

## **The Time of the End** (A Study of Daniel 11:40-45)

Pastor Kelly Sensenig

### **Prophecy or History?**

Daniel chapter 11:36-45 is a key prophetic passage dealing with the End Times. In this study, we want to address the events directly associated with the “time of the end” or the future Tribulation Period. Of course, there are those who dismiss this as a prophetic passage dealing with the End Times and suggest that Daniel 11:36-45 is a continuous historical narrative from the previous section, which spoke of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The claim is put forth that this passage in Daniel is simply describing additional historical details regarding the wars that Antiochus had with other countries. However, the details given in these verses were not fulfilled by Antiochus. In fact, no student of history can assign these campaigns of war to any historical records.

Scriptures often jump from prophesied battles which have already been fought and fulfilled historically to prophetic battles yet to be fought and fulfilled during the End Times. This is what we discover in Daniel chapter 11. The scene shifts in Daniel 11:36-45 from historical battles fought by Antiochus Epiphanes to a future prophecy where battles are fought by the Antichrist and fulfilled during the End Times. Looking back we see the battles of Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled but looking ahead we see the battles with the Antichrist unfulfilled and waiting fulfillment during the End Times (Tribulation Period). In short, the invasions of these verses in Daniel 11:36-45 have no correspondence to historical facts; therefore, they are still future and will be fulfilled in the coming Tribulation Period. Daniel actually links the events of Daniel 11:36-45 to a future period of great trouble and persecution upon his own Jewish people (Dan. 12:1) which Jesus identified elsewhere as the coming Tribulation Period.

Matthew 24:21

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

The phrase “time of the end” is a prophetic time designation that refers specifically and exclusively to the Tribulation Period. All the time designations in Daniel point to the seven-years known as the Tribulation Period.

Renald Showers remarks:

“It appears that, when Daniel 11:40 speaks of ‘the time of the end,’ it refers to the end segment of this present age before Christ returns (Second Coming). More specifically, it refers to the last seven years of this present age. Today those years are frequently called the Tribulation.”

The expressions “the time of the end” (Dan. 12:4, 9) and “at the time of the end” (Dan. 11:40), according to Daniel, describe a specific prophetic time when a series of events occur that bring the earth closer to its climactic end or finish with the Second Coming of Christ. Such events as the rising to power of the Antichrist (Dan. 11:37) and the rigorous contest against the Beast (Dan. 11:40), the racial persecution and hatred of the Jews (Dan. 12:1), and the resurgence of prophetic knowledge (Dan. 12:4, 9). These events are linked to the time of the end and indicate that the earth is moving to its intended destiny and goal which is the return of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

### **Middle or End of Tribulation?**

A closer study of Daniel 11:40-45 is important, since many expositors incorporate the events of Daniel chapter 11, as part of the battles that will occur at the *close* of the Tribulation Period. In other words, these events are often construed to mean that the nations will come against the Antichrist and contest his rule at the *end* of the Tribulation Period. However, this does not seem to be the case. The Bible clearly says that the Antichrist will rule for three-and one-half years (Rev. 13:5). The Bible does not seem to depict a world revolt against the Antichrist at the end of the Tribulation *after* he has already established world dictatorship. Instead, there will be a world revolt against the true Christ, at His Second Coming, and this is the reason the Antichrist summons the world powers together for the final showdown against Jesus Christ (Rev. 16:13-14; Psalm 2:2). Therefore, it’s appropriate to conclude that these battles are taking place in

relation to the middle of the Tribulation Periods when the Antichrist bids for world power and rulership.

The End Time scenario takes place “at the time of the end” (Dan. 11:40), which according to Daniel is an eschatological reference describing the midway point of the Tribulation Period (Dan. 12:1), the same time when Daniel’s people, as a nation, will begin to be severely persecuted (Matt. 24:15-21; Rev. 12:6). During this time Antichrist will conquer all his opponents, but he will also break his treaty with the Jews, erect his blasphemous image (Dan. 9:27), and establish a strategic military base in Jerusalem (Dan. 11:45).

Daniel 12:1 opens with another scene, declaring how Israel as a nation will be persecuted during this same time of the end (“at that time”). Since the previous context speaks of “the time of the end” (Dan. 11:40) and is linked with Israel’s persecution which begins at the middle of the Tribulation Period, it stands to reason that the same time period is being addressed in the prophetic passage of Daniel 11:36-45. The time frame of these End Time battles is when the Antichrist makes his bid for world power and dominance near the midway point of the Tribulation Period.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum agrees:

“This passage concerns the conquests of the Antichrist in the middle of the Tribulation as he begins his world political takeover.”

