

The Sure Word of Prophecy, part 2

Wed. 3/8/23

Background : Antiochus Megas returned to his capital and reveled in his latest victory. He allowed Egypt to live under it's new child king, Ptolemy V, who ruled for 24 years (204-180 BC). For the first decade young Ptolemy had the help of two courtiers, Sosibius and Agathocles. Agathocles quickly solidified the new regime. He hired chosen mercenaries and build fenced cities from Egypt through Sinai, Philistia and Israel. He fortified them with stockpiles of munitions. At that time Egypt was 'ruling' over Israel in their fortified fenced cities.

- v 15 the king of the north
take the most fenced cities
the south shall not withstand. In 201 BC Antiochus Megas rallied his armies and attacked the Ptolemaic strongholds and by 198 BC he was victorious. This ended all Egyptian rule in Judea.
- v 16 he shall stand in the glorious land
which by his hand shall be consumed And Antiochus Megas now had dominion over Israel. And he wasted the Holy Land taking vast spoil for his army.

v 17 Next Antiochus set his face to enter Egypt with the strength of his whole kingdom.

But he had to change his plans because Egypt had a new ally : Rome. Egypt supplied the city of Rome with grain, so the Romans now supported the Egyptians. Antiochus, then, diplomatically proposed a peace treaty and offered his young daughter Cleopatra I (glory-father) in marriage to the young Egyptian king Ptolemy V. Young Cleopatra needed her mother and a nurse to care for her, and they were sent as part of the agreement. So she was known as the daughter of women.

Antiochus schemed for Cleopatra to privately work against her Egyptian husband and spy for her Syrian father, i.e. corrupting her. But his plan failed. Cleopatra joined with her husband and even took sides with the Romans against her father: but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him.

v 18 After this he shall turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many. When Antiochus saw that his scheme with Cleopatra failed, he turned his attention to other places. He fitted a fleet of 300 vessels with munitions and sent them to assail the isles of Asia Minor.

But a prince . . . shall cause the reproach to cease. Prince Lucius Scipio Asiaticus of Cornelia defended the isles and engaged Antiochus when his fleet disembarked at Magnesia. Prince Scipio forces were heavily out numbered and if he lost the Romans would take his crown : his own reproach. So Scipio launched a bold surprise frontal attack using archers and slingers who bombarded Antiochus troops with projectiles. Antiochus began a slow organized retreat at first, but his army eventually dispersed in the face of the continuous projectile assault.

So Antiochus gathered his surviving troops and retreated to Sardes . . . he (Scipio) shall cause it (the reproach) to turn upon him (Antiochus). Battle of Magnesia, December 190 BC

v 19 Then shall he turn his face toward the fort of his own land. Antiochus returned to Antioch and sent ambassadors to Rome to negotiate a peace treaty. The Roman terms were harsh. Antiochus Megas was ordered to relinquish all his holdings in Europe and Asia minor and to pay tribute to Rome : an initial payment of 2,500 talents followed by 1,000 talents for the next 12 years . . . but he shall stumble. So he traversed the Eastern provinces of his Empire to raise the tribute money. And when he tried to plunder silver and gold from the Temple of Bel in Elymais (in the province of Elam) the people revolted and slew him [in 187 BC] . . . he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

v 20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes.

Antiochus Megas eldest son, Seleucus Philopater, took the throne at the age of 9 years old. And he was forced to raise taxes to pay the Roman tribute.

. . . in the glory of the kingdom . Ten years later he was hard pressed to raise enough money from his own subjects so he sent his treasurer, Heliodorus, to Jerusalem to confiscate the treasures of the Temple.

. . . but within a few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle . Shortly after his treasurer raided God's Temple, Seleucus mysteriously died at age 21 in 175 BC. Secular historians postulate that he was poisoned (?)

[v 21 - 31]

Antiochus IV Epiphanes

reign 175 - 164 BC

This next section deals with the most cruel king of the north, the greatest Syrian persecutor of Israel, the son of Antiochus Megas : Antiochus Epiphanes.

v 21 in his estate (Seleucus Philopater) . . . shall stand up a vile person = Antiochus Epiphanes to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom - Demetrius I Soter was next in line for the throne, but he was being held hostage in Rome. In his absence, Antiochus usurped his throne. Antiochus was 40 years old and experienced in politics. He immediately held opulent banquets with the finest food, clothing and spices. He scattered money to the Seleucid army and would walk the streets of Antioch and give money to the common people. He stole the hearts (2 Sam 15:6) of the people and obtained the kingdom by flatteries.

v 22 As soon as he secured the throne he built a coalition with Attalus and Eumenes, king of Pergamum = the arms of a flood. And together they attacked the remaining Egyptian armies in a military onslaught (i.e. a flood, see 9:26). The Egyptian armies were defeated . . . broken.

yea, also the prince of the covenant The rightful heir, Demetrius learned of Antiochus dealings and wrote that he would soon be released. Antiochus pretended that he would resign when Demetrius returned.

v 23 And after the league made with him (Demetrius) ... he (Antiochus) shall work deceitfully, for he shall come up - Antiochus continued to give gifts and his reputation grew. and become strong with a small people He enjoyed the support and favor of the common man in Antioch.

v 24 This verse describes how he took his 'bribery show' on the road, campaigning in the fattest places in the province (i.e. of the Syrian Empire) . . . scattering among them ... riches. None of the ancestor kings had ever done so . . . that which his fathers have not done.

he shall forcast his devices against the strong holds He made speeches reviewing the history of the "awful Egyptians" and their hostility toward the Syrian people. He wanted to recruit young men from the Syrian provinces for his next war against Egypt.

even for a time (1) Antiochus took two years to build up his army.

(2) Antiochus manner of rule suddenly changed, he quit gifts and ruled by force.

v 25 and he shall stir up his power . . . against the king of the south

Antiochus led his great army down through Israel to attack Ptolemy V Philometer.

Word had reached the Egyptian king of the coming attack, so he had prepared a very great and mighty army.

. . . but he shall not stand - for two reasons : (1) His principal ally, Rome, was embroiled in the Third Macedonian War and could not help Egypt.

v 26 (2) Ptolemy was betrayed by his own counsellors - they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him. Many of his war cabinet took bribes from Antiochus and gave Ptolemy and his generals deadly advice - they forcast devices against him (v 25).

The Egyptian army was led into ambushes and overrun by the Syrian forces - his (Antiochus) army shall overflow : and many - Egyptian soldiers - shall fall down slain.