



The Sword & The Plow

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Commentary on Daniel Chapter Eleven

[Editor's Note: This article is an excerpt from my commentary Adumbrations: The Kingdom and Coming of Christ in the Book of Daniel. Daniel Eleven is part of the last vision of the prophet and represents a timeline until the "end," including the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12:1, 2). Yet, the historical material is clearly tied to the succession of world empires beginning with Persia and ending with Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem (Dan. 12:7). Of particular interest is the identity of the "king of the south" and the "king of the north" (11:40) toward the latter part of the vision. We believe that verse 40 represents the turning point of the vision and that Rome here takes center stage with Pompey the Great, Mithridates of Pontus, and, finally Julius Caesar.]

Chapter Eleven

Daniel receives a minute account of the vicissitudes of the Greco-Egyptian and Greco-Syrian dynasties until the rise of Rome and sole principate of Gaius Julius Caesar.

1 – Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

In chapter six, we learned that Darius acceded to the throne of Chaldea and set one-hundred and twenty princes over the realm; over these, he placed three

presidents, of whom Daniel was first. Daniel's advancement and preferment excited the envy of other men, who laid a trap for him. Recognizing that Daniel was a good, God-fearing man, Darius labored to free him. Unable to secure Daniel's acquittal, Darius spent the night fasting on his behalf. Later, Darius condemned Daniel's accusers to suffer the very death they had plotted for the prophet. We infer from this that Darius was sympathetic to the Hebrew religion, perhaps even an actual proselyte. At the very least, he was a man of shining moral character, unwilling to countenance evil traducers about his throne. These qualities made Darius valuable to heaven; a man who would protect God's people and advance his cause, and

no doubt account for the angel's labors to strengthen and confirm him in his faith and government.

The Persian Monarchy

2 – And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

The kings of Persia until the conquest by Alexander were: 1) Cyrus, 2) Cambyses, 3) Pseudo-smerdis, 4) Darius (the Great) Hystaspis, 5) Xerxes; 6) Artaxerxes I Longimanus, 7) Darius II (Ochus), 8) Artaxerxes II, 9) Artaxerxes III, and 10) Darius III Codomannus. The fourth king following Cyrus was Xerxes. When he ascended the throne (476 B.C.), the Persian Empire was at the height of power and extent. Xerxes used his magnificent wealth and riches to stir up all against the realm of Greece. Soon after his accession, Xerxes announced his intention to build a bridge over the Hellespont, march across Europe, invade Greece, and burn Athens. For four years, he gathered men and supplies, and in the fifth year of his reign, set out from Susa. Xerxes compelled all nations including Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycia, Caria, Mysia, Troas, the Hellespont, Bithynia, and Pontus to contribute men, ships, and supplies to the campaign. Herodotus gives the number of Xerxes' infantry at one million seven hundred thousand; his cavalry at eighty thousand; and his navy at twelve hundred and seven ships. The whole number of fighting men on board ships and land brought by Xerxes Herodotus gives at two million three hundred seventeen thousand six hundred and ten. To these he adds three hundred thousand contributed by nations in Europe.¹

In a great show of power and ostentation, Xerxes caused a canal a mile and a half long to be dug at Mount Athos, wide enough for two triremes with oars extended to pass without touching, even though they might have been carried over land with small effort and expense. He also caused a bridge almost a mile long to be constructed across the Hellespont at Abydos, a feat undertaken more for effect than practical benefit. However, man proposes, but God disposes. Notwithstanding so great a host and so great trouble and expense, Xerxes' expedition can only be characterized as an unmitigated disaster. Although Xerxes managed to burn Athens, the Persian navy suffered defeat at Salmis, and Xerxes was forced to retreat across the Hellespont lest the Greeks destroy the

¹ Herodotus, VII, clxxxiv-vi

bridge, trapping him in Europe. In his retreat, Xerxes lost much of his army to famine and pestilence. The net result of the expedition was the destruction of the better part of his army and the loss of all holdings beyond Asia Minor.

Philip and Alexander

3 – And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

During the years of Persian decline, the power of Greece was delayed in arriving at the apex of world power by almost a hundred years of Greek civil war. The Peloponnesian war raged for twenty-seven years (431-404 B.C.), followed by nine years of peace, only to break out again by the policy and intrigue of the Persians, who gave Athens and Thebes money to make war against Sparta, resulting in almost continuous war until the unification of Greece under Philip and Alexander. Philip began his conquest of Greece by seizing Amphipolis (357 B.C.), followed by Pydan, and Potidaea (356 B.C.). In 355 B.C., he took Methone, where he lost an eye in the siege. In 347 B.C., Philip captured Olynthus, giving him control of the European coast north of the Aegean. At the encouragement of Demosthenes, Athens determined to remain independent. In 338 B.C., Athens put together an army and marched north to meet Philip in battle at Chaeronea. Thebes joined on Athens' side but both were defeated, and the following year, at an assembly in Corinth, Philip was unanimously chosen commander of all Greek forces to free Asia from Persian dominance. However, before he could face the Persians, Philip was murdered, and his son Alexander acceded to his throne. In nine years, Alexander conquered the known world from Egypt in the west to India in the east, the Danube in the north and Arabia in the south. This is the meaning of "he shall do according to his will" (said also of "the king" in v. 36); viz., it signifies the ability to overcome all resistance and conquer whomever he willed.

Division of Alexander's Empire

4 – And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

Like the man to whom God said, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Lk. 12:20), Alexander no sooner conquered the world than

he died (323 B.C.). Having conquered much of India, he proposed to push further east and to conquer the people dwelling beyond the Ganges, but his army rebelled, tired of ceaseless war and its attendant dangers. Alexander was thus forced to abandon his adventures. Returning to Babylon, which he proposed to make the seat of his empire, there he gave himself up to drinking and reveling with the captains of his army. After a drinking bout one night, Alexander took ill (some believe from poison), and died several days afterward. He was succeeded by a half brother, Philip Aridaeus, an illegitimate son named Hercules, and a pregnant wife, Roxana, in her sixth month, who later gave birth to Alexander's only legitimate heir, a son whom she named Alexander. Although the common soldiers declared Alexander's posthumous son king, actual power was held by Perdiccas, to whom Alexander had committed his signet in the hour of his death. The empire was ruled by Perdiccas and distributed to Alexander's generals, who were appointed governors over various regions and cities.²

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1. To Lysimachus: Europe, consisting of Thrace and countries bordering the Black Sea.
 2. Antipater and Craterus: the region beyond Thrace, including Macedonia and Greece.
 3. Ptolomy, the son of Lagus: Egypt, Cyrene, Libya, and parts of Arabia. In Asia Minor, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, and regions abutting the Black Sea were committed to Eumenes Cardianus.
 4. Antigonus: Phmphyilia, Lycia, Lyconia, and Greater Phrygia.
 5. Leonnatus: Lesser Phrygia.
 6. Menander: Lydia, and parts of Ionia and Aeolia, including the sea coast.
 7. Cassander, son of Antipater: Caria.
 8. Philotas: Cilicia and Isaura.
 9. Laomedon: Syria and Phoenicia.
 10. Neoptolemus: Armenia.
 11. Arcesilaus: Mesopotamia, Babylon.
 12. Atropates: Media (this was later assigned to Pithon).
 13. Philip: Bactria and Sogdiana.
 14. Peucestes: Persia.
 15. Phrataphernes: Hyrcania and Parthia.
 16. Tlepolemus: Carmania.
 17. Oxyartes: Parapamisus.
 18. Stasanor: Aria and Drangiane, bordering the Taurus Mountains.
 19. Pithon: India from Parpanisus and the junction of the Acesines and Indus Rivers to the ocean.
 20. Eudemus: Oxydracans and Mallians.
 21. Cyprus remained under the rule of the petty kings granted by Alexander.
 22. King Porus, Taxiles, and the son of Abisares, those parts of India Alexander had assigned.

This is the meaning of the prophetic decree that the kingdom would be divided "not to his posterity;" *viz.*, none of Alexander's descendents would enjoy his dynasty. That Alexander's kingdom should be "plucked up, *even for others beside those,*" seems to indicate the instability that would mark the initial division of his empire and how, through many battles and assassinations, the dynasty eventually devolved into four kingdoms: Lysimachus received Thrace; Cassander, Macedon; Seleucus "Nicantor" ("Victor"), Mesopotamia and portions of Iran, and Ptolemy I, called by the people of Rhodes "Soter" (Saviour or Deliverer), Egypt and the Levant.

Ptolemaic Dynasty

5 – And the king of the south shall become strong,

Henceforth, attention is focused upon the kingdoms of the south and north. "North and south" should probably be understood initially in relation to Judea and the Jews; for the prophecy was given to the Jewish nation to serve as a type of geo-political timeline until the Messiah and destruction of their earthly kingdom. The kingdoms of the north and south represent Egypt and Syria, betwixt whom Judea was situated. These two great dynasties, foreshown in Nebuchadnezzar's dream by the legs of brass, were ultimately assimilated into the Roman Empire; Pompey the Great subdued Syria and Jerusalem; Julius Caesar obtained control of Egypt, followed by Marc Antony, and, finally, Octavius (Augustus). Hence, before the vision concludes, "north" and "south" lose all reference to Judea, and come to reflect instead the contesting powers of the Mediterranean theatre of which Rome will emerge sole victor.

