

The Wars Between the Kings of the South and the North for Dominion Over Israel (Daniel 11:5-35)

<u>Daniel Chapter 11 Passage</u>	<u>Comments</u>
<p>⁵“Then the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority.</p>	<p>The king of the south was Ptolemy I Soter who ruled Egypt from 323 to 285 B.C. Seleucus I Nicator served him for several years, but in 312 B.C. Seleucus became ruler of Babylonia. Through time Seleucus also gained control of Syria, southern Asia Minor, and the Iranian Plateau. This made him the ruler of a much larger kingdom than that of Ptolemy Soter.</p>
<p>⁶ After some years they shall make an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement. But she shall not retain the strength of her arm, and he and his arm shall not endure, but she shall be given up, and her attendants, he who fathered her, and he who supported her in those times.</p>	<p>Several years after Ptolemy I Soter and Seleucus I Nicator, two new kings, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282-246 B.C.) of Egypt and Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.) of Syria, formed an alliance. Ptolemy's daughter, Berenice, was married to Antiochus to bind the alliance. Ptolemy forced Antiochus to divorce his first wife, Laodice, in order to marry Berenice. The marriage did not last, however. When Ptolemy died a few years later, Antiochus abandoned Berenice and took back Laodice. Laodice was so jealous over her divorce that she had her husband, Berenice, Berenice's baby, and all those who had accompanied Berenice from Egypt murdered.</p>
<p>⁷“And from a branch from her roots one shall arise in his place. He shall come against the army and enter the fortress of the king of the north, and he shall deal with them and shall prevail.</p>	<p>Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221 B.C.), succeeded his father as king of Egypt. To avenge his sister's murder he marched north, defeated the Syrian army, invaded Syria, and put Laodice to death.</p>
<p>⁸ He shall also carry off to Egypt their gods with their metal images and their precious vessels of silver and gold, and for some years he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north.</p>	<p>He conquered large areas of the Seleucid kingdom and carried back to Egypt 40,000 talents of silver and 2,500 idols. He remained more powerful than the Syrians for a number of years.</p>
<p>⁹Then the latter shall come into the realm of the king of the south but shall return to his own land.</p>	<p>However, around 240 B.C., the new Syrian king, Seleucus Callinicus, made a retaliatory invasion against Egypt. He was defeated and had to return home.</p>

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<p>¹⁰ “His sons shall wage war and assemble a multitude of great forces, which shall keep coming and overflow and pass through, and again shall carry the war as far as his fortress.</p>	<p>The sons of Seleucus Callinicus, Seleucus III Ceraunus (226-223 B.C.) and Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B.C.), gathered a huge Syrian army together. Seleucus was killed in an early battle in Asia Minor, so Antiochus took charge of the army. He made great rapid conquests, retaking Syrian territory held by Egypt. By 219 B.C. he had conquered into parts of Israel and the Transjordan. Antiochus let up on the campaign in the year but returned to the offensive again in 217 B.C. This time he conquered south to the Egyptian fortress at Raphia. All this time Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-203 B.C.), the king of Egypt, sat idly by involved in a life of luxury and ease.</p>
<p>¹¹ Then the king of the south, moved with rage, shall come out and fight against the king of the north. And he shall raise a great multitude, but it shall be given into his hand.</p>	<p>Finally, Ptolemy got angry with the advances toward Egypt by Antiochus. He assembled an army consisting of 70,000 infantry, 5,000 cavalry and 73 elephants and marched against Antiochus. Antiochus had 72,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry and 102 elephants. In 217 B.C. the two armies clashed at Raphia. Egypt won a great victory.</p>
<p>¹² And when the multitude is taken away, his heart shall be exalted, and he shall cast down tens of thousands, but he shall not prevail.</p>	<p>Antiochus lost 10,000 infantry, 300 cavalry and 5 elephants through death and 4,000 prisoners through capture. Ptolemy became very proud of his victory, but he did not press his advantage. Instead of retaking all lost territory from Syria, he returned home to his life of ease.</p>
<p>¹³ For the king of the north shall again raise a multitude, greater than the first. And after some years he shall come on with a great army and abundant supplies.</p>	<p>In 203 B.C. Ptolemy Philopator and his wife died. Their son, Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181 B.C.), became king of Egypt when only four years old. Antiochus the Great saw this as the opportune time to retaliate against Egypt. He marched south with a larger, well-equipped army which he had developed through some successful eastern campaigns during the fourteen years since Raphia.</p>