The Antichrist will make a move to consolidate his ten kings and kingdoms together at the middle of the Tribulation Period (Rev. 17:10-12) and will create a formidable military power. But there will be countries within the boundaries of the Roman Empire, and some outside his boundary, which will contest his powerful grip on the Middle East by challenging his position of dominance in the region. They will attack Antichrist but lose the battle. This is the time when the Antichrist defeats all those who oppose him and begins his final move to take total political, commercial, and military control over planet earth (Rev. 13:1-8).

It’s apparent from the prophecy that various countries will not like the Antichrist’s Romanish Kingdom and ascendancy to world power. As a result,

they will contest his bid for worldwide power and dictatorship. Like a goat, they will “push at him” (Dan. 11:40) or collide with him and then “trouble him” (Dan. 11:44) with their military deployments. The Antichrist will do battle with those nations, who are seemingly at odds with his rise to world dictatorship, and eventually enter the glorious land (Jerusalem) to establish his new military headquarters, which sets the stage for the abomination of desolation to occur (Dan. 9:28; Matt. 24:15).

At this specific time, he will break his seven-year covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27), attack the nation, and become the undisputed power of the world (Rev. 13:4-8). By this time, everyone in the world will say, “Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4). His defeat of these armies, along with his alleged return from the dead, as a popular military figure or leader of the past, will seal his worldwide dictatorship.

### **Armageddon?**

Again, some have suggested that these battles are linked to Revelation chapter 16:12-16, with the closing battles throughout Palestine, which are associated with Armageddon, near the end of the Tribulation Period. However, this cannot be the same time period or scene for several reasons. First, nothing is said of armies fighting one another in Revelation 16. They are simply gathering together to fight and oppose the Lamb (Rev. 17:14). Second, in chapter sixteen, all the kings of earth are in view - not just the specific nations mentioned in Daniel’s prophetic account (Rev. 16:14). Third, the Antichrist enters into these countries and utterly destroys all of these nations (Dan. 11:42) but nothing is said of this in Revelation chapter 16. Fourth, nothing is said of certain countries escaping in the prophetic record of Revelation 16 as in Daniel 11:41. For these reasons, it makes good sense to understand the prophetic scenario of Daniel 11:40-45 as occurring during the midway point of the Tribulation Period, as the Antichrist makes his bid for world dominance and power, whereas the military events of Revelation 16 will occur at the closing point of the seven-year Tribulation Period.

## Ezekiel 38-39?

Other prophetic writers suggest that the specific nations mentioned in Daniel 11:36-40 are somehow linked with the invasion described in Ezekiel 38-39. They view these two passages as parallel passages and assume that both northern armies must be the same (Russia and he allies). In other words, the events of Daniel 11:40-43 parallel the events stated in Ezekiel 38-39 and both refer to same war even through some additional countries are mentioned and other military campaigns are unfolding which are not described in Ezekiel's passage.

Of course, Russia could fit this picture, which elsewhere is said to be from "the north parts" (Ezek. 38:15). However, it must be noted that Russia is never called "king of the north" in relationship to Egypt but in relationship to the land of Palestine or Israel. Furthermore, this cannot be referring to Russia's invasion in Ezekiel 38-39, since the invaders from the north are destroyed by God in the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38:19-23; 39:1-12), whereas in this case, the implication is that the Antichrist goes about to destroy the invading northern soldiers and accomplishes his task, as in the previous campaigns (Dan. 11:41-42, 44-45).

Some expositors go to great lengths to fit Daniel's prophetic scene (Dan.11:40-45) into Ezekiel's prophetic narrative (Ezek.38-39). Several *assumptions*, which are cited below, are made by those who try and parallel the two prophetic events.

- Egypt's name was bypassed in the Ezekiel passage because they are one of the farthest nations, outside the ring of closest nations, which will join up with Russia to come against Israel.
- The northern army must always relate to the same prophetic army in eschatological passages of the End Times.
- The antichrist only performs a mop up battle with the northern invader since the northern nations will be destroyed by God in the mountains of Israel.
- It seems impossible for two different battles to transpire in the same general area in a short period of time; therefore, both the passages must be referring to the same event.