Seleucid Dynasty

but one of his princes shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

The king of the south refers to Ptolemy Soter, the son of Lagus; "one of his princes" to Seleucus Nicator, who became the most powerful of Alexander's successors, and founder of the Seleucid dynasty that reigned over all Syria and the regions east of the Euphrates river. In the original distribution of Alexander's empire, Seleucus was made governor of Babylon, but was forced by Antigonus to flee to

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23. Susa, consisting of Scynus, Arachoaia, Gedrosia, and Sibyrtius, with the governors Alexander assigned. *See Ussher at §§2375-2381.*

24.

Ptolomy. Antipater the meanwhile having died, Antigonus gained possession of all the region of Babylon, Mesopotamia, and all the countries from Media to the Hellespont. Envious that Antigonus should have so large a realm, a league was formed by Seleucus, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Cassander, the son of Antipater, who demanded Antigonus share the realm he had gained possession of. When he scoffed at their demands, they made war jointly upon Antigonus. Ptolemy gave Seleucus a thousand footmen and three-hundred horsemen, sending him to Babylon. With this small force Seleucus took the city and became king of Babylon. Following the defeat of Antigonus, the latter's lands were divided between the kings in league with Seleucus, who received all Syria from the Euphrates to the sea, and inland Phrygia. He later added to his empire the whole region from Phrygia to the Indus, making his the most extensive in Asia after Alexander.³

Ptolemy Philadelphus, Bernice, and Antiochus Theos

6 – And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

The "end of years" does not look to the eschaton, but is used in the relative sense to signify the "at the end *some* years" (*cf.* Dan. 8:17-19). The first recorded marriage between the dynasties of the north and south was between Bernice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, given in marriage to Antiochus "Theos," the grandson of Seleucus, the third ruler in succession of the Seleucid dynasty. Philadelphus, wishing to put an end to the bloody contentions between their kingdoms, gave Bernice in marriage to Theos, who was already married to Laodice who had borne him two sons. Theos removed Laodice from being queen, but kept her as one of his concubines, and made Bernice queen in her stead. However, after the death of Philadelphus, Theos' love for Laodice caused him to send Bernice away ("she shall be given up") and take Laodice again as his wife and queen. Fearing Theos' fickleness, Laodice poisoned her husband lest his attentions return to Bernice and the crown depart from her son.⁴

³ Appian, XI, ix, 52-55

⁴ Appian, XI, xi, 65

Ptolemy Philadelphus was a great lover of learning and literature; it was he who caused the great library at Alexandria to be built. He also had the Hebrew scriptures translated into Greek for inclusion in his library. This translation is known as the "Septuagint," so-called after the seventy-two men of the Jews commissioned for the work. To secure cooperation of the Jews in translation of the sacred books, Philadelphus manumitted all Jewish slaves among the Egyptians, sent fifty talents of gold for making large basins, vials, and cups, an immense quantity of precious stones, and a solid gold table, together with one hundred talents for sacrifices and other uses about the temple. Additionally, after the translation was completed, he made numerous gifts to the translators and to Eleazar the High Priest.⁵ Philadelphus was succeeded by his son, Ptolemy Euergetes.

Ptolemy Euergetes

7 – But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

After the murder of her husband, Laodice secured the accession of her son, Antiochus Callinicus, to the throne. To eliminate potential rivals, Laodice took steps to secure the murder of Bernice and her tender son. However, Bernice shut herself up in Daphne, a citadel of Antioch; and many cities of Asia rallied to her defense. Fearful for his sister's safety, Ptolemy Euergetes invaded Syria. However, before he arrived, Bernice was slain. Ptolemy avenged his sister by slaying Laodice. The cities of Asia that had revolted from Seleucus joined Ptolemy, who thus seized Syria, Cilicia, and the remoter regions beyond the Euphrates, together with almost all of Asia.

8, 9 – And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

In his absence, a rebellion broke out in Egypt. Ptolemy thus hastened home, committing Cilicia to his friend Antiochus, and the regions beyond the Euphrates in the control of Xanthippus. Euergetes plundered the kingdoms of Seleucus, carrying off as booty forty thousand talents of silver and precious vessels and images of their gods to the amount of two and a half

⁵ Josephus, *Antiquities*, XII, ii, 5, 15

thousand talents. Among them were the very images which Cambyses had brought to Persia after he had conquered Egypt. For returning the images of their gods after so many years, the Egyptian people surnamed Ptolemy “Euergetes,” “Benefactor” or “well-doer.”⁶ Euergetes “continued more years” than Seleucus, his reign exceeding the latter’s by five years.

Ptolemy Philopater and Antiochus the Great

10 – But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

The sons of Callinicus, to avenge their father’s disgrace, assembled a great multitude of forces against Ptolemy Philopater, the son of Euergetes. Ceranus, the eldest son of Callinicus, made war against Egypt in Asia Minor where Egypt had holdings, but perished in the third year of his reign, having been poisoned by Apatarias and Nicator, two of his friends. Antiochus the Great then assumed the throne and regained Coelesyria through the betrayal of Theodotius, the governor under Ptolemy. At length, Antiochus brought the battle to the fortress in Raphia, at the gates of Egypt.

11, 12 – And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

Having lost Syria through the betrayal of Theodotius, Ptolemy Philopater gathered a great multitude against Antiochus; the two kings joined battle near Raphia. Ptolemy had seventy-five thousand, Antiochus seventy-eight. When Antiochus seemed to be winning, Arsinoe, Ptolemy’s wife (and sister), went about with her hair loosed and hanging down, encouraging the soldiers to defend the liberty of their wives and children, and promised that if they won they would each be given two minas in gold. The soldiers’ morale thus piqued, they turned the battle and won the day; Antiochus lost his entire army and was almost captured as he fled through the desert.⁷

Philopater’s Rage against God

⁶ Jerome, *Daniel, in loc*

⁷ Jerome, *in loc*

And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up;

This seems to refer to Ptolemy Philopater after his defeat of Antiochus. Philopater grew proud and insolent from his victory. Visiting the cities throughout Syria, he made gifts to their temples to secure their good will; he also visited Jerusalem, where he attempted to enter the Holy of Holies, but was stricken with paralysis and had to be carried from the temple half dead. However, rather than repent of his wickedness, Philopater grew worse and attempted to completely suppress the Jewish religion in Alexandria; he compelled all Jews in Alexandria to be registered and to sacrifice; those that resisted were killed; the rest were branded with a hot iron upon the face with the symbol of Dionysus, and lost their civil rights. When the Jews of Alexandria ostracized their fellow countrymen who apostatized from the faith by obeying the king, Philopater’s fury was blown into a rage and he sought to put the whole nation of the Jews in Egypt to death. The Jews were thus brought to the hippodrome, where they were to be crushed to death by elephants made mad with wine mingled with frankincense and myrrh. However, when the elephants turned upon the soldiers and trampled them rather than the Jews, the king repented and acknowledged his error and feasted the Jews for seven days instead.⁸

and he shall cast down many ten thousands:

The Egyptians grew insolent against Philopater because of their victory against Antiochus. They sought another leader who might free them from Philopater’s rule. Philopater was thus compelled to suppress a revolt of his own people.

“As for Ptolemy, his war against the Egyptians followed immediately on these events. This king, by arming the Egyptians for his war against Antiochus, took a step which was of great service for the time, but which was a mistake as regards the future. The soldiers, highly proud of their victory at Raphia, were no longer disposed to obey orders, but were on the lookout for a leader and figure-head, thinking themselves well able to maintain themselves as an independent power, an attempt in which they finally succeeded not long afterwards.”⁹

⁸ III Macc.1-7

⁹ Polybius V, cvii, 1-3

In this war, sixty thousand Jews perished fighting on behalf of Philopater.¹⁰

but he shall not be strengthened by it.

