

# ***A Critical and Historical Interpretation of the Prophecies of Daniel***

by  
**Daniel Folsom**

A Helpful Summary of Daniel 11:2-45  
by  
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This book of Nathaniel S. Folsom is most helpful when trying to understand Daniel 11. I have taken the liberty of using the NASB text of Daniel 11:2-45 and inserting into the text itself the names to which the pronouns refer. These names are according to the text of Folsom's book. The "Notes" following many of the verses are Folsom's own additional remarks, although I have at times randomly selected or condensed a great many of them while at the same time lightly editing and paraphrasing them for clarity.

Folsom's book, *A Critical and Historical Interpretation of the Prophecies of Daniel* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1842), can be read by going to [Open Library.org](http://OpenLibrary.org). The reader will also find much additional detail on the fulfilled prophecy of Daniel 11 by reading Ken's paper, "[A Complete Exegesis of the Historical Section of Daniel Chapter 11](#)" on our Web site. In addition, see Dr. Robert Culver's book, *Daniel and the Latter Days*, [Chapter 8](#), also on our Web site, for his view of 11:36-45, contrary to Folsom's.

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2. *And now I [the angel Gabriel] will tell you [Daniel] the truth. Behold, three more kings [Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius the son of Hystaspes] are going to arise in Persia. Then a fourth [Xerxes I] will gain far more riches than all of them; as soon as he [Xerxes I] becomes strong through his riches, he will arouse the whole empire against the realm of Greece. [Xerxes I invaded Greece in 480 B.C.].*

3. *And a mighty king [Alexander the Great] will arise, and he will rule with great authority and do as he pleases.*

4. *But as soon as he [Alexander] has arisen, his kingdom [Greece] 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. [Alexander's empire was divided between his generals Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy.]*

5. *Then the king of the South [Ptolemy I Soter of Egypt] will grow strong, along with one of his [Alexander's] princes [Seleucus Nicator] who will gain ascendancy over him [Ptolemy I] and obtain dominion; his [Seleucus Nicator's] domain will be a great dominion indeed.*

**Note:** The words "south" and "north" are used to denote the countries lying in those directions from Palestine. Ptolemy was the first established in his kingdom, that of Egypt, and having gained possession of Jerusalem by treachery, he claimed Palestine as part of it. Seleucus Nicator assumed the title of king of Syria, that is, "king of the north." Ptolemy was a powerful prince, but Seleucus became mightier, and the race of kings that sprung from him were stronger than the Egyptians. Seleucus is called "the greatest king after Alexander" by the ancient historians.

6. *After some years they [Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt and Antiochus II Theos of Syria] will form an alliance [they had been at war with each other], and the daughter [Berenice] of the king of the South [Ptolemy II] will come to the king of the North [Antiochus II Theos] to carry out a peaceful arrangement [ratify peace]. But she [Berenice] 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. [Ptolemy II, her father, died two years after her marriage].*

**Note:** In order to bring about peace, Antiochus II agreed to divorce his first wife Laodice and disinherit her children in order to marry Ptolemy's daughter Berenice and settle the succession of the kingdom on her son. But after Berenice's father Ptolemy II died, Antiochus II had nothing more to fear and so removed Berenice and brought back his wife Laodice. However, in order to prevent a repetition of her disgrace and redeem her children from disinheritance, Laodice proceeded to poison her husband. She also had Berenice and her infant son killed as well as many of Berenice's Egyptian attendants. She procured the

succession of the kingdom for her oldest son Seleucus II Callinicus in 246 B.C. by forging a decree in the name of her deceased husband.

7. *But one of the descendants [Ptolemy III Euergetes] of her {Berenice's} line will arise in his [Ptolemy II's] place, and he [Ptolemy III Euergetes] will come against their [the Syrian] army and enter the fortress [probably Seleucia, a fortified seaport of Syria] of the king of the North [Seleucus II Callinicus], and he [Ptolemy III] will deal with them and display great strength. [Ptolemy III will avenge the death of his sister Berenice by killing Laodice and making himself master of most of Syria].*

**Note:** The seaport city of Seleucia was one of the nine cities of that name built by Seleucus I. It lay near the mouth of the Orontes. Ptolemy took this seaport city, among others in Syria. He placed an Egyptian garrison there and held possession of it for about thirty years until Antiochus the Great recaptured it. The chief city of Syria and residence of the Syrian kings was Antioch, fifteen miles above Seleucia on the same river. There is no mention in history that Ptolemy took Antioch itself.

