

# A Complete Exegesis of the Historical Section of Daniel Chapter 11

## Part III Daniel 11:21-35

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### *THE PERSECUTION UNDER ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES: 11:21-35*

In Part II we found that Daniel 11:5-20 deals with the wars between the Ptolemaic and Seleucidian kingdoms up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Here in verses 21-35 we have an extended discussion of the career of this despotic ruler and his persecution of Daniel's people. Daniel 11:36-45 describes his antitype, the eschatological Antichrist. The arguments for this division between these portions of Daniel dealing with Antiochus and Antichrist are given in the next section of these notes.

#### 1. The Rise to Power: 11:21-24

*And 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 (v. 21).*

When Seleucus IV is poisoned by Heliodorus in 175, Antiochus IV, having been released from Rome, was in Athens where, due to his charm and political acumen, he had managed to get himself elected to the chief magistracy of the city. When news of his brother's death reached him in Athens, Antiochus left immediately for Antioch. Since Demetrius, the rightful heir to the throne, was now in Rome as the new hostage, Antiochus IV (with the help of King Eumenes II of Pergamene and with deceitful promises to high government officials in Syria) had himself appointed regent for the youngest son of his brother, also named Antiochus and at this point still an infant in Syria. Antiochus thus foiled the attempts of Heliodorus to do the same. Certain cuneiform documents dating from 175 to 169 contain the reading "Antiochus and Antiochus kings." Again, through clever intrigue, Antiochus IV secured his position on the throne to the exclusion of both of his nephews, even murdering the young Antiochus on whose behalf he had been appointed regent. Antiochus IV thus becomes the next "king of the North."

Therefore, the "his" in the phrase "in his place" in 11:21 refers to Seleucus IV, and the "despicable person" refers to Antiochus IV, the infamous persecutor of Daniel's people. The second part of the verse indicates that he usurps the throne through intrigue and conspiracy rather than assuming it as a rightful heir.

*And the overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant (v. 22).*

Both parts of this verse are difficult. The first part might indicate that Antiochus is successful in putting down armed opposition to his usurpation of the throne in Antioch, viz., armed supporters of Heliodorus. It might also be a very general statement predicting the early successes of Antiochus in a renewed struggle with Ptolemaic Egypt, although this is perhaps less likely.

The title "prince of the covenant" is also difficult. Many take this as a reference to Onias III, a high priest in Jerusalem deposed by Antiochus very early in his reign.<sup>1</sup> Keil argues against this identification, but this interpretation is still quite possible. The phrase is similar to "the prince of the house of God" in Nehemiah 11:11. The reference to a Jewish high priest at this point in the narrative can be explained as follows: just as Antiochus is successful in removing all opposition to his usurpation of the throne, so he will soon remove opposition to his policy of hellenization in Judah. This introductory statement is important to make at this point, because the climax of the narrative dealing with Antiochus (verses 21-35) is his tyrannical oppression of the Jews.

Archer, however, takes this "prince" to be Ptolemy VI (whom Archer calls Ptolemy VII, perhaps due to a misprint). If the "prince of the covenant" refers to Ptolemy VI, then the two-fold point of the verse is that just as Antiochus is successful in removing all opposition to his usurpation of the throne, so he will soon enjoy success against Ptolemy VI, the "prince" with whom he makes a "covenant" after defeating him in battle. If the first part of the verse predicts in a general way the early successes of Antiochus against Egypt, the connection between the two parts is even stronger. However, even if the "prince" is interpreted as Onias, this "covenant" or alliance of Antiochus IV and Ptolemy VI is important for the ensuing narrative and is discussed later in these notes.

All things considered, I prefer to take the first part of verse 22 as a reference to Antiochus's rise to power in Antioch and the "prince of the covenant" as a reference to Onias III, the Jewish high priest.

*And 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 (v. 23).*

This verse is very difficult. First consider the translation of the Hithpael infinitive in the first part of the verse. "And after an alliance is made with him" is more literally translated "and from [the time of] allying themselves to him." "Him" most likely refers to Antiochus, not the "prince" of verse 22. Who allies themselves to Antiochus? If the first interpretation of verse 22 given above is correct, I think it is best to take verse 23 as a more detailed statement of how Antiochus secured the throne in Antioch. By making alliances with a number of people, including the Pergamenes, Antiochus was able to have himself appointed regent for his young nephew. All of this, however, is a deception, for he actually usurps the throne for himself and kills young Antiochus. He is thus able through deceit to "gain power," i.e., usurp the throne, with a small following of allied people, not an army.

