

Appendix O

THE RISE OF ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES AND HIS ASSAULT AGAINST JUDAEA

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will focus on the Seleucid king known as Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who ruled over the Seleucid Empire from 175-164 BC. In addition to being well known for his atrocities against the Jews that led to the Maccabean revolt, he is also a key figure in the Book of Daniel where he is referred to in both chapter eight and chapter eleven. Furthermore, he serves as a *type* of the yet future Antichrist (who is also predicted in the Book of Daniel). Hence, a greater understanding about this king will be valuable for studies in the Book of Daniel.

During the rule of Antiochus IV, Judaea was under the rule of the Seleucids. The first section of this paper will trace the political developments following the conquest of Alexander the Great to explain how Antiochus IV came to have power over Judaea. Attention will then be given to the factor of Hellenization within Judaea, and how the High Priesthood became corrupted by this influence. This is somewhat necessary, since at the time of Antiochus' persecutions, the High Priest was in cooperation with him. The military campaigns of Antiochus IV against Egypt brought him in closer association with the territory of Judaea and eventually led to the persecutions. Hence, this will

be examined in section III. Finally, focus will be put upon the atrocities that Antiochus carried out against the Jews. The question will also be addressed as to why he decided to enact religious persecutions against the Jews, rather than simply political measures.

Section I

Political Developments From Alexander To Antiochus IV

The meteoric rise of Alexander to world power was quickly diminished by his untimely death in 323 BC. The next twenty or more years became known as the period of the Diadochi, when the surviving generals of Alexander vied for shares of the colossal kingdom he had left behind. Antigonos had tried to extend his control beyond Asia Minor, and Seleucus (satrap of Babylon since 321) had to flee to Egypt for Ptolemy's help. Conflict continued until eventually four Macedonian generals declared themselves kings: Ptolemy claiming Egypt, Seleucus over Babylon, Cassander over Macedon, and Lysimachus over Thrace. Finally, on the battlefield of Ipsus in 301 they prevailed over Antigonos. "Lysimachus took the western part of Asia Minor; Ptolemy took Palestine; and Seleucus the remaining lands from Syria to Babylon."¹ In this arrangement, Ptolemy and Seleucus were the primary powers. Seleucus, however, gained the advantage:

Seleucus obtained the largest portion of Alexander's empire: all the countries of Asia from the frontiers of India to the Mediterranean littoral were under his rule. In 281 he defeated Lysimachus and annexed Asia Minor to his kingdom. Only Palestine and the islands of the Mediterranean remained subject to Ptolemy.²

The oriental lands under Seleucus were difficult to control because of the great diversity to them. India was lost very early, and the rise of Parthia about the middle of the 3rd century BC reduced the Seleucid empire to those lands west of the Euphrates. To the south, the Ptolemies managed to keep their empire intact, at least until about 221 BC. At that time, Antiochus III attempted to invade Palestine and made a few minor gains. For a time, the Ptolemies prevailed although signs of weakening began to show:

In 219, Antiochus III of Syria attacked Egypt; Ptolemy IV Philopator went out to meet him at the head of his army of mercenaries; and in order to expand his forces he also recruited 20,000 men of the native population. Ptolemy defeated Antiochus at Raphia (217) and this victory, in which Egyptians also participated, served as the starting point for the reawakening of the Egyptian nationalist spirit.³

Despite the temporal victory, Egypt was weakening as evidenced by the internal uprisings which followed. After a brief lull, political developments in Egypt took a turn for the worse. Ptolemy IV Philopator died and Ptolemy V Epiphanes came to the throne. However, he was only five years of age, and thus power passed to his guardians. This did not prove successful, and internal turmoil among the Egyptians followed, particularly at Alexandria. In 201 BC Antiochus III exploited

¹ V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, 10.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 14.

the opportunity and invaded Coele-Syria. This endeavor was successful, except for Gaza which maintained its alliance with the Ptolemies.⁴ During the years 199-8 BC, Antiochus captured all the fortified cities of Coele-Syria, the Egyptians evacuated, and the territory was now firmly under the rule of the Seleucids.

During this power struggle, the country was often drawn in two opposite directions.⁵ Tcherikover argues that Antiochus was backed by a pro-Seleucid faction in Jerusalem, and that even the High Priest Simon the Just stood at the head of this.⁶ Certainly there was a breach in the Jewish community during the years 201-198 as Syrian Antioch replaced Egyptian Alexandria as the power center.