8. *Also their [the Syrian's] gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold he [Ptolemy III] will take into captivity to Egypt, and he [Ptolemy III] on his part will refrain from attacking the king of the North [Seleucus II Callinicus] for some years.*

9. *Then the latter [Seleucus II Callinicus] will enter the realm of the king of the South [Ptolemy III], but will return to his own land [Syria].*

**Note:** Seleucus II Callinicus prepared a great army against Ptolemy to recover the dominions that Ptolemy had seized, but he was defeated. A peace having been concluded between them at the insistence of Ptolemy in 243 B.C., Seleucus marched into the east some twelve years later to subdue the province of the Parthians which had revolted from him. He was overthrown, taken prisoner by Arsaces governor of the Parthians, and confined until he died of a fall from his horse in 226 B.C. Ptolemy III outlived him some four or five years.

10. *His [Seleucus II Callinicus'] sons [Seleucus III Soter, who succeeded to the throne, and Antiochus III the Great] will mobilize and assemble a multitude of great forces [in order to recover what had been lost during their father's reign]; and one of them*

[Antiochus III] *will keep on coming and overflow and pass through, that he [Antiochus III] may again wage war up to his [Ptolemy IV Philopator's] very fortress [Raphia].*

**Note:** Seleucus III Soter was deemed inefficient and thus poisoned by two of his generals. He was succeeded by his younger brother Antiochus III the Great in 223 B.C. while a youth of only fifteen years of age. In Egypt, the death of Ptolemy III Euergetes resulted in the succession of his son Ptolemy IV Philopator to the throne in 221 B.C. Antiochus proceeded directly against Ptolemy IV, but his first campaign effected little. His second campaign resulted in the recapture of the seaport Seleucia and getting possession of Ptolemais, Tyre, and Damascus as well as many cities of Palestine that had been assigned to the king of Egypt when Alexander's kingdom was partitioned. The last phrase, which Folsom translates "then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress," may describe Antiochus' march on his second expedition as far as Raphia, a frontier fortress of Egypt (the word "return" being connected with the following verb thus having the force of the adverb *again*, a very frequent Hebrew usage).

11. *The king of the South [Ptolemy IV Philopator], will be enraged and go forth and fight with the king of the North [Antiochus III the Great]. Then the latter [Antiochus III] will raise a great multitude, but that multitude will be given into the hand of the former [Ptolemy IV]. [Antiochus is totally defeated.]*

12. *When the multitude is carried away, his [Ptolemy IV Philopator's] heart will be lifted up, and he [Ptolemy IV] will cause tens of thousands to fall; yet he [Ptolemy IV] will not prevail. [Ptolemy will not pursue the advantage whereby he might have deprived Antiochus III of his whole empire].*

**Note:** Ptolemy IV Philopator, a profligate king, made peace with Antiochus III the Great on condition of the cession of Palestine and Coele-Syria, thus giving Antiochus opportunity to recruit. But this clemency of Ptolemy to Antiochus resulted in much discontent and consequently open rebellion on the part of the Egyptian people.

13. *For the king of the North [Antiochus III] will again raise a greater multitude than the former, and after an interval of some years he [Antiochus] will press on with a great army and much equipment. [Antiochus' dominion and resources were vastly increased by expeditions in the east.]*

14. *Now in those times many will rise up against the king of the South [Ptolemy V Epiphanes, who was placed on the throne at the age of 5 when his father Ptolemy IV Philopator died]; the violent ones [Egyptian conspirators] among your [Daniel's] people [the Jews] will lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision [of killing Ptolemy], but they will fall down.*

**Note:** A conspiracy was formed against the Egyptian king Ptolemy V Epiphanes soon after he was placed on the throne. Very soon afterward, the Syrian king Antiochus III and Philip king of Macedon joined forces to seize and divide Ptolemy's dominion. Folsom's translation of the end of the verse is, "also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall." The phrase is literally, "sons of burglars of thy people," and in the Septuagint it is "sons of the pests of thy people." These robbers probably refer to the Egyptian General Scopas and his men who were in Palestine to subdue the Jews, but while doing so had enriched themselves by plundering them. Scopas and his accomplices plotted against Ptolemy's life in the ninth year of his reign, but neglecting the opportunity to strike the blow at once they were discovered and put to death.