*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 father's' fathers; he will distribute plunder, booty, and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but only for a time (v. 24).*

After securing his position on the throne in Antioch, Antiochus "in a time of tranquility" enters "the richest parts of his realm"--probably a reference to the wealthiest parts of his own providences, not to Egypt. This act, then, would be prior to his first attack upon Egypt. It is well known from extra-biblical sources that his excessive plundering was matched only by his extravagant squandering of this plunder to his friends, sometimes for no particular reason at all. Such actions, as the verse goes on to state, were quite unlike anything his predecessors had done.

This verse also summarizes in a general way the strategies Antiochus habitually and skillfully employed. Notice how they are characterized in both verses 21 and 24. According to Archer, "It was Epiphanes' policy to throw his intended victims off guard by offering them his friendship and alliance. Then he would maneuver for an advantageous position till he could catch them by surprise."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The incident is discussed later in these notes.

<sup>2</sup> Archer, *Daniel*, in *EBC*, 7:136.

The phrase "only for a time" points to the fact that God has definitely set the time limit on the reign of Antiochus IV and the scheming intrigues that characterized it.

There is some question whether the clause "he will devise schemes against strongholds" should be interpreted as the introductory statement to the first campaign against Egypt described in verses 25-28. Those who take this view suggest that the strongholds might be Pelusium and Memphis. Since "only for a time" seems to set a limit upon his reign, the clause might also be interpreted as a general summary of all his military campaigns, which fill the gap chronologically between the plunder of wealthy parts of his own realm mentioned in the first part of the verse and the end of his reign mentioned in the last phrase.

## 2. The First Campaign against Egypt: 11:25-28

*And 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. And those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. 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. 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 (vv. 25-28).*

These verses summarize the first invasion of 170-169. The "he" of the first part of verse 25 is Antiochus. The antecedent of "he" in the clause "but he will not stand" is "king of the South," Ptolemy VI. The general facts of this campaign are as follows.

Ptolemy VI, a nephew of Antiochus IV, becomes king when his queen-regent mother, Cleopatra I (daughter of Antiochus III and sister to Antiochus IV) dies in 176. However, power is temporarily exercised by two amateur regents, Eulaeus and Lenaeus. They wanted to recover Coele Syria, which had been lost to Antiochus III. To counter a possible invasion, Antiochus IV moves south to Joppa with his forces, but there is no engagement. However, in 170 Ptolemy VI, now on the throne, is advised by the pro-war party in Alexandria, particularly Eulaeus and Lenaeus, to assemble an army and recover not only Coele Syria but all of lower Syria and Palestine from Antiochus IV. Hearing of this, Antiochus begins the Sixth Syrian War (170-168) during which he twice marched against Egypt. The first of these two encounters is discussed in these verses.

Antiochus' first campaign against Egypt begins in 170, and although Ptolemy VI had some initial success, Antiochus captures Pelusium in 169 and penetrates Egypt far enough to capture Memphis and even take Ptolemy as prisoner, also in 169. In the confusion, officials in Alexandria place Ptolemy's younger brother, Ptolemy VIII on the throne. To counter this move and to weaken the power of Alexandria, Antiochus makes a treaty of peace with his nephew Ptolemy VI, under the pretense of protecting his interests, and enthrones him in Memphis as his ally. At this point he returns to Antioch, stopping at Jerusalem on the way.

Returning now to an analysis of these verses, verse 25 predicts that Antiochus will come against Ptolemy and that Ptolemy will be defeated. The last part of the verse might indicate that Antiochus had agents in Ptolemy's court who compromised their king's plans against Antiochus.

Verse 26 might refer to the same spies mentioned in the last part of verse 25, but most commentators take "those who eat his choice food" as a reference to Ptolemy's advisers, Eulaeus and Lenaeus. After all, it was their advice that "destroyed" their king and his army.