Complicating the political reorganization was the defeat of Antiochus III at Magnesia by the Romans,⁷ a feat which left the Seleucid kingdom with recurring financial difficulties.⁸ Gafni comments,

In 190 Antiochus suffered his greatest defeat near Magnesia and was forced into a degrading settlement by the victorious Romans. Sensing this, the eastern provinces of the Seleucid Empire revolted and Antiochus, determined to finance his recent setback at their expense, died while trying to sack one of the Temple treasuries of Elymais.⁹

The death of Antiochus III in 187 BC brought more confusion to the troubled Seleucid empire. Initially, his son Seleucus IV Philopater ruled from 187 to 175, but his assassination brought Antiochus IV to the throne (though he was not the legal heir of the throne). Waltke explains:

After the battle of Magnesia, Antiochus lived in Rome as a hostage in connection with the reparations Antiochus the Great had to pay. In 175 B.C. he was released by the intervention of his brother Seleucus IV Philopator, who substituted his own son Demetrius I as hostage. While Antiochus was at Athens, Seleucus IV was assassinated by his chief minister, Heliodorus. Antiochus IV, with the military sanction of the Pergamene monarch Eumenes II, expelled

⁴ Polybius, XVI, 40, 1ff.; XVIII, 2.

⁵ Jerome, Hieron., in Daniel, 11.14.

⁶ Tcherikover, 80.

⁷ Conflict with Rome came as a result of the substantial power that the Romans gained with the defeat of Hannibal after the Second Punic War (202 BC). Rome turned attention to Greece and other cities of the Aegean Sea, and eventually Antiochus III was drawn into the conflict. Jagersma elaborates,

"Antiochus succeeded in landing in Greece with troops and occupying some of it, but he was driven out again in the following year (192 BC). The Romans then in turn landed in Asia Minor, where in 190 BC they inflicted a major defeat on the troops of Antiochus III at Magnesia (cf. Dan. 11.18). After that Antiochus had no other choice than to make peace with Rome. The peace concluded at Apamea in 188 BC was very damaging to him. Among other things he had to give up all the territory west of the Taurus, let his second son, later to become Antiochus IV Epiphanes, go to Rome as a hostage, and pay an indemnity of 15,000 talents. This tribute, unprecedented in ancient history, had to be paid in twelve annual installments" (*A History of Israel from Alexander the Great to Bar Kockba*, 36-7).

⁸ This, coupled with the financial demands of the Egyptian campaigns of Antiochus IV, would eventually have serious repercussions for Judaea. Temple treasuries became politically important within the empire!

⁹ Isaiah Gafni, "Antiochus," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 3, p. 73.

Heliodorus and usurped the throne to the exclusion of both Demetrius and the late king's younger son Antiochus, still a baby in Syria.¹⁰

Thus it was that Antiochus IV, a usurper to the throne, came to be king over the mighty Seleucid empire. His reign lasted from 175 until 164 BC. Regarding the early influences on Antiochus IV, Jagersma comments, "During his long stay in Rome and Athens (from 188-175 BC), Greek culture and religion in particular seem to have made a deep impression on him."¹¹ He was also innovative: ". . . he assumed the cult name theos epiphanes (the manifest god), and secondly he replaced the image of the traditional Seleucid Apollo with that of Zeus Olympius on the reverse of the Antiochene tetradrachm."¹²

The character of Antiochus IV has been dealt with by Greek historians as well as by Jewish. Polybius, in particular, devoted to him a detailed description (from which Livy and Diodorus derived their accounts). Tcherikover summarizes the report of Polybius:

He lacked political tact and did not understand how to behave as befitted a king. Sometimes he would leave his palace and wander through the streets of his capital with two or three of his courtiers, enter shops and the craftsmen's places of work and converse at length with these insignificant people. Once, during one of his habitual visits to the public baths he poured a jar full of perfumed ointment over the heads of the bathers and enjoyed the sight of the people rolling on the slippery floor, unable to rise or to keep their balance, himself among them. Once during a magnificent festival which he was holding at Antioch, he appeared on the stage before the audience as an actor, and began to dance with the other players.

. . . His behavior toward other people was full of contradictions and sudden surprises, for he was silent in the company of his best friends and talkative with strangers; to some he gave precious gifts such as silver and gold, and to others, without clear reason, worthless objects such as dates and dice. Irritable and nervous, full of profound inner contradictions, ever striving to do something extraordinary and to astound the world--this was the figure cut by King Antiochus in the eyes of his Greek contemporaries. Hence it is not to be wondered at that humorists mocked him and called him in jest Epimanes ("mad") instead of Epiphanes ("the god manifest").¹³

Section II

The Corruption of the Priesthood in the Context of Hellenization

In order to adequately understand and appreciate the developments which led to the persecutions of Antiochus IV, one must understand the context in which they transpired. One key contextual theme is that of Hellenization. Alexander the Great may have reigned supreme for only a short time, but he

¹⁰Bruce K. Waltke, "Antiochus IV Epiphanes," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 1:145. Jagersma, however, asserts that it was in 177 BC when Antiochus IV was set free in exchange for Demetrius, and that he settled for a time in Athens.

¹¹ Jagersma, 45.

¹² Ibid.