15. *Then the king of the North [Antiochus III] will come, cast up a siege ramp and capture a well-fortified city [Sidon, as well as Gaza and other fortified cities in Palestine]; and the forces of the South [of Ptolemy V Epiphanes] will not stand their ground, not even their choicest troops, for there will be no strength to make a stand.*

16. *But he [Antiochus III] who comes against him [Ptolemy V] will do as he [Antiochus] pleases, and no one will be able to withstand him [Antiochus III summons his whole army to deal with the Egyptian garrison left in Jerusalem]; he [Antiochus III] will also stay for a time in the Beautiful Land [Judea], with destruction in his hand.*

**Note:** Since Antiochus was occupied for some time in taking the Egyptian garrison, the sustenance of the land was consumed by the soldiers. Concerning this war between Antiochus and Egypt, the historian Josephus states that whether the former was conqueror or was beaten, it was the fate of the Jews to suffer, like a ship tossed in a tempest between the angry billows. (Antiq. xii. chap. iii, sec. iii).

17. *He [Antiochus III] will set his face to come with the power of his whole kingdom [to*

undertake the conquest of Egypt], *bringing with him a proposal of peace which he will put into effect; he [Antiochus] will also give him [Ptolemy V Epiphanes] the daughter of women [Cleopatra, Antiochus' daughter] to ruin it. But she [Cleopatra] will not take a stand for him [her father Antiochus III] or be on his side.*

**Note:** Antiochus tried to further his ambitious schemes by giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy in marriage with the hopes she would betray her new husband. But Cleopatra stood by her husband's cause and joined with him in congratulating the Romans for the victory they obtained over her father.

18. *Then he [Antiochus III] will turn his face to the coastlands [the Peloponnesus and the isles and maritime towns of Greece under Roman protection] and capture many. But a commander [Lucius Scipio, a Roman Consul] will put a stop to his [Antiochus'] scorn against him; moreover, he [Scipio] will repay him [Antiochus III] for his scorn.*

**Note:** Antiochus submits to a disgraceful peace, the conditions being that he should leave Asia Minor and pay the expenses of the war, estimated at 15,000 talents, which consisted of five hundred down, twenty-five hundred on the ratification of the treaty by the Roman Senate, and the remaining twelve thousand in twelve successive years.

19. *So he [Antiochus III] will turn his face toward the fortresses of his own land [Syria], but he will stumble and fall and be found no more. [Antiochus III the Great is killed in 187 B.C. when he enters a temple in Babylonia to seize its treasures in order to replenish his own treasury.]*

20. *Then in his [Antiochus III the Great's] place one will arise [Seleucus IV Philopator, Antiochus' eldest son] who will send an oppressor [collector of tribute] through the Jewel of his kingdom [Palestine]; yet within a few days [ten years] he [ Seleucus IV] will be shattered, though not in anger nor in battle. [Seleucus IV Philopator was poisoned by his treasurer Heliodorus in 176 B.C.]*

**Note:** After Seleucus IV Philopator came to the throne, he was obliged to extort the money for the remaining yearly payments from his subjects by sending tax collectors into Judea (see 2 Macc. 3).

21. *In his [Seleucus IV Philopator's] place a despicable person [Antiochus IV Epiphanes] will arise, on whom the honor of kingship has not been conferred, but he*

[Antiochus IV] *will come in a time of tranquility and seize the kingdom [of Syria] by intrigue.*

**Note:** Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the younger brother of Seleucus IV Philopator, had been sent to Rome by his father Antiochus III the Great as a hostage for the fulfilment of the conditions of peace. Seleucus IV Philopator, some time after he ascended the Syrian throne, recalled his brother Antiochus IV after having first sent his own son and lawful heir Demetrius to Rome. But before Antiochus reached home Seleucus was killed. Heliodorus, the treasurer who poisoned Seleucus, was aiming to get the throne with the consent of a large portion of the people. But there was also a portion of the people who favored the twelve-year-old youth Ptolemy VI Philomator, who had succeeded Ptolemy V Epiphanes king of Egypt and whose mother was sister to the deceased king Seleucus and his brother Antiochus IV. But Antiochus IV Epiphanes, by flattering professions and promises, procured the expulsion of Heliodorus and then securely seated himself on the throne to the exclusion of the rightful heir Demetrius and his other nephew Ptolemy VI Philomator.