These *assumptions* are not necessarily true. First, the Ezekiel battle will likely occur at the very beginning of the Tribulation Period in conjunction with the signing of the covenant (Dan. 9:27) and be another sign marker that the Tribulation Period has officially begun. The Russian and Islamic nations will be poised to the north waiting for the signing of the covenant and then make their move to come against Israel. Perhaps the cleanup of seven years (Ezek. 39:9) is one indicator that the battle occurs at the beginning of the Daniel's final week of seven years. Second, Egypt is not mentioned because this nation is not part of the coalition of the Islamic nations that comes against Israel during the first battle. Egypt becomes a clear player in the second battle at the midway point of the Tribulation Period. Third, Russia is never called "king of the north" in relationship to the land of Egypt. Russia is said to come from the "north parts" (Ezek. 38:15; 39:2) in relationship to the land of Palestine or Israel – not in relationship to the land of Egypt.

Fourth, to assume that Antichrist will discover that the northern invaders have already been destroyed in the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 38-39) and have no real battle with them (Dan. 11:40-45) is to assume too much, since the obvious meaning and understanding of Daniel 11:44-45, without reading other prophetic passages into it, is that Antichrist destroys the Russian invaders as he does the southern invaders. Fifth, it should not seem impossible or improbable for two larger battles to occur in the framework of the End Times, within the span of three- and one-half years. The Bible says that there will be an increase in wars and rumors of wars (Matt. 24:6) that will eventually move into the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:14). Furthermore, in the Ezekiel invasion God destroys the armies, whereas in Daniel's prophetic vision the Antichrist destroys the armies. All of these differences cannot be reconciled or merged and paralleled together as the same prophetic event. It assumes too much without looking at the actual facts of Daniel's prophetic passage.

### **A Past or Prophetic Connection?**

The ruler of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes, is historically portrayed in Daniel 11:1-35, whereas Antichrist and his future kingdom, the Revived Roman Empire, are prophetically portrayed in Daniel 11:36-45. The kingdom of the

North continues right on into the future as the same king and kingdom that was represented in the previous historical verses. Consistency demands that we interpret the southern and northern kingdoms in the same way. However, the scene changes from history to prophecy, as the Antichrist is seen doing battle with various countries during the End Times (the seven years of Tribulation). The battle in Daniel 11:40-45 leaps through the centuries and takes us into the End Times – “the time of the end” (Dan. 11:40). Thus, history merges into prophecy and the future Antichrist and his military forces are doing battle with a confederacy of different nations designed to attack him, remove his power, and take him out of the political picture.

### **Who is the King of the North?**

As already mentioned, the expression “the time of the end” (Dan. 11:40) coincides with the middle of the Tribulation Period, when Israel is persecuted (Dan. 12:1). It’s during this time when a chain of military events will occur which leads to Antichrist’s world dictatorship.

There are two ways to understand the future military battles of Daniel 11:40-45. I’d like to explain both of them as possible scenarios to these End Time events. I favor the second view or explanation of these prophetic texts since it takes into account the flow of the previous narrative.

View #1

### **The King of the North = a country against the Antichrist**

Daniel 11:40 reads:

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south (Egypt) push at him (Antichrist): and the king of the north (Syria) shall come against him (Antichrist) like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships (in a joint invasion); and he (Antichrist) shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.”

Daniel 11:44 then states: “But tidings out of the east and out of the north (another joint invasion of allied troops) shall trouble him (Antichrist):

therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.”

In this interpretation, there is a marked change from the historical to the prophetic narrative. Instead of the Antichrist being depicted as the king of the north, he is actually the one being attacked by the northern army (Syria). The pronoun “him” (Dan. 11:40) is taken to mean the Antichrist, instead of the king of the north. In other words, it’s the Antichrist being attacked by Egypt, instead of Syria (the northern country) being attacked by Egypt. It’s assumed that the two countries, which were historical enemies, actually form an alliance against the Antichrist (“him”) during the End Times.

There are some weaknesses to this view, when trying to connect it to the flow of thought in the previous narrative. Historically, it was Antiochus (king of the north - Syria), who fought with the king of the south (Egypt). Therefore, it would seem that one should maintain this same link to the historic past. However, some prophetic scholars have seen a change in the narrative in that a joint military coalition is attacking the Antichrist, who is only prefigured by the previous king, Antiochus. In other words, the Antichrist fulfills the *typology* of Antiochus, but he does NOT fulfill the *territorial* dimensions that Antiochus possessed as king of the north (Syria). Many dispensational writers take this approach to the prophetic passage of Daniel 11:36-45 and identify the kings of the north, south, and east as nations that were historically surrounding Jerusalem.