¹³Tcherikover, 176-7. Based on Polybius XXVI, 10; XXXI, 3-4; Livy XLI, 19-20; Died. XXIX, 32; XXXI, 16, 1-2.

left a powerful legacy with the spread of Greek culture and thinking upon the oriental lands, and Judaea was no exception to this. The Greek influence was felt upon Judaea, of course, long before Antiochus IV came to the throne. Nevertheless, he was a devoted patriot of the Hellenistic philosophy, and sought to spread it throughout his empire. Devotion to Hellenistic philosophy was often centered in the matter of Greek education and the "gymnasia" in which it was cultivated. Tcherikover comments:

The citizen educated his son in the municipal educational institutions—the gymnasium and the ephebeion, which were the very embodiment of the spirit of Hellenism. Here the young citizens received their Hellenic education, developed their strength and agility by physical exercise, and learned poetry and music; and if such an education was not imposed on the citizens as an absolute duty, no one deliberately avoided it.

. . . the gymnasia became the symbols of Hellenism as a whole. . . . The gymnasiarch, the citizen upon whom had been imposed the conduct of the gymnasium and the satisfaction of its monetary requirements, was regarded by the citizens as one of the most honored men in the city.¹⁴

At first, the Hellenistic tendencies did not appear too threatening to Judaism, and many citizens saw value in the Greek education. Nevertheless, in time the attachments to Hellenization came to be a severe problem and led to great conflict between the Hellenizers and the conservative figures within Judaism.

In the first third of the second century B.C.E., a group of Hellenizing Jews came to power in Jerusalem. They were led by wealthy Jewish aristocrats such as Joseph son of Tobiah, and his son Hyrcanus, who were apparently attracted to the externals of Hellenism; their Hellenization was, at first, primarily social rather than cultural and religious. Jason the high priest carried his Hellenizing to the extent of establishing Greek educational institutions, the gymnasium and ephebeion, and of founding Jerusalem as a Greek city, Antioch-at-Jerusalem. But Jason was only a moderate Hellenizer compared with Menelaus, whose succession as high priest occasioned a civil war between factions, with the Tobiads supporting Menelaus and the masses of the people standing behind Jason. As the scholars Bickermann, Tcherikover, and Hengel have shown, it was the Hellenizers, notably Menelaus and his followers, who influenced Antiochus Epiphanes to undertake his persecutions of Judaism so as to put down the rebellion of the Hassideans, who were supported by the masses of Jerusalem and who rebelled against the Hellenizers.¹⁵

Stronger leanings toward Hellenization quite naturally developed in the years 201-198 BC when Judaea was shifting from Ptolemaic rule to Seleucid, especially since the more authoritative figures in Jerusalem were pro-Seleucid (including representatives of the upper stratum of the priestly class [the High Priest himself], the Jerusalem aristocracy [members of the Gerousia], and the wealthy [the sons of Joseph ben Tobiah]). Nevertheless, there was no severe violation of the religious life of Judaea initially. Documents initiated by Antiochus III permitted the Jews to live according to their ancestral laws.¹⁶ Tcherikover comments,

¹⁴ Ibid., 27.

¹⁵ "Hellenism," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 8, p. 295.

¹⁶ Josephus, *Antiquities*, XII, 138ff., 145ff.

The documents of Antiochus evidence explicitly that the king had no intention of changing the traditional way of life of Judaea by imposing Greek tendencies. On the contrary, Antiochus by his orders strengthened the priests' power, exempted them from taxes and gave to the commandments of the Torah the validity of official law.¹⁷

Tcherikover even suggests that the inclination toward Hellenization was an aspiration of some of the Jews themselves (particularly among members of the ruling aristocracy), not something being imposed upon them forcefully.¹⁸ Of course, Hellenization was open to criticism, especially since the young Jewish men who participated in the life of the gymnasium took part in sports while in the nude. Furthermore, Hellenization also meant the spread of Greek gods in Judaea (though this was probably not entertained too seriously by the Jews; there is no evidence of any cult to this effect).

One of the significant developments that paralleled the movement of Hellenization was the creation of the post of "prostasia" (head of the Jews). At the beginning of the Hellenistic era, this was in the hands of the High Priest, and included the responsibility for tax collection in Judaea. But a struggle developed whereby the post of prostates passed from the High Priest Onias to Joseph, the son of Tobiah. From this transition arose the family of the Tobiads and their power to influence political events of the country. Indeed, the Tobiad family seems to have been the main instigators of the Hellenistic reform in Jerusalem, mainly because of the wealth accumulated by Joseph the son of Tobiah in his prolonged activity as tax-collector.¹⁹

The official representation of the people to the king (the "prostasia") had reverted to the High Priest under Simon the Just, but the Tobiads still exerted tremendous social pressure, and sought to influence the management of the Temple. At this time, the Temple Treasury had accumulated great wealth, since in addition to the public moneys, the money of private individuals was also kept there on deposit.²⁰

When Simon died, he was succeeded by his son, Onias III. But Onias had Egyptian sympathies and shifted policy to a pro-Ptolemaic stance. This was at odds with Seleucid rule, and with the Tobiads who backed them. Now, the Tobiads were anxious to get Onias out of power. Through the agency of another Simon (the overseer of the Temple), the Tobiads managed to stir up trouble for Onias with the Seleucid authorities. As conditions deteriorated in Jerusalem, Onias felt compelled to appear before Seleucus IV. This, however, was closely connected chronologically with the death of Seleucus and the seizing of the throne by Antiochus IV. During Onias' absence, the Tobiads took advantage of the occasion to secure another High Priest with a man who was more sympathetic to their desires. Interestingly, they gained the cooperation of the brother of Onias, Joshua (who had changed his Hebrew name to the Greek name of Jason). Jason had the advantage of being in the legitimate family to qualify as a High Priest, but his sympathies lay more with the Tobiads and the Hellenizers. The next step was for him to journey to Antiochus and buy him off:

Jason promised the king, in addition to the 300 talents which were evidently the usual tribute . . . another 60, and a further 80 'of another revenue' (II Macc. 4.8); by this payment he purchased the High Priesthood from Antiochus.²¹

¹⁷ Tcherikover, 88.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, XII, 237ff.; *War*, 1, 31ff.

²⁰ Josephus, *War*, VI, 282; II Macc. 3.10-12.

²¹ Tcherikover, 160.

As was brought out earlier, the Seleucid throne was ever in need of revenue and this exchange of High Priests became an easy matter for Antiochus IV. However, the new High Priest did more than promise money for the king. He also desired to convert Jerusalem into a Greek *polis* called Antioch. He even promised more money for permission to build a gymnasium and ephebeion in Jerusalem and to register the people of Jerusalem as Antiochenes (II Macc. 4.9). This launched Jerusalem into its high point of Hellenism and foreign customs. Nevertheless, there is no hard evidence that the Jewish religion itself was abolished or significantly altered, or that the Mosaic Law was abolished.

Thus, Jason acted as High Priest during the years 175/4–172/1, although details of this period are lacking. In time, however, the Tobiads sought to oust even him for a man more loyal to themselves. Their new candidate was Menelaus, brother of Simon the Overseer of the Temple. Significantly, Menelaus had no legitimate claim to the High Priesthood at all, and civil war broke out over the attempt to replace him for Jason (with the majority of the people siding with Jason). However, Menelaus was able to go to Antiochus and pay even more money for the priestly position than Jason had paid. Thus Menelaus returned as High Priest and Jason fled to the Land of Ammon (II Macc. 4.25-6).

Since Menelaus had attained power against the will of the Jerusalem population, he could only maintain himself by brute force. Furthermore, he had difficulty in keeping his financial obligations to the throne, and found it necessary to journey to Antioch. Two significant events came as a result of this trip. First, Menelaus arranged for the murder of the Onias, the legitimate High Priest at the hand of Andronicus, a high official of Antiochus. The king was infuriated at this, and had Andronicus put to death; Menelaus only escaped death himself by more bribery. Second, Menelaus had left his brother, Lysimachus, in charge as his deputy in Jerusalem. Lysimachus carried out the spoliation of the Temple treasury of the vessels which Menelaus needed. This deed was discovered, causing a great outcry from the people, such that a huge battle waged in the streets with Lysimachus being slain (II Macc. 4. 39-42). Tcherikover comments,

This lawless deed aroused the ire of the population of Jerusalem; the Temple treasure, accumulated over generations, was the property of all Israel, and it was hard to tolerate the fact of a small group of people disposing of it as if it were their own. The Temple, moreover, this national and religious center, was now in the hands of men who had cast off the restraints of religion and followed strange customs belonging to other peoples.²²

All of this served to hamper the position of Menelaus. Although he was able to retain his role as High Priest, he was now even more at odds with the populace. He had also incurred the displeasure of the king (he had been brought up for trial before Antiochus, escaping only by bribery and deceit). Clearly the situation in Jerusalem was deteriorating, and resistance was steadily building toward those associated with Hellenization and having pro-Seleucid sympathies (especially Menelaus). Also, the burden of taxation under the Seleucid government (especially since the peace of Apamea in 188 BC) was probably greater than it had ever been under the Ptolemies. Hence, some began to have pro-Ptolemaic opinions, a matter of grave concern since Antiochus IV came into armed conflict about this time.

Section III

Judaea's Relationship to Antiochus

²² Ibid., 173.

Against the Backdrop of the Egyptian Campaigns

Antiochus IV desired to enlarge his frontier, and he sought the opportunity by a military campaign against Egypt. This quest for more power (and perhaps financial gain) made the matter of Judaea's loyalty a serious consideration, for Judaea was the buffer state between these two powers. The political situation of Antiochus IV's realm cannot be ignored. McCullough comments,

. . . Antiochus's primary interest in Judea was its location on the southwest border of his kingdom. It was important to him that there be peace and security in this area. To ensure such peace he looked for the cooperation of the Jewish high priest, who, as the recognized head of the Palestinian Jews, was to all intents and purposes a political figure.²³

During the years 169-67 BC, Antiochus IV carried out his military campaigns against Egypt. This was during the time when Menelaus served as the High Priest, and tensions with Antioch were at their highest. The religious persecution of Antiochus IV that came in 167 BC must be seen in light of the events attending the Egyptian campaigns. Scholars have proposed numerous reasons to explain the actions of Antiochus IV, including his character, attempts at unification of the empire by establishment of one religion, political motives of reconstituting the decaying power of his kingdom, his devotion to the Hellenic spirit and culture, and even the idea that Antiochus was not the real perpetrator but rather men from within the Jewish ranks (as well as a combination of the above).²⁴ Tcherikover, however, advances the theory that the real reason for the religious persecution of Antiochus IV is to be found in the developments that paralleled his military campaigns against Egypt, most notably the rebellion that began surfacing in Jerusalem.