22. *The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him [Antiochus IV Epiphanes] and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant [Onias, the High Priest of the Jews].*

**Note:** Onias was replaced as High Priest by his brother Jason in the first year of Antiochus Epiphanes' reign. Jason obtained the office by giving Antiochus a large sum of money and promising to use his influence in bringing the Jews over to heathen manners and customs, and this he immediately began once in office. Onias had held the office for twenty-four years, and it is recorded that "the laws were kept very well, because of the godliness of Onias the High Priest, and his hatred of wickedness" (2 Macc. 3:1). In 172 B.C., Jason's younger brother Menelaus received an appointment to the office of High Priest by offering a still higher price, thereby forcing Jason to retire. But finding Jason's party too strong, Menelaus returned unsuccessful to Antioch. However, Menelaus renounced the Jewish religion, and Antiochus Epiphanes gave Menelaus enough aid to become High Priest in 171 B.C. However, Menelaus neglected to pay the price for his promotion. Upon being summoned to appear before Antiochus, he left his brother Lysimachus as his deputy. Lysimachus discharged Menelaus' debt to the

king by taking the golden vessels out of the temple. This act of Lysimachus produced a tumult in which he was killed near the treasury within the precincts of the temple. Onias, after a long confinement in Antioch, was treacherously killed at the instigation of Menelaus, whom he had severely reproofed for the recent sacrilege committed by Lysimachus. Onias died a violent death though without the consent of the king.

23. *After an alliance [seemingly with the Jews] is made with him [Antiochus IV], he [Antiochus IV] will practice deception, and he [Antiochus] will go up and gain power with a small force of people.*

**Note:** The Jewish historian Josephus remarks that Antiochus Epiphanes, "pretending peace, got possession of the city<sup>1</sup> by treachery, and ventured to break the league he had made." And again, in his second book, Josephus writes, "He [the king] attacked us while we were his associates and friends." With comparatively small forces, reduced under the reign of his two predecessors, Antiochus IV had become mighty. His success and growing power led him to violate the pledges he had given to induce the provinces attached to his kingdom to remain loyal.

24. *In a time of tranquility he [Antiochus IV] 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 [his soldiers and partisans], and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time.*

**Note:** In 173 B.C. Antiochus sent Apollonius to Egypt to congratulate the young king Ptolemy VI Philomator on receiving the crown. Prior to this the affairs of Egypt were conducted by the the regency of his mother with the assistance of the ministers of state. On Apollonius' return, Antiochus learned that the Egyptian government was intending to retake Palestine. Accordingly, Antiochus provided for his own safety and came to Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem where he was honorably received by Jason and the city and ushered in with torch lights and great acclamation. From there he went with his host to Phenice<sup>2</sup> (2 Macc. 4:21,22). This expedition was to prevent the frontiers

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1 Folsom does not name the city, but it is likely Antioch, the seat of the Syrian kingdom.

2 More properly "Phoenix," the name of a haven in Crete on the south coast.

and fortified cities from falling into the hands of Ptolemy and to arrange for a posture of defense. Antiochus had come into the possession of the territory of Palestine and Coele-Syria without open resistance. He scattered gold, silver, and rewards to his soldiers and partisans, the spoils of the provinces in which he gave them rule. In his drunken moments he often threw money among the crowd and gave gold to perfect strangers whom he accidentally met. But two years after Ptolemy VI was crowned, Antiochus resolved not to wait for the threatened expedition of Egypt into Palestine.