Verse 27 refers to the alliance that Antiochus makes with the captured Ptolemy VI. The "lies" spoken between Antiochus and Ptolemy probably refer to the negotiation of a treaty of peace between the two kings, which both thought they could twist to their own advantage. However, the plans of neither king fully succeed, as we shall see. The "end" mentioned in this same verse does not refer to the eschatological end of the age. Many interpretations have been offered, but perhaps the best is this: the plans of both kings to take over the other's kingdom will fail because the "end" of both kingdoms will come at God's appointed time, well beyond the lives of either of these two kings.

Verse 28 speaks of the return of Antiochus to Antioch. He ended his first Egyptian campaign after setting up Ptolemy VI as king in Memphis. Why did he not continue the struggle until Alexandria fell? Perhaps a number of reasons prompted him to leave Egypt before all of his plans were accomplished. But one important reason was surely what was then going on in Jerusalem.

The second part of verse 28 predicts that during his return from Egypt, Antiochus executes his first act of aggression against Israel. To understand what prompted this "action," we need another piece of the story. Opinions differ somewhat on the exact sequence of events in Jerusalem between 172 and 168, and the view presented in these notes is taken essentially from Bruce Waltke.<sup>3</sup>

A power struggle was going on in Jerusalem between Honyia III (Greek, Onias III), his brother Yeshua (Greek, Jason), and someone called Menelaus from the tribe of Benjamin. Jason and Menelaus both wanted to introduce Greek culture into Israel, while Onias, the legitimate high priest, stood firmly for fidelity to the law of Moses. Evidently, sometime before the first campaign into Egypt (perhaps shortly after he ascended the throne in 175) Antiochus was contacted by Jason, who promised him a substantial bribe and help in hellenizing Israel if Antiochus would set him up as high priest in place of his older brother, Onias. This Antiochus is pleased to do. However somewhere around 172 or 171, Menelaus appealed to Antiochus for the same favor by promising even more tribute. Antiochus again agreed, and Jason was forced to flee to Transjordan. Menelaus, as the new high priest, soon began selling the golden utensils of the temple to raise money for the promised tribute. Onias, the deposed rightful high priest, protested this sacrilege and was forced to flee to Daphne just outside Antioch. Menelaus followed him there and in 170 or 169, and while Antiochus was still absent, persuaded a certain Andronicus to murder Onias.

While away in Antioch, Menelaus left his brother Lysimachus in command at Jerusalem. Lysimachus attempts to get money for his brother (who was still desperate to raise funds) by selling some of the golden furniture in the temple. At such sacrilege the people of Jerusalem riot. So angered are they, not only over this sacrilege, but also over the murder of Onias, that they send a delegation to Antiochus himself to protest these heinous events. However, in response to another bribe, Antiochus has Menelaus reinstated as high priest in Jerusalem.

Now while Antiochus was still in Egypt, a false rumor arose that he had been killed. Prompted by this rumor, Jason organized an armed party and began killing supporters of Menelaus in Jerusalem. However, the orthodox party, taking advantage of the confusion, overcomes Jason and gains control of the city, thus forcing Jason to flee again to Ammon. When Antiochus hears not only that Jason had tried to take over the high priesthood, contrary to Antiochus' formal installation of Menelaus, and that the orthodox opposition had regained power in the city, he leaves his campaign in Egypt unfinished and in a rage returns to Palestine. Antiochus storms Jerusalem, killing thousands of Jews and selling many more thousands into slavery. With Menelaus as a guide, he plunders the temple and takes many of its treasures back to Antioch. A garrison is stationed in the city, and a certain Philip is appointed royal governor in Jerusalem. This was the first "action" taken and is that to which 11:28 refers.

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3 Waltke, "Antiochus IV Epiphanes," *ISBE*, I:145.

### 3. The Second Campaign against Egypt: 11:29-31

*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. 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 (vv. 29, 30).*

After Antiochus leaves Egypt in 169, the two Ptolemy brothers together with their sister, Cleopatra II, form an uneasy alliance against Antiochus and begin ruling Egypt jointly (a situation that prevails until 164, the year that Antiochus IV dies). In response, however, Antiochus marches against Egypt a second time in 168. He again successfully captures Memphis and then marches against Alexandria itself.

