

and became strong after making his league with the king of Pergamum, though he had begun with only a small group of supporters.

Verse 24 describes two aspects of Antiochus' character. It tells of the extortions by which he obtained money and resources from the wealthiest parts of the province (i.e., of Syria and Palestine). Claiming to be a god he held that all the property of the sanctuaries belonged to him and seized the treasures of various temples, including the temple at Jerusalem. Yet he differed from his fathers in that he did not use this wealth only for political purposes or for his own pleasure, but scattered much of it among his friends, lavishly giving gifts to those he liked or even to casual strangers he happened to meet. Sometimes he would walk through the streets scattering coins and laughing as people scrambled for them. Antiochus built pagan temples in various Greek cities, including a colossal temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens. The character of Antiochus combined great stinginess with generous prodigality and he could quickly change from one to the other.

The Career of Antiochus Epiphanes

(25) "With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. (26) Those who eat from the king's provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. (27) The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. (28) The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.