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

**Note:** Two years after Ptolemy VI was crowned, Antiochus resolved not to wait for the threatened expedition of Egypt into Palestine but decided to carry the war into the enemy's country. Antiochus marched toward the frontiers of Egypt where he met Ptolemy's army, and by laying and executing schemes with his greater skill he obtained the victory. At this time, however, Antiochus attempted nothing further but instead returned to Tyre and made preparations for a vigorous campaign the next season.

26. *Those [Eulaeus, his prime minister, and Lennaeus, the associate minister of state] who eat his [Ptolemy VI's] choice food, will destroy him [Ptolemy], and his [Antiochus'] army will overflow, but many will fall down slain.*

**Note:** The words "those who eat his food" probably designate the king's ministers to whom the young prince's education was entrusted. But they had corrupted Ptolemy with all manner of luxury and effeminacy. In the name of the king, they had demanded the territory of Palestine, and Ptolemy unfortunately adopted measures most inefficient and inadequate. It was probably through the influence of these same ministers that Ptolemy surrendered himself to Antiochus. In the opening of the year 170 B.C., Antiochus began his next campaign. "He entered into Egypt with a great multitude, with chariots, and elephants, and horsemen, and a great navy, and made war against Ptolemy king of Egypt. But Ptolemy was afraid of him and fled; and many were wounded

to death. Thus they got the strong cities in the land of Egypt, and he took the spoils thereof" (1 Macc. 1:17-19). The armies of Ptolemy and Antiochus had met on the borders of Egypt, where Ptolemy was overcome. Pelusium, a frontier city, was taken by Antiochus. Antiochus followed up his advantage by pouring his forces into Egypt as a flood, penetrating the heart of the empire, and thus making himself master of all of Egypt except Alexandria. Ptolemy himself was captured.

27. *As for both kings [Antiochus and Ptolemy VI], 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.*

**Note:** Antiochus, at whose table his nephew Ptolemy VI Philomator ate, professed that he would manage the affairs of Egypt as guardian for the young king. The Alexandrians, however, were convinced that Ptolemy Philomator was a lost cause and therefore they took his younger brother and put him on the throne with the title of Ptolemy Euergetes II. Antiochus, who had found Alexandria too strong for him to subdue, thus concocted a scheme whereby the two brothers would themselves be engaged in war in order that the whole kingdom, weakened by internal troubles, might become his more sure and easy prey. But Ptolemy Philomator, now roused from his life of luxury and sloth, saw through the plot of Antiochus. The two brothers, therefore, came to an agreement that both should reign conjointly, and they sent ambassadors to Greece for auxiliary forces. Thus what seemed to promise so well for Antiochus' prosperity amounted to nothing. His power to oppress did not continue, and his kingdom began to be broken to pieces and destroyed at the time appointed in the councils of Heaven.

28. *Then he [Antiochus] will return to his land with much plunder [the spoils of his Egyptian campaign]; but his heart will be set against the holy covenant [the holy religion of the Jews], and he will take action [accomplish his purposes] and then return to his own land [Antioch, the seat of power for the Syrian kingdom].*

**Note:** While Antiochus was in Egypt on his second expedition in 170 B.C., a report spread that he was dead. Jason, who had been compelled to give up his office to Menelaus, now thought it was a favorable moment to recover the High Priesthood. He marched to Jerusalem with a thousand men, and aided by many of his party residing in Jerusalem

forced Menelaus into the fortress on Mount Zion. Jason made a great slaughter of those he thought to be his adversaries. An exaggerated rumor of this occurrence reached Antiochus, leading him to suppose that the Jews had revolted. Therefore he hastens to Jerusalem on his way back to Antioch with his Egyptian spoils. Jason fled at his approach and finally perished a miserable exile in Lacedaemonia. Antiochus entered Jerusalem with his army; and though Jerusalem had not revolted, yet he was so enraged at learning the people rejoiced at his supposed death that he plundered the city and killed 40,000 of its inhabitants, making slaves of many more. "Not content with this, he presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world, with Menelaus, that traitor to the laws and to his own country, being his guide. Taking the holy vessels with polluted hands, and with profane hands pulling down the things that were dedicated by other kings to the augmentation, and glory, and honor of the place, he gave them away" (2Macc. 5:15, 16).

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

**Note:** Antiochus, enraged at the alliance of the two Ptolemy brothers, entered Egypt with a large army and determined to wage a more furious war.