Ptolemy Philopater was a weak and indolent ruler; he failed to follow up on his victory, and was content merely to regain his possessions in Syria. Philopater led an abandoned and immoral life, spending his time in banqueting and revelry as if every day were a festival. He was called Philopater (“lover of his father”) by way of sarcasm, for it was believed that he had murdered both his father and mother to obtain the throne.¹¹ After Philopater defeated Antiochus, he separated from his wife and queen, Arsinoe, and fell in love with a man named Agathocles and his sister, a lute player, named Agathoclea. Together with their mother, Oeanthe, the three completely dominated Ptolemy and his government. Ptolemy retained Agathocles as a concubine, and made him his chief of state; the two women handed out the offices of state and military positions to whomever they willed. When Ptolemy Philopater died (204 B.C.), Agathocles and Sosibius concealed his death long enough to murder Arsinoe, and forge a will naming themselves guardians of young Epiphanes. Yet, so hated were the three that a popular revolt promptly broke out. The Macedonian soldiers delivered the family to the will of the mob who tore them to pieces:

“Before long Agathocles was led along in fetters, and as soon as he appeared some of the crowd ran up and immediately stabbed him. This in reality was a compassionate rather than a hostile act, for the consequence was to save him from the hideous death which he deserved. Next Nicon was brought in, and then Agathoclea, who with her two sisters had been stripped naked, and after them all the rest of her relatives. Last of all they dragged Oeanthe from the Thesmophorium, placed her on a horse and led her naked to the stadium. All of them were then handed over to the fury of the mob, whereupon some began to tear them with their teeth, others to stab them, others to gouge out their eyes. As soon as any of them fell, the body was torn limb from limb until they had dismembered them all, for the savagery of the Egyptians is truly appalling when their passions have been roused.”¹²

¹⁰ Ussher §§ 2938, 2939

¹¹ Ussher §§ 2874, 2878

¹² Polybius, XV, xxxiii

Ptolemy Epiphanes

13 – For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

Taking advantage of the tumultuous state of affairs following the death of Philopater, Antiochus the Great moved against Philopater’s tender son, Ptolemy Epiphanes. He made peace with Philip III, king of Macedon, who agreed together to divide Ptolemy’s kingdom, and annex such parts as were nearest to their own.¹³

14 - And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

At the very apex of power and wealth, Antiochus led his armies into Coelesyria, gaining control of Judea. Epiphanes sent Scopas as general of his forces to regain his lost dominion. In the winter of 199 B.C., Scopas regained control of many cities of Syria, including those of the Jews.¹⁴ However, at length, Antiochus overcame Scopas at a battle fought at the fountains of the Jordan (198 B.C.), and thus set about conquering anew those cities Scopas had taken from him. Then it was that the Jews went over to Antiochus of their own accord, and received him into Jerusalem, and gave plentiful provision to all his army, and to his elephants, and readily assisted him when he besieged the garrison which was in the citadel of Jerusalem.¹⁵ The term “robbers” carries negative connotations and signifies the Jews’ treachery in voluntarily receiving Antiochus into their city and helping fight against the garrison there, for Judea had been an acknowledged part of Ptolemy’s dominions for above one hundred years.

Antiochus the Great Invades Syria and Egypt

15 - So the king of the north shall come up, and cast up a mount, and shall take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

¹³ Polybius, XV, xx; Jerome, *in loc*

¹⁴ Polybius, XVI, xxxix

¹⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* XII, iii, 3; Polybius XVI, xxxix

This verse expands upon the exploits mentioned in verse 13. Antiochus would come, and capture many cities of Syria, wresting them from Ptolemy's power. However, young Epiphanes dispatched Scopas to retake the cities Antiochus had conquered. Although initially successful, the following summer Scopas was defeated in a battle at the fountains of the Jordan, as previously noted. Scopas thus fled to Sidon, where Antiochus besieged him with ten thousand troops. Ptolemy sent three famous captains – Menocles, Damozenus, and Europus – to assist Scopas and raise the siege, but they were unsuccessful. Scopas was forced to surrender due to famine. Antiochus granted them their lives, permitting them to leave stark naked.

16 – But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

Josephus provides the most detail of these days:

“Now it happened that in the reign of Antiochus the Great, who ruled over all Asia, that the Jews, as well as the inhabitants of Coelesyria, suffered greatly, and their land was sorely harassed; for while he was at war with Ptolemy Philopater, and with his son, who was called Epiphanes, it fell out that these nations were equally sufferers, both when he was beaten and when he beat the others: so that they were very like to a ship in a storm, which is tossed by the waves on both sides: and just thus were they in their situation in the middle between Antiochus's prosperity and its change to adversity. But at length, when Antiochus had beaten Ptolemy, he seized upon Judea: and when Philopater was dead, his son sent out a great army under Scopas, the general of his forces, against the inhabitants of Coelesyria, who took many of their cities, and in particular our nation; which, when he fell upon them, went over to him. Yet was it not long afterward when Antiochus overcame Scopas, in a battle fought at the fountains of Jordan, and destroyed a great part of his army. But afterward, when Antiochus subdued those cities of Coelesyria which Scopas had gotten into his possession, and Samaria with them, the Jews, of their own accord, went over to him, and received him into their city.”¹⁶

17 – He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do:

While Antiochus made war in Coelesyria and Phoenicia, Philip began a campaign of aggression,

attacking various cities and kingdoms in Europe and Asia, including Rhodes, Pergamum, Prinassus, Abydus, and Athens. Rome was uneasy with the growing power of Philip and Antiochus, and agreed to make war against Philip. When Philip was defeated, it was decreed that the Greeks in Europe and Asia should be free; moreover, Antiochus was told not to meddle with any free city in Asia, and to abandon any places that had formerly belonged to Philip or Ptolemy. Further, he was told not to enter Europe nor send forces there. A rumor was then current that Ptolemy was dead. Hence, Antiochus hastened to Egypt to seize the country while bereft of a ruler. While on his journey, Antiochus was met by Hannibal at Ephesus, who magnificently received the famous Carthaginian general. Antiochus planned to make war on Greece and to begin a war against the Romans there. Hannibal advised that the Romans could be defeated only in Italy, and sought a hundred warships from Antiochus, planning to instigate a fresh revolt at Carthage or, if this failed, to land in Italy and make war there, freeing Antiochus to make war in Greece and Asia.

Marriage of Ptolemy and Cleopatra

and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

In preparation for his war with Rome, Antiochus sought to league himself by marriages and alliances with as many kings as possible. He thus gave his daughter, Cleopatra to Egypt to marry Ptolemy, giving Ptolemy as dowry all of Coelesyria and Judea. However, Cleopatra did not side with her father, but was faithful to Ptolemy.

“Now, determining no longer to conceal his intended war with the Romans, he formed alliances by marriage with the neighboring kings. To Ptolemy in Egypt he sent his daughter Cleopatra, surnamed Syria, giving with her Coelesyria as a dowry, which he had taken away from Ptolemy himself, thus flattering the young king in order to keep him quiet during the war with the Romans.”¹⁷

18 – After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many:

Antiochus began a naval campaign against the isles of Rhodes, Samos, Colophon, Phocaea, and others, as part of his bid to defeat Rome and control all of Asia.

Antiochus the Great Defeated by Rome

¹⁶ Josephus, *Ant.* XII, iii, 3; Whiston ed.

¹⁷ Appian, *The Syrian Wars*, XI, i, 5

but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause it to turn upon him.

This is generally interpreted in reference to the Roman consul Marcus Acilius Glabrio, who defeated Antiochus first at Thermopylae and then at Magnesia, turning back upon Antiochus the ignominy of defeat. His army destroyed, Antiochus sued for peace; the terms offered by Rome were that he abandon Europe and all of Asia west of the Taurus, pay the cost incurred in the war, amounting to fifteen thousand Euboic talents, five hundred to be paid at once, twenty-five hundred more upon ratification of the treaty by the Roman senate, and twelve thousand in equal payments over twelve years. Antiochus was also to surrender twenty hostages and Hannibal the Carthaginian. The defeat of Antiochus III the Great should probably be deemed the point at which the Roman republic begins to appear in the Nebuchadnezzar's dream, depicted by the legs of iron.

19 – Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Having lost all of Asia, Antiochus returned to the upper provinces of his own dominions. Naming his son, Seleucus Philopater, his successor, Antiochus attacked Elymais where he heard that the temple of Zeus Belus had immense quantities of gold and silver, which he hoped to plunder to help pay the Roman tribute. He raided the temple at night with his army, but when word of this spread through the county, the people set upon him, killing Antiochus and his entire army (187 B.C.).

Rise and Fall of Seleucus - Death of Ptolemy Epiphanes

20 – 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.

Antiochus' son, Seleucus, acceded to the kingdom, but could accomplish little that was noteworthy because his kingdom was prostrated by the heavy tribute incurred by his father's defeat to Rome. II Maccabees relates that Seleucus paid the cost for the public administration of the temple service in Jerusalem:

“Now when the holy city was inhabited with all peace, and the laws were kept very well, because of the godliness of Onias the high priest, and his hatred of wickedness, it came to pass that even the kings

themselves did honour the place, and magnify the temple with their best gifts; insomuch that Seleucus king of Asia of his own revenues bare all the costs belonging to the service of the sacrifices.”¹⁸

However, Seleucus was soon turned to another mind when he was informed by quarrelling factions among the Jews that there were immense treasures laid up within the temple. He thus sent his treasurer, Heliodorus, to seize the money, but the latter was smitten by the Lord and carried from the temple half dead for his presumption.¹⁹ About this time, Ptolemy Epiphanes was poisoned and succeeded by Ptolemy Philometer (178 B.C.). Heliodorus, who survived the event at the temple, murdered Seleucus soon after (175 B.C.), planning to seize the kingdom for himself.

Accession of Antiochus Epiphanes

21 - 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.