A discussion of the military campaigns is difficult due to the fact that the number and date of the campaigns is unclear and a subject of debate among scholars. Furthermore, it is not entirely clear how many times Antiochus IV actually visited Jerusalem in connection with these military expeditions. There does seem to be some consensus, however, that Antiochus IV carried out two primary campaigns against Egypt. Tcherikover alerts us that "... the studies of Otto and Bickermann make it virtually certain that Antiochus' first expedition to Egypt fell in the year 169, and the second in 168."²⁵ But the number and time of visitations by Antiochus IV to Jerusalem is a much more problematic issue. There are three reports of a plundering of the temple by or on the orders of Antiochus IV: I Macc. 1.20-24, II Macc. 5.15ff., and Josephus, *Antiquities*, XII, 5:2-4. However, the information is unclear on whether or not the temple was plundered on two different occasions. Jagersma notes that the account in II Macc. 5

²³W. Stewart McCullough, *The History and Literature of the Palestinian Jews From Cyrus to Herod*, 112.

²⁴The latter is the suggestion of Bickermann in his book *Der Gott der Makkabäer*. "Bickermann's basic assumption is that Antiochus, a king of Greek education and a pupil of the Epicureans, could not have been the initiator of the persecution . . . not Antiochus but the Hellenistic reformers of Jerusalem, the High Priest Menelaus and his group, were the real initiators of the decrees. Antiochus' function was merely the abolition of the rule of the Torah in Judaea, and it was the Jewish Hellenizers who filled the formal abolition with real content" (Tcherikover, 183; cf. I Macc. 1.11ff.; II Macc. 4.7ff.: 13.4). Tcherikover (184) objects on the basis that in the sources, we find the association of the persecution with Antiochus' name alone, without a word about Jason and Menelaus as religious persecutors.

²⁵ Tcherikover, 186.

. . . mentions a plundering of the temple, in which Menelaus accompanied Antiochus IV as a guide. This plundering is said to have taken place after Antiochus' second expedition to Egypt and Jason's revolt. The king is supposed to have interpreted the revolt as a rebellion by Judaea (II Macc. 5.11) and to have occupied Jerusalem at that time by force. Thousands of inhabitants are said to have been killed, with others being carried away as slaves. The plundering of the temple in 168 is supposed to be set against this background.²⁶

Tcherikover (186) defends the theory that there were two visitations, upon return from each of the Egyptian campaigns. The work of Emil Schurer, however, argues the view that Antiochus visited Jerusalem only once in the 160s, viz. in the autumn of 169 BC.²⁷

A complete and scholarly resolution of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, but the position of Tcherikover seems a bit more plausible. Despite the fact that scholars are quite critical of Josephus on many points (including Tcherikover himself), he does specifically record two visitations by Antiochus and the other source material does not contradict this. Furthermore, it is quite reasonable to believe that Antiochus IV would have visited Jerusalem during each of the Egyptian campaigns. He would have had to travel very near Jerusalem upon his return to Antioch, and he had a high interest in the affairs of Jerusalem since this was his buffer zone with Egypt. There had been several previous dealings with Jerusalem and with each of the High Priests (particularly Menelaus) that would have caused him to keep his guard up in regard so Jerusalem affairs, not to mention his vital interest in the financial potential of the Temple treasury.

The first Egyptian campaign was successful for Antiochus IV in that he dealt a defeat to Egypt. He appointed two rulers over the country in different locations to prevent the centralization of power, and then returned to Antioch by way of Jerusalem. He probably reached Jerusalem at the end of 169 BC. Although relations with Jerusalem had previously been generally friendly,

. . . on this visit Antiochus laid hands on the Temple treasures and looted them. I Maccabees (1.20ff.) also gives a detailed account of the spoilation of the Temple vessels and speaks of the way the place was desecrated. Naturally this left a feeling of violent hatred for Antiochus among the people, and as it was a time of war, this inevitably assumed a political coloring.²⁸

²⁶ Jagersma, 49.