30. *For ships of Kittim<sup>3</sup> [a Roman fleet] will come against him [Antiochus]; therefore he [Antiochus] will be disheartened and will return and become enraged at the holy covenant [the Jewish religion] and take action; so he [Antiochus] will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant [the Jewish religion].*

**Note:** When Antiochus entered Egypt on this last expedition, 168 B.C., he marched directly to Alexandria; but he was met with an unexpected obstacle. Ptolemy Eurgetes II (whom the Alexandrians had placed on the throne) had sent to Rome for aid, and the Roman Senate had therefore sent an embassy of three distinguished individuals to Antiochus to inform him that if he persisted in the war the Romans

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3 Kittim, or Chittim, was one of the sons of Javan, by whom the isles of the Gentiles were divided. As in many other like instances, the name of the person was given to the place which he settled. It is now called Cyprus. The greatest part of the seacoasts were named Kittim by the Hebrews.

would treat him as an enemy. The embassy met Antiochus four miles outside Alexandria as he was proceeding to besiege it. Antiochus recognized Popilius, one of the ambassadors, for he was an acquaintance from Antiochus' former residence in Rome. Antiochus extended his hand to salute him, but Popilius declined, not knowing whether Antiochus was the friend of Rome and would comply with the decree of the Senate. Antiochus asked for time to think, but Popilius drew a circle around himself in the sand and demanded an answer before he stepped outside it. Antiochus then capitulated through dread of the Roman power and immediately left Egypt.

*31. Forces from him [Antiochus] will arise, desecrate the [Jewish] sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they [Antiochus' forces] will set up the abomination of desolation.*

To give vent to his rage, Antiochus sends his general Apollonius with 22,000 soldiers to ravage Jerusalem. They waited for the holy sabbath to arm themselves and then proceeded to kill all the worshippers. The army then goes through the city killing great multitudes while taking women and children captive. After plundering the city, it is set on fire. The remaining inhabitants flee, and Jerusalem becomes a habitation of strangers. The temple is laid waste, and from this time forward the daily morning and evening sacrifices cease. The historian Josephus describes Menelaus as the chief culprit, for he persuaded Antiochus Epiphanes to compel the Jews to leave the religion of their fathers. In 168 B.C., Antiochus and his officers, including apostate Jews, build idolatrous altars throughout the cities of Judea. Any holy scriptures found are torn up, and whoever is found with any book of the testament is put to death. The "abomination of desolation" in the last clause was the placing of a pagan altar atop the altar of God. This was done around December 5, when the temple was dedicated to Zeus. Ten days later Antiochus made an unholy sacrifice upon it.

*32. By smooth words he [Antiochus] 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.*

**Note:** Verses 32-35 belong to the period called the Maccabean Revolt. For a thorough commentary on this section, please refer to Ken's paper, "A Complete Exegesis of the Historical Section of Daniel Chapter 11," Part III.

36. *Then the king [Antiochus IV Epiphanes] 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.*

**Note:** According to Folsom, the angel Gabriel here at verse 36 resumes the personal exploits and character of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, from which he had digressed to speak of the victims of his power. There were some in Folsom's time, however, who applied verses 36-45 to the Pope, others to Napoleon Bonaparte. Even today a great many apply the verses to the future Antichrist. Folsom writes as follows:

"If we are ever to obey the laws of language and to be guided by the context, we are directed here most explicitly to Antiochus Epiphanes. 'The king' has the definite article, which is never put in the Hebrew for the indefinite, but always marks some person or thing definite at least to the mind of the writer; and in such a context as this directs attention to what has already been made the subject of discourse. (2) In respect to the kings mentioned in this chapter, something is told of the termination of their reign; but unless the history of the king given in vs. 21-32 is resumed, it is left in the midst. The end of his predecessor is given, and the end of the one before that; but no end of the king whose history is commenced in verse 21 occurs until the close of the chapter. It must therefore be the history of one and the same king. (3) Up to verse 36, the reader is brought no further down than the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Everyone must feel the unexampled transition from the king of Syria to the Pope of Rome, or to Napoleon Bonaparte. From a temporal reign long before Christ to the reign of Christ there are indeed frequent instances of sudden transition in the prophets, but not from one temporal reign in one country to another in a distant country with nothing to prepare the reader for the transition.

