

Verse 29 predicts that "at the appointed time" (i.e. when failure of his strategy becomes obvious) Antiochus will make another expedition against Egypt. In this case the situation will not be the same as before. There will be three important differences: (1) When Antiochus made his first expedition the Egyptians were preparing a huge force to reconquer Palestine and Antiochus could reasonably say that he was only defending his own land. This will no longer be the case. (2) He will not be able, as in the latter part of the former expedition, to say that he is merely trying to defend the rights of his nephew, since his nephew will be standing with the other Egyptians who oppose Syrian influence in Egypt. (3) Although it might reasonably be expected that he would now be able to conquer Egypt, his expedition will be a total failure, because of a new factor that was not involved on the former occasion.

At the time of Antiochus' first Egyptian expedition Rome was too busy to concern itself with the Seleucids or the Ptolemies, since it was then engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Macedonia, the other of the three great kingdoms that had been formed from Alexander's empire. Now the situation was different. Rome had successfully terminated its third Macedonian war and had gained full control of that entire region.

When a modern democracy has won a great war, it often tends to pay no further attention to distant areas, thinking that success in war has solved all its problems. Rome was different. In the second century, B. C., it was still a republic, but it had a permanent senate composed of men who had previously held high office in the government. Not having to seek reelection, the senators could give their full attention to the world-wide interests of their country. When a war was finished they would decide how to make its results permanent. This is one of the reasons why Rome continued for so many centuries to be an important force in the world. After the victory over Macedonia its leaders decided not to permit any other eastern nation to become powerful enough to endanger Roman supremacy.

Verse 30 begins with the statement: "Ships of the western