

Antiochus IV Epiphanes' Against the Jews (REV73)

- 1) Antiochus Epiphanes was the king of Syria who came to power about 175 BC.
- 2) He is an evil forerunner to the still-future Antichrist.
- 3) He was one of the Seleucids who in succession to Alexander the Great built a realm in Syria and adjacent lands.
- 4) Epiphanes' name means *God made manifest*.
- 5) Epiphanes sought to force Greek culture and manners on the Jews. In doing so, he was furthering the policy of his predecessor, Alexander.
- 6) Alexander the Great desired to create a Hellenistic empire.
- 7) Antiochus' initiative found support with some of the 'free thinking' members of the priesthood, but there was a core of conservative priests who refused to abandon the ancient faith.
- 8) This introduction of Greek religion threatened to destroy the Jewish religious community. Refusing to allow this to happen, some of the Jews fought back. This is known as the Maccabean Revolution.
- 9) In 170 BC a new law requiring all citizens to present themselves quarterly to “pay formal homage to Antiochus Epiphanes as the senior god of the Seleucids” was published. The day of homage would fall on the Jewish Sabbath.
- 10) In 168 BC Antiochus Epiphanes arrogantly attacked and occupied Jerusalem:

- He entered the Holy of Holies in the Temple.
 - He desecrated the sanctuary by offering unclean animals upon the altar of burnt-offerings.
 - He polluted the whole building by sprinkling it with water in which flesh had been boiled.
 - He dedicated the Temple itself to Jupiter Olympus.
 - He erected a statue of Jupiter Olympus.
 - He plundered the temple treasures.
- 11) The Jews rebelled and, eventually, won their independence.
- 12) Thus, Antiochus Epiphanes represents a type of “the abomination of desolation” foretold by the prophet Daniel. He serves as a foreshadow of the coming Antichrist.

Primary Source: 1 Maccabees

Antiochus Loots Jewish Temple¹

1 Maccabees 1:20-24: “And after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt, he returned again in the hundred forty and third year, and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, ²¹ And entered proudly into the sanctuary, and took away the golden altar, and the candlestick of light, and all the vessels thereof, ²² And the table of the shewbread, and the pouring vessels, and the vials. and the censers of gold, and the veil, and the crown, and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all which he pulled off. ²³ He took also the silver and the gold, and the precious vessels: also he took the hidden treasures which he found. ²⁴ And when he had taken all away, he went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly.”

¹ This intertestamental period is also well documented in the works of Josephus.

Mattathias Laments

1 Maccabees 2:1-14: “In those days arose Mattathias the son of John, the son of Simeon, a priest of the sons of Joarib, from Jerusalem, and dwelt in Modin. ² And he had five sons, Joannan, called Caddis: ³ Simon; called Thassi: ⁴ Judas, who was called Maccabeus: ⁵ Eleazar, called Avaran: and Jonathan, whose surname was Apphus. ⁶ And when he saw the blasphemies that were committed in Juda and Jerusalem, ⁷ He said, Woe is me! wherefore was I born to see this misery of my people, and of the holy city, and to dwell there, when it was delivered into the hand of the enemy, and the sanctuary into the hand of strangers? ⁸ Her temple is become as a man without glory. ⁹ Her glorious vessels are carried away into captivity, her infants are slain in the streets, her young men with the sword of the enemy. ¹⁰ What nation hath not had a part in her kingdom and gotten of her spoils? ¹¹ All her ornaments are taken away; of a free woman she is become a bondslave. ¹² And, behold, our sanctuary, even our beauty and our glory, is laid waste, and the Gentiles have profaned it. ¹³ To what end therefore shall we live any longer? ¹⁴ Then Mattathias and his sons rent their clothes, and put on sackcloth, and mourned very sore.”

Mattathias and His Sons Rebel

1 Maccabees 2:15-16, 19-25, 27-41: “¹⁵ In the mean while the king’s officers, such as compelled the people to revolt, came into the city Modin, to make them sacrifice. ¹⁶ And when many of Israel came unto them, Mattathias also and his sons came together . . . ¹⁹ Then Mattathias answered and spake with a loud voice, Though all the nations that are under the king’s dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments: ²⁰ Yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers. ²¹ God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances. ²² We will not hearken to the king’s words, to go from our religion, either on the right hand, or the left. ²³ Now when he had left speaking these words, there came one of the Jews in the sight of all to sacrifice on the altar which was at Modin, according to the king’s commandment. ²⁴ Which thing when Mattathias saw, he was inflamed with zeal, and his reins trembled, neither could he forbear to shew his anger according to judgment: wherefore he ran, and slew him upon the altar. ²⁵ Also the king’s commissioner, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at that time, and the altar he pulled down . . . ²⁷ And Mattathias cried

