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THE REIGN OF ANTIOCHUS IV EPHIPHANES | DANIEL 11:21-35

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- Verse 21 –
  - **A vile person** - Antiochus IV Ephiphanes was the brother of Seleucus IV, who had (in time) the infant son of Seleucus IV murdered so that he could have the throne. Antiochus IV has been called, "one of the most extraordinary characters exhibited on the pages of history...Indeed his extravagances and follies and cruelty were so great, that his contemporaries gave him the nickname of ἐπιμανής (madman), instead of the title which he assumed, viz. ἐπιφανής (illustrious)."<sup>1</sup>
  - **to whom...** The Syrian people themselves did **not give the honour of the kingdom** to Antiochus IV, rather, he took it upon himself by force.
  - **he shall come peaceably** - Literally, "he shall come at ease." YLT says, "quietly." At the death of Seleucus IV, Antiochus (who had been in Rome) visited with the two kings of Pergamus and flattered them into supporting him. When Antiochus came into Syria with the support of Pergamus, they quietly allowed him to take the throne, without a battle.
- Verse 22 –
  - **with the arms of a flood** –
    - Darby translates as, "And the overflowing forces shall be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken"<sup>2</sup>
    - The **arms of a flood** are clearly a reference to mighty military forces.
    - Stuart Moses translates as, "And overwhelming forces shall be overwhelmed before him, and be broken in pieces"<sup>3</sup>
    - When Cleopatra (daughter of Antiochus III The Great and sister of Antiochus IV) was given to Ptolemy V in marriage (as a peace treaty, see notes on v. 17), the dowry was that the land of Israel would be given to Egypt (which had lost Israel in the Battle of Baniyas in 195BC - see notes on v. 15). However, the land was never given, and Ptolemy VI (under his regents) eventually met Antiochus IV with a mighty force to secure the dowry. This battle took place in 171-170BC, and Egypt suffered humiliating defeat.
  - **the prince of the covenant** - This phrase has two possible meanings.
    - Some say that it is a reference to Onias, the Jewish High Priest, who was murdered by Antiochus IV in 172BC
    - Some say it is an elaboration on the previous phrase, and refers to the **covenant** between Syria and Egypt regarding Israel, and is a prophecy that Ptolemy VI (the **prince of the covenant**) would be **broken**. This later view has greater support in context as well as in the chronology, since what took place in 172 would have been before the battle referred to in the previous phrase.
- Verse 23 –
  - **after the league made with him** - Antiochus IV made a **league** (treaty agreement) with Ptolemy VI after defeating him. This treaty effectively made Egypt a vassal state of Syria, but was a tenuous league at best.
  - **he shall work deceitfully** - The attempted full takeover of Egypt would come with deceit, as will be seen further in v. 24.

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<sup>1</sup> Stuart, Moses. *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*. Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1850. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Darby, John Nelson. *The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation from the Original Languages*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1996. Print.

<sup>3</sup> Op. Cit., Moses.