This is Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). Antiochus came into the kingdom upon the death of Seleucus. Under the terms of peace imposed upon Antiochus the Great, twenty hostages were retrained at Rome, who were exchanged every three years. Seleucus thus sent his son, Demetrius, in place of his brother, Antiochus, at the conclusion of three years. About the time Antiochus arrived in Athens on his way home, Seleucus was assassinated by Heliodorus, who sought to possess the kingdom himself. Eumenes II, king of Pergamum, helped depose Heliodorus and installed Epiphanes as king, because he was suspicious of the Romans and wanted Antiochus for his friend and ally.²⁰

Epiphanes, nicknamed for his actions Epimanes (the Madman),²¹ is supposed by many to be a type of the antichrist. This was the belief of Jerome, and many have since followed in his opinion. Unfortunately, those who hold this view misunderstand what they read, supposing there is yet a figure to appear in history shortly before the world's end. The motivation for taking this approach is the prophecy's language concerning the "time of the end" and the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 11:27, 35, 40; 12:2), which events

¹⁸ II Macc. 3:4

¹⁹ *Ibid*, vv. 3-40

²⁰ Appian, XI, viii, 45

²¹ Polybius, XXVI, i

are supposed to correspond with the end of the physical cosmos. However, this misconstrues the scope of the prophecy, which the angel specifically restricts in terms of time to the fall of the Jewish nation (Dan. 10:14; 12:7). However, if it be understood that the antichrist was *Nero*, then the idea that Antiochus Epiphanes was a type of the antichrist is perhaps correct. Jerome all but concedes the point:

*“These events were typically prefigured under Antiochus Epiphanes, so that this abominable king who persecuted God’s people foreshadows the Antichrist, who is to persecute the people of Christ. And so there are many of our viewpoint who think that Domitius Nero was the Antichrist because of his outstanding savagery and depravity.”*²²

Overview of Antiochus Epiphanes’ Conquests in Egypt and Intrigues against the Holy Land

22 - And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken;

These verses are best understood as an overview of Antiochus Epiphanes’ reign. The image here is of a rushing, mighty flood that meets another even mightier, and is engulfed and lost within its overwhelming current and power. This speaks to the superior strength of Syria vis-à-vis Egypt during the reign of Epiphanes: However many forces Egypt mustered against the dominion of the north, Antiochus prevailed according to the purpose of heaven.

yea, also the prince of the covenant.

The “prince of the covenant” should probably be interpreted in reference to the high priest, Onias III, who Antiochus removed from office, making first Jason, then Melanaus high priest.

23 - And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

Onias’ brother Jason labored underhandedly to become high priest, promising Antiochus above five hundred talents if the king would give him the rule. But, having thus swept Onias from office and broken the power and sanctity of the high priesthood, Antiochus dealt deceitfully with Jason, for after three years Menelaus obtained the priesthood by offering three hundred talents more than Jason.²³

²² Jerome, *ad* 11:30

²³ II Macc. IV:7, 23; *cf.* Clarke *in loc*

24 - He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province;

As with the two preceding verses, this is best understood as a general summary of Antiochus Epiphanes’ whole reign and his designs upon Egypt and its holdings. His entrance *peaceably upon the fattest parts* of the province likely refers to his annexation of Coelesyria, which he wrested from young king Ptolemy upon the death of his father, and his ready reception into Joppa and Jerusalem, to secure their obedience against the coming war with Ptolemy.

*“Now when Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent into Egypt for the coronation of Ptolemy Philometer, Antiochus, understanding him not to be well affected to his affairs, provided for his own safety: whereupon he came to Joppe, and from thence to Jerusalem: where he was honourably received of Jason, and of the city, and was brought in with torch light, and with great shoutings.”*²⁴

and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers’ fathers;

Rome was at the brink of war with Perseus, king of Macedon. Thinking Rome’s occupation with affairs in Macedonia afforded opportunity to make war upon Ptolemy, despising the youth of the king and the sloth of his guardians, Antiochus used the dispute over Coelesyria as pretext for war and an invasion of Egypt.²⁵ He succeeded where his fathers did not, gaining control not only of Coelesyria, but almost all Egypt.

he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea,

Antiochus distributed the spoils of his conquests throughout his realm. Livy reports “in two important and honorable activities he showed a truly royal disposition – in benefactions to the cities and in tributes to the gods...Furthermore, in the magnificence of his entertainment of every sort he outdid the earlier kings.”²⁶ I Macc. 3:30 states that Epiphanes “abounded above the kings that were before him” in gifts and liberalities.

²⁴ II Macc. IV:21

²⁵ Livy, XLII, xxix

²⁶ Livy XLI, xx

and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.

This probably refers to Antiochus' designs upon the strongholds of Egypt, perhaps Alexandria and Pelusium, which figured prominently in the history of his campaigns. Pelusium, on the side of Syria, is deemed one of two "keys" to control of the kingdom, the other being the island of Pharos, toward the sea.²⁷

His Campaign into Egypt

25 - 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.

Coelesyria had been given in dower to Egypt when Cleopatra, Antiochus' sister, was given in marriage to Ptolemy Epiphanes, but was seized by Antiochus when Cleopatra died. Ptolemy Philometer, Antiochus' nephew by his sister, Cleopatra, was still a child when Antiochus Epiphanes took the throne of Syria; his kingdom was managed by Eulaeus, the eunuch who was the king's tutor, and by Lenaeus. Eulaeus persuaded the young king to demand the return of Syria. However, Antiochus so much as denied that there was ever an agreement or that the land had been given to Egypt, and the two kingdoms went to war. Ptolemy's forces were defeated between Pelusium and the Casian Mountain, and the young king himself was captured. The Alexandrians thus declared Ptolemy's brother, Physicon, co-regent with Cleopatra, their sister. Antiochus spared Ptolemy's life, and, pretending concern for his kingdom, marched to Memphis where he had the young king crowned. He then made preparations for war upon Alexandria, under the pretext of restoring his nephew to his throne, but in reality that he might seize Egypt for himself.²⁸

26 - Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

The Egyptian court of the young king, Ptolemy Philometer, teemed with treachery and intrigue; at the center was the king's brother, Physcon. Defeat of Ptolemy is generally supposed to have been attributable to treachery by members of his court who betrayed him to Antiochus.

²⁷ Caesar, *Alexandrian War*, XXVI

²⁸ Livy, XLIV, xix

27 - 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.

Antiochus feigned concern for his nephew's interest, and Ptolemy feigned gratitude in return. Antiochus raised the siege at Alexandria, but left a garrison at Pelusium that he might reenter the country at will. His intention was for the two Ptolemies to wear down their kingdoms by civil war, at which time he would then return and seize the whole.²⁹ "Time of the end" is taken by some in relation to the end of the things concerning these two kings and their dynasties. But the better view is that the destruction of Jerusalem, which serves as the focal point of the prophecy, is intended. Ptolemy wanted to regain control of Coelesyria and Jerusalem, which had been part of the Egyptian dynasty for almost two hundred years; doubtless the Jews' open reception of Antiochus in revolt against Egyptian rule had earned Ptolemy's wrath and he looked to avenge himself upon them. Antiochus on the other hand was in need of money to pay the heavy tribute imposed by Rome upon his father, and eyed the great wealth deposited in the temple. On his return from Egypt, Antiochus plundered and robbed Jerusalem and made a great massacre. However, the wrath of the two kings was limited by heaven; the time appointed for the final indignation could not arrive before the Jews' crucifixion of Christ; then the end would come.

He Plunders the Temple

28 - 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.

Having raised the siege of Alexandria, Antiochus returned to his land, but stopped to loot the temple and vent his wrath against the Jews. I Maccabees provides the best commentary on this verse:

"And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, and entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, and the table of the showbread, and the pouring vessels, and vials, and the censers of gold and the veil, and the crowns, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off. He took also the silver and the

²⁹ Livy, XLV, xi

gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found. And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly.”³⁰

His Subsequent Campaign into Egypt; Intervention of Rome

29 - At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

Ptolemy Physcon was king in Alexandria; Ptolemy Philometer was king in Memphis. The civil unrest caused by Egypt having two kings was much to Antiochus’ advantage; Philometer and Physcon, perceiving their situation, agreed for the time to share the royal power and cooperate in their mutual defense. Antiochus, aggrieved by the two Ptolemies joining together, began to prepare for a renewal of the war.³¹ Physcon and his sister Cleopatra sent envoys to Rome seeking Rome’s intercession against Antiochus. The Senate being informed that Antiochus had become master of Egypt, and all but taken Alexandria, and conceiving that the aggrandizement of that king was a matter affecting Rome, appointed Gaius Popilius and others to go as ambassadors to put an end to the war.³²

30 - For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return,

Chittim here refers to Rome, as witnessed by the Septuagint version of the Qumran community and the Vulgate in this place.³³ When Antiochus had advanced to attack Ptolemy in order to possess himself of Pelusium, he was met by the Roman legate Gaius Popilius Laenus. Popilius handed Antiochus tablets containing the decree of the Senate, ordering him to cease his war with Ptolemy. Upon reading these, Antiochus expressed a desire to confer with his friends. Popilius drew a circle about Antiochus in the sand and bade him give his answer before he stepped from the circle. After a moment of awkward silence, Antiochus replied that he would do whatever the Romans demanded. Accordingly, a stated number of days were allowed him, within which he withdrew his army into Syria.³⁴

³⁰ I Macc. 1:20-24; Brenton ed.

³¹ Polybius, XXIX, xxvi; cf. Livy XLV, xi

³² Polybius, XXIX, ii; cf. Livy XLIV, xix

³³ Cf. Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke *in loc*

³⁴ Polybius, XXIX, 27; cf. Livy XLV, xi

Further Desolates 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.