throughout the city with a loud voice, saying, Whosoever is zealous of the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me. ²⁸ So he and his sons fled into the mountains, and left all that ever they had in the city. ²⁹ Then many that sought after justice and judgment went down into the wilderness, to dwell there: ³⁰ Both they, and their children, and their wives; and their cattle; because afflictions increased sore upon them. ³¹ Now when it was told the king's servants, and the host that was at Jerusalem, in the city of David, that certain men, who had broken the king's commandment, were gone down into the secret places in the wilderness, ³² They pursued after them a great number, and having overtaken them, they camped against them, and made war against them on the sabbath day. ³³ And they said unto them, Let that which ye have done hitherto suffice; come forth, and do according to the commandment of the king, and ye shall live. ³⁴ But they said, We will not come forth, neither will we do the king's commandment, to profane the Sabbath day. ³⁵ So then they gave them the battle with all speed. ³⁶ Howbeit they answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped the places where they lay hid; ³⁷ But said, Let us die all in our innocency: heaven and earth will testify for us, that ye put us to death wrongfully. ³⁸ So they rose up against them in battle on the Sabbath, and they slew them, with their wives and children and their cattle, to the number of a thousand people. ³⁹ Now when Mattathias and his friends understood hereof, they mourned for them right sore. ⁴⁰ And one of them said to another, If we all do as our brethren have done, and fight not for our lives and laws against the heathen, they will now quickly root us out of the earth. ⁴¹ At that time therefore they decreed, saying, Whosoever shall come to make battle with us on the Sabbath day, we will fight against him; neither will we die all, as our brethren that were murdered in the secret places.”

The Revolution Prospers

1 Maccabees 2:24-48: “⁴⁵ Then Mattathias and his friends went round about, and pulled down the altars: ⁴⁶ And what children soever they found within the coast of Israel uncircumcised, those they circumcised valiantly. ⁴⁷ They pursued also after the proud men, and the work prospered in their hand. ⁴⁸ So they recovered the law out of the hand of the Gentiles, and out of the hand of kings, neither suffered they the sinner to triumph.”

After his Father's Death, Judas, who was called Maccabeus, Leads an Army to Liberate Jerusalem

1 Maccabees 3:55-60: “⁵⁵ And after this Judas ordained captains over the people, even captains over thousands, and over hundreds, and over fifties, and over tens. ⁵⁶ But as for such as were building houses, or had betrothed wives, or were planting vineyards, or were fearful, those he commanded that they should return, every man to his own house, according to the law.² ⁵⁷ So the camp removed, and pitched upon the south side of Emmaus. ⁵⁸ And Judas said, arm yourselves, and be valiant men, and see that ye be in readiness against the morning, that ye may fight with these nations, that are assembled together against us to destroy us and our sanctuary: ⁵⁹ For it is better for us to die in battle, than to behold the calamities of our people and our sanctuary. ⁶⁰ Nevertheless, as the will of God is in heaven, so let him do.”

The Temple Cleansed

1 Maccabees 4:36-48: “³⁶ Then said Judas and his brethren, Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go up to cleanse and dedicate the sanctuary. ³⁷ Upon this all the host assembled themselves together, and went up into mount Sion. ³⁸ And when they saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, or in one of the mountains, yea, and the priests' chambers pulled down; ³⁹ They rent their clothes, and made great lamentation, and cast ashes upon their heads, ⁴⁰ And fell down flat to the ground upon their faces, and blew an alarm with the trumpets, and cried toward heaven. ⁴¹ Then Judas appointed certain men to fight against those that were in the fortress, until he had cleansed the sanctuary. ⁴² So he chose priests of blameless conversation, such as had pleasure in the law: ⁴³ Who cleansed the sanctuary, and bare out the defiled stones into an unclean place. ⁴⁴ And when as they consulted what to do with the altar of burnt offerings, which was profaned; ⁴⁵ They thought it best to pull it down, lest it should be a reproach to them, because the heathen had defiled it: wherefore they pulled it down, ⁴⁶ And laid up the stones in the mountain of the temple in a convenient place, until there should

² **Deuteronomy 20:5-7:** “The officers also shall speak to the people, saying, ‘Who is the man that has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him depart and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. And who is the man that has planted a vineyard and has not begun to use its fruit? Let him depart and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man begin to use its fruit. And who is the man that is engaged to a woman and has not married her? Let him depart and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.’”

come a prophet to shew what should be done with them. ⁴⁷ Then they took whole stones according to the law, and built a new altar according to the former; ⁴⁸ And made up the sanctuary, and the things that were within the temple, and hallowed the courts. ⁴⁹ They made also new holy vessels, and into the temple they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt offerings, and of incense, and the table. ⁵⁰ And upon the altar they burned incense, and the lamps that were upon the candlestick they lighted, that they might give light in the temple. ⁵¹ Furthermore they set the loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they had begun to make.”