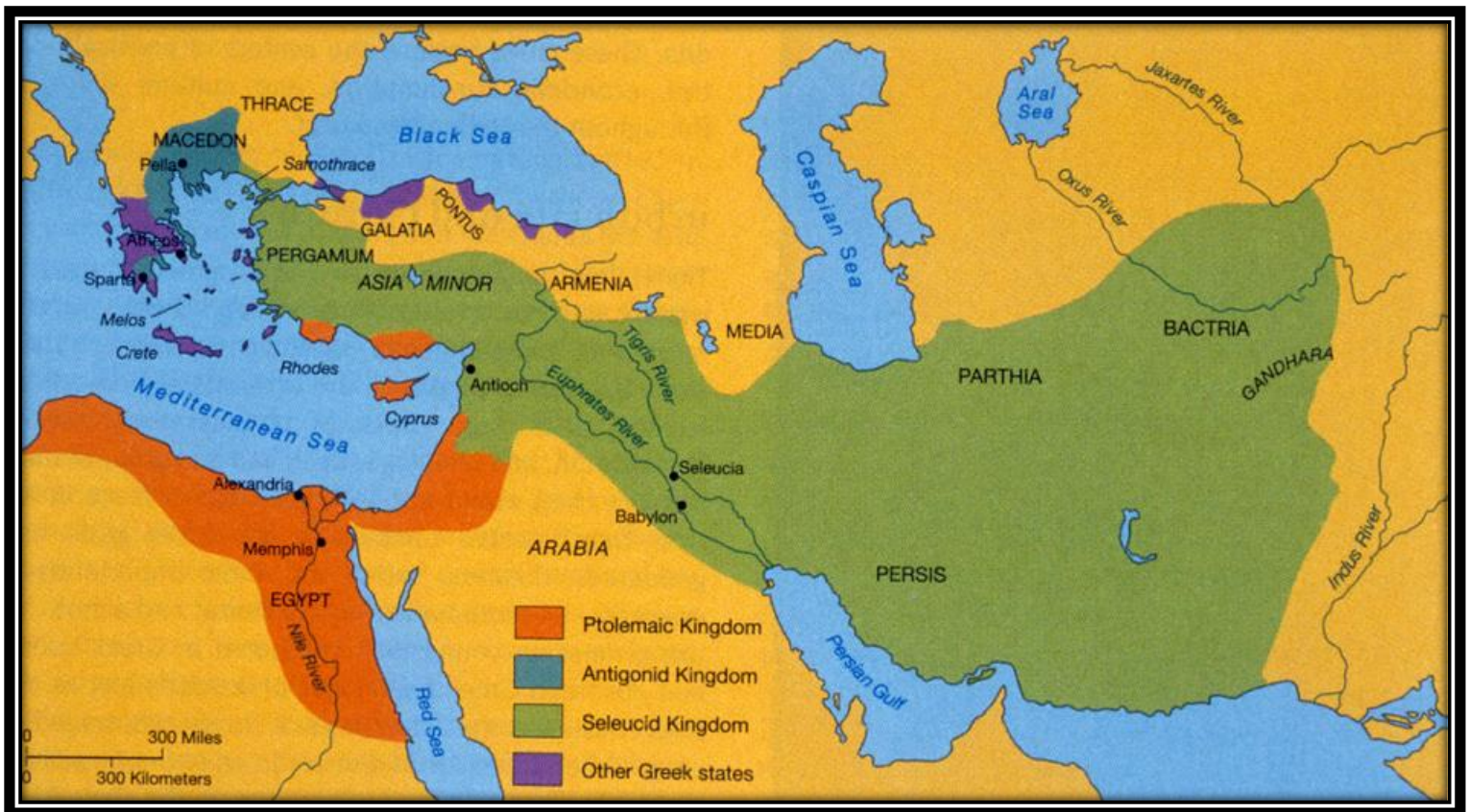


## Outline of the Final Prophecy of Daniel (11:2 –12:4)

11:2	End of Medo-Persian kingdom
11:3–4	Beginning of the kingdom of Greece
11:5–20	Egypt (Ptolemy) and Syria (Seleucus) prophecies
11:21–35	Antiochus Epiphanes
11:36–12:4	The End Times



