

Other articles on this site have provided documented evidence that the Book of Daniel was written in the 500's BCE, and accurately foretold details of the exploits Syrian King Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was "the king of the north" for about 12 years. This article will discuss exactly what some of the scriptures in [Daniel 11](#) foretold, and how they were fulfilled.

"The next to come to power will be a despicable man who is not in line for royal succession. He will slip in when least expected and take over the kingdom by flattery and intrigue"—[Daniel 11:21 NLT](#).

This verse accurately foretold the coming to power of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 175 BCE. He's also the "small horn" of [8:9-14](#), [23-25](#), and is historically described in detail in [1 Maccabees 1:7-6:16](#); [2 Maccabees 1:1-10:5](#); [4 Maccabees 4:15-18:5](#). Why was Antiochus foretold to be despicable? He was not a legitimate successor of his brother Selucus IV, since Selucus IV had a son. He was called despicable because he would usurp the kingship through his use of "flattery and intrigue", thus currying the favor of Rome, and for his notorious acts as king. His brother, Seleucus IV had a son, Demetrius, who was very young, and held in Rome as a hostage at the time. Antiochus therefore seized the throne for himself with the help of King Eumenes II of Pergamon., proclaiming himself co-regent with another son of Seleucus, an infant named Antiochus (whom he murdered a few years later). The prediction called him a "despised" or "despicable" person because of his hatred of the Jewish people, his attempt to destroy Jerusalem, his desecration of the Temple and his megalomania displayed in calling himself Epiphanes ('Manifest One; Illustrious One'). People of that time also called him Epimanes ('Madman').

"Before him great armies will be swept away, including a covenant prince"—[Daniel 11:22 NLT](#)

The "great armies" refer to the way all opposition against Antiochus IV will be broken. Despite Ptolemy VI Philometor (181 BCE-146 BCE) attacking with a flood of forces, Antiochus IV would be able to defeat them, and also depose the covenant prince, the Jewish high priest

Onias III, in 175 BCE and replace him with his brother Jason (2 Maccabees 4:7-10). In 171 BCE, Onias was murdered by Menelaus, through manipulation of one Antiochus IV's nobles, Andronicus (2 Maccabees 4: 32-43). Menelaus then became high priest (171-162 BCE), until his execution (2 Maccabees 13:3-8). Menelaus supported Antiochus IV's program of hellenization.

“With deceitful promises, he will make various alliances. He will become strong despite having only a handful of followers (quoted from NLT). During a time of peace, he will come into the richest parts of the province and do what his fathers and predecessors never did (quoted from HCSB)”—Daniel 11:23,24

Antiochus IV would increase in power by sharing the wealth of his conquests, lavishing plunder, loot, and wealth on his supporters. He introduced Greek religion into Judea, helped by lawless followers who supported his policies (1 Maccabees 1:11-15). Antiochus IV seized the riches of the Temple, took large tributes from Jerusalem, and stationed troops there (1 Maccabees 1:29-40).

“Then he will stir up his courage and raise a great army against the king of the south. the king of the south will go to battles with a mighty army, but to no avail, for there will be plots against him”—Daniel 11:25,26 NLT.

These verses refer back to the first campaign of Antiochus against Ptolemy VI Philometer of Egypt (vs 22), predicting that not only would the power of Antiochus defeat Ptolemy VI, but also that plots “against him” would cause his army to be swept away. Antiochus IV attacked Egypt twice between 170 and 168 BCE (1 Maccabees 1:16-19). The guardians of Ptolemy VI Philometer demanded the return of Coele-Syria in 170 BCE, but Antiochus launched a preemptive strike against Egypt, capturing all but Alexandria. In this first campaign of Antiochus IV against Ptolemy Philometer of Egypt (son of Antiochus' sister Cleopatra, and Ptolemy V), Ptolemy was misled by his advisers, and was defeated, and captured by Antiochus, at Pelusium, on the border with Egypt. Antiochus, pretended friendship, but

plundered Egypt. On the way back, Antiochus savagely mistreated the Jews (verse 28).

