

**“WALKING IN THE SHADOW OF THE ANTICHRIST”****“Type of the Antichrist” (Daniel 11:20-35)**

After detailing a broader overview of the next four centuries of world history, the vision then will narrow down to focus in on the life of an infamous Greek ruler, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (c. 215 – 164 BC). He was the eighth ruler of the Seleucid dynasty and the youngest son of Antiochus III. Antiochus IV regarded himself as a manifestation of god Zeus. He took names to extol himself like *Theos Epiphanes* (“God Manifest”) and after his defeat of Egypt, *Nikephoros* (“Bearer of Victory”). The Bible revealed greater detail of his life than the others for 2 main reasons:

- (1) Antiochus Epiphanes had a profound influence on Jewish history
- (2) Antiochus Epiphanes is one of the more obvious types of the final Antichrist. He is the junior version of the real thing to come later! He is sometimes called the “Antichrist of the Old Testament.”

In Daniel 8 we learned that he was pictured as a little horn that emerged from the four horns (4 generals) of the Greek Empire.



The new details in Daniel 11 revealed more of the timeframe from which Antiochus IV Epiphanes would emerge in history. This would be a help to those Jews who knew their Scriptures in facing up to the threat of this evil man, “*but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.*” (v32b)

*Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. (v20-21)*

Seleucus Philopator inherited the kingdom of his father Antiochus III, “*Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom.*” He was an insignificant king with limited ambition and ability. Most of the 12 years he was king he devoted himself to raising the tribute money imposed on his family by the Romans. Seleucus Philopator died suddenly, which many suspect

was due to poisoning, *“but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.”* After his death, Seleucus’ younger brother known as Antiochus IV claimed the throne, *“And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom.”* Immediately in the introduction to this man’s life his evil character is clearly described, *“a vile person.”* He was a proud, erratic, and deeply depraved individual. Although he described himself as Antiochus Epiphanes (“God Manifest”) his detractors called him Antiochus Epimanes meaning “madman.” God perfectly described him as, *“a vile person.”*

The authorities in the Seleucid kingdom did not want him as king, *“to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom.”* But this did not deter Antiochus Epiphanes. He made a deal with the king of Pergamum, who lent him money and troops. Antiochus then used deception to seize the throne by pretense of peace. He first pretended to be a man of peace and a protector of his brother’s family. He ruled as co-regent with an infant son of Seleucus, Demetrius Soter who was the heir to the throne. Once his rule was consolidated, Antiochus Epiphanes murdered his young nephew.

*And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time. (v22-24)*

These verses describe the military successes of Antiochus Epiphanes. Using great deception, he was able to expand his kingdom by making agreements with rivals and then betraying them. One of his tactics was to come up with a smaller force to pretend his was come for peace, *“for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.”* When he had fooled his partners, Antiochus would ambush them and seize control. This brought a measure of outward success to him, *“He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers.”*

One of Antiochus Epiphanes’ tactics was to share the great wealth his plundered with his followers to buy their loyalty, *“he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches.”* His kingdom was now wealthy and expanding. However, there is a warning for the proud Epiphanes in these prophetic verses. His success is limited in place and time, *“and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.”* God would deal with him in God’s timing. The proud blasphemer who described himself as Epiphanes or “God Manifest” would discover he was far from divine! God had put an appointment in His divine calendar that Antiochus Epiphanes had to face, *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”* (Heb. 9:27)

*And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain. And both of these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed. (v25-27)*

This section focuses on the intrigue and rivalry between Antiochus of the northern Seleucid Empire and the southern Ptolemaic Empire. History reveals that the new king of Egypt Ptolemy VI (nephew of Antiochus as his sister Cleopatra was the mother of Ptolemy VI) decided to

conquer Israel and the southern part of the Seleucid Empire. He gathered a great army to do so, *“and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army.”* When Antiochus heard that his young nephew was preparing for war against him, he mobilised his mighty Seleucid army and defeated him, *“but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.”* One of the tactics that Antiochus used was by utilizing traitors from within the Egyptian senior ranks to assist him in undermining Ptolemy VI, *“Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him.”* Antiochus, effectively, mastered the Ptolemaic Empire at this point, although he didn't control all of Egypt. Some supporters of another brother Ptolemy VII had rallied behind him as king.