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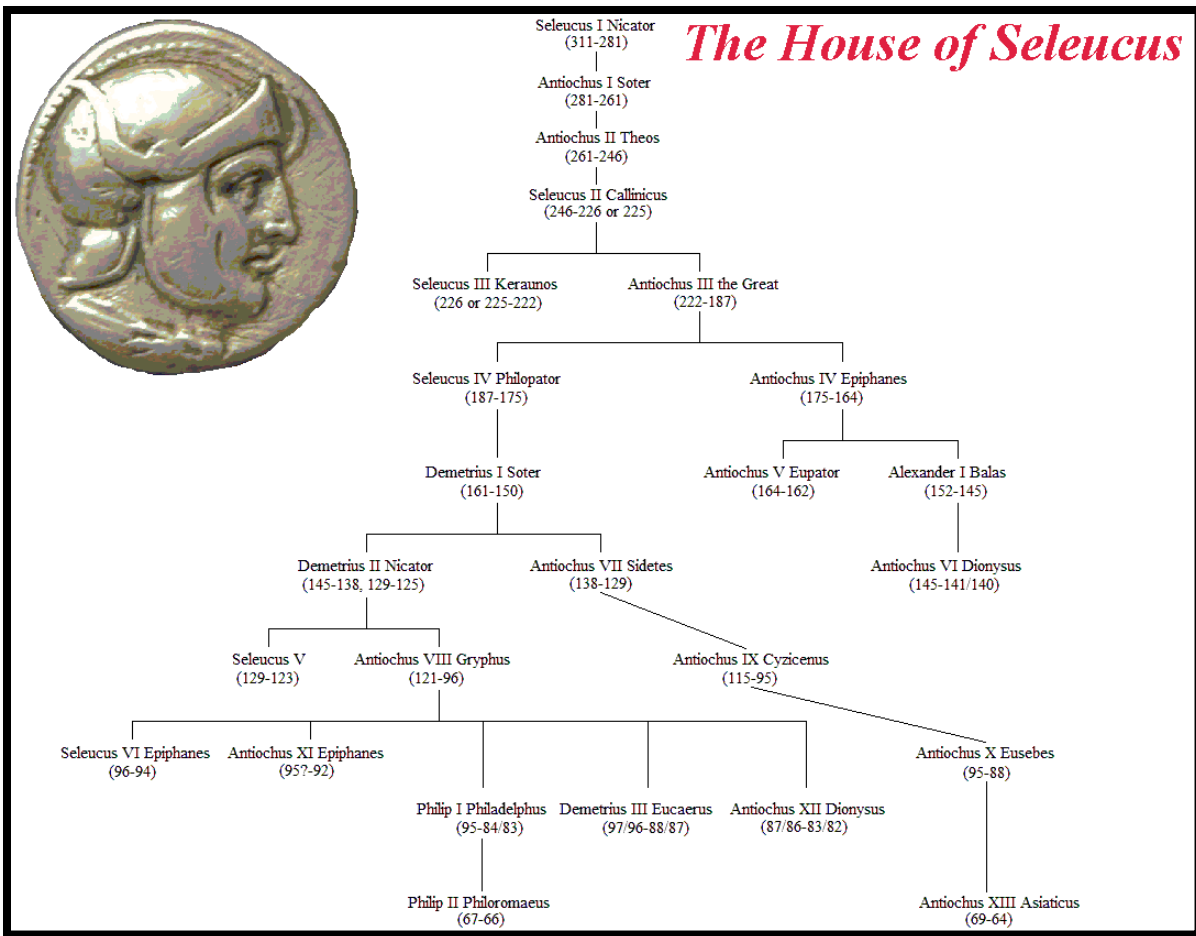
It is around 197 BC and under the leadership of Antiochus III the Great, Israel comes under the control of the Seleucid empire, one of the four divisions of the Greek Kingdom, the third great Gentile kingdom in Daniel's prophecies. Between verse 20 and 21, there is some 25 years of history. We continue in the text of Daniel with verse 21.

## Daniel 11:21–24 Antiochus Ascension and Early Reign

<sup>21</sup> "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. <sup>22</sup> "The overflowing forces will be flooded away before him and shattered, and also the prince of the covenant. <sup>23</sup> "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*. <sup>24</sup> "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 ancestors; he will distribute plunder, booty and possessions among them, and he will devise his schemes against strongholds, but *only* for a time.

The text of Daniel begins by telling us that "a despicable person will arise," and such was Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He was so despised by his contemporaries that they nicknamed him "Epimanes" (madman) a play on words from the name he gave to himself (Epiphanes) which means "the god made manifest." Antiochus III and Laodice had eight children, 3 sons and 5 daughters, of which only 2 sons are shown.

Below is the *relevant* family tree for Antiochus III the Great.