Verse 29 clearly predicts the second campaign of Antiochus into Egypt in 168, namely, the campaign to crush the alliance between the two Ptolemy brothers formed against him. This time his successful thrust brings him all the way to Alexandria. But then something unexpected happens--"This last time it will not turn out the way it did before." A Roman fleet arrives. "Kittim" refers strictly to a city on the island of Cyprus. However, the Hebrews generally applied the name not only to the island as a whole but also to Mediterranean peoples generally, and to Macedonians and Romans specifically. According to Josephus, "the name Chethim [was] given by the Hebrews to all islands and to most maritime countries."<sup>4</sup>

The Roman legate, Popilius Laenas, met Antiochus at Eleusias, the eastern suburb of Alexandria, and ordered him to withdraw from Egypt or face the prospect of war with Rome. He arrogantly draws a circle around Antiochus and tells him to decide before stepping outside the circle. No doubt remembering the defeat his father Antiochus III met at the hands of the Romans at the battle of Magnesia in 190, and his own stay in Rome as a hostage, Antiochus quickly decides to withdraw. Some years later, in 164, Rome made Ptolemy VI sole ruler in Alexandria and established his brother Ptolemy VIII as a separate king in Cyrene.

Following his humiliation in Egypt, Antiochus retreats to Jerusalem in 167, set on securing his southern border. Evidently the orthodox party proved too troublesome for Philip (the royal governor) and his troops garrisoned at Jerusalem, and Antiochus proceeds to vent his wrath on the Jews. It is not known whether or not Antiochus himself accompanies his troops to Jerusalem. In any event, a large force under the leadership of Apollonius comes to Jerusalem to teach it a lesson. "He will return [to his own kingdom] and become enraged at the holy covenant and take action." This is the second "action" taken by Antiochus against Jerusalem: "So he will come back [to Jerusalem] and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant."

When Apollonius arrives at Jerusalem, he pretends to have come in peace. Then on the Sabbath he orders his troops to parade, fully armed, outside the city. All those who come out to watch are massacred. Then he leads his troops through the city, killing a large part of the population. Jerusalem is plundered, parts of it are burned, and its walls are destroyed. It is at this point that the decrees are issued that have made the name of Antiochus Epiphanes infamous: on penalty of death the Jews were to depart from the laws of their fathers and cease living by the laws of their God. They could not observe the Sabbath or the feasts, they could not circumcise their children, and copies of the Torah had to be destroyed. These decrees favored those apostate Jews in Jerusalem, no doubt Menelaus and his followers, who were ready to "forsake the holy covenant" for power and the favor of Antiochus.

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<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* i.6.1. Cf. Jer. 2:10; see William H. Brownlee, "Kittim," *ISBE*.

*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 (v. 31).*

Antiochus directs his forces to "desecrate the sanctuary fortress." For "the sanctuary fortress" the Hebrew literally has "the sanctuary, the strength." Many take this to mean that the temple was fortified, i.e., desecrated by being turned into a fortress housing Gentile soldiers. However, Keil argues against this interpretation and takes the phrase to mean "desecrate the temple, which was the spiritual fortress of Israel." 1 Macc. 1:31-33 does state that Antiochus fortified the old "City of David" by erecting a massive wall and strong towers. This citadel, near the temple, was called the Acra, and it stood for some twenty-five years. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that the words of this verse speak of the Acra.

In addition, Antiochus also puts a stop to the daily sacrifices (if this had not already occurred somewhat earlier), and desecrates the sanctuary by erecting an "abomination of desolation." This consisted at least of an altar to Zeus on top of the altar of burnt offering and probably also a statue of Zeus Olympios himself. The date was 15 Kislev (Dec. 6), 167. The first animal was sacrificed to Zeus ten days later on 25 Kislev (Dec. 16), 167. Such an offering was to be made the 25th of every subsequent month in celebration of Antiochus' birthday. Finally, he forces the Jew to march in procession wearing wreaths of ivy during the festival to Dionysus (Bacchus), the god of the grape harvest and wine. All of this, of course, was a serious strategic error on the part of Antiochus, for it sparked the successful Maccabean revolt.

