

ability. His guerilla bands would suddenly attack the Syrians and then retreat into mountain hideouts. As verse 33 points out, many of Judas' people fell by the sword, were burned, captured or plundered. Yet they eventually succeeded in retaking Jerusalem and reestablishing the temple worship. These verses predict their struggles and praise those who would make the supreme sacrifice for their faith.

Verse 34 includes a somber note that was fulfilled in history. It says: "Many who are not sincere will join them." When the Maccabees began to gain decisive victories, other Jews came to join their efforts. Although some were moved by desire to stand for God's truth, many had inferior motives. Some joined purely because of nationalistic feeling and some for selfish reasons, thinking they could advance themselves better by joining this group of stouthearted men than by supporting a king who was notoriously changeable.

Verse 35 stresses the individual working of God's spirit in cleansing and purifying His people. These verses contain no specific promise that the Maccabees will win, but the last half of verse 35 gives assurance that the persecution will only continue until the time that God has appointed for its end. As we noticed in our study of Daniel 8 (pp. 151-3) there is no warrant for thinking that such phrases as "the time of the end" or "the appointed time" must always look forward to the time of Antichrist, more than 2000 years later. Here we have God's assurance that the persecution started by Antiochus will end at God's appointed time.

After a long struggle the Maccabees succeeded in gaining complete freedom from Syrian control, and made treaties of friendship and mutual support with Rome and with Sparta. Although these cities did not actually send aid, the treaties gave the Jewish state an international position as an independent unit, and it continued in virtual independence for a number of years, while resisting the efforts of Antiochus' successors to reestablish Syrian authority. Eventually the Seleucid kings gave up their hope of reconquering the Jewish state and its independence lasted almost a century, until the time when the Romans finally put an end to the Seleucid realm and also marched into the land of Israel and