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<p>¹⁴ “In those times many shall rise against the king of the south, and the violent among your own people shall lift themselves up in order to fulfill the vision, but they shall fail.</p>	<p>Antiochus did not fight Egypt alone. He made a league with Philip V of Macedonia, Egyptian rebels who opposed their child-king and Jewish men of violence who resented Egypt’s influence in Israel. Egypt controlled Israel again after the battle at Raphia in 217 B.C. The Jewish rebels decided to help Antiochus the Great take Israel away from Egypt. They thought that their alliance with Syria would aid Israel, but instead it brought their nation into Syria’s grasp and made it subject to the horrors that Antiochus Epiphanes would bring upon it in later years. Thus, their action helped to bring about the fulfillment of the vision in Danile 8.</p>
<p>¹⁵ Then the king of the north shall come and throw up siegeworks and take a well-fortified city. And the forces of the south shall not stand, or even his best troops, for there shall be no strength to stand.</p>	<p>In 198 B.C. Antiochus the Great conquered a leading Egyptian general, Scopas, by besieging and conquering Sidon, the fortress city in which Scopas was located. Three attempts to rescue the besieged Scopas by three chosen Egyptian generals (Eropas, Menacles, Damoyenus) failed. This victory for Syria ended Egypt’s rule in Israel.</p>
<p>¹⁶ But he who comes against him shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him. And he shall stand in the glorious land, with destruction in his hand.</p>	<p>Antiochus now had no opposition for some time. He had a free hand to do what he wanted in the Middle East. He came to Israel and took complete control of the land (the word translated “destruction” means <i>completeness</i> and referred to Isarel being completely in his hand). Antiochus treated the Jews well – he released Jerusalem from taxed for three years and sent money to the Temple.</p>
<p>¹⁷ He shall set his face to come with the strength of his whole kingdom, and he shall bring terms of an agreement and perform them. He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom, but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.</p>	<p>By this time, the rising power of Rome was beginning to threaten Syria’s expansionist program. In light of this, Antiochus decided that he dare not risk a costly military invasion against the land of Egypt itself. Instead, he determined to bring Egypt under his control through a treaty. The threatening power of his enlarged kingdom gave him leverage to make Egypt agreeable to such a treaty. As part of this treaty, Antiochus married his daughter, Cleopatra, to the Egyptian king, Ptolemy Epiphanes, in 197 B.C. Ptolemy was about ten years old at that time. Antiochus planned for his daughter to work for him against her husband. She was supposed to work from the inside to ruin Egypt as an opponent of Syria. The scheme didn’t work. Cleopatra constantly sided with her husband against her father.</p>

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<p>¹⁸ Afterward he shall turn his face to the coastlands and shall capture many of them, but a commander shall put an end to his insolence. Indeed, he shall turn his insolence back upon him.</p>	<p>Beginning in 197 B.C., Antiochus the Great conquered several Aegean Sea islands and portions of Asia Minor and Thrace. He even invaded and conquered parts of Greece. Rome was seeking to control these areas, so Antiochus boasted concerning what he was doing to Roman interests. Rome sent the Roman general, Lucius Cornelius Scipio (Scipio Asiaticus), to deal with him. IN 191 B.C. Scipio forced his out of Greece. IN 190 B.C. Scipio defeated Antiochus terribly in the Battle of Magnesia in Asia Minor. In 188 B.C. the Romans forced him to relinquish all of Asia Minor. Not the Romans boasted concerning what they were doing to Antiochus' interests.</p>
<p>¹⁹ Then he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land, but he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found.</p>	<p>Antiochus the Great had been defeated so soundly that he had to withdraw to the protection of his own land, Syria, never again to conquer the strongholds of other lands. In 187 B.C. he was killed while trying to rob a temple in Elam in order to replenish his exhausted treasury.</p>
<p>²⁰ "Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute for the glory of the kingdom. But within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle.</p>	<p>Antiochus the Great was succeeded by his son, Seleucus IV Philopator (187-176 B.C.). The romans required him to pay a 1,000 talent tribute each year. This forced him to levy heavy taxes on the peoples of his kingdom. Seleucus sent his prime minister, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem to take the wealth of the Temple treasury. A short time after this, Seleucus suddenly and mysteriously died, possibly of poisoning in 176 B.C.</p>
<p>²¹ In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flattery.</p>	<p>Seleucus IV Philopator was succeeded by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.) as king of Syria. Antiochus was so contemptible that his contemporaries nicknamed his "Epimanes" (madman) instead of the title that he gave himself ("Theos Epiphanes" – <i>the God Made Manifest</i>). Antiochus was not the rightful heir to the throne. One of Seleucus' two sons was the rightful heir. However, when Antiochus learned about Seleucus' death, he come to Syria and took the throne, not by waging war, but by the use of flattery and intrigue.</p>