#### 4. The Maccabean revolt: 11:32-35

##### The Beginning of the Revolt

*And 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 (v. 32).*

Verses 32-35 describe the response to the second action taken by Antiochus against Israel described in 11:30-31. "By smooth words" Antiochus was able to turn many to godlessness, i.e., support of his policies. However, "the people who know their God will display strength and take action."

*And those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder, for many days (v. 33).*

Many people were in danger of being led astray by the hellenizers. Therefore the educated among the faithful arise and give leadership and understanding to the people. However, the early resistance movement is not very successful. Many will "fall" as martyrs. It is not clear whether the many who fall are among the "many" who are given "understanding" or are among the leaders "who have insight." The reference also might be general and apply to both groups. The "many days" refer to the early days of the resistance. This courageous but very costly resistance will continue for "some days."

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

Just when many of the faithful are being martyred under the dread persecution, "they will be granted a little help." "They" here probably points back to both "those who have insight" and "the many" who are given understanding. This phrase seems to predict the early successes of the armed Maccabean revolt under Mattathias and his son Judas. The "little help" probably refers to the few

faithful followers of Mattathias and Judas compared to the Syrian host. The following is a summary of how it started.

In every village of Palestine offerings were to be made to the pagan gods under the supervision of an imperial representative. In 166 one old priest from the town of Modein (17 miles NW of Jerusalem) named Mattathias refuses to offer these sacrifices. He kills another Jew about to comply, kills the imperial legate, and destroys the pagan altar. He and his five sons--John Gaddis, Simon Thassi, Judas Maccabeus, Eleazar Avaran, and Jonathon Apphus--form a band of guerrilla fighters and flee to the hills. Others soon join. This marks the beginning of the Maccabean revolt.

The last part of the verse indicates that some join in the revolt "in hypocrisy," literally "with flatteries." Many commentators take the reason for this to be the harsh treatment meted out by Judas against hellinizing and apostate Jews.<sup>5</sup> Many of these insincere followers deserted as soon as an opportunity presented itself.

*And 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 (v. 35).*

In these struggles the deaths of many of the leaders "who have insight" might very well make the people doubt the blessing of God on them and their cause. However, this verse states that the purpose of these deaths is to refine and purge "them," a reference pointing back to both the leaders "who have insight" and "the many" who receive "understanding," i.e., the community of the faithful at large.

The last part of the verse indicates that this refining and purging will continue "until the time of the end." As Keil rightly remarks, this "end" does not refer to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes or even to the end of the Greek oppression with the establishment of an independent Jewish state under John Hyrcanus in 135. Rather, this phrase (the same one used also in verse 40) carries us all the way to the eschatological end. Neither the oppression under the Greeks nor that under the Romans constituted the "end" of the refining process for Israel. Just prior to the second advent of Christ there will be another time of persecution--even greater--under the eschatological Antichrist, whose career is traced in verses 36-45. The phrase here in verse 35 envisions the entire course of the refining process and serves as the transition to the portion of Daniel that describes the final installment of this process in some detail. Recall from 10:14 that, according to the angel, the purpose of this entire vision was to describe "what will happen to your people in the latter days." The summary begins at Daniel's own time (11:2), but it must continue all the way to the eschatological end.

Finally, in the last part of the verse, we read that the end will come "at the appointed time," that is, at the destruction of the Antichrist and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, described in 12:1-3.

This ends the exegesis of the historical section of chapter 11. However, here is a brief summary of the final course of the Maccabean revolt.

### Phase One: The Rededication of the Temple

Because they refused to fight on the Sabbath, many of the original freedom fighters who followed Mattathias and Judas lost their lives during an early encounter with Antiochus' troops. At this point they changed their policy and decided to fight on the Sabbath if compelled to do so.

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<sup>5</sup> See Keil and Young.

These patriots began calling on Jews everywhere to return to the standards of the law of Moses and join in the struggle against hellenization. They tear down heathen altars and circumcise children who had been left uncircumcised. Soon they gain the support of the Hasidim, the orthodox party in Jerusalem that remained faithful to the Torah. Mattathias dies in 166, the same year in which he began the revolt. But before dying he exhorts his sons to continue the struggle and designates Judas, his third son, as leader of the resistance.