II Maccabees indicates that a false rumor reached Judea that Antiochus was slain. Jason, who had purchased the high priesthood, only to have it sold to Menelaus, seized the moment. Taking a thousand men, he made an assault upon the city, and made a great slaughter of its inhabitants, as if they had been his enemies, but was forced at length to flee. Antiochus, thinking Judea was in revolt, marched upon the city and took it by force. He ordered his soldiers to slay whomever they met, sparing neither young nor old, man or woman. In the space of three days forty thousand were slain, and an equal number sold as slaves. Antiochus was then led by Menelaus into the temple where he carried off a thousand eight hundred talents, and returned to his own land, leaving governors to keep the land: Philip at Jerusalem, Andronicus at Garizim, and Menelaus as high priest. Doubtless it is to Menelaus and his party this verse refers when it says Antiochus had *intelligence with them that forsake the covenant*. II Maccabees says Menelaus, “worse than all the rest, bare an heavy hand over the citizens, having a malicious mind against his countrymen the Jews.”³⁵

Desecration of Temple; Places Image of Jupiter

31 - And arms shall stand on his part,

Antiochus sent Apollonius with an army of twenty-two thousand, commanding him to slay all those who were in their best age, and to sell the women and younger sort. Apollonius thus came upon the city pretending peace, where he waited until the Sabbath, then attacked, slaying multitudes. When they had taken the spoils of the city, they set it on fire, and pulled down the walls on every side, taking the women and children captive. They next built a garrison with great towers in the city of David and made it a stronghold where they stored armor and provisions, and brought together the spoil of the city, using it as a place to guard the king’s interest and retain control of the sanctuary and nation.

and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice,

As part of an overall policy throughout his realm to conform religious worship to a single model,

³⁵ II Macc. IV:5-14

Antiochus compelled all peoples to abandon their local rites and gods; he wrote letters to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, and every one should leave his laws. The king forbade the Jews to keep the Sabbath, circumcise their children, or keep the law. He changed the temple's name to Jupiter Olympius, set an idol upon the altar therein, and sacrificed swine's flesh and unclean beasts.

and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

This is usually interpreted in reference to the idol Antiochus caused to be placed in the temple, and, certainly, this was the understanding of the author of I Maccabees: "*Now on the fifteenth day of the month Cauleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah on every side; and burnt incense at the doors of their houses, and in the streets...on the five and twentieth day of the month they did sacrifice upon the idol altar, which was upon the altar of God.*"³⁶ However, the Lord used this phrase in reference to the Roman armies that desolated the land and city of Jerusalem, as may be seen by comparing Matthew's account of the Olivet discourse with that of Luke:

Matthew 24:15-21

When ye therefore shall see the *abomination of desolation*, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, whoso readeth let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains...For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Luke 21:20-22

And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the *desolation thereof is nigh*. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

The Lord's reference is to Dan. 9:27 and 12:11, 12. The reading given by the translators Dan. 9:27 is "and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it

³⁶ I Macc. 1:54-59

desolate." The marginal reading is "*with abominable armies*" he shall make it desolate. This seems to accord most with the intended sense, as witnessed by the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke. Hence, the abomination of desolation cannot refer to an idol in the Jerusalem temple, or to the Roman standards, as is sometimes supposed.³⁷ Rather it refers to the *armies of foreigners*, which denuded the land of men and cities, leaving it desolate. (See comments at 12:11, 12.) Hence, placing the abomination of desolation is better interpreted in reference to the army sent into the land by Antiochus, by which Jerusalem was made desolate. I Maccabees relates "Now Jerusalem was laid void as a wilderness, there was none of her children that went in or out: the sanctuary also was trodden down, and aliens kept the stronghold; the heathen had their habitation in that place."³⁸

Judas Maccabeus and his Brethren

32 - And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

This refers to Judas Maccabeus and his brethren who rose up to defend Israel in those days. Judas slew Apollonius in battle, and took his sword.³⁹ He defeated Seron, captain of the Syrian host, which fled before him.⁴⁰ Antiochus, seeing the revolt was strong, but lacking sufficient money to sustain his forces, led an expedition into Persia to gather tribute. He committed half of his forces to Lysias, with instructions to completely destroy the Jews and resettle the land with other peoples. Lysias entered Judea in the one hundred forty-seventh year of the Greeks (166 B.C.) with forty thousand footmen and seven thousand horsemen. To pay the king's tribute of two thousand talents to the Romans, they proposed to sell the Jews into slavery. They advertised along the sea coasts that seventy Jews could be purchased for one talent. Therefore, a thousand merchants followed the armies to battle, to purchase the Jews. Judas and his army defeated Lysias.⁴¹ The following year, Lysias gathered an army

³⁷ Worship of the Roman soldiers of their standards after the fall of the temple would be too late for the Lord's instruction to flee when Jerusalem was first surrounded. Cf. Josephus, *Wars*, VI, vi, 1

³⁸ I Macc. 3:45

³⁹ I Macc. 3:10-12

⁴⁰ I Macc. 3:13-26

⁴¹ I Macc. 3:27-4:34; II Macc. 7:8- 8:36

of sixty thousand foot and five thousand horse, but was beaten again. After the defeat of Lysias, on the twenty-fifth day of Cesleu, in the one hundred forty-eighth year of the Greeks (165 B.C.), Judas cleansed the temple and renewed the divine service. This day became among the set feasts of the Jews and appears to have been observed even by the Lord (Jn. 10:22). It is also the traditional date assigned to the Lord's birth.

33 - And they that understand among the people shall instruct many:

This may refer to the Assideans (Hasidim), a religious reform group of the time of the Maccabean revolt that joined themselves to Judas and his brethren, from which the Pharisees are thought to have sprung: "Then came there unto him a company of Assideans, who were mighty men of Israel, even all such as were voluntarily devoted unto the law."⁴² At all events, it signifies those that adhered to God and the holy covenant, teaching the people by word and example to resist unto death apostasy from the law.

yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

The whole period during which Antiochus IV Epiphanes vexed Israel was just over six years (169-163 B.C.), of which Judas and his brethren led the nation three years (160-163 B.C.). Judas' career spanned the reigns of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 B.C), Antiochus Eupator (164-161 B.C.), and Demetrius, the son of Antiochus the Great (161-149 B.C.). He died in the one hundredth and fifty-second year of the Greeks (160 B.C.), and was followed in the government by his brother, Jonathan. The whole book of I Maccabees covers a period of forty years, until the priesthood of John Hyrcanus. "Many days" therefore manifestly embraces more than the period of the Maccabees, reaching instead unto the "time of the end" (v. 35), and the destruction of the nation by the Romans.

34 - Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

God rendered the nation sufficient help to sustain the faithful, but permitted its oppressions to continue in punishment of its sins. Antiochus' successors were a source of constant suffering to the Jews, but contests for the throne of Asia gave the Jews periodic relief as the competing claimants courted the nation's good will and allegiance. Those that cleaved to the Jews with

⁴² I Macc. 2:42; cf. 7:13; II Macc. 14:6

flattery during this time, in the first instance, were likely Alexander and Demetrius whose competing claims to the throne caused them to seek the Jews' alliance and so granted them various favors.⁴³ Later, when Alexander's son Antiochus VII Sedetes and Trypho rose up against Demetrius II Nicanor, in a move to gain the Jews' good will, the latter remitted the nation's tribute and Judea temporarily gained independence.⁴⁴ The Samaritans and Gentiles living in Judea during these days are also likely candidates, as they aligned themselves now this way, now that, according to whomever seemed to be prospering at the time.

Anticipation of A.D. 70 and the Final Indignation

35 - 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.

The whole period from Antiochus until the destruction of the nation by Rome was marked by a time of national suffering and oppression as the dominate power of the region shifted about, and the Jews came under the dominion of the Egyptian, Syrian, and Roman power. The calamities served the double purpose of punishing the nation for its sin, and purifying and refining the faithful. The image of purging and making white may speak to the refining of silver whereby the dross is burned and skimmed off, leaving the metal white and pure. Conversely, it may also refer the whitening of laundered garments, which represents in scripture the righteousness of the saints (Rev. 3:4; 19:8).

It should be emphasized that *the end* here is not the end of the material world, or the persecutions of Antiochus, or even the kingdom of the Greeks, but the end of national Israel, for so the angel expressly states (Dan. 10:14; 12:7). This end corresponded in time and event with the destruction of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the beast and little horn of chapter seven. These events were eschatological in nature, and were clearly confined to the days of the Roman Empire. They marked both the end of the Jewish nation and Gentile world-dominion by the restoration of the Davidic throne over earth's peoples in Christ, and the coming of his kingdom in power. The Jews, because they rejected Christ, fell within the sweep of these judgments. These were accomplished in the fall of Jerusalem and the cataclysmic events that overtook the

⁴³ I Macc. 9:1-10:47

⁴⁴ I Macc. 13:1-46

Roman Empire in the first century. For Jesus now reigns at the right hand of God, and all nations are subjected to him; the saints share in the dominion of the world through the reign of the victorious Christ.

