG, AND DO EXPLOITS.

[11:32] Antiochus promised apostate Jews great reward, favor & position if they would set aside the God of Israel & worship Zeus. Many were persuaded by his smooth words ("flatteries"). In order to remain high priest, Menelaus turned to the service of Zeus. However, a small remnant remained faithful (1 Macc.1:62-63).

DAN 11:33 AND THEY THAT UNDERSTAND AMONG THE PEOPLE SHALL INSTRUCT MANY: YET THEY SHALL FALL BY THE SWORD, AND BY FLAME, BY CAPTIVITY, AND BY SPOIL, MANY DAYS.

DAN 11:34 NOW WHEN THEY SHALL FALL, THEY SHALL BE HOLPEN WITH A LITTLE HELP: BUT MANY SHALL CLEAVE TO THEM WITH FLATTERIES.

[11:33-34] Most noteworthy of these was Mattathias Maccabeus, a pries of God, and his 5 sons (one of them Judas, refurbished & restored the Temple in 164 B.C. – he was called "the Hammerer"). They understood the issues of the day and could clearly distinguish between the Word of God and the errors of Hellenism. Mattathias refused to offer the pagan sacrifice & killed Antiochus representative who

ordered him to offer it. He and his sons forsook their personal possessions & fled to the mountains. Thus began the Maccabean revolt (1 Macc.2:1-30). At first only a few Jews joined them. But as their movement became popular, "many" joined them, some out of sincere motives & others were uncommitted but sided with the Maccabees hypocritically for expediency sake... especially when they saw the Maccabees winning for they furiously punished the Jewish apostates. Their "exploits" (v.32) were numerous, & they exhibited great courage. Time and again a small number of Jews would defeat Antiochus much larger armies with their guerrilla tactics from 167-165 B.C.

DAN 11:35 AND SOME OF THEM OF UNDERSTANDING SHALL FALL, TO TRY THEM,
AND TO PURGE, AND TO MAKE THEM WHITE, EVEN TO THE TIME OF THE END:
BECAUSE IT IS YET FOR A TIME APPOINTED.

[11:35] Several of Mattathias Maccabeus' sons were killed while leading those that were either faithful to the covenant or that were nationalistic patriots or whatever their reasons for resisting Syria. Many other of the faithful also were slain. "Some...shall fall" is to be understood not merely of death in battle, however, but of other calamities & afflictions such as persecution, imprisoned, plundered, loss of loved ones, exposure, etc. But God permitted these things to the end that they might be purged, refined & purified (cp. Heb.11:35b-38). The angel indicated that such a cleansing process would go on, not only during the 2300 days of the persecutions (cp. Dan.8:9-14 which includes the entire period of the abominations of Antiochus ie: 171-165) by Antiochus Epiphanes, but also throughout the "days of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) until the "Day of the Lord"...the second coming of Jesus the Christ. Again Daniel is reminded that God is sovereign...He has determined the time for all these to be fulfilled.

The Temple worship was restored; the Temple was cleansed & purified on December 25, 165 B.C. This event has been commemorated ever since as the Feast of Hanukkah, or the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22).

All the events described thus far in chapter 11 are past. The intricate detailed prophecies (about 135 in number beginning at v.2-35!) of the conflicts between the Seleucids & the Ptolemies were fulfilled literally, as God had predicted through His prophet, Daniel.

However, verses 36-45 describe a king that cannot be Antiochus IV Epiphanes for there is no fulfillment in the details of these verses that corresponds to his life. True, Antiochus was a foreshadowing of a king who is to come - but the two are not the same. These verses speak of the "little horn" of 7:8, the "king of fierce countenance" of 8:23, and "the prince that shall come" of 9:26. We know this because other prophetic passages which describe the Antichrist correspond exactly with the description of this king that is introduced in verse 36. Lastly, we know this to be true because according to Daniel 12:1, during the time of the king described in Daniel 11:36-45 "there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Nearly 6 centuries after the angel gave this revelation to Daniel, Jesus the Christ indicated that *this unique time of distress* would transpire during the time period *immediately before His second coming* (Mt.24:21-22, 29-31; cp. Jer.30:7 "the time of Jacob's trouble). Jesus thereby placed the fulfillment of Daniel 11:36-12:3 into the future when the Antichrist will reign.

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