²⁷ Emil Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)*, 152-53. According to Schurer, there are three reasons for supposing that Antiochus visited Jerusalem twice: (1) an inference from Dan. 11:28-31; (2) statements in I Macc. and II Macc.; and (3) the account in Josephus *Antiquities* (XII 5, 2-4). Each of these are analyzed in Schurer's work: "Thus Daniel clearly refers to two phases of action, one after the campaign of 169 B.C., and one subsequent to that of 168; but he does not explicitly and concretely refer so the presence of Antiochus in Jerusalem on either occasion" (152). With regard to the accounts in Maccabees I and II, he notes that II Macc. makes no mention of the 'first' campaign, and the account in I Macc. 1:20-3 is markedly similar to that in II Macc. 5:11-21 (taking τὴν δευτέρον ἄφοδον in II Macc. 5:1 as a reference to the second phase of the campaign of 180/69 BC). Finally, he notes that Josephus is the only source to actually speak explicitly of two visits by Antiochus to Jerusalem, but his account is dismissed rather quickly because "his narrative is filled with confusions, apparently resulting from an over-hasty conflation of earlier documents" (153). Schurer concludes: "In consequence, it must be concluded that Antiochus visited Jerusalem in 169 B.C., and that the attempted coup by Jason took place previously in that year. There is no reason to doubt that the 'Mysarch', Apollonius (the name given in 2 Mac. 5:24), arrived in 167 B.C." (153). This reconstruction leads to a rejection of the hypothesis of Tcherikover which relied on the attempted coup of Jason (at the time of the 2nd campaign) as a primary factor leading to the persecutions of 167 BC.

²⁸ Tcherikover, 186-87.

The increased financial demands of the recent military campaign may have prompted this action against the Temple treasury. In 168 BC, Antiochus IV carried out another military campaign against Egypt, which resulted in bitter disappointment for him. On the previous campaign, Ptolemy VI had been forced into a treaty, but quickly broke it, so that as early as 168 BC Antiochus had begun a new campaign against Egypt.²⁹ Once again he was prevailing, only to be thwarted by the arrival of ships from Rome (note Dan. 11:29-30). Waltke notes,

. . . the Roman legate C. Popilius Laenas handed Antiochus an ultimatum from the senate, arrogantly drew a circle around Antiochus, and demanded his answer before he stepped outside the circle. Antiochus was forced to retreat to Syria within a specified time.³⁰

As a bitter and disappointed Antiochus IV marched back to Syria, he did so with the thought that the securing of Judaea was now more necessary than ever . . . not only for fear of the now independent Egypt but also the threat of Rome from the south. No doubt, he hoped to find Jerusalem in good order!

Section IV

The Religious Persecution of Antiochus Against Judaea

Finding Jerusalem in good order was the very thing that Antiochus IV did not find! A revolt had occurred during the time that Antiochus was carrying out his second military campaign in Egypt. Jason, the former High Priest of the line of Zadok, had been living in Transjordan since he had been deposed by Antiochus in favor of Menelaus. But during the second Egyptian campaign of 168 BC, Jason made an attempt to regain control of Jerusalem. This bold endeavor may have been due to a false report that Antiochus was now dead (note II Macc. 5:5), and there was certainly a great deal of sentiment toward Egypt in light of Menelaus' cooperation with Antiochus after the first Egyptian campaign.

This revolt led by Jason resulted in a great many people being killed, and with Menelaus having to seek refuge in the citadel (II Macc. 5:5-6). Nevertheless, Jason was not able to retain control and had to flee Jerusalem back to Transjordan. Tcherikover argues that control of the city passed to the opponents of the king—the enemies of the Hellenizers—and that it was these before whom Jason fled.³¹ These would be the Hasidim, a sect that had arisen within Judaism who were intensely loyal to the Mosaic Covenant and against Hellenization and foreign influence.

Despite the fact that Jason's revolt had not succeeded, the news of the events was not favorably received by Antiochus. McCullough comments,

Antiochus was not amused by such insurrectionary activities, and on his return journey from Egypt, doubtless deeply chagrined by his failure there and interpreting events in Judea as a revolt against himself, he went to Jerusalem to discipline its people in an extremely ruthless way (2 Mac 5:11-14; cf Dan 11:29-30).³²

²⁹ Jagersma, 44.

³⁰ Bruce K. Waltke, "Antiochus IV Epiphanes," in *ISBE*, 1:145. Cf. Polybius xxix.2.1-4; 27.1-8; Livy xlv.12.1-6; Diodorus xxxi.2; Appian Syr. 66; Justinus xxxiv.3.

³¹ Tcherikover, 187-89.

³² McCullough, 114.

No doubt, in light of the recent events with Egypt and Rome, Antiochus felt compelled to communicate a message that insurrection would not be tolerated. Such opposition to Hellenization and Seleucid authority could only be interpreted as sympathy for Egypt, for only from Egypt could the rebels hope to receive support for the liberation movement. Therefore, upon reaching Jerusalem, he had the walls of the city torn down, slaughtered thousands of Jews, and sold many more into slavery (II Macc. 5:11ff). In addition, he himself entered the Holy of Holies, with Menelaus as his guide. Upon departing the city, he left Philip, the commander of the Phrygian mercenaries, in charge (II Macc. 5:22).