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<p>²² Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant.</p>	<p>Early in Antiochus' rule Egypt prepared an army to march against him. When Antiochus learned about this, he marched his Syrian army south to attack the Egyptian army. Antiochus completely routed this opponent in 170 B.C. at a battle which took place on the Mediterranean seacoast halfway between Gaza and the Nile delta. Antiochus allowed Onias III, the high priest of Israel, to be deposed and replaced by Onias' brother, Jason. 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 it was the high priest's responsibility to see that Israel kept its covenant with God.</p>
<p>²³ And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people.</p>	<p>Antiochus offered friendship to Egypt in order to get it to let down its guard against him. Having accomplished this, he then proceeded to try to gain control of Egypt through deceitful means. In spite of the small size to which Rome had reduced his Syrian kingdom, Antiochus began to rise in power.</p>
<p>²⁴ Without warning he shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.</p>	<p>Antiochus robbed the richest parts of his own kingdom when they did not expect to be plundered. He did not squander this wealth upon himself, as his ancestors had done. Instead, he very generously distributed it among his poorer subjects in order to gain their support (1 Macc. 3:30). He planned to take Egypt's fortresses to serve his ends, but God had decreed only so much time for him.</p>
<p>²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his heart against the king of the south with a great army. And the king of the south shall wage war with an exceedingly great and mighty army, but he shall not stand, for plots shall be devised against him.</p>	<p>Antiochus and Ptolemy VI Philometor (181-145 B.C.) battled each other with huge armies when Antiochus invaded Egyptian territory Ptolemy was soundly defeated, because some of his own men from his royal court plotted against him and aided the Syrian enemy.</p>
<p>²⁶ Even those who eat his food shall break him. His army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.</p>	<p>Many Egyptian soldiers were killed. Ptolemy was overthrown as king of Egypt and taken captive by Antiochus. Some Egyptians crowned Ptolemy Philometor's brother, Ptolemy VII Euergetes, as king of Egypt in Alexandria.</p>

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<p>²⁷ And as for the two kings, their hearts shall be bent on doing evil. They shall speak lies at the same table, but to no avail, for the end is yet to be at the time appointed.</p>	<p>In light of this new development, Antiochus pretended to befriend captured Philometor in order to obtain his help against Euergetes. Antiochus promised to reconquer Egypt for Philometor to restore him as king. Philometor pretended to believe Antiochus. But both intended to use the other to gain control of all Egypt. The intentions of both failed. Antiochus did conquer the city of Memphis but failed to take Alexandris. He returned home without taking all of Egypt. Philometor became king of Memphis but 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 between these two Gentile powers, it suffered greatly during the course of this war.</p>
<p>²⁸ And he shall return to his land with great wealth, but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant. And he shall work his will and return to his own land.</p>	<p>Although he had not conquered all of Egypt, Antiochus did take much wealth from it to carry home to Syria. Before this Egyptian campaign Antiochus had removed Jason as high priest of Israel and replaced his with Menelaus. Menelaus had sought this position by offering Antiochus higher tribute money (2 Macc. 4:23-27). While Antiochus was fighting in Egypt, Jason heard a false rumor to the effect that Antiochus was dead. Jason raised a Jewish force and attacked Jerusalem to overthrow Menelaus. Menelaus beat off the attack, but, as Antiochus returned home through Israel, he determined to teach the rebel Jews a lesson. He slaughtered many Jews, sold many into slavery, plundered the Temple of its valuable contents and carried these scared things of God to Syria (1 Macc. 1:20-28; 2 Macc. 5:5-21). This showed his personal contempt for Israel's covenant relationship with God.</p>
<p>²⁹ "At the time appointed he shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before.</p>	<p>When Antiochus learned that Ptolemy Philometor had formed a coalition with Ptolemy Euergetes to rule Egypt jointly, he felt betrayed. As a result, he invaded Egypt a third time in 168 B.C. Gabriel told Daniel that the time of this invasion had been appointed sovereignly by God. This third invasion did not have the successful outcome for Antiochus that the first invasion of 170 B.C. had had.</p>