After the death of Antiochus the Great (187 BC), Seleucus IV Philopator took his rightful place on the throne of Syria, being the oldest son of Antiochus (at the time). His son Demetrius I Soter would therefore be the prince and rightful heir to the throne after Seleucus IV. It so happened that while Demetrius I Soter was held hostage in Rome, and with Antiochus Epiphanes in Athens, there was an attempt for the throne of Syria by Heliodorus and Seleucus Philopator was killed (175 BC). Upon hearing of his older brother's death, Antiochus fled back to Syria and took the throne, not by waging war, but by flattery and intrigue. It is known that he won over Eumenes, king of Pergamos and he influenced key figures in Syria by promising them rewards if they cooperated with him. This is how he rose to power and maintained control over the Seleucid kingdom.

Verse 22 is a general statement of the military career of Antiochus Epiphanes with a more detailed campaign victory of his first major conquest (of Egypt) highlighted in verse 25. The NIV (usually very good in the OT) renders the verse as "Then an overwhelming army will be swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed."

The "prince of the covenant" is likely the High Priest Onias III, though some expositors would see Ptolemy himself as that personage. Onias III was deposed by Antiochus and the office of high priest was **sold** to Onias' brother, Jason, who wanted to Hellenize the entire Jewish state. In 172 BC Antiochus ordered Onias III killed.

The "him" in verse 23 seems to point back to the king of the South (Egypt). History records that Antiochus offered friendship to the Egyptian king/kingdom at first, but then later reneged on that friendship when he became more powerful. Recall that Antiochus' father (A the Great) promised the two states, Coele-Syria and Palestine, to Egypt as a dowry with Cleopatra on her marriage to Ptolemy Epiphanes. Antiochus reiterated this promise when he first gained power, but in 170 BC he rescinded this promise by marching through both territories as prelude to the attack in verse 25.

Verse 24 is in debate. It is true that Antiochus came upon his own people and plundered their goods ... but the recipients of these "favors" is in doubt. The text implies that what he did would somehow be different from that which was normal for the time, namely, give stuff to your political friends. It is conjectured that Antiochus actually gave this spoil from the rich districts of his domain and give it to the poor, thus increasing favor with the majority poorer populace. He also had a habit of trying to weaken the stronger portions of his domain to prevent insurrection from within his kingdom. The final phrase is a reminder that God in His sovereignty will allow even an evil dictator only so much time to do his evil.

## Daniel 11:25–28 Further Description of the First Egyptian War and Subsequent Jewish Persecution

<sup>25</sup> "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. <sup>26</sup> "Those who eat his choice food will destroy him, and his army will overflow, but many will fall down slain. <sup>27</sup> "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. <sup>28</sup> "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.

Starting with verse 25, we are given more details concerning the first campaign against Egypt during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. His victory over Ptolemy VI (described in a general fashion in verse 22) is the subject of this section. The "schemes" against Ptolemy seem to include Antiochus's plans against him, including the activities of traitorous advisors and counselors within the Egyptian government, i.e., verse 26. Taken as a whole, these things prevented Ptolemy from succeeding against the forces of Antiochus, despite his vastly numerical advantage. Miller<sup>1</sup> summarizes verse 27 well ...

While Ptolemy VI was a prisoner, Ptolemy VII was made king. This development led Ptolemy VI and Antiochus ("the two kings") to plan how they would regain the Egyptian throne. Both kings made promises that they had no intention of keeping. Of course, Antiochus was willing to support Ptolemy merely for personal gain, and in return, Ptolemy made insincere promises in order to receive aid from the powerful Syrians. ... the plan of Antiochus and Ptolemy to control all Egypt was "to no avail." ... Ptolemy VII still ruled in Alexandria. Later Ptolemy VI established a joint rule with his brother, Ptolemy VII.

Certainly, his successful first campaign against Egypt is the context for verse 28. After looting Egypt of its wealth as spoils of war, he returned back to Syria via Israel. As he passed through Israel, he found an insurrection in progress. These events are documented in the apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees 5<sup>2</sup>. Verse 11 occurs after Jason heard a rumor that Antiochus was dead and he *attempted to seize control of Jerusalem*.

<sup>11</sup> When news of what had happened reached the king, he took it to mean that Judea was in revolt. So, raging inwardly, he left Egypt and took the city by storm. <sup>12</sup> He commanded his soldiers to cut down relentlessly everyone they met and to kill those who went into their houses. <sup>13</sup> Then there was massacre of young and old, destruction of boys, women, and children, and slaughter of young girls and infants. <sup>14</sup> Within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting, and as many were sold into slavery as were killed. <sup>15</sup> Not content with this, Antiochus dared to enter the most holy temple in all the world ... <sup>21</sup> So Antiochus carried off eighteen hundred talents from the temple and hurried away to Antioch ...