"From verse 2 to verse 3 in this chapter, there is an interval of more than a hundred years, but the absence of the article from the phrase 'mighty king' and the specification of circumstances leave no one in doubt whom the prophecy means. If, however, there should be something in the language of verses 36-45 making it impossible to apply it to the king, whose history is given in the verse preceding, then it cannot be so applied. But if there is nothing, then all usage and authority require us to apply it to him. If the language is remarkably descriptive of him, then it is a confirmation that he alone is meant.

"The prophecy now proceeds to set forth the character of Antiochus in a more particular and comprehensive manner. The character given of him in this verse 36 has already been illustrated in the notes to the verses preceding. That he literally spoke impious words against the God of heaven is confirmed by the appellation of 'blasphemer' given him in 2 Macc. 9:28. It is remarked also in 1 Macc. 1:24, on the occasion of the sedition of the deposed Jason and the subsequent march of Antiochus to the city, that 'when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having spoken very proudly.' The prediction, 'shall magnify himself above every god,' had its accomplishment in his abolishing the religious worship of whatever deity he saw fit, whether of the Jews or of others, and in his setting up the worship of whom he chose. In his disposal of the deities to be worshipped, he magnified himself above them all as his inferiors. This verse therefore has its full accomplishment in Antiochus Epiphanes, though some profess to make the language a reason for not applying it to him."

37. *He [Antiochus Epiphanes] will show no regard for the gods of his fathers [those gods worshipped in Syria and the east] or for the desire of women [the goddess Astarte], nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all. 38. But instead he [Antiochus Epiphanes] will honor a god of fortresses [Hercules], a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him [Hercules] with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures.*

**Note:** Antiochus embraced the gods of Greece, particularly Jupiter Olympius and Hercules. Hercules was honored in the games celebrated at Tyre, and was the "god of fortresses," or strongholds. This is more probable from the fact that the Grecian Hercules was of Phoenician

origin, and those cities of Greece that were originally Phoenician colonies celebrated feasts in honor of him and sang his exploits. In Tyre, therefore, which belonged to Phoenicia, Antiochus doubtless found the worship of Hercules already existing, a worship remarkably suited to such a person as Antiochus.

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

**Note:** Antiochus himself did not care for any god (vs. 37), but as law-giver and religion-giver he would pull down and build up as he chose. He was disposed to honor and reward those who complied with his choices. The first clause of verse 39 seems to imply that Antiochus introduced the worship of Hercules into all the fortified places of Syria.

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

**Note:** The angel Gabriel now recapitulates and sums up the events immediately preceding, with a few additional particulars, as he comes to the downfall of Antiochus. As we have seen in verse 27, the young king Ptolemy VI Philomator had roused himself and adopted measures to repel Antiochus, prompting Antiochus to rush again into Egypt with greater fury. While hastening to Alexandria against the two Ptolemy brothers, he sent a fleet to Cyprus to secure that island as the key to Egypt.

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

**Note:** Antiochus' invasion of Palestine subsequent to his repulse in Egypt has been already noticed in verses 30-39. While he ravaged almost every country in and around Palestine, history mentions no invasion and spoil of Moab, Edom, and the chief places of the

Ammonites.

42. *Then he [Antiochus] will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape.* 43. *But he [Antiochus] 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.*

**Note:** The first clause is a repetition for the sake of emphasizing the preceding verse and introduces the affirmation respecting Egypt, the particulars of which were given in notes to verse 28. Some suppose that it is here asserted that Antiochus invaded and possessed Libya and Ethiopia, thus making it impossible to apply the passage to him. But this is not so. The text only asserts that the Libyans and Ethiopians, who were held as slaves in Egypt, ceased to be the slaves of Ptolemy and became the attendants and servants of Antiochus.

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

**Note:** Antiochus had returned to Antioch from his last expedition into Egypt. To console himself for his failure in that expedition, he was carrying forward his project to conform all parts of his empire to one standard of worship and laws. With characteristic recklessness and devotion to pleasure, he was celebrating the games in the neighboring grove of Daphne in honor of Jupiter Olympius when he heard of two signal defeats of his armies by Judas Maccabeus. The effects of this news are related in part in 1 Maccabees 3:27-37.