- **and shall become strong** - Antiochus IV moved on after his battle and kept only a small army, not expecting much resistance from Egypt.
- Verse 24 –
  - **he shall enter peaceably** - Under the pretense of peace, moving quietly so as not to disturb the peace or garner the ire of Rome (which sided with Egypt), Antiochus IV moved **upon the fattest places**, including Alexandria, the capital of the Ptolemaic empire.
  - **that which his fathers have not done...** - Antiochus III had desired to conquer Egypt, even giving his daughter to corrupt the empire (see v. 17), but had failed to accomplish his goals.
  - **he shall scatter** - Antiochus IV worked by giving **the prey, and the spoil, and riches** to loyal forces in order to gain further loyalty and buy more "allegiance."
  - **he shall forecast...** - The Hebrew word translated **forecast** means "to think upon." Therefore, "he shall put his thoughts against other strongholds" in order to pay for his strategy of the previous phrase.
- Verse 25 –
  - **he shall stir up** - Earlier (vv. 23-24) Antiochus IV had attempted a quiet, secret mission of takeover. Now he comes with **a great army**. However, in this phrase, **great army** is better as "great force" (YLT) and refers to the force of his effort and will. The later phrase **mighty army** being the actual army.
  - **the king of the south...** - The King of the South (Ptolemy VI) will try to fight, but **shall not stand** because of the **devices against him**, presumably the scheming of Antiochus IV which likely planted paid supporters in the ranks of Egypt. See v. 26 for elaboration.
- Verse 26 –
  - **they that feed...** - Ptolemy VI was under the guardianship of Lennaeus and Eulaeus, who betrayed him and brought about the loss of his army against Antiochus IV.
  - **his army shall overflow** is "his force overfloweth" (YLT), and refers to the fact that Ptolemy's army lost all cohesion and ran.
- Verse 27 - Though both kings were deceitful, the end result was not to come from their deceit. God was fully in charge and the warfare would not end until **the time appointed**.
  - *Note:* Do not make a doctrine out of this appointment of time. This is an *example* of God appointing outcomes, not a *doctrine*.
- Verse 28-
  - **then shall he return...** - There will be a time when Antiochus IV would be victorious against Egypt, and would return in victory. See 1 Maccabees 1:19.
  - **his heart shall be against** - Having returned from Egypt, Antiochus IV would turn the attention of his heart to the wealth of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Verse 29 – the **time appointed** is a reference to the **end** mentioned in v. 27 (v. 28 was a forward glance). When Antiochus IV invaded Egypt for the last time, his successes were not as great as before (see v. 28). Thus the phrase **it shall not be as the former, or as the latter** means "the latter time will not be like the former time."
- Verse 30 –
  - **for the ships...** - The **ships of Chittim** would have included the Macedonians, and Ptolemy secured the help of Rome against Antiochus IV, so Rome sent a Macedonian fleet to meet Antiochus IV at Alexandria. When Antiochus IV met Roman ambassador Caius Popilius, and was informed of a cease and desist declaration of the Roman Senate, he said that he would consult his friends about the matter. To this, Caius Popilius is said to have drawn a circle around him and said, "make your decision before you leave the circle." Antiochus gave in and agreed to the Roman decree, going home enraged.
  - **have indignation ...** - While Antiochus IV was in Egypt, a rebel pseudo-High Priest named Jason sought to take control of Jerusalem. Word of the skirmish made it to Antiochus IV, who turned toward Jerusalem and attacked it with a vengeance. Read 2 Maccabees 5:11-14 for the account (also 1 Maccabees 1:20ff.)
  - **have intelligence** - The *Hellenists* were Jews aligned with Rome. For example, see 1 Maccabees 1:10-15, 2 Maccabees 4:7-22.
- Verse 31 –

- **they shall pollute** - See 1 Macc. 1:37 (all of 1 Macc. 1 for full context).
- **shall take away...** - This refers to the work of Antiochus IV and will be seen again in the Antichrist. In Daniel 8 he is called the **little horn**.
- **shall place the abomination** –
  - Literally, "the desolating abomination." Not only did Antiochus IV sacrifice a pig on the altar, but also set up an image (likely of Zeus) at the temple (see 1 Macc. 1:54).
  - Note that this act of desolation became the foreshadow of what is to come in the *future* when the Antichrist will set up, once again, the **abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel** (Matt 24:15). Jesus spoke of these words almost 175 years *after* Antiochus IV and spoke of them as future, so we know that what was done by Antiochus IV in the past is a foreshadow/type of what will come in the future.
- Verse 32 –
  - **to such as do wickedly...** - As seen in v. 24, it was the practice of Antiochus IV (and most evil rulers) to **corrupt by flatteries**.
  - **but the people...** - Consider Mattathias and his followers of faithful Jews, as seen in 1 Mac. 2.
- Verse 33 –**they that understand** - That is, those that have understanding of God and the situation at hand.
- Verse 34 - That is, "many will join the faithful, but do so hypocritically."
- Verse 35 - The verbs and illustration all have to do with the purification of silver: smelting, purifying, and whitening.