God's purpose for including in Daniel this section of the exploits of Antiochus Epiphanes focuses on the ramifications for the nation of Israel. Antiochus was incredibly brutal against the Jews, who were having their own internal struggle between the faithful and those who wished to make Israel more in line with Greek customs and culture, most of which would incur violations against the Mosaic covenant.

## Daniel 11:29–30a The Second Egyptian War

<sup>29</sup> "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. <sup>30</sup> "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;

Antiochus IV became angry when Ptolemy VI and his brother, Ptolemy VII Physcon were reconciled and invaded Egypt a second time. However, this time the Egyptian brothers called on Rome for help in thwarting Antiochus' second attempt at the kingdom of the Egyptians. In response, Rome dispatched Gaius Popilius Laenas, portrayed as the "ships of Kittim" in the text, to turn Antiochus away from his conquest of Egypt. That the "ships of Kittim" refers to the Romans is evidenced by the fact that the Septuagint OT translation here just has "Romans." There is also a number of times in the Dead Sea Scrolls that the word Kittim is used in reference to Rome. As Antiochus was preparing to besiege Alexandria, the Roman commander met Antiochus a few

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<sup>1</sup> Miller, Stephen R., *Daniel, The New American Commentary*, B&H Publishing Group, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Quotations from the New Revised Standard Version up on BibleGateway.

miles outside the city and delivered a letter from the Roman Senate ordering him to stand down or face full war with Rome. As Antiochus was stalling for time, the Roman commander dismounted his horse and drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and told him "Before you step out of that circle give me a reply to lay before the senate." Apparently, Antiochus understood the power of Rome (they would overthrow Greece in the coming years to become the fourth Gentile kingdom), and recalling his father's defeat at the battle of Magnesia, he withdrew in humiliation and headed back to Syria. As he returned home through Palestine, he apparently took out his frustrations upon the Jewish people. The word rendered enraged literally means "foaming at the mouth."

### Daniel 11:30b–35 Further Persecution of the Jews

<sup>30</sup> so he will come back and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. <sup>31</sup> "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. <sup>32</sup> "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. <sup>33</sup> "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. <sup>34</sup> "Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. <sup>35</sup> "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.

In 167 BC, Antiochus dispatched Apollonius (head mercenary), his chief tax collector to Jerusalem. He pretended to come peacefully, but on the Sabbath, he viciously massacred Jews and looted the city. But he also rewarded apostate Jews who sided with Antiochus in his Hellenistic policies. Verse 31 seems clear enough ... Antiochus overran the temple and began to institute anti-Jewish religious policy. Miller, again, has a succinct summary of the events of the day ...

All Jewish religious practices such as circumcision, possessing the Scriptures, sacrifices, and feast days were forbidden on penalty of death (1 Macc. 1:50, 63), and the imperial cult was introduced. Desecration of the Jewish religion reached its climax on 15 Chislev (December) in 167 BC when an altar or idol-statue devoted to Olympian Zeus (Jupiter) was erected in the temple ("the abomination of desolation"), and on 25 Chislev sacrifices, probably including swine (cf. 1 Macc. 1:47; 2 Macc. 6:4–5), were offered on the altar (cf. 1 Macc. 1:54, 59). In this manner the temple was desecrated and rendered empty of Yahweh worshipers.

The text goes on to say that even in this horrific period of Jewish history, when many Jews had abandoned the faith, there were still true believers among the people. These chose death rather than obedience to the decrees of Antiochus. One of these heroes of the time was a priest named Mattathias Maccabeus along with his sons. They successfully overthrew the forces of Antiochus (was likely a small force) over a period of a few years. This became known as the Maccabean Revolt in the writings of Jewish history. As the revolt took place, small groups joined the Maccabees in their quest. Uncommitted Jews, when they saw the Maccabees winning, hypocritically sided with them ... mostly to avoid the harsh punishment brought on them by the Maccabees. As a result of their victories, and at the ultimate ousting of Syrian forces, the temple was rededicated (Hanukkah) on December 14, 164 BC.

Antiochus Epiphanes died in 164 BC while he was in the Fars Province in modern day Iran. Over the next 50 years the Seleucid Empire began to crumble. It was finally toppled by Rome through the efforts of general Pompey the Great (106–48 BC) in 63 BC. Rome became the fourth Gentile world kingdom and maintained its domination over the ancient world for hundreds of years.

This section of Daniel, depicting the life and times of Antiochus Epiphanes, reminds the expositor of two things: One, that God is sovereign; He has determined the significant events, rulers, and timing of human history. Second, that Israel will be persecuted until the Second Coming of Christ (until the end time, vs. 35).

μαράνα θά (1Co 16:22)