Apparently the spirit of rebellion continued so that Apollonius, head of the Moesian mercenaries captured the city on a Sabbath (when the religious faithful would not fight). "Apollonius had received from Antiochus the assignment of putting an end once and for all to the danger threatening the peace of the kingdom from the rebellious Jews."³³ The focus of action now shifted to the events connected with the "Akra":

Among the measures taken by Appollonius to secure the city's loyalty to the Seleucid king, were two which totally changed the status of Jerusalem: the erection of the citadel known by its Greek designation, akra, which was made into the center of the new polis, and the dispatching of a katoikia, i.e., a colony of foreign soldiers, inside Jerusalem. The introduction of the katoikia was a particularly bitter blow. It marked the beginning of mass opposition which very soon turned into a general rebellion. Many examples in Greek and Roman history bear witness that the establishment of a katoikia, or cleruchy, of soldiers in a quiet town meant its total ruin.

These soldiers certainly had no intention of slighting what they considered to be the cult of a local god, yet, on the other hand, they did not want to give up their own religious customs and their traditional deities. Since their residence was the akra, which was also the new center of the polis of Antioch-at-Jerusalem, they were obviously regarded as permanent citizens of the polis, whether they had obtained full citizenship or were annexed to it as foreigners accorded the status of permanent residents. These new inhabitants of Antioch-at-Jerusalem desired to worship in the Temple the deities who were familiar to them as well: first and foremost the supreme Syrian god Basal Shamin and the Syrian goddess known under different names such as Anath, Allat, etc. The worship of the god of wine, Dushara, identified by the Greeks with Dionysus, may also have been set up in the Temple. Concurrently with Syrian gods, Syrian customs were also introduced into the Temple. The author of II Maccabees (6:4) attests that the Temple filled with prostitutes in religious rites is not typical of the Greek religion whereas it was a permanent feature in the cult of the Syrian goddess. It follows, therefore, that this custom was introduced into the Temple not as a result of Antiochus' persecutions but some time earlier, just after the establishment of the Syrian katoikia.³⁴

³³ Tcherikover, 188.

³⁴ A. Schalit, gen. ed., *The World History of the Jewish People*, vol. 6, 134-36. Cf. I Macc. 1:33 and Josephus (*Antiquities* XII, 251) for an account of the building of this Akra. Regarding this structure, McCullough comments, "A hill overlooking the temple was fortified and garrisoned, to become the Acra, which was held by a Seleucid force until 141 BC (1 Mac 1:33-4)" (114). Elsewhere he adds, "The location of the Acre is uncertain. One view is that it was on the western hill, opposite the temple area, overlooking the Tyropoen valley; another places it on the southeast hill. See W. A. Shotwell, *BASOR*, 176 (Dec. 1964), 10-19" (McCullough, fnt.13, p 239). Schurer's work also contains a footnote on the location of the Akra: "It is probable that it lay on the southern spur of the eastern hill; south, that is to say, of the Temple mount" (fnt. 39, p. 154). He includes fuller discussion and takes note of some discrepancy with Shotwell.

These actions connected with the Akra, as carried out by Apollonius, only served to incite the more conservative elements of the Jewish society to further rebellion. The pollution of the Temple of the Lord by Gentiles worshiping other deities and using sacred prostitutes was too extreme. Consequently, there was a flight among the Jews out of Jerusalem following the actions of Apollonius in 168-67 BC.

But the abandonment of the Temple by the Jewish populace was not favorably looked upon by Antiochus IV. Up until this point, his persecutions upon Judaea had been mostly political in nature, and no action was taken to declare illegal the Mosaic Law or religion of the Jews. Now, however, it was becoming more and more obvious that the Jewish religion itself was detrimental to the unification of the realm. McCullough adds an interesting thought:

As had been noted earlier, this was a departure from Seleucid religious policy, and it has to be interpreted in light of conditions in Judea. As Antiochus presumably had limited knowledge of Jewish religious customs, he must have been advised by some person or persons that the religious peculiarities of the Jews lay behind the recent troubles in Jerusalem, and that, by banning such practices, there was a good chance that tranquility could be established in Judea.³⁵

Thus, about a year after Apollonius' political measures of establishing the Akra, Antiochus IV issued down orders for religious persecution (i.e., in December of 167 BC). This time of the persecutory decrees is known as the period of the *Gezerot*.

According to II Macc. 6:1, Antiochus sent a special emissary to Judaea to carry out the decree "in order to force the Jews to transgress the laws of their fathers and not to live according to God's commandments." McCullough notes,

Here the Jewish ritual was prohibited (1 Mac 1:45-6), and the sacred precincts were formally given over, on the fifteenth of Chislev, 167 BC, to the worship of Zeus Olympios (1 Mac 1:54; 2 Mac 6:2), whose Aramaic designation may have been 'Lord of heaven' (*b'l šmyn*). The main structure of the temple seems to have been left intact, as well as the altar of burnt offering, although upon the latter a small pagan altar was erected (1 Mac 1:59; 4:44). It is generally assumed that this pagan object is the 'desolating sacrilege' of 1 Mac 1:54 (cf Dan 11:31). In addition to this altar we might have expected that either a statue of Zeus or some acceptable symbol of Zeus was erected, but this is nowhere specifically mentioned (cf M Taanith 4.6).³⁶

The persecution not only involved a complete abomination of the Temple and the altar, but copies of Torah were burned, and Sabbath keeping and circumcision were forbidden. Furthermore, the Jews were forced to celebrate the king's birthday every month and to participate in the festal procession in honor of Dionysus. High places and altars on which swine and other animals were to be sacrificed were erected throughout Judaea, and inspectors were appointed by the king to make sure these measures were carried out.

