

wilderness. Soon a considerable number of these refugees accepted the leadership of a pious priest and his five sons. Beginning with small guerrilla raids these men gradually increased their number and extended their power. Eventually they succeeded in recapturing Jerusalem and cleansing the temple. After Antiochus' death his successors tried in vain to bring Judea again under Seleucid control. For about a century the Jewish state was completely independent.

Chapter 8 says nothing about the Maccabean uprising, though the words of the two "holy ones" (sections 20 and 21) indicate that Antiochus' efforts would ultimately fail. Toward the end of his reign Antiochus led an expedition to the east. He was not killed in battle or as a result of an uprising, but suffered a nervous disorder which caused his death. Section 19 summarizes this fact by the words, "he will be destroyed but not by human power."

Section 21 declares that the interruption of the temple ceremonies will continue for "2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated." The phrase "evenings and mornings" (vv. 14 and 26) does not occur elsewhere in the Scripture. It reminds us of the frequent statement in Genesis 1, "and there was evening, and there was morning." Some have interpreted the daily sacrifice as referring only to a special sacrifice that was made each morning and each evening, and therefore have taken the phrase as representing this number of sacrifices and consequently meaning a total of 1150 days, but others regard the term evenings and mornings as indicating a complete day, thus considering the desecration as lasting 2300 days.

The apocryphal book of First Maccabees, though not inspired, is generally considered to be a dependable historical source for the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the years that followed. I Maccabees 4:52 states that the temple was cleansed and the regular sacrifices reestablished on the 25th day of the ninth month, the month Kislev, in the year 148 of the Seleucid era. This era had begun when Seleucus returned victoriously to Babylon in 312/311 B.C. Since the year was considered to begin at various months in different