

(29) "At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. (30) Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

(31) "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation.

Verse 25 begins an account of Antiochus' relations with Egypt. His sister, Cleopatra (already mentioned in v. 17), had ruled Egypt after the death of her husband, Ptolemy V, since her children were very young. After her death the advisors of Ptolemy VI, who was still in his teens, gathered a large army with the intention of trying to reconquer Palestine and southern Syria, which had been seized by Antiochus' father, after having been ruled by the Ptolemies for over a century. Hearing of this Antiochus quickly marched to Egypt, defeated the Egyptian forces, and gained possession of the young Ptolemy VI. Thereupon some of the Egyptian leaders declared that Ptolemy VI was no longer king, and made his younger brother king in his place, as Ptolemy VII. They then obtained possession of Alexandria and prepared for a siege. As verse 26 indicates, many of those who belonged to the household of Ptolemy VI turned against him. His army had been overwhelmed and many of his people slain, and he himself was a prisoner of his uncle.

At this point it is probable that Antiochus could have conquered all of Egypt and incorporated it into his empire, though the capture of Alexandria might have taken considerable time and involved rather serious losses. Since he had captured Ptolemy VI, who was his nephew, he decided to use trickery instead of force. Rather than proceed further with his conquests, he declared that he had no desire