

The Character of "the king"

(36) "The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. (37) He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. (38) Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. (39) He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.

Except for the words "of a foreign god," verse 39 could fit almost any great tyrant, as could also the first sentence in verse 36. The statement that he "will say unheard-of things against the God of gods" (v. 36) could apply to any great anti-God figure. But the rest of this first section is very difficult to relate to Antiochus. I shall list below, in the order in which they occur, the statements that seem inappropriate to a description of this Seleucid king:

- A. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god (v. 36)
- B. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed (v. 36)
- C. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers (v. 37)
- D. Or for the one desired by women (v. 37)