Identity of “the king”

The *crux interpretum* of the verses thirty-six through thirty-nine is the identity of the individual or government initially nominated “the king” (v. 36), and whether the same individual or government is intended by the “king of the north” in verses forty through forty-five, which follow. Some, like Porphyry, hold it to be Antiochus Epiphanes; others, like Jerome, see it in reference to the Antichrist; Calvin saw it as an abstract of the Roman Empire in general. Taking the second question first, we conclude that the *king of the north* in verses forty through forty-five cannot be Antiochus because 1) it describes an invasion of Egypt impossible for Antiochus to have made; and 2) the events described belong to the time of the end, which can apply only to the Romans.

Verse forty describes an invasion by the king of the north into Egypt at the time of the end. History is silent concerning an Egyptian invasion by Antiochus following the orders of the Roman envoy, Gaius Popilius, to desist from molesting the dominion of the Ptolemies. Porphyry (cited by Jerome) asserts that, in the eleventh year of his reign, Antiochus undertook a campaign against Egypt. But this is surely wrong. Neither Polybius nor Livy, nor yet Josephus or Maccabees, which are our sources for this period, make mention of such an invasion. Jerome was aware of this discrepancy, and did not allow Porphyry’s assertions to go unchallenged, saying that he was “unable to furnish any historical source” substantiating his claims.⁴⁵ Nor should we wonder that history is silent about these events. The eleventh year of Antiochus (165 B.C.) marked his campaign against Persia, returning from which he was injured in a fall from his chariot, contracted a gangrenous disease in his members, and died the following year (164 B.C.), having reigned not quite twelve years.⁴⁶ Hence, it is plainly impossible that Antiochus undertook the invasion described. Similar objections may be interposed against his sons and successors, none of whom invaded Egypt.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Jerome, *ad* 11:44, 45

⁴⁶ Appian, XI, LXVI

⁴⁷ Demetrius II attacked Pelusium, but this was at the instance of Cleopatra, who was making war against her brother, Physcon (Eurgetes II). Ussher § 3796, p. 492

Regnal Yrs. of Antiochus IV Epiphanes

| | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|----|
| 175-74 B.C. | 1 | 169-68 B.C. | 7 |
| 174-73 B.C. | 2 | 168-67 B.C. | 8 |
| 173-72 B.C. | 3 | 167-66 B.C. | 9 |
| 172-71 B.C. | 4 | 166-65 B.C. | 10 |
| 171-70 B.C. | 5 | 165-64 B.C. | 11 |
| 170-69 B.C. | 6 | 164 B.C. died | |

Verse twenty-seven specifically limits the power of the Ptolemies and Seleucids in their desolations of Jerusalem, reserving the ultimate destruction until the time of *the end*. Similarly, verse thirty-five looked beyond the time of Antiochus and the Maccabean revolt unto *the end*, stating that the Jews would suffer intermittent war and oppression until the final calamity that desolated the nation. This *end* is then described in Dan. 12:7, saying, “*When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*” Isaiah prophesied of the destruction of the city and temple, and did also the Lord (Isa. 66:5, 15; Matt. 23, 24). Both were cited by Stephen as about to be fulfilled (Acts 6:13; 7:48-50). Furthermore, the eschatological crisis that would overtake the saints in the persecution of the “little horn” (Nero) that rose out of the fourth beast (Rome) is alluded to later in Daniel’s prophecy (Dan. 12:1), where it is set as a forerunner of the nation’s destruction, and was referred to the by the Lord in that context (Matt. 24:21; *see comments at 12:1, below*). Hence, when verse forty mentions the time of the end, we necessarily understand that the time of the Romans has come into view.

That leaves only to decide the identity of the king or government in verses thirty-six through thirty-nine. A review of Antiochus’ successors will show that, although a source of suffering to the nation, they cannot in fairness be accused of many of the things described in these verses. Antiochus’ immediate successors, Eupator, his son, and Demetrius, his nephew, meet some of the description, but not all. The same is true of the Romans. Although in general terms the Caesars meet the description of these verses, there are items too specific to have more than a single individual in view, and for which we search in vain among the Caesars. For example, while it may be said in a general way that the Caesars, and Nero in particular, *magnified themselves above every god, and spoke marvellous things against the God of gods* (v. 36), it cannot be said that any of them (vv. 38, 39) *honoured with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things a strange god in most strong holds*. Yet, these things describe perfectly

Antiochus, and accord with all that we know about him. Hence, the approach taken here is that verses thirty-six through thirty-nine provide a recapitulation and general description of this king. Verses forty through forty-five we take in reference to Gaius Julius Caesar.

36 - And the king shall do according to his will; and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

The nation had been carried into captivity in Assyria and Babylon because of its sins and obstinate refusal to repent or obey God's commands. Although God in his clemency had returned the nation to its land, it had not repented, or produced the fruits of repentance. Heaven's wrath was thus provoked. Antiochus was the implement in God's hand to punish the erring nation. Antiochus would prosper in the task heaven ordained him to accomplish.

and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods,

Antiochus did not merely attempt to suppress the Jews' obedience to the law and worship of God, his policy extended to all the local cults within his kingdom; he attempted to unify his expansive dominion by worship of a single god. I Maccabees states "king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom, that all should be one people, and everyone should leave his laws: so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king. Yea, many also of the Israelites consented to his religion, and sacrificed unto idols, and profaned the Sabbath."⁴⁸

37 - Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god:

Antiochus did not regard the Greek pantheon of his fathers, nor the traditional gods of Syria, but followed after the gods of Rome. The "desire of women" is a probable reference to the worship of Adonis or *Tammuz* popular throughout Syria, though it may refer to *Astarte*, or *Ashtoreth*.⁴⁹ Ezekiel indicates that the cult of the former gained popularity among the women of Israel and Judah, and describes the "women weeping for Tammuz" (Ezek. 8:14); Jeremiah provides evidence of worship of the latter (assuming they are distinct) (Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19, 25). Antiochus' disregard for all

⁴⁸ I Macc. 1:41, 42

⁴⁹J.E.H. Thomson, *Daniel* (The Pulpit Commentary), *in loc*; cf. Moses Stuart, *in loc*

that is called god is seen, not only in his attempt to suppress the worship of God and local pagan cults, but his attempt to plunder the temple at Elymais shortly before his death. While on his last expedition into Persia to collect tribute, he learned that the temple at Elymais housed great wealth and went to rob it.

for he shall magnify himself above all.

Antiochus' expedition to Persia was a failure; he was repulsed in his attempt to spoil the temple at Elymais. Returning from Persia, he contracted a disease in his bowels that tormented him greatly. Hearing that Lysias was defeated by the Jews, Antiochus hastened home to pursue his vengeance upon the Jews, but fell from his chariot, and was severely wounded. He died a horrible, lingering death; his body bred worms and stank so bad none could endure to even carry him upon a litter. He attributed his disease to his persecution of the Jews. Before he died he is reported to have said "*It is meet to be subject unto God, and that a man that is mortal should not proudly think of himself, as if he were God.*"⁵⁰ Epiphanes succumbed to death in the one hundred and forty ninth year of the Greeks (164 B.C.). He was succeeded in the government of Syria by his son, Antiochus Eupator, who followed his father's evil example, having Lysias as his counselor.

38 - But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

The ascending power of the Romans made them the people to imitate and their customs fashionable to follow. The chief god among the Romans was Jupiter Optimus Maximus, whose temple served as the capital of Rome. It was the greatest temple in the world after the temple in Jerusalem; both were destroyed in A.D. 70 in Christ's coming in his kingdom in power. The name Jupiter is a contraction of Jove and Pater ("father Jove"). This god was the chosen object of Antiochus' veneration, which he honored with temples and gifts throughout his dominion.

39 - Thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory:

The strange (*viz.*, "alien") god is Jupiter. Antiochus attempted to enforce the worship of Jupiter Olympus at Jerusalem, and Jupiter Xenios at Samaria, setting up his image and compelling their inhabitants to sacrifice. He honored Jupiter throughout the great cities (here

⁵⁰ II Mac. 9:12

called strongholds) of his realm, building temples and adorning his places of worship with gifts. Livy relates:

“As evidence of the magnificence of his ideas in relation to the gods one may cite the temple of Jupiter Olympius at Athens, the only temple in the world planned (though it was not finished) on a scale proportionate to the greatness of the god; besides this, he adorned Delos with splendid altars and an abundance of statues, and he promised at Antioch a magnificent temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, not merely with a ceiling paneled with gold, but with its walls also covered with gold leaf; but this temple, like many other works he promised in other places, he did not succeed in finishing, because his reign was so short a time.”⁵¹

and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

Causing them to rule over many, probably refers to those who cooperated in Antiochus’ attempts to reform his kingdom’s religion. Matthias was promised many favors and to be among the king’s intimate friends if he pronounced in favor of worshipping Antiochus’ gods.⁵² Antiochus’ habits of vast expenditure and the tribute imposed upon his father by Rome forced him to ever be in need of money. Hence, he *divided the land for gain*, selling the priesthood to Jason and later Menelaus.

The Roman Power and the Time of the End

The prophecies regarding Antiochus Epiphanes were expressly stated *not* to reach to the time of the end (vv. 27, 35). Verse forty thus becomes the turning point of the prophecy, bringing us to the introduction of the Roman power in the land; the days of the fourth world empire (the feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream), which would witness the kingdom and coming of Christ in power against the world of disobedient men. Beginning with verse forty-two, the exploits of Julius Caesar are described, including 1) His capture of Egypt; 2) Caesar’s departure from Egypt to Syria and Pontus; 3) his appointment of the government over Syria and Judea; and 4) his assassination.

