

Daniel's Vision of World History (Part 1)



DANIEL 11:2-35

**TEXT, EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL
HELPS**

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DIVISION III

The History and Destiny of Israel: Five Prophecies or Pictures Clearly Seen in Daniel's Visions, [Daniel 8:1–12:13](#)

Daniel's Vision of World History (Part 1): A Prophecy of Conflict, War, and Horrible Suffering, [Daniel 11:2-35](#)

[\(Daniel 11:2-35\)](#) **Introduction:** a great cosmic warfare is being fought for the souls of people both by the forces of good and the forces of evil. This warfare is being waged by the angels of God and the angels of Satan who are locked in a constant fight to influence the behavior of people and nations. We saw a glimpse of this spiritual warfare in the former chapter ([Daniel 10:1–11:1](#)). As was noted, the objective of the demonic forces was to stop Daniel's prayer, preventing it from ever being answered. The important prayer was a plea for God to protect the Jews who had returned to the **Promised Land** to rebuild their nation and temple. Daniel knew that the believing remnant had returned to fulfill their God-given purpose: to be the channel through whom God would send His Holy Word and the Messiah into the world.

This was the reason Satan and his forces sought to stop Daniel's prayer. If the *evil one* could somehow destroy the Jews, he could stop God's purpose. He could prevent the Messiah from being born and keep the Holy Bible—God's Word—from ever being completed (or fulfilled).

Scripture *reveals* **several major efforts** by Satan to thwart God's plans to use the Jews as His channel to save the world.

1. First, as just pointed out; Satan made a supreme effort to stop Daniel's prayer from being answered. He sent his most powerful angels to prevent King Cyrus of Persia from supporting and protecting the Jews. But the LORD countered with His angelic forces to stop the evil. And Cyrus not only supported and protected the Jewish captives but he also set them free.

2. Some fifty years later, the prime minister Haman, who served during the reign of King Ahasuerus (**Xerxes**), made a supreme effort to exterminate the Jews. But God raised up the godly Queen Esther to save her people (see [Esther 3:1-5](#); [Esther 4:1–10:3](#)). Based upon the revelation of the previous chapter, God was at work behind the scene of world history. God's archangel Michael was waging spiritual war against Satan's angelic *prince of Persia* ([Daniel 10:13](#)) in order to protect Esther and to influence King Xerxes to save the Jews.

3. Another of Satan's attempts to stop God's plan can be seen in the savage persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes. More than any other ruler in former history, this tyrant attempted to destroy the Jewish faith, the worship of the LORD, the only living and true God. As the angel (**probably Gabriel**) told Daniel, once the evil angelic prince of Persia was defeated, and then the demonic *prince of Greece* would come. Thus Gabriel and Michael, with their army of angelic forces, would be battling to work out God's will during the Grecian dominance of the known world.

The LORD would be victorious over all the forces of evil, even over a tyrant like Antiochus Epiphanes. God would use His angelic forces to save the Jews because they were His chosen people, the channel through whom He would send the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

The present Scripture is a continuation of the captivating vision that God gave Daniel. God wanted Daniel and all succeeding generations to know the major events of world history up until the very end, that is, the major events that involved the Jews and God's plan of redemption for the world. Thus the LORD gave Daniel a vision of the key events that would stretch from his own day right up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. But note that this prophecy skips over "**the times of the Gentiles**" ([Luke 21:24](#)), for this period of history does not concern the people (**the Jews**) through whom the Messiah would come. Of course, we who are Gentiles are offered the wonderful salvation of Christ and the privilege of hearing and reading God's Word. **But we are not the people who brought Christ and God's Word into the world. The Jews are: "Salvation is of the Jews" ([John 4:22](#)).** Thus, the ages of Gentile history are skipped over, and the focus of the present prophecy becomes the events of the end time.

Daniel's vision covers the last era of human history, in particular the rise of the antichrist and the terrifying tribulation he will launch upon earth. These events concern the Jews; therefore, they must be included in the history of God's deliverance of the human race from the tyrants of this world, both human and spiritual tyrants (**Satan and his demonic angelic force, [Ephesians 6:12](#)**).

The present Scripture is a remarkable prophecy, a prediction of history that would begin with the Persian Empire of Daniel's day and run right up to Antiochus Epiphanes, the arch-persecutor of God's people. Keep in mind that the events in this Scripture had not yet taken place. This Scripture was a prophecy—a prediction of the future—to the people of Daniel's day. As we look back upon the events today, they are history. And their fulfillment is astounding, even down to the details of the prophecy. As we study this passage, we should note how accurately God fulfills His Holy Word. This Scripture assures us of God's love and the fulfillment of all His wonderful promises.