In other words, Daniel’s focus and his Jewish perspective of direction was always from Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10) and every passage would naturally dictate this to be true in relationship to End Time events. Therefore, the nations being described must be directionally aligned to Jerusalem. Of course, there is some truth to this statement, but it is not necessarily a conclusive argument as we will see in this study. We must ultimately allow the text of Scripture to be our compass and guide in relationship to what will occur during the End Times.

#### **A. Military invasion one**



In the first view, the explanation of this prophetic passage would go something like this. In these battles, which occur at the middle of the Tribulation Period, the “king of the south” (Egypt and Southern coalition of nations – “Libyans and Ethiopians or modern-day Libya and Sudan - vs. 43) are seen attacking the Antichrist’s kingdom. Since “the king of the South” in Daniel 11:5-35 referred to a king of Egypt, there seems to be no reason to relate this king of the south (v. 40) to some other nation. In fact, Egypt is mentioned twice in verses 42-43.

Along with the southern nations, a “king of the north” (Syria – as in the previous historical records) will also join the allied forces. These forces will “push” or collide with him militarily. Instead of being enemies, as in the historical record, the north and south now become allies in trying to take down the military power of the Antichrist. The Antichrist is seen fighting against the southern and northern countries which have merged together as a coalition of nations to contest his rise to world power and dictatorship.

How will these countries attack the Antichrist, whose headquarters is in Babylon? The countries will apparently come to attack Israel, who will be an ally of the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27). An attack upon Israel would mean an attack upon the Antichrist, at this point of time, since Israel would be an extension of the Antichrist’s arm and kingdom. Mention of the Antichrist moving through the Holy Land (“the glorious land” – vs. 41) would indicate that the troops will be gathering to destroy Israel.

The Antichrist will seek to destroy all those troops who oppose Israel and his powerful kingdom (Dan. 11:40) at the midway point of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week (Dan. 9:27). On his journey from Babylon to the Holy Land, and to Egypt in the south, the Antichrist will destroy many soldiers and peoples and overthrow many countries in his rage (vs. 40).

First, he will pass through Palestine, and many will fall prey to his war effort (vs. 41) except some ancient lands which are reserved for a special judgment at Christ’s Second Coming (Isa. 11:11-14; Ezek. 25:12-14). They are the lands of Edom, Moab, and Ammon - the people who are the ancient enemies of Israel (vs. 41). On a modern map, we would identify these counties with the country of modern Jordan, where many Jews will be

hiding to wait for the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 12:6, 14; Matt. 24:16). It is not luck or chance that the Antichrist bypasses these countries on his way to destroy the southern invaders. God will preserve a remnant of Jews in this land for His Second Coming.

Second, we discover from the prophetic revelation that the Antichrist will utterly defeat Egypt (vs. 42) along with her allies in his southern invasion, such as Libya and Ethiopia (Sudan), who are said to be symbolically placed under his feet (under his control) and they will bow in surrender and submission to him (vs. 43).

Daniel 11:43 says:

“But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.”

At some point, after Antichrist has plundered the southern countries, perhaps while he is still within these southern regions, he receives “tidings” (news or report) of another joint military effort coming from the east and north to intersect his army (“tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him” – vs. 44).

## **B. Military invasion two**

Daniel 11:44 prophetically anticipates:

“But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.”

### **1. The eastern force**

A second band of countries with their military might will combine forces in order to try and overthrow the power and strong kingdom of the Antichrist in Europe and the Middle East. The invaders would no doubt include such countries as China, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other Islamic countries immediately east of Israel, which have not yet capitulated or surrendered unconditionally to be part of his Roman kingdom.

Please note again that one should not confuse the eastern armies (“kings of the east”) moving into the Holy Land of Israel for Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16) with this eastern army in Daniel 11:44. As stated above, these events occur at different times. Daniel chapter 11:36-45 occurs during the middle of the seven-year Tribulation Period, while Revelation 16:12 occurs at the end of the Tribulation Period, as the armies converge together to make war with the Lamb (Rev. 16:12-16). Daniel chapter 11 deals with various wars against the Antichrist but Revelation 16 deals with a final war against the true Christ.

## **2. The northern force**

A northern invader is once again mentioned (Dan. 11:44 – “out of the north”). This northern invader is the subject of much debate, since, according to the first view, the previous northern invader, who was allied with the southern coalition (Egypt), was seemingly destroyed and taken out of the picture by the Antichrist (Dan. 11:40).

One possibility