Judas Maccabeus ("Judas the Hammer") proved to be a very capable leader. In his first year (166/165) he defeats the Syrian governors Apollonius and Seron. Had Antiochus personally overseen the conflict, the results might have been different. But God in his providence has had Antiochus occupied on his eastern front since 167 or 166, never again to return to Palestine. Therefore Antiochus orders Lysias, regent of the western part of his empire, to put down the revolt. Lysias sends an army down to engage Judas under the leadership of Gorgias and two other generals named Ptolemy and Nicanor. They were so confident of victory that traders went along to buy Jewish slaves. Judas, however, defeats Gorgias at Emmaus and puts the Syrian troops to flight.

In 164 Lysias makes a last attempt to defeat the Jews by personally leading an even larger army against them. The battle is fought at Beth-zur, 15 miles south of Jerusalem. Again Judas is victorious. At this point Judas enters Jerusalem, taking the entire city except the Acra, selects a faithful priest to officiate, cleanses the temple, and begins the daily sacrifices. The date is 25 Kislev, 164, exactly three years to the day after the desecration. This event is celebrated in the Jewish Feast of Dedication, or Lights (Hanukkah). Judas then fortifies the walls of Jerusalem and the city of Beth-zur. This marks the end of the first phase of the revolt, and the Maccabees had not yet experienced defeat.

### Phase Two: Religious Freedom Gained

The fighting, however, was not over. The Maccabees wanted to end Syrian control of the Acra in Jerusalem. Therefore, in the spring or summer of 163, Judas mounts a siege against the Acra, but some of the Syrian soldiers and Hellenistic Jews escape and go to Antioch for help.

At this point in the history we need to discuss Antiochus again. Sometime around 167 or 166 he begins to campaign in Parthia and Armenia. He had heard of the riches of the temple of Nanaea in Elymais, hung with the gifts of Alexander, and he determines to plunder it. He is not killed in the act like his father was, but the event did hasten his death. He returns to Babylon and then to Tabae (Isfahan) in Persia. At this point (in 164) word reaches him of the successes of the Maccabean revolt and the restoration of the temple worship in Jerusalem. He dies insane in Persia in 164 or 163. "He will be broken without human agency" (8:25). Due to the panoramic view given in 11:35, his death is not mentioned in chapter 11.

Shortly before his death, he appoints his friend Philip regent and guardian for his young son Antiochus V Eupator. Both Philip and Lysias are in Antioch when Antiochus dies. Lysias, however, protests that he had earlier been designated as regent for the young Antiochus. Apparently his claim is supported, for he then crowns Antiochus V king. Philip presumably goes to Persia.

In response to the trouble in Jerusalem, Lysias and the boy-king head south and defeat Judas at Beth-zachariah (11 miles SW of Jerusalem), killing his youngest brother Eleazar with Judas himself retreating to Jerusalem. Lysias then lays siege to Jerusalem. Due to the shortage of food, Judas is nearly defeated again. However, Lysias receives news that Philip is leading troops from Persia to Syria to claim the boy-king and the kingdom for himself. Therefore, Lysias becomes anxious to make a treaty of peace with Judas. Judas agrees to tear down the walls of Jerusalem, and Lysias grants the Jews religious freedom. They are, however, still under Seleucid rule. This ends the second phase of the Maccabean revolt.

### Phase Three: Political Freedom Attempted

Judah has gained religious freedom, but Judas Maccabeus wants complete political freedom as an independent country. To counter Judas, therefore, Lysias tries to strengthen the Hellenists among the Jews. He apparently appoints Alcimus as high priest. This man was of Aaronic descent, but he was also a Hellenist.

At this point an unexpected event occurs. In 162 Demetrius I Soter escapes from Rome where he had been a hostage since 175 (when Seleucus IV arranged to have Antiochus IV, his brother, released in exchange for Demetrius, his son). Demetrius returns to Antioch, proclaims himself king, and kills both Lysias and Antiochus V, young king. However, he sees the wisdom in confirming the appointment of Alcimus as high priest in Jerusalem. Still in 162, he sends Alcimus to Jerusalem with an army under the general Bacchides. The Hasidim at first accept Alcimus, possibly because he represented the Aaronic line. Hence they temporarily break from Judas Maccabeus, who still wants political freedom from under the Seleucid yoke.