“The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but because an end will still come at the appointed time. The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country”—Daniel 11:27,28 NIV

After the defeat of Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VII took control of Egypt. Then, “the two (other) kings”, Antiochus IV and Ptolemy VI, who was living in Antiochus’ custody, would meet, ‘speaking lies at the same table’, to plot Ptolemy VI’s restoration to the throne. To avoid alarming Rome, Antiochus allowed Ptolemy VI to continue ruling as a puppet king. After initial limited success, they would eventually fail. Then “the king of the North”, Antiochus IV, having plundered Egypt, would return to his land, but ‘with his heart set against the holy covenant’. On the way home to Syrian Antioch from Egypt, in response to intrigues in Jerusalem against his supporters, he would turn his hatred toward and attack Israel. This would result in killing 80,000 Jewish men, women, and children, and plundering Jerusalem and the holy temple’ (170-169 BCE), and enslaving many others (1 Maccabees 1:20-42; 2 Maccabees 5:1-23). His arrogance was unbounded (1 Maccabees 1:24,25).

We can learn even from the bad example of these ‘two treacherous kings’ (vs 27). Treachery and deceit are a power broker’s way to position himself over someone else. When two power brokers try to gain the upper hand, it is a mutually weakening and self-descriptive process. It is also futile because God ultimately holds all power in his hands.

“At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to the those who forsake the holy covenant”—Daniel 11:29,30 NIV

Upon Antiochus' withdrawal, the city of Alexandria chose a new king, one of Ptolemy's brothers, named Ptolemy VIII Euergetes. The Ptolemy brothers agree to rule Egypt jointly instead of fighting a civil war. In 168 BCE, Antiochus IV again invaded "the South", Egypt. However, this second campaign against Egypt would end in ignominy. "Ships of the western coastlands" ("ships of Kittim", [Numbers 24:24](#)), would come from the west, past Cyprus. They were the Romans fleet vessels under the command of Roman consul Gaius Popilius Laenas, who would arrive at Alexandria before Antiochus reached it. He would inform Antiochus of the Roman senate's order to withdraw, forcing Antiochus to give his answer right then —whether he would continue to fight. The general drew a circle in the sand, forced Antiochus to stand inside it, before he was allowed to exit the circle, he had to decide whether return home or prepare for war with Rome, which would put Antiochus in a state of war with the Roman republic. The other decision would force Antiochus to retreat from Egypt, withdrawing in shameful humiliation— which is what he did, since he feared the Roman fleet, **"ships of the western coastlands", "ships of Kittim" (compare [Numbers 24:24](#))**. These **"ships"** had sailed from the west past Kittim (Cyprus). On the way home, he vented his anger and humiliation on the Jews the people of **"the holy covenant"**, determined to exterminate the Jewish religion, attacking Jerusalem in 168 BCE.

"His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him"—[Daniel 11:31,32 NIV](#)

Antiochus would once again attack Israel, while returning to Syria. He captured and plundered Jerusalem in 167 BCE, desecrated the Temple, and stopped the Jews' **"daily sacrifice"** at the altar, and made all Mosaic Law practices illegal. He rewarded those who would come over to him, **"those who have violated the holy covenant"**. The Temple was desecrated when he sacrificed pigs on an altar erected in honor of the pagan Greek god Zeus Olympius. ([1 Maccabees 1:54,59](#); [2 Maccabees 6:2](#)). According to Jesus Law, pigs were unclean and were not to be touched or eaten. ([Daniel 8:9-14, 23-26](#)), and was considered to

be one of the worst insults against the Jews. This prefigured a similar abomination that Jesus predicted would be erected in the future ([Matthew 24:15](#); [Luke 21:20](#)).

Antiochus harassed and killed whoever refused to ‘**violate the covenant**’ ([1 Maccabees 1:43-61](#)). **“The people who know their God”**, who would resist the Hellenizers and would be ready to die for their faith, are foretold to **“firmly resist him”**, as expressed in the Maccabean revolt ([1 Maccabees 1:62-64](#)).

“Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time”—[Daniel 11:33-35 NIV](#)

“Those who are wise” are the godly leaders of the Jewish resistance movement, also called the Hasidim. They are accurately foretold to teach many, but would also face great persecution, and some Jews were martyred, as they resisted the pagan Hellenizers . **“Fall by . . . etc”**, see [Hebrews 11:36-38](#). **“A little help”** refers to the early successes of the guerrilla uprising in 168 BCE that originated in Modein, 17 miles NW of Jerusalem, under the leadership of the elderly priest, Matthias and his son Judas Maccabeus. Together with Matthias’ other 4 sons (John, Simon, Eleazar, and Jonathan) and their followers, they were called the Maccabees. They instigated a national revolt which Antiochus, who occupied elsewhere, could not put down. In December 165 BCE and on into 164 BCE, three years after the Temple had been desecrated, the Maccabees recaptured Jerusalem, removed **“the abomination that causes desolation”** (the statue of Zeus), cleansed the altar, and the altar of the Temple was rededicated. Then the daily sacrifices were restored ([Daniel 8:11-14,26](#); [1 Maccabees 1:59](#); [4:36-39](#)). They established the festival of Hanukkah to commemorate this ([John 10:22](#)), which is still observed by Jews today.

“The king will do as he pleases, exalting himself and claiming to be greater than

every god, even blaspheming the God of gods. He will succeed, but only until the time of wrath is completed. For what has been determined will surely take place”—Daniel 11:36 NLT

Antiochus IV thought that he was equal to God (2 Maccabees 9:1-10:12). Like Alexander (8:4; 11:3) and Antiochus the Great (11:16), but unlike the Achaemenids, who in their inscriptions consistently ascribe their success to the will of Ahura Mazda. Antiochus IV, in his old age, had himself represented on his coins with the features of Zeus Olympios. God would hem him in until the time of wrath was completed. Antiochus suddenly contracted a very painful disease and died in 163 BCE in the mountains of Persia (Daniel 8:25; 1 Maccabees 4:52,53;6:16; 2 Maccabees 9:4,28; 10:5).

“He will have no respect for the gods of his ancestors, or for the god loved by women, or for any other god, for he will boast that he is greater than them all”—Daniel 11:37 NLT

Antiochus IV forsook the Syrian gods in order to worship the Greek gods. The successors of Seleucus I honored Apollo as their principle deity. Antiochus IV also was a devotee of Zeus Olympios (vs. 36), whom he identified with Jupiter Capitolinus (vs. 38). **“The god loved by women”** might be one of the Canaanite or Egyptian fertility deities, or it more likely to Adonis (Tammuz, a Babylonian fertility god—Ezekiel 8:14). He was foretold to not recognize any deity or religions at all, not even pagan ones. Instead, he will proclaim himself to be divine, and the ultimate power!

“Instead of these, he will worship the god of fortresses—a god his ancestors never knew—and lavish on him gold, silver, precious stones and expensive gifts”—Daniel 11:38 NLT

The “god of fortresses” is believed by some to be Jupiter or Zeus. Another possibility is that it may refer to the lavish gifts that Antiochus gave to cities and to Greek temples, perhaps to increase his reputation and power. The primary implication is that this king will make war his

god. More than all his predecessors he will wage war and glorify its horrors.

“He will use the people of an alien god to defend the fortresses; he will confer great honors on those whom he acknowledges, by giving them wide authority and by parcelling the country out for rent”—[Daniel 11:39](#) NJB

This is an allusion to the Syrians and the renegade Jews with whom the king had garrisoned at the new citadel, known as the Acra ([1 Maccabees 1:33,34](#)), and the Seleucid policy of leasing conquered territory back to its defeated inhabitants ([1 Maccabees 3:36](#)).

It is truly amazing that the even minor details, not to mention major points, concerning Antiochus IV were foretold 350 years in advance! Only the Almighty Creator could do such a thing. This gives us great confidence that all Bible prophecies which are not yet fulfilled will be fulfilled ([Titus 1:2](#)), with precision accuracy!