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<p>³⁰ For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant.</p>	<p>While Antiochus was besieging Alexandria, the Romans sent Popilius Laenas with many soldiers in trireme ships to prevent Antiochus from taking Egypt. When Laenas told Antiochus that the Roman Senate wanted him to leave Egypt, Antiochus stalled for time. Laenas drew a circle around Antiochus and told him to decide either to leave Egypt or to fight Rome before leaving the circle. Antiochus was so fearful of Rome's power that he left Egypt, but very reluctantly and dejected. With great bitterness of heart, he decided to vent his wrath upon the people of Israel who were opposing his efforts to enforce Greek culture upon the nation. He gave special favors to Menelaus and his apostate Jewish followers who were rejecting the true worship of God in favor of the Hellenization process (1 Macc. 1:11-15; 2 Macc. 4:4-17)</p>
<p>³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.</p>	<p>Antiochus ordered his general, Apollonius, to occupy Jerusalem with Syrian troops for the purpose of stamping out every trace of Judaism and replacing it with Hellenism. The Syrian stationed themselves in the Temple and the fortress which guarded the Temple. 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 supervise the enforcement of the edict. The regular Temple sacrifices to God were stopped. Syrian soldiers and harlots performed licentious heathen rites in the Temple courts. Pigs were sacrificed to Greek gods in the Temple. Jews were required to take part in a drunken orgy in honor of Bacchus, the god of wine. Jews who tried to offer sacrifice to God, practice circumcision or observe the Sabbath or feast days were put to death. The Old Testament was ordered destroyed. A pagan altar was erected over the altar of God, and the Temple was rededicated to Zeus. This was the "abomination of desolation" that was caused by Antiochus (1,2 Macc.).</p>
<p>³² He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.</p>	<p>Those apostate Jews who already had deserted the worship of God were flattered by Antiochus into completely perverting the faith of Israel. In order to remain high priest, Menelaus turned to the service of Zeus. But those Jews who knew God personally through faith took a strong stand for Him and acted in obedience to God's covenant with Israel (1 Macc. 1:62-63).</p>

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<p>³³ And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.</p>	<p>Mattathias Maccabeus, a priest of God, and his five sons refused to forsake the covenant of God. They understood the issues of the day and could distinguish clearly between the truth of God and the errors of Hellenism. Mattathias refused to offer the pagan sacrifice and killed Antiochus' representative who ordered him to offer it. He and his sons forsook their personal possessions and fled to the mountains. Through this example they gave many others an understanding of the issues of the day. Others joined them in their revolt against Antiochus' repressive measures. This was the beginning of the Maccabean revolt (1 Macc. 2:1-30). These people paid a high price. Many of them were killed and abused by Syrian forces (1 Macc. 2:31-38).</p>
<p>³⁴ When they stumble, they shall receive a little help. And many shall join themselves to them with flattery,</p>	<p>From time-to-time small groups of men joined the Maccabees to help them in their revolt against the Syrian oppression (1 Macc. 2:42-43). Many uncommitted Jews sided in with the Maccabees hypocritically for expediency's sake. They did this when they saw the Maccabees winning and in order to escape the furious punishment that the Maccabees brought upon the apostate Jews (1 Macc. 2:44; 3:5, 8).</p>
<p>³⁵ and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.</p>	<p>Several of Mattathias Maccabeus' sons were killed while leading the people of Israel who remained faithful to God's covenant (1 Macc. 9:18-21; 13:48; 16:16). Other faithful Jews suffered similar fates (1 Macc. 6:43-46; 9:26-27). God permitted these things to happen to His people so that they might be purified in order to serve Him more effectively. Gabriel indicated that such a refining process of God's people would go on, not only during the persecutions by Antiochus Epiphanes but also throughout the entire end time (the word translated "until" also means <i>during</i>). This refining process would continue until the time that God has appointed for it to end – the end of the end time at the second coming of Christ. Once again Daniel was reminded of two things. First, God is sovereign – He has determined the significant times of history. Second, Israel would continue to be persecuted until Christ's second coming.</p>

Notes Based on Showers, Renald E.; *The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*; (Bellmawr, New Jersey; The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc.; 1982) 197 Pages. See Pages 149-162.
 Minor Modifications made by David Lazarony.