A foolish action, however, on the part of Alcimus soon leads again to armed conflict on a major scale. After promising not to harm the Hasidim, Alcimus kills sixty of them. This turns the Hasidim to once again support Judas' policies. Alcimus is forced to ask Demetrius for help in combating Judas and his followers. In response Demetrius sends Nicanor, but he is defeated and killed by Judas at Adasa (4 miles N of Jerusalem) in 161. What is left of his army retreats to Gazara (20 miles W of Adasa) but is destroyed there by Judas. Alcimus flees to Syria.

At this point Judas sends to Rome for help, but before any can arrive Demetrius sends Bacchides with Alcimus to avenge Nicanor's death. Seeing the size of the Syrian army, many desert Judas. Rather than retreat, Judas decides to fight. He is killed at the ensuing Battle of Elasa (10 miles N of Jerusalem) in 160. He is buried by his two brothers, Jonathan and Simon, at Modein where they had lived and where his father had been a priest.

### Phase Four: The Leadership of Jonathan

The death of Judas the Hammer hurt the morale of the resistance movement, but Jonathan carried on the work with distinction, gaining more power than Judas had had. However, it was a slow start. The Hellenists were in control in Jerusalem. Bacchides fortified Jerusalem and other Judean cities. And Jonathan, with his small band of followers were in the wilderness of Tekoa able to wage only guerrilla warfare.

Eventually the tide turned. Alcimus died in 159 and no successor was appointed. Bacchides returns to Syria in 157. However, as the power of Jonathan grows, Bacchides returns only to be defeated at Beth-basi (6 miles S of Jerusalem). As a result of this setback, he makes a treaty with Jonathan and returns to Antioch. This greatly weakens the hold of the Hellenists on Jerusalem. Jonathan makes Michmash (9 miles S of Jerusalem) his headquarters and continues to wield power as a judge, punishing hellenizers.

Once again surprising and unexpected events in Antioch gain the Maccabean movement even more power. In 152 Alexander Balas, who claimed to be a son of Antiochus Epiphanes, appears and challenges the reign of Demetrius. Both contenders seek Jonathan's support. Providentially Jonathan sides with Alexander, for in 150 Demetrius is killed in a battle with Alexander. Alexander then makes Jonathan a general, governor, and high priest in Judah.

However, turmoil continues to plague Syria. In 147, three years after the death of his father,

Demetrius II arrives in Cilitia with Cretan mercenaries. Ptolemy VI joins him and together they defeat Alexander Balas in 145. Demetrius becomes king of Syria. However, he is only sixteen years old and inexperienced. Jonathan takes this as an opportunity to attack the Acra in Jerusalem, where the Hellenists still retain power. Demetrius II is not pleased with this move, but instead of taking action against Jonathan he confirms his appointment as high priest. Jonathan, however, is not able to take the Acra.

Yet another coup occurs in 143. The army successfully rebels under Demetrius II, and Diodotus Trypho (a general who had served under Alexander Balas) assumes the throne in Antioch in the name of Antiochus VI, the son of Alexander Balas (Trypho later kills Antiochus VI in 142). He becomes the first non-Seleucid king. Jonathan sides with Trypho and is designated civil and religious head in Judah, with his brother Simon in charge of the military. However, Trypho, apparently fearful of Jonathan, tricks him into a meeting and kills him in 143. The leadership of the movement passes to Simon.

#### Phase Five: The Rule of the Hasmoneans

Demetrius II was not killed in 143, and Simon, after the treachery displayed toward his brother Jonathan, throws his support to Demetrius in exchange for Judah's complete independence. The Maccabean goal has now finally been achieved: Judah is a free independent country for the first time since 586 and the Babylonian captivity. There is more to the story, but here the Maccabean revolt ends successfully. From 143 until the Roman intervention in 63, Judah retained its independence. In 140 the people confer the position of high priest upon Simon, transferring the legitimate high priesthood officially from the family of Onias to the Hasmoneans. Simon is followed by his son John Hyrcanus (135-104). The remaining independent leaders are Aristobulus I (104-103), Alexander Jannaeus (103-76), Salome Alexandra (76-67), and Aristobulus II (67-63).

The Maccabean victories are also predicted in Zechariah 9:13, and the Maccabees themselves are included in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11:34:

*By faith they became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight.*