"Now when king Antiochus heard these things, he was full of indignation; wherefore he sent and gathered together all the forces of his realm, even a very strong army. He opened also his treasury and gave his soldiers pay for a year, commanding them to be ready whenever he should need them. Nevertheless, when he saw that the money of his treasury failed and that the tributes in the country were small, because of the dissension and plague he had brought upon the land in taking away the laws which had been of old time, he feared that he should not be able to bear the charges any longer, nor to have such gifts to give so liberally as he did before. Being greatly perplexed, he determined to go into Persia, there to take the tributes of the countries,

and to gather much money."

This discontinuance of tribute money from his eastern provinces of Persia and Media, together with the revolt of Artaxias king of Armenia (which lay to the northeast of Antioch), were the tidings out of the east and north that troubled him. The fear and perplexity it produced, together with a treasury exhausted by his extravagant expenses and lavish gifts, goaded him to desperation and he went forth resolving to make those eastern and northern countries an example of his severity for the trouble they caused him.

45. *He [Antiochus] 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.*

**Note:** This verse does not present an event taking place chronologically, but it is a description given to heighten the effect of the declaration of his end. All his strength, glory, and dominion were now to depart. His hold on Palestine and numerous provinces was to be loosed. The ties by which he held the world fast in his embrace were forever to be broken.

After arriving in the east, he had made an incursion into the city of Elymais, situated a little south of the border of Media near the Tigris river, for the purpose of plundering a temple of Diana. But Antiochus was repulsed by the inhabitants who had gathered to protect their temple. He then retreated to Ecbatana in Media, and there he received news that his army in Judea had been routed, the heathen altars he erected had been pulled down, and the Jewish temple he had desecrated had been purified by Judas Maccabeus. In a paroxysm of rage, Antiochus immediately started back to Syria, threatening "that he would come to Jerusalem and make it a common burying place for the Jews." He commanded his charioteer to drive with the utmost speed, stopping neither by day nor by night. His excitement and over-exertion brought on a disease of the most malignant kind (most probably the Asiatic cholera), yet he refused to slow down until he was forced to by being violently thrown out of his chariot. Bruised and exhausted, he was carried on a stretcher, but the motion was too painful to be endured. He was compelled to stop at an obscure town called Tabae on the confines of Persia and Babylonia, where his disease increased in virulence and became God's divine judgment. He died in 164 B.C. Antiochus came to his end with no one to help him. "Thus the murderer

and blasphemer, having suffered most grievously . . . died a miserable death in a strange country in the mountains" (1 Macc. 6; 2 Macc. 9).

### The Ptolemies: The Kings of the South (Egypt)

Ptolemy I Soter - (Saviour)	323-283 B.C.
Ptolemy II Philadelphus - (Brother-loving)	283-246 B.C.
Ptolemy III Euergetes - (Benefactor)	246-221 B.C.
Ptolemy IV Philopator - (Father-loving)	221-203 B.C.
Ptolemy V Epiphanes - (Glorious)	203-181 B.C.
Cleopatra I (Regent)	181-176 B.C.
Ptolemy VI Philomator - (Mother-loving)	176-145 B.C.
Ptolemy VIII Euergetes - (Benefactor) <sup>4</sup>	170-116 B.C.

### The Seleucids: The Kings of the North (Syria)

Seleucus I Nicator - (Conqueror)	312-281 B.C.
Antiochus I Soter - (Savior)	280-261 B.C.
Antiochus II Theos - (God)	261-246 B.C.
Seleucus II Callinicus - (Gloriously Triumphant)	245-225 B.C.
Seleucus III Soter - (Savior)	225-223 B.C.
Antiochus III The Great	223-187 B.C.
Seleucus IV Philopator - (Father-loving)	187-175 B.C.
Antiochus IV Epiphanes - (Glorious)	175-164 B.C.

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<sup>4</sup> There are some differences in the sources for the kings. S. Angus, writing in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, attributes "Euergetes" with Ptolemy VII and takes "Ptolemy VIII" as another designation for the same king.