40 - And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him:

This and the following verse appear to describe in general terms the eruption of the Roman power in the south and east. One hundred years have passed since

⁵¹ Livy, XLI, xxii

⁵² I Macc. 1:17, 18

the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (164 B.C.). The powers of the world have shifted and taken new forms. The legitimate line of the Ptolemies failed with the death of Alexander II, and an illegitimate son of Soter II has been placed upon the throne (80 B.C.) (see below). The kingdom of the Ptolemies, once consisting of Egypt, Cyrene, Cyprus, Phoenicia, Arabia, Syria, Libya, Ethiopia, Pamphlyia, Cilicia, Lycia, Caria, and the isles of the Cyclades⁵³ is now almost nonexistent. The Jews had gained independence during the Maccabean period (142 B.C.); Cyrene has been bequeathed to Rome by Ptolemy Apion (96 B.C.); Syria is mostly occupied by Tigranes, king of Armenia; Cyprus is destined to be declared a Roman province in 58 B.C.; all that remains of the “kingdom” of the Ptolemies is (or shortly would be) Egypt itself.⁵⁴ Hence, “king (*viz.*, “kingdom”) of the south” is probably best no longer understood in reference to the Ptolemaic dynasty, but to the power that had risen up in its place. Similarly, by now the king of the north was not the Seleucid dynasty, but Rome. “Pushing” at the kingdom of the north therefore likely refers to attempts to restrain or prevent Roman expansion in the south and east, most likely by Mithridates, king of Pontus, who was the major power in the region, and for over forty years challenged Roman arms for control of the east. Appian describes the greatness of Mithridates:

“Many times Mithridates had over 400 ships of his own, 50,000 cavalry, and 250,000 infantry, with engines and arms in proportion. For allies he had the king of Armenia and the princes of the Scythian tribes around the Euxine and the Sea of Azov and beyond, as far as the Thracian Bosphorus. He held communication with the leaders of the Roman civil wars, which were then fiercely raging, and with those who were inciting insurrections in Spain. He established friendly relations with the Gauls for the purpose of invading Italy. From Cilicia to the Pillars of Hercules he also filled the sea with pirates, who stopped all commerce and navigation between cities, and caused severe famine for a long time. In short, he left nothing within the power of man undone or untried to start the greatest possible movement, extending from the Orient to the Occident, to vex, so to speak, the whole world, which was warred upon, tangled in alliances, harassed

⁵³ The dominions of Ptolemy Soter included Egypt, Phoenicia, Arabia, Syria, Libya, Ethiopia, Pamphlyia, Cilicia, Lycia, Caria, and the isles of the Cyclades. Ussher § 2729, p. 350

⁵⁴ E. R. Bevan, *The House of Ptolemy* (Methuen, London, 1927), pp. 342-353

by pirates, or vexed by the neighborhood of the warfare. Such and so diversified was this one war against Mithridates, but in the end it brought the greatest gain to the Romans; for it pushed the boundaries of their dominion from the setting of the sun to the river Euphrates."⁵⁵

and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

Having conquered most of the world, Egypt and the east were all that remained. Rome's final thrust at world conquest was like a great whirlwind whose power was irresistible. Nothing could contain them; they overflowed one country and passed on to the next. The biggest gains were accomplished by Pompey who defeated Mithridates, whose fall brought down most of the region in its wake:

*"Thus the Romans, having conquered King Mithridates at the end of forty-two years, reduced to subjection Bithynia, Cappadocia, and other neighboring peoples dwelling near the Euxine sea. In this same war that part of Cilicia which was not yet subject to them, together with the Syrian countries, Phoenicia, Coele-Syria, Palestine, and the territory lying between them and the river Euphrates, although they did not belong to Mithridates, were gained by the impetus of the victory over him and were required to pay tribute, some immediately and others later. Paphlagonia, Galatia, Phrygia, and the part of Mysia adjoining Phrygia, and in addition Lydia, Caria, Ionia, and all the rest of Asia Minor formerly belonging to Pergamus, together with old Greece and Macedonia, that Mithridates had drawn away from them, were completely recovered."*⁵⁶

41 - He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

After defeating Mithridates, Pompey deposed Antiochus Asiaticus, the last of the Seleucids (64 B.C). The Jews were governed at the time by Antigonus, who had deposed his brother, Hyrcanus, thrust him from the high priesthood, and put on the royal diadem. When Antigonus' party shut the gates of Jerusalem against Pompey, the latter laid siege to the city with Hyrcanus for his assistant, taking it after a siege of five months

⁵⁵ Appian, XII, xvii, 119, White ed.

⁵⁶ Appian, XII, xvii, 118, White ed.

(63 B.C.). Antigonus was sent bound to Rome and Hyrcanus made high priest. However, Edom, Moab, and the children of Ammon, which were south and east of Palestine beyond the Jordan, escaped the power of Rome and were never brought under its dominion. Egypt remained for Caesar to conquer.

*"Pompey, having cleaned out the robber dens, and prostrated the greatest king then living, in one and the same war, and having fought successful battles, besides those of the Pontic war, with Colchians, Albanians, Iberians, Armenians, Medes, Arabs, Jews, and other Eastern nations, extended the Roman sway as far as Egypt. But he did not advance into Egypt, although the king of that country invited him there to suppress a sedition, and sent gifts to himself and money and clothing for his whole army."*⁵⁷

Gaius Julius Caesar

42 - He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

This verse shows that "king of the south" contemplates more than Egypt, which was merely the seat of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Having taken other countries historically identified with the Greco-Syrian and Greco-Egyptian kingdoms, Egypt itself now falls to the Roman power.

Egypt had been a Roman protectorate from the time of Antiochus III the Great, and Rome had become increasingly involved in Egypt's internal affairs, including succession to the throne. When Soter II died in 88 B.C., he left queen Bernice in power; the sole remaining legitimate male heir was Alexander II. Sulla was master of Rome at this time, and installed Alexander II (Ptolemy X) on the throne. Alexander married the elder Bernice, but had her assassinated only three weeks later. Incensed by the murder of its queen, the people of Alexandria slew Alexander II and installed Ptolemy XI (*Nothos* – "the Bastard") as king. For a long time, Rome chose not to recognize Ptolemy XI, preferring to have a discreditable king on the throne that could be removed when it served Rome's purpose. However, in 59 B.C. Julius Caesar, the leader of the Democratic Party, was one of the consuls. Ptolemy contrived, by an enormous payment of six thousand talents, to buy Caesar's support. Caesar carried a law by which Ptolemy XI was recognized as king of Egypt, and, by a new treaty, "ally and friend of the Roman People."⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Appian, XII, xvii, 114, White ed.

⁵⁸ E. R. Bevan, *The House of Ptolemy*, pp. 342-354

Ten years later, Caesar's civil war against the Roman Senate (49 B.C.) brought him to Egypt (47 B.C.), where Pompey fled following his defeat at Pharsalus (48 B.C.). When Caesar arrived, he found Pompey had been murdered, and king Ptolemy XIII making war against his sister and co-regent, Cleopatra, daughter of Ptolemy XI, whom he had expelled from the throne shortly before. A boy in age, Ptolemy and the kingdom were under the control of the eunuch Pothinus. Caesar, who was consul that year, declared his wish that Ptolemy and Cleopatra disband their armies and settle their dispute before him in process of law, rather than by armed force between them. Pothinus, thinking it unseemly for the king to submit the contest to Caesar's arbitrage, attacked Caesar's forces with the royal army. In the war that resulted, Ptolemy was slain, the royal army defeated, and Egypt came under the power of Rome and Caesar.

43 - But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

The whole power of Egypt came under Caesar's command to dispose of as he willed. However, fearing that if he made it a province Egypt might one day be a source of revolution by a governor, Caesar left it a kingdom, and appointed Cleopatra and her surviving younger brother queen and king.⁵⁹ Caesar's intimate involvement with Cleopatra, who bore him a child (Ptolemy Caesarion), created an alliance between them that put the wealth and power of Egypt at his ready disposal. Shortly before his assassination, it was rumored that he intended to remove the capital to Alexandria and set himself up as king with Cleopatra as his wife and queen.⁶⁰ However this maybe, Caesar's conquest of Egypt put Ethiopia at his steps. Caesar's war with Scipio and Juba (46 B.C.) reduced Mauritania, Libya's neighbor, to a province, putting Libya at his steps as well.⁶¹ The final reduction of Egypt came when Octavius (Augustus), Caesar's adopted son, defeated Antony and Cleopatra, capturing Alexandria with its vast treasures (30 B.C.).

⁵⁹ Caesar, *Alexandrian War*, XXXIII; Suetonius, *The Deified Julius*, XXXV

⁶⁰ Suetonius, *The Deified Julius*, LXXIX, iii

⁶¹ Caesar, *The African War*, 85. Libya had been bequeathed to Rome by King Apion circa 76 B.C. Tacitus, *Annals* XIV, xviii

44 - But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to take away many.