As a result, the famous Maccabean revolt ensued. Three years later, the Temple could be rededicated at an opportune moment. McCullough explains:

³⁵W. Stewart McCullough, *The History and Literature of the Palestinian Jews from Cyrus to Herod*, 115. Cf. the *Ency. Jud.* for a statement of agreement: "It would seem, therefore, that religious oppression appeared to Antiochus to be the only means of achieving political stability in Palestine, since it was that country's religion, if anything, that was out of place in a predominantly hellenized empire" (3:74).

³⁶ McCullough, 115.

Seleucid armies had now been defeated three times, and doubtless Judas knew that most of the state's remaining military resources were involved, like Antiochus himself, in Syria's eastern campaign, it was a propitious time to recover the temple, and Judas acted accordingly (1 Mac 4:36-61; 2 Mac 10:1-8; *Ant* XII, 316-26). Some of the soldiers were derailed to block any effort on the part of the Seleucid garrison in the Acra to interfere with the Jewish plan, which, in fact, seems to have proceeded without let or hindrance. Priests were chosen to cleanse the sanctuary, in which connection Menelaus is nowhere mentioned. The pagan altar was removed, and a completely new altar erected. Necessary repairs to the structures in the temple area were made and new vessels for the service fabricated. On the twenty-fifth of Chislew 164 BC the renovated temple was formally dedicated to the service of Israel's God, three years after it had been taken over by Antiochus in 167 BC.³⁷

The victory of rededicating the Temple was well-timed, for Antiochus IV was to die shortly thereafter, having been engaged in campaigns in Parthia and Armenia.

He retired to Babylon and then to Tabae (Isfahan) in Persia. Here, having heard of the successes of the Maccabees in restoring the temple worship at Jerusalem, he died insane in 164 B.C.³⁸

CONCLUSION

The period from 200 BC to 164 BC was one of the most turbulent periods of Jewish history, and certainly Antiochus IV Epiphanes played a key role in this era. The tensions connected with international politics and the growth of Hellenization came to a climax under his reign. That he was an evil man, no one can doubt. The difficulties and persecutions that he brought down upon the Jewish people will mark him forever as a despicable person. Nevertheless, one important matter needs to be clarified and expounded in the conclusion to this paper, which revolves around a simple question. What happened during that final year (167 BC) to change things from political measures carried out by Apollonius to the religious actions instigated by Antiochus IV?

Tacitus had made a remark that Antiochus IV strove to do away with Jewish belief and introduce Greek customs (*Hist.* V.7.4), but he may have relied on some anti-Jewish sources for this opinion, which tends to discredit his remark. A better explanation lies in the events that transpired within the Akra, a political move but one which had important ramifications because of the changes that this led to in the sphere of the cult. Tcherikover sees the Hasidim as the key to understanding the persecution, and insists that they inspired the mounting intolerance by the Jews. He remarks,

Apollonius' acts had created a rebellion, and the introduction of the Syrian cults onto the Temple mount had lent a religious odor to the rising. The Jewish faith was faced, not after Antiochus' decree, but before it, with the alternative of renouncing its existence or of fighting for its life. The Jewish rising, which had first broken out in natural resistance to Apollonius' acts, during the year 168/7 took on the form of a religious movement.³⁹

He finds some support for this in the sources (e.g., 1 Macc. 7.12; cf. 2.29). The fact that they were organized as a fighting community after the Maccabean revolt (except for the Sabbath, in which they

³⁷ Ibid., 118-19.

³⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, "Antiochus IV Epiphanes," in *ISBE*, 1:146. Cf. 1 Macc. 6:1-16; Appian Syr. 66; Polybius xxi.11; xxxi.9; Josephus *Ant.* xii.8.1ff.

³⁹ Tcherikover, 196.

would not bear arms), suggests that they were activists before the persecutions as well. Hence, the Hasidim were the main factor behind what Antiochus IV did:

If the revolt was led by the Hasidim, for whom the commandments of the Torah were of the utmost sanctity, and if devotion to the Mosaic Law was the watchword of the uprising, then that Law had to be extirpated if the rebellion was to be put down.⁴⁰

The religious persecutions of Antiochus IV in 167 BC can be attributed to many factors, but a reasonable theory can be built around the mounting antagonism of the Jews as inspired by the Hasidim. In light of the political tensions with Egypt and Rome to the south, Antiochus IV could not afford to be easy-going in his policies toward Judaea. The conservative religious community of Jerusalem posed too great a threat to his hand on Jerusalem, and he resorted to measures he felt would put an end to this threat . . . he would try to eliminate their faith. Although God allowed Antiochus to persecute Judaea of that day, He did not allow him to fully carry out his diabolical plans.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

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