

The Master of Intrigue

“The Book of Daniel” (11:21-45)

Pastor Mike Cooke

1. The Rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164)

- A. Calls himself “Epiphanes” (god manifest)—but people call him “Epimanes” (madman)
- B. Returns from Rome as a political hostage
- C. In Athens when his brother Seleucus IV was assassinated
- D. Usurps the throne from Seleucus’ son Demetrius I, who instead takes Antiochus’ place as a hostage in Rome (v21)
- E. Goal is to make Jerusalem a Greek polis and convert it to Hellenism

2. The Assassination of Onias III (171)

- A. High Priest Onias III is replaced by his brother Jason for a large bribe and the promise to assist in Hellenization (Greek culture) (175)
- B. Jason is replaced by Menelaus for an even larger bribe
- C. Menelaus has Governor Andronicus murder Onias III (171) (v22)
 - 1) 2 Maccabees 4:34-35
“Therefore Menelaus, taking Andronicus aside, urged him to kill Onias. Andronicus came to Onias, and resorting to treachery, offered him sworn pledges and gave him his right hand; he persuaded him, though still suspicious, to come out from the place of sanctuary; then, with no regard for justice, he immediately put him out of the way. For this reason not only Jews, but many also of other nations, were grieved and displeased at the unjust murder of the man.”
 - 2) “It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them.” (Dan 8:10)
 - 3) “After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing.” (Dan 9:26)
 - 4) “Both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed.” (Dan 11:22)

3. The Sixth Syrian War (169)

- A. The regents of young Ptolemy VI Philometor, Eulaeus and Lenaeus, declare war on Antiochus IV
- B. Seleucids defeat the Ptolemies at Pelusium (Nov 170) (v25)
- C. Antiochus takes his nephew Ptolemy under his wing (169) (v27)
- D. Thebes and Memphis are occupied by the Seleucid army
- E. Alexandria rebels and Antiochus withdraws to Syria (v28)
- F. Ptolemy VI and his brother Ptolemy VIII Physcon reconcile as co-regents

4. **The Second Invasion of Egypt (168)**

- A. Antiochus IV takes Cyprus and again occupies Memphis (v29)
- B. Roman senate dispatches Gaius Popilius to defend Alexandria (v30)
- C. Popilius draws a line around Antiochus and commands him to withdraw or face a war with Rome (see Polybius)

5. **Fury Against the Holy Covenant**

- A. While he is gone, Jason leads a rebellion against Menelaus
- B. Antiochus returns and unleashes his wrath upon the rebels (July 168)
When these happenings were reported to the king, he thought that Judea was in revolt. Raging like a wild animal, he set out from Egypt and took Jerusalem by storm. He ordered his soldiers to cut down without mercy those whom they met and to slay those who took refuge in their houses. There was a massacre of young and old, a killing of women and children, a slaughter of virgins and infants. In the space of three days, eighty thousand were lost, forty thousand meeting a violent death, and the same number being sold into slavery. (2 Maccabees 5:11-14)
- C. He launches a systematic program of Greek religion (Dec 167)
 - 1) Desecration of the Temple—sacrifices and Sabbaths ended, circumcision Torah observance forbidden (v31)
 - 2) Abomination of Desolation—Olympian Zeus set up in Temple (v31)
 - 3) Flattery of Covenant Breakers—Menelaus and other Hellenizers
 - 4) Those Who Are Wise—The Maccabean Revolt

6. **Antiochus' Unfulfilled Ending**

- A. Antiochus departs to defend Babylon against the Parthians
- B. He leaves Lysias in charge to fight the Maccabees
- C. Antiochus IV dies suddenly of disease in Persia (164)
- D. The Maccabees enter Jerusalem in triumph (v32-35)
 - 1) They ritually cleanse the temple (25 Kislev—Hannukah)
 - 2) Regent Lysias lifts the ban on Jewish practices
- E. Judas Maccabeus lays siege to Acra fortress (162)
 - 1) Lysias signs an agreement with the Maccabees
 - 2) Lysias executes Menelaus to appease the rebels
 - 3) Lysias and Antiochus V are executed
- F. Demetrius I Soter appoints Alcimus as High Priest (161)
 - 1) Bacchides reinvades Judea (160)
 - 2) Judas Maccabeus is killed in battle
- G. Jonathan Apphus becomes leader and High Priest
 - 1) Alexander Balas allies with Jonathan and challenges Demetrius
 - 2) Demetrius I is killed and the Hasmonean Dynasty begins (150)

Popilius Makes Antiochus Stop the War **Polybius, Histories, Book 29**

When Antiochus had advanced to attack Ptolemy in order to possess himself of Pelusium, he was met by the Roman commander Gaius Popilius Laenas. Upon the king greeting him from some distance, and *holding out his right hand* to him, Popilius answered by holding out the tablets which contained the decree of the Senate, and bade Antiochus read that first: not thinking it right, I suppose, to give the usual sign of friendship until he knew the mind of the recipient, whether he were to be regarded as a friend or foe.

On the king, after reading the dispatch, saying that he desired to consult with his friends on the situation, Popilius did a thing which was looked upon as exceedingly overbearing and insolent. Happening to have a vine stick in his hand, he drew a circle round Antiochus with it, and ordered him to give his answer to the letter before he stepped out of that circumference. The king was *taken aback* by this haughty proceeding.

After a brief interval of *embarrassed silence*, he replied that he would do whatever the Romans demanded. Then Popilius and his colleagues shook him by the hand, and one and all greeted him with warmth. The contents of the dispatch was an order to put an end to the war with Ptolemy at once. Accordingly, a stated number of days was allowed him, within which he withdrew his army into Syria, in *high resentment indeed, and groaning in spirit*, but yielding to the necessities of the time.