Farquharson - followed by Mauro and Jordan - argues that Herod, Antony and Cleopatra, and Augustus are in view throughout these verses; but admits that he can find no historical referent to Augustus matching this verse.⁶² And for good reason: it is Julius Caesar, not Augustus, who is the immediate subject. The passage describes exactly the history of Caesar's movements east to Syria, then north to Pontus following his capture of Egypt.

Scipio had been appointed consul of Syria by the Roman Senate at the outbreak of civil war. Syria was under threat of an invasion by the Parthians, who had recently killed the commander Marcus Licinius Crassus, and kept Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus closely invested. However, with the outbreak of civil war, the legions assigned to guard Syria were needed in the war against Caesar. Scipio thus brought two legions from Syria to Thessaly, where they were joined by Pompey.⁶³ With the defeat of their combined armies in Pharsalus, the two generals fled: Pompey to Egypt; Scipio to Africa. Without a governor and its accustomed legions, and apprehensive of the Parthians, Syria was in a state of unrest. Adding to these commotions was the general uncertainty about the government of Judea. Hyrcanus had been appointed by Pompey, who was now dead, and Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, was attempting to regain his father's throne.⁶⁴ Caesar thus marched overland from Egypt to Syria where he set Sextus Caesar, his friend and relative, in command of the government and legions

⁶² "We cannot discover, however, that the terms in the 44th verse are predictions of anything Augustus did." James Farquharson, *Daniel's Last Vision and Prophecy* (London, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, 1838), p. 137; Philip Mauro, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation* (1922), pp. 135-162; James B. Jordan, *Handwriting on the Wall* (American Vision, 2008), pp. 593-614

⁶³ Caesar, *Civil Wars*, I, vi; III, iv; III, xxxi; III, lxxxii

⁶⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIV, viii, 4. Antigonus was the surviving claimant to the Hasmonean throne. Aristobulus, whom Pompey had sent prisoner to Rome, had been released by Caesar and sent back with two legions to Syria when Caesar had taken Rome and the senate fled. However, Aristobulus and his son Alexander were put to death by Pompey's party. *Ibid.*, XIV, xiv, 4

appointed to guard it.⁶⁵ From there he marched to Pontus, where Pharnaces was making war on neighboring Cappadocia and Lesser Armenia.⁶⁶ Suetonius sums it up briefly thus:

*“From Alexandria he crossed to Syria, and from there went to Pontus, spurred on by the news that Pharnaces, son of Mithridates the great, had taken advantage of the situation to make war, and was already flushed with numerous successes; but Caesar vanquished him in a single battle within five days after his arrival and four hours after getting sight of him, often remarking on Pompey’s good luck in gaining his principal fame as a general by victories over such feeble foemen. Then he overcame Scipio and Juba, who were patching up the remnants of the party in Africa, and the sons of Pompey in Spain.”*⁶⁷

45 - And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

“Planting his tabernacles in the glorious holy mountain” appears to refer to Caesar’s settlement of the government of Judea. While besieged in Alexandria, Caesar sent Mithridates of Pergamum into Syria and Cilicia to bring forces. Hyrcanus and Antipater, father of Herod the Great, assisted Mithridates with provisions and forces when he returned to Egypt. Antipater distinguished himself greatly in combat, once even turning the battle and saving Mithridates. Caesar therefore honored Antipater after the war by making him a citizen of Rome, freeing him from taxes, and allowing him whatsoever principality he should choose. Accordingly, Antipater was made procurator of Judea, and Hyrcanus was confirmed as high priest. Antipater gave the government of Galilee to Herod. Despite his great conquests, Caesar soon came to his end, with none to help him; he was assassinated a year or two later (44 B.C).



⁶⁵ Caesar, *Alexandrian War*, LXV

⁶⁶This same Pharnaces obtained the throne by murdering his father, Mithidates, about the time Pompey captured Jerusalem. Josephus, *Antiquities*, XIV, iii, 4

⁶⁷ Suetonius, *The Deified Julius*, XXXV

- 1684 -

Bishop John Lightfoot on
Romans 8:19-23

“The Whole Creation Groaneth and
Travaileth”

“At the nineteenth verse of chap. viii, he beings upon the second mystery that he hath to treat upon, - the calling of the Gentiles; whom he calls *pasa ktisij* ‘the whole creation’ or ‘every creature:’ by which title they also are called, Mark xvi. 15, Col. 1.23: and he shows, how they were subject to vanity of idolatry, and the delusions of the devil; but must, in time, be delivered from this bondage, for which deliverance they now groaned: and not they only, but they of the Jews also, which had received the first-fruits of the Spirit, longed for their coming in, waiting for the adoption, - that is, the redemption of their whole body: for the church of the Jews was but the childlike body; and, accordingly, their ordinances were according to the childlike age of the church: but the stature of the fulness of Christ’s mystical body, was in the bringing in of the Gentiles. Being to handle this great point of the calling of the Gentiles, and rejection of the Jews, he begins at the bottom, at the great doctrine of predestination, which he handles from ver. 29 of chap. viii to chap. ix. 24: and then he falls upon the other; - that Israel stumbled at Messias and fell, seeking indeed after righteousness, but not his, but their own; and that they are cast away, but not all; a remnant to be saved, that belonged to the election of grace. As it was in the time when the world was heathen, some of them that belonged to the election, came in and were proselyted to the worship of the true God; so some of these, while all the rest of their nation lie in unbelief. And in this unbelief must they lie, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and then all God’s Israel is completed.”

Comment: Bishop Lightfoot here argues that the “whole creation” of Rom. 8:19-23 refers to or embraces the Gentiles, finding in Mk. 16:15 and Col. 1:23 language of similar meaning and import. He finds reference to the Jews by the nomination “we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit.” The Jews were the first-fruits; the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation, unto the Jew first and also the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). John specifically calls the Jews the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb in Rev. 14:4; (*cf.* 7:1-8; Jm. 1:18; Eph. 1:12). Lightfoot sees “all Israel” (“and so all Israel shall be saved,” Rom. 11:26) in reference to the whole body of believers in Christ, not ethnic Jews as incorrectly supposed by some. Israel is defined by the obedience of faith, not ethnicity; hence, it is not ethnic Jews that are the seed of Israel, but those who receive the gospel verity. Hence, it is in the inclusion of men from every race and people that “all Israel” is saved; for there is no respect of persons with the Lord, “but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:35).

Kings of the North and of the South

Seleucid Dynasty

Seleucus I (323-280 B.C.)
Antiochus I Soter (280-261 B.C.)
Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.)
Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226 B.C.)
Seleucus III Ceranunus (226-223 B.C.)
Antiochus III the Great (223-187 B.C.)
Seleucus IV Philopater (187-175 B.C.)
Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.)
Antiochus V Eupator (164-161 B.C.)
Demetrius I Soter (161-149 B.C.)
Alexander I Epiphanes (152-145 B.C.)
Demetrius II Nicator (145-138 B.C. –
captured by Parthians)
Antiochus VI Dionysus (144-142)
Trypho (B.C. 142-138 B.C.)
Antiochus VII Sidetes (138-129 B.C.)
Demetrius II Nicator (*regains throne* -
129-125 B.C.)
Alexander II Zabinas (129-123 B.C.)
Seleucus V (125 B.C.)
Antiochus VIII Grypus (124-97 B.C.)
Antiochus IX Cyzicenus (113-95 B.C.)
Seleucus VI (96-95 B.C.)
Antiochus X Eusebes Philopater (95-92
B.C.)
Antiochus XI Epiphanes Philadelphus
(95-92 B.C.)
Demetrius III Eucerus (95-87 B.C.)
Philip I Philadelphus (95-83 B.C.)
Antiochus XII Dionysus (87-84 B.C.)
Tigranes II the Great of Armenia (83-69
B.C.)
Antiochus XII Asiaticus (69-64 B.C.)

Pompey the Great deposes Asiaticus and
conquers Syria and Jerusalem; end of
Seleucid dynasty (64-63 B.C.)

Ptolemaic Dynasty

Ptolemy I Soter (323-284 B.C.)
Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 B.C.)
Ptolemy III Eurgetes (246-221 B.C.)
Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-204 B.C.)
Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-180 B.C.)
Ptolemy VI Philometer (180-145 B.C.)
Ptolemy VII Neos Philopater (145-144
B.C.)
Ptolemy VIII Physcon (171-116 B.C.)
Ptolemy IX Lathurus (116-81 B.C.)
Ptolemy X Alexander (106-89 B.C.)
Ptolemy XI Alexander II (81-66 B.C.)
Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos (80-51 B.C.)
Cleopatra VII (51-30 B.C.)
Ptolemy XIII (51-47 B.C.)

Julius Caesar Conquers Egypt (47 B.C.);
makes Cleopatra queen with younger
brother.

Ptolemy XIV (47-44 B.C. co-regent with
Cleopatra VII)
Ptolemy XV Caesarion (34-30 B.C. co-
regent with Cleopatra VII)

Battle of Actium (31 B.C.); Octavian
(Augustus) takes Alexandria following
year; murders Ptolemy Caesarion; Antony
and Cleopatra commit suicide; end of
Ptolemaic dynasty (30 B.C.)