

In the course of the fighting against Egypt armies marched back and forth through Palestine several times. The latter part of verse 14 contains a strange statement: "the violent men among your own people will rebel to establish the vision; but without success." This refers to a faction in the land of Israel that gave its support to Antiochus, in the hope of gaining freedom from Ptolemy. Their vision of a better condition for Israel utterly failed, since Antiochus' son, Antiochus IV (described in vv. 21ff.) caused far more injury to the Jews in a few years than the Ptolemies had caused them in more than a century of rule.

The Egyptian forces made a vigorous effort to retain Palestine, and one of the great battles in the career of Antiochus III occurred at Gaza. In 198 B.C. he gained control of Palestine, which the Ptolemies had held for more than a century. This success is summarized in the phrase in verse 16, "he will establish himself in the Beautiful Land."

Despite these great victories Antiochus was unable to make a complete conquest of Egypt and therefore attempted to gain his ends by diplomacy. In order to establish friendship with the young scion of the house of Ptolemy he gave him his daughter, Cleopatra, in marriage, thinking that she would make her husband support her father's purposes. However, as verse 17 predicts, these plans did not succeed. This daughter of Antiochus III, who became the first influential Egyptian to bear the name Cleopatra, gave her whole loyalty to the land of her husband instead of standing with her father.

If Antiochus III had been content with regaining the great territory that his ancestors had controlled, adding to it Palestine and southern Syria, and also establishing a very considerable amount of control over Egypt, he might well have gone down in history as one of the greatest of ancient kings. But he was not satisfied and this led to his downfall. Verse 18 says: "Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them." The term "coastlands," (generally rendered as "isles" in the KJV) is used in Scripture as a designation for all the lands across the sea to the west of Palestine. Antiochus desired to emulate