This is, Daniel's Vision of World History (Part 1): A Prophecy of Conflict, War, and Horrible Suffering, [Daniel 11:2-35](#).

1. **The conflicts between rulers and nations: a proof that God fulfills His Holy Word (vv.1-20).**
2. **The great sufferings under the Syrian king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes: a picture of severe persecution (vv.21-35).**

1. (Daniel 11:2-20) Sowing, Results, Reap What One Sows—Judgment, Prophecy Concerning, Reaping What One Sows—Tribulation, Caused by, World’s Rulers—History, Prophecy Concerning, War and Its Horrors—War and Conflict, Prophecy Concerning, Fact of History; Effect on the Jews; Effect on Believers—Prophecy, Conflict Between Nations, Discussed—Prophecy, Concerning War, Between Rulers of Egypt and Syria—History, Prophecy Concerning, Specific Rulers to Arise: this amazing prophecy predicted the rise of rulers and kingdoms and the wars they would fight.

As each ruler swept across the scene of world history, they and their people would prove what God had predicted. A people would reap what they sow.

To help the reader in his or her study, the Scripture and outline will be placed with each point as well as here at the beginning:

a. The first prophecy concerned the rulers of the Persian Empire (**Daniel 11:2**). Three kings who were important to Biblical history would succeed Cyrus, who was ruling when Daniel received this vision. The three kings were **Cambyes (530–522 B.C.), Smerdis (522 B.C.), and Darius I Hystaspes (522–486 B.C.)**. After these three, a fourth king would arise who would become far more powerful than the others, so powerful that he would launch an invasion against the kingdom of Greece. This king was Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) (see **Esther 1:1-22**). It was this invasion into Greece that aroused Alexander the Great to retaliate against Persia. Therefore, none of the other kings of Persia are mentioned or predicted because they would not become directly involved in the history that affected the Jews and God’s plan for world redemption.

b. The second prophecy concerned the mighty Greek ruler, Alexander the Great (**336–323 B.C.**). Alexander ruled a vast kingdom with great power, doing as he pleased. Note how this last statement—*doing as he pleased*—indicates the horrible sin of arrogant pride, as well as the fact that Alexander exalted himself. He was driven by the lust for power. Nobody could stand in his way as he swept across the face of the earth, conquering nation after nation. Nobody could stop him despite the bloody slaughter, injury, pain, destruction, and devastation he caused. In **334 B.C.** he launched a retaliatory attack against the Persian Empire. And within just four years he completed his conquest of the empire (**331 B.C.**).

Within nine years, when Alexander was at the height of his power, he suddenly died from a high-grade fever (**323 B.C.**). After his death his empire was divided into four kingdoms. Although he had two sons, neither one of them ruled over any territory.

Instead, his kingdom was divided and given to four of his generals. But none of them was able to achieve or to carry Greece to its former power (**for more discussion see [Daniel 7:6](#); [Daniel 8:8](#)**).

c. The third prophecy concerned the king of the **South (Egypt)** and the king of the **North (Syria)**. These two kings were **Ptolemy I Soter** and **Seleucus I Nicator** (**[Daniel 11:5](#)**). Although there were four divisions of the Greek Empire, the two mentioned here were the nations that were directly south (Egypt) and north (Syria) of Judah. Thus they were the two divisions of the Grecian Empire that concerned the Jewish people and God's plan of redemption for the world. **Ptolemy** had been a very capable commander under Alexander the Great, and **Seleucus** had been a high ranking officer of lesser rank.

In **321 B.C.** Seleucus was appointed the ruler over Babylonia, but he was attacked by another commander who had served under Alexander, the commander Antigonus. Thus Seleucus had to flee for his life, escaping to Egypt under Ptolemy's protection. Some time later Antigonus was defeated in battle, so Seleucus was able to return to Babylon with Ptolemy of Egypt supporting him. Some years later Seleucus became strong enough to conquer all of Syria and Media to add to his Babylonian kingdom.