The deposed young nephew, Ptolemy VI was no shrinking violet when it came to deception either. He promised peace and friendship to his uncle. They sat down for meals engaged in diplomatic intrigue, *“And both of these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table.”* Both attempted to deceive one another. Such behaviour was all part of the sovereign plan of God. In spite of all the lies and wicked deceptions of men, God was in control of all events, *“but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.”* Ptolemy VI managed to persuade Antiochus to leave Egypt and he promised to rule as his puppet king there. But as soon as Antiochus and his troops left, Ptolemy VI sought an alliance with the forces of his brother Ptolemy VII to defy Antiochus. This invitation didn't work out the way Ptolemy VI thought because the supporters of Ptolemy VII insisted that both brothers should rule as joint kings. Hence, Egypt was weakened by this rival system. So the plans and plots of Ptolemy VI and Antiochus were thwarted, *“but it shall not prosper.”*

*Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land. (v28)*

Antiochus made his way back to the Seleucid kingdom from Egypt. He went back enriched from his conquests in Egypt, *“Then shall he return into his land with great riches.”* On his way to Syria he passed through Israel. There his anti-Semitic and anti-Jehovah spirit began to manifest, *“and his heart shall be against the holy covenant.”* Antiochus sought to conquer and colonise the Jews in Israel to embrace Greek religion and culture. He had a significant following among apostate Jews who turned from their faith to embrace this little antichrist. Initially he used guile and apostate Jews to persuade many to embrace Hellenization and turn their backs on their faith. The Book of 1 Maccabees records his deceptive ways with the Jews,

**In those days went there out of Israel wicked men, who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. So this device pleased them well. Then certain of the people were so forward herein, that they went to the king, who gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the heathen: (1 Maccabees 1:11-13)**

*At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. (v29-30)*

When Antiochus learned his young nephews in Egypt had outmaneuvered him he was enraged. The deceiver had been deceived by bigger deceivers! He mobilized his troops in 167 BC to return to fight his Ptolemaic relatives, “*At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south.*” However, he did not find things as smooth as before, “*but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.*” The two Ptolemaic rulers issued a call to the powerful Romans for assistance. The powerful Senate issued a decree that he should desist going to war. The Senate sent the decree by hand by a Roman commander, Gaius Popillius Laenas. He was an old friend of Antiochus Epiphanes.

When Antiochus docked his ships in Alexandria the Roman fleet was there, “*For the ships of Chittim shall come against him.*” Chittim is a generic name seemingly for parts of the Mediterranean world that lay west of the Middle East where the Roman fleet came from. When he saw his old friend Gaius Popillius Laenas he extended his hand in a warm greeting but there was no handshake by Laenas. Antiochus hoped to enlist Roman help in his war. Laenas immediately passed the decree from the Senate to him. A shocked Antiochus tried to prevaricate so he could find a way to deceive Rome. He requested time from Laenas to consider the decree with his generals. Laenas, well aware of Antiochus’ deceptive ways, famously drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and imperiously informed him, “*Before you step out of that circle give me a reply to lay before the senate, and there is only one answer that is acceptable.*”

Antiochus discerned that Rome was too big a bully to fight with and too clever to bluff with any further. Humiliated by this public rebuff in front of his troops, he was reluctantly forced to comply with the words, “*I will do what the senate thinks right.*” Only at that point did Laenas extend a hand of greetings to Antiochus.

Antiochus was forced to disband his navy and order his men to leave Egypt, “*therefore he shall be grieved, and return.*” This was a great loss of face for such a proud man, who proclaimed that he was a god! He tried to conceal his anger but he was furious underneath. Antiochus fumed every step back to Syria. He needed an outlet to vent his rage. That outlet would come when he passed by Jerusalem, “*and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.*” Antiochus remembered the proud dismissal of many of the Jews to his attempts to force through Hellenization. He ordered his troops to attack all those who refused to comply with this policy.

