

tried to extirpate a lascivious cult that was well established in Syria, but there is no historical evidence for this. If the statement refers to events that in our day are still future, it may be impossible to tell in advance exactly what it will mean, but this should become clear when it occurs.

Statements F, G and H seem to contradict statements A, C and E. The apparent contradiction is removed if one interprets these last three statements as referring to the attitude of an atheist toward principles or ideas, rather than to that of an ancient king toward deities. Devotion to materialism would be a natural way to understand statement F, with its reference to a "god of fortresses." Such a statement was rather incomprehensible in ancient times, so it was natural for the translators of the Septuagint to interpret the word as a proper name and simply transliterate it. This precedent was followed by Jerome, who rendered it in the Latin Vulgate as "the god Maozim," but there is no evidence that any god with this name was known in the time of Antiochus or at any subsequent period. The interpretation that considers it as representing devotion to materialism or to some other atheistic attitude gives sense in the context and makes it possible to understand statements F, G and H in such a way as not to contradict statements A, C and E.

Even though some ancient kings may have made material force and power their real gods, all found it expedient to show great regard for the established gods of their community. The attitude of brazenly making force one's god and not regarding any supernatural being did not become common until modern times. At present more than a third of the earth is dominated by men who substitute atheistic materialism for religion.

In view of the many ways the statements cited above contradict the known facts about Antiochus, it is surprising to find that there are a few interpreters who place the long interval between Antiochus and "the man of lawlessness" at the end of verse 39, instead of at the end of verse 35. Perhaps this is due to the fact that verse 40 begins with the phrase, "at the time of the end." As we saw in our