

about his reign, as enumerated in the chart. Our present survey of the facts will be limited to statements in chapter 8, since his career will be discussed in more detail in our consideration of chapter 11.

Section 1 points to the fact that nearly a century and a half passed between the death of Alexander and the time when Antiochus became king.

Section 2 probably alludes to the fact that many Jews were departing from the religion of their fathers. Even before Antiochus took the throne Greek customs had been introduced into Jerusalem and Hellenism had begun to attract many of the younger Jews. At first Antiochus moved very carefully, seeking to wean the Israelites away from their devotion to God. He bestowed special honors on those who adopted Greek customs and many found it desirable to seek the king's favor by abandoning the practices of their fathers.

The meaning of the statement "which started small but grew in power" would have been quite clear to men living in the Seleucid empire when Antiochus became king. No one expected Antiochus to succeed his brother, Seleucus IV, whose sons naturally had a prior claim to the throne.

As a young man Antiochus had been sent to Rome as one of the hostages the Romans had demanded after defeating his father, Antiochus III.³ When his older brother, Seleucus IV, became king the Romans naturally insisted that the oldest son of Seleucus be sent to Rome in his place. Being now free to leave Rome, Antiochus went to Athens and became an Athenian citizen. About ten years later Seleucus IV was murdered and his assassins attempted to rule in the name of an infant son, since the legitimate heir was a hostage in distant Rome. It probably never occurred to them that Antiochus, who had become chief magistrate of Athens, might be a hindrance to their plans. To their great surprise, he succeeded in destroying them and becoming king himself. Thus "he started small but grew in power" (v. 4).

It did not become apparent that Antiochus was "a stern-faced king" (section 3) until he had reigned for a time. At first he used peaceful measures to advance his policy, but