*And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. (v31 - 34)*

Antiochus sought to win compromised Jews with his false promises, “*And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries.*” He launched a full-scale war on those who would not bow the knee to his gods. His soldiers massacred 40,000 Jews and he sold into slavery another 40,000. The terrible persecutions listed in Hebrews 11 are likely drawn from this period of intense national tribulation, “*and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they*

*wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”* (Heb. 11:35b-38) These events were almost 400 years after the vision of Daniel recorded in Daniel 8 and Daniel 11. The streets of Jerusalem were red with the blood of the slain Jews. He was the Hitler of his day! Maccabees records of his deception,

**And spake peaceable words unto them, but all was deceit: for when they had given him credence, he fell suddenly upon the city, and smote it very sore, and destroyed much people of Israel. And when he had taken the spoils of the city, he set it on fire, and pulled down the houses and walls thereof on every side. But the women and children took they captive, and possessed the cattle. (1 Maccabees 1:30-32)**

Antiochus looted the temple of much of its wealth including the golden altar. He ordered the burning of the copies of Holy Scripture and if any were found to possess a copy they were put to death. His ultimate act of desecration was to offer pigs as sacrifices on the altars in the temple to the Greek gods, *“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”*



Fornication and prostitution was also practiced in the sacred temple precincts. Naked Greek games were instituted to entertain the people and corrupt the morals of the nation. This led to the end of the daily sacrifices to the Lord,

**Insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them: whereupon the city was made an habitation of strangers, and became strange to those that were born in her; and her own children left her. Her sanctuary was laid waste like a**

**wilderness, her feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach her honour into contempt. (1 Maccabees 1:38-39)**

Antiochus sought to utilise a combination of guile and persecution to eradicate the worship of Jehovah amongst the Jews. He expanded this campaign to outside Jerusalem. But God always has His remnant. Eventually a faithful remnant, inspired by an old priest called Mattathias in a town outside Jerusalem called Modin, revolted against the attempt to Hellenize the whole of the nation. These were those that we read, *“but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.”*

The son of Mattathias called Judas Maccabeus (“Maccabaeus” is the Greek word for hammer) led a guerilla campaign against Antiochus’ troops. Initially they were battled against the odds and received little assistance from other nations or from the compromised Jews, *“Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help.”* However, when they begin to make some headway some of the compromised Jews would hypocritically rejoin their winning side, *“but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.”* Yet the true remnant encouraged each other to hold fast in the midst of the furnace of the battle, *“And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil.”* They would look forward with hope in their hearts that this persecution would only last for, *“many days.”*

*And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed. (v35)*

The Greeks underestimated the Jews’ determination and courage. Despite being greatly outnumbered, Judah Maccabeus defeated the Greeks over a period of many years. In one of the last great battles, the Jews recaptured the temple in Jerusalem. They broke the statue of Zeus and cleansed the temple from the defilements of the Greeks. Any Hellenist priests were either executed or expelled. This period of Jewish history is celebrated even today in the *Feast of Chanukah* (or *Hanukkah*), also known as the Festival of Lights. The name derives from a Hebrew verb meaning “to dedicate.” In 2016 the Jews will celebrate it on 25 December. God promised them that this victory would eventually come, *“even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.”* Although many lives were lost, the Jews would eventually triumph.

Antiochus Epiphanes is one of a long list of little antichrists that have tried to destroy the Jewish people by compromise or persecution. All have failed. All will fail. The Jew has stood at the graveside of every last one of his enemies! They are the invincible race. M R. De Haan eloquently puts it, “Pharaoh could not drown them, Nebuchadnezzar could not burn them, the lions could not eat them, the whale could not digest them and Haman could not hang them.”

The men and women who can facedown the final Antichrist will have to have the same robust uncompromising faith as the Maccabee Jews. Such will be numbered with those, *“people that do know their God”* as they *“shall be strong, and do exploits.”* Sodom and Gomorrah are on our streets and televisions. The world economies are in turbulence. The Middle East is exploding. Israel is increasingly isolated. Antichrist is coming soon. Many will apostasize and compromise. Do you know your God? The Antiochus and the Antichrist will not last a second longer than God ordained. Only our God is sovereign. He not only knows the future but He controls the future.