Thus the stage was set for the rule of the Ptolomies in Egypt and the rule of the Seleucids in Syria. As is seen throughout the remainder of this division of study (**points d and e**), the focus is upon the Egyptian dominance over Syria (**[Daniel 11:6-12](#)**) and then the Syrian dominance over Egypt (**[Daniel 11:13-20](#)**).

d. The fourth prophecy concerned the Egyptian or Ptolemy dominance over Syria (**[Daniel 11:6-12](#)**).

The angel *revealed* **five significant historical facts** to Daniel and to us through this prophecy.

1) The two dynasties would form an alliance through marriage (**[Daniel 11:6](#)**). The two rulers involved were Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Antiochus II Theos. The agreement between the two rulers stated that the daughter of Ptolemy, Berenice, was to marry the Syrian king Antiochus II (the king of the North), and that their son would eventually become the ruler of Syria.

2) However, the alliance would not last, for both Berenice and Antiochus would be killed by the king's former wife Laodice. The former wife had wanted her own son to be the designated ruler of Syria. Thus she formed a conspiracy against the king and was successful in having him, Berenice, and their son killed. But the royal reprisals were not to stop with these brutal assassinations.

3) The prophecy included a prediction that the brother of Berenice would succeed his father and attack Syria to avenge his sister (**[Daniel 11:7](#)**). Berenice's brother was Ptolemy III. He was victorious in seeking revenge, defeating the Syrians in battle and plundering the wealth of the nation, including seizing their idols or so-

called gods. After executing vengeance against Syria, Ptolemy III of Egypt pursued a policy of peace for some years. But eventually the Syrian ruler Seleucus II invaded Egypt ([Daniel 11:9](#)). However, the southern king Ptolemy sent the northern king Seleucus scurrying back to his own homeland in defeat (**240 B.C.**).

4) Daniel's vision also included predictions concerning the sons of Seleucus II, who succeeded him: **Seleucus III** and then **Antiochus III** ([Daniel 11:10](#)). Both of these sons would continue Syria's conquest. Note how Scripture predicted that these two rulers would mobilize a mighty army and stir up war, overwhelming those whom they attacked. The nations they conquered included Phoenicia, Palestine itself, and some of Egypt's fortress cities.

5) God also revealed to Daniel that the Egyptian king from the South (Ptolemy IV) would march out against the king of the North, defeating Antiochus III of Syria. Note the prediction that Ptolemy IV would be filled with sinful pride because he was able to slaughter thousands. However, his victory would be short-lived, for God would not allow him to continue prevailing over nations. His triumphant slaughter of armies and populations would end, an indication that God's judgment would fall upon him.

e. The fifth prophecy concerned the Syrian (northern) dominance over the Egyptian (southern) rulers ([Daniel 11:13-20](#)). A significant shift in power now took place, a shift from the Ptolomies of Egypt to the Seleucids of Syria. Remember that this was a prophecy given to Daniel, a prediction of events that were to take place in the future. To us these events are history, but to Daniel and his people they were events that had not yet happened. As stated earlier, an amazing fulfillment of prophecy! Antiochus III became so powerful that historians today refer to him as **Antiochus the Great** (**223–187 B.C.**). Thus he and the son who succeeded him carry us up to the contemptible ruler Antiochus Epiphanes.

1) The angel predicted that Antiochus the Great would mobilize a large army and invade Egypt, Palestine and Phoenicia ([Daniel 11:13-19](#)). His first campaign would be against the Egyptian king of the South ([Daniel 11:14](#)). In this campaign, some lawless Jews who hoped to gain their independence from Egypt would revolt against the Ptolomies. But they would be unsuccessful.

Note the facts that were prophesied about Antiochus the Great:

1. He would have his soldiers pursue a division of the Egyptian forces who retreated to Sidon. The Syrian army would set up a siege around Sidon and eventually capture the fortified city ([Daniel 11:15^a](#)).
2. He would be so powerful that the forces of Egypt would not be able to resist him ([Daniel 11:15^b](#)). Antiochus the Great would do as he pleased and no one would be able to stop him ([Daniel 11:16^a](#)).
3. He would conquer the beautiful land of Israel ([Daniel 11:16^b](#)). Note the prediction that he would have the power to destroy it, which meant that he would control the entire land of Palestine. This

conquest was setting the stage for the rise and rule of Antiochus Epiphanes, who would literally crush the Jews.

4. He would use his power to force Egypt to sign a *peace treaty* ([Daniel 11:17](#)). This treaty would be sealed by giving his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Ptolemy V. At this time, Cleopatra was only a small child.
5. He would see his plan to control Egypt fail ([Daniel 11:17^b](#)). His daughter Cleopatra cared more for her husband in Egypt than she did for her father in Syria. Therefore she supported her husband, not the schemes of her father.
6. He would then turn his attention to conquering the Mediterranean coastlands, the islands and countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea ([Daniel 11:18](#)). But Antiochus was soundly defeated by a battalion of Roman soldiers at the Battle of Magnesia in 190 B.C. After this humiliating loss, the Syrian ruler was forced to turn back to his own country.
7. He would soon thereafter stumble and fall, which means that he would be killed ([Daniel 11:19](#)). Surprisingly, the ordinary citizens of the city of Elymais killed Antiochus the Great when he was plundering their temple (187 B.C.).

2) Antiochus' son, Seleucus IV, immediately succeeded his father ([Daniel 11:20](#)). However, in order to pay the tribute demanded by Rome, he was forced to impose heavy taxes on the citizens of Syria and on the nations under Syria's control, which included Palestine. Thus the Jewish people were severely oppressed under their new king's leadership. Seleucus IV was poisoned by his tax collector, Heliodorus, in 175 B.C.

Thought 1. One important lesson jumps out at us as we review this prophecy: God fulfills His Holy Word. Down through the centuries, God has given us prophecy after prophecy to help us and to warn us of coming events. Many of these prophecies have already come to pass, but many still lie out in the future. They, too, will be fulfilled—unquestionably! All the prophecies that predict the coming blessings and judgment of God will be carried out. What God has predicted will happen. God's Holy Word is an absolute surety, completely trustworthy.

This is the strong declaration of the Lord God Himself:

Matthew 1:20-23 (NASB)

“²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

²¹ She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel , " which translated means, "God with us."

Matthew 2:14-15 (NASB)

¹⁴ So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.

¹⁵ He remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

Matthew 2:23 (NASB)

²³ And came and lived in a city called Nazareth. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Matthew 4:13-16 (NASB)

¹³ And leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.

¹⁴ *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet:

¹⁵ The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali , By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles —

¹⁶ The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light , And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death , Upon them a light dawned ."

Matthew 5:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

Matthew 8:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases."

Matthew 27:35 (NASB)

³⁵ And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots."

Luke 21:33 (NASB)

³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

Luke 24:44 (NASB)

⁴⁴ Now He said to them, These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

John 5:39 (NASB)

“³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me.”

John 19:24 (NASB)

“²⁴ So they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, *to decide* whose it shall be; *this was* to fulfill the Scripture: They Divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots .”

Acts 3:18 (NASB)

“¹⁸ But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

1 Kings 8:56 (NASB)

“⁵⁶ Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant.”

Ezekiel 12:25 (NASB)

“²⁵ For I the Lord will speak, and whatever word I speak will be performed. It will no longer be delayed, for in your days, O rebellious house, I will speak the word and perform it," declares the Lord God.”

2. ([Daniel 11:21-35](#)) Persecution, of the Jews, by Antiochus Epiphanes—Persecution, Example of, Jews, by Antiochus Epiphanes—Antiochus Epiphanes, History of; Persecution of Jews—Suffering, of Persecution, Example of, Jews: this amazing prophecy predicted the severe persecution the Jews would suffer at the hands of the infamous Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes.

Two other passages in Daniel have already discussed this evil tyrant ([Daniel 8:9-12](#), [Daniel 8:23-25](#). Also see [DEEPER STUDY # 1—Daniel 8:23-25](#) for more discussion.) Antiochus actually chose the name “**Epiphanes**” because it means *illustrious, manifestation, glorious one*. By choosing the name, he was claiming to be an illustrious manifestation of the gods he worshipped. He even had his image and the Greek word for god (Theos) impressed on the coins minted during the years of his rule. However, Antiochus was anything but *illustrious* and *glorious*. In reality, he was just what Scripture calls him: a *vile, contemptible, despicable* person ([Daniel 11:21](#)). He was the tyrant who did all he could to exterminate the Jews and wipe them off the face of the earth.

While reading the Scripture and outline, note that the prophecy **highlights three major focal points** of this evil ruler’s time in power:

a. First, the prophecy predicted Antiochus’ rise to power ([Daniel 11:21-24](#)). This evil tyrant would not inherit the throne; instead, he would seize it through guile and intrigue. When Seleucus IV Philopator died in 175 B.C., his young son Demetrius was the true heir to the kingdom. But Demetrius was being held hostage in Rome, so his uncle Antiochus was placed in charge of the government.

However, through the ensuing months, Antiochus laid out a scheme to secure the throne for himself. He deceitfully secured the support of other government officials through promises of payoffs and promotions.

Sometime thereafter, he was able to consolidate his power by a victory over Egypt. Egypt had invaded Syria in an attempt to regain the territories of Palestine and Phoenicia that the Syrians had earlier conquered ([Daniel 11:22](#)). Right after defeating Egypt, Antiochus had the High Priest Onias III executed. **Note** that the High Priest is referred to as “**a prince of the covenant.**”

After defeating Egypt, Antiochus formed a deceitful treaty with the defeated king of Egypt, Ptolemy VI. While Ptolemy VI had been absent from Egypt, his brother took the throne. Thus Ptolemy VI was willing to make Egypt a vassal state of Syria in return for Syria’s support as he sought to regain his throne. Of course, Antiochus’s underlying motive in the plan was to secure a power base in Egypt. It seems that he sought to consolidate his power even more by taking the wealth he plundered from conquered nations and distributing it among his supporters ([Daniel 11:24^a](#)). Although the proud Antiochus had grandiose plans to conquer many other lands, his days were numbered. The LORD would allow only so much slaughter and violence by this evil, contemptible tyrant.

b. Second, the prophecy predicted Antiochus’s invasion of Egypt ([Daniel 11:25-27](#)). These verses are actually a more detailed description of the tyrant’s first victory over Egypt, the victory that consolidated his power right after taking the throne ([Daniel 11:22-23](#)). Fortunately for Antiochus, he had a large army when Egypt launched its attack to recover the lands of Palestine and Phoenicia. Thus he was able to defeat Ptolemy VI of Egypt. But note why: because of internal plots against Ptolemy. Some of Ptolemy’s most trusted officials—those who ate from the king’s own provisions—betrayed him ([Daniel 11:26](#)). It was while Ptolemy VI was being held captive by Antiochus that his brother Ptolemy VII secured the throne.

As mentioned above, it was the usurping of his throne that aroused Ptolemy VI to form an alliance with Antiochus. If the alliance succeeded, it would restore the defeated king back to the throne of Egypt. It was a unique opportunity for Antiochus to secure a power base in Egypt, as well as providing a rich tax base for the Syrian kingdom. **But note** what the prophetic Scripture foretold: this treaty would fail due to God’s appointed judgment ([Daniel 11:27^b](#)). Antiochus was doomed.

c. Third, the prophecy predicted Antiochus’s persecution of the Jews ([Daniel 11:28-35](#)). In fact, the main point of the entire chapter and of all the historical facts predicted so far have pointed to the rise of this evil, contemptible tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanes. This prophecy predicted that he would attempt to destroy the worship of the LORD, the only living and true God.

Antiochus Epiphanes wanted the people of his kingdom to commit their first loyalty to the state and the king, not to some *unseen god* professed by the Jews. Most people throughout his kingdom had no difficulty declaring their first loyalty to the state, for they worshipped many gods. Adding the state or king to their list of gods to be worshipped posed no problem for them.

But not so with the Jews. They had been entrusted with the knowledge of the LORD and had been given the wonderful privilege of protecting God's Word for the human race. Thus, faithful Jews—not all Jews, but *faithful* Jews—were willing to die to preserve the Name of the LORD and His Holy Word. Faithful Jews knew that the human race was to be saved through the message of God's Holy Word and the Messiah He was to send into the world.

Daniel's vision of the future **included five predictions** about Antiochus Epiphanes' wicked treatment of the Jews, all of which have now been fulfilled.

1) The angel prophesied that Antiochus would return to Syria with great plunder after his first campaign against Egypt (169 B.C.). As a matter of fact, as he passed through Israel on his return home, he found an uprising taking place in Palestine. He put down the revolt, massacring 80,000 citizens, including women and children. He also plundered the temple of its treasures ([2 Maccabees 5:12-21](#)).

2) The angel prophesied that Antiochus would again invade Egypt, but this time he would be turned back by the Romans and forced to retreat in shame ([Daniel 11:29](#)).

3) The angel prophesied that Antiochus would vent his anger on the Jews, the people of the covenant ([Daniel 11:30-32^a](#)). **But note** that some Jews forsook the *holy covenant, meaning* that they turned their backs on the LORD. The leader of those who supported Antiochus was the High Priest Menelaus, a politician who had been put in office by Antiochus. As predicted, the armed forces of the tyrant desecrated the temple and abolished the daily sacrifice ([Daniel 11:31](#)).

Furthermore, they set up the abomination of desolation, an altar to the pagan god Zeus, within the temple. Being a *master of intrigue*, Antiochus used flattery to corrupt and lead many of the Jews to violate the covenant of the LORD.

4) The angel prophesied that Antiochus Epiphanes would be resisted by a core of true Jewish believers and rebels ([Daniel 11:32^b-34](#)). The leaders among these staunch believers were the Macabees. These heroic patriots were mobilized by a Jewish priest named Mattathias and his five sons. The most famous of his sons was Judah, nicknamed Macabeus, which means the *hammerer*.

Many in Israel joined the Macabean revolt, choosing to stand firm for the LORD rather than deny Him or profane the holy covenant. They were willing to die for their faith, and many were martyred ([Daniel 11:33](#)).

Some fell by the sword and others were burned alive. Still others were arrested, imprisoned, and had all of their property confiscated by the state. These committed patriots gave their all in their fight for righteousness and freedom to worship the LORD. At first, it looked like the Macabean revolt would fall or collapse, but other Jewish patriots soon began to join their cause ([Daniel 11:34](#)). As the revolutionaries began to defeat the Syrians in skirmishes and small battles—even against overwhelming odds—other Jews began to join the troops. But as the movement grew, there were naturally some who were not as sincere or committed as the initial loyalists.

5) The angel prophesied that the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes would be overcome, triumphed over by true believers, those whom the Scripture called “**the wise**” ([Daniel 11:35](#)). As just pointed out, some of the Macabean patriots were not strong believers, not fully committed to the nation or to their LORD. But many of the Jews were faithful and totally committed to the cause of saving their nation and their God-given religion. As predicted, some of the wise or faithful believers stumbled, that is, were martyred for their faith. Because of their staunch stand for the LORD, many other Jews were challenged to commit their lives to the LORD.

Therefore, God used the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes to *refine* and *purify* the Jewish people and to cleanse them from their sins, both individually and nationally. In their terrifying sufferings, some of the Jews cried out for the LORD to have mercy upon them and to save them. Of course, as is true during any period of intense suffering, many who were unbelieving and complacent turned to the LORD for help. And others who had become lethargic and complacent recommitted their lives. Many of the people’s sins and sinful lifestyles were cast away as the people turned to the LORD.

Thought 1. True believers, those who have genuinely committed their lives to Christ, will be persecuted. Any person who takes a stand for Jesus Christ and for righteousness becomes a *rod of conviction* to the unbelievers of the world. Those who reject Christ want nothing to do with Christ, for the LORD puts restraints upon their lives.

The Lord Jesus declares that He is the only way to God. Consequently, all other approaches to God are wrong. According to Christ, all other approaches to God doom a person and lead to eternal separation from God. Thus any person who rejects Christ wants nothing to do with any person who represents Christ. Unbelievers prefer to ignore and isolate believers off in a corner some place, having little if anything to do with them. Tragically, the rejection of believers—those who follow Christ and what He stands for—can lead to outright abuse, persecution, and even martyrdom.

Listen to what God’s Holy Word says about persecution:

Matthew 10:16-22 (NASB)

¹⁶ Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.

¹⁷ But beware of men, for they will hand you over to *the* courts and scourge you in their synagogues;

¹⁸ and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

¹⁹ But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say.

²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but *it is* the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

²¹ Brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

²² You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.”

Matthew 24:9 (NASB)

⁹ Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name.”

Luke 21:12 (NASB)

¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake.”

John 16:2 (NASB)

² They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.”

2 Timothy 3:12 (NASB)

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Hebrews 11:32-40 (NASB)

³² And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

³³ who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed *acts of* righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

³⁵ Women received *back* their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

³⁸ (*men* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

⁴⁰ because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.”

Revelation 2:10 (NASB)

“¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Revelation 20:4 (NASB)

“⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I *saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”

Psalms 119:86 (NASB)

“⁸⁶ All Your commandments are faithful; They have persecuted me with a lie; help me!”

Psalms 119:157 (NASB)

“¹⁵⁷ Many are my persecutors and my adversaries, *Yet* I do not turn aside from Your testimonies.”

Psalms 119:161 (NASB)

“¹⁶¹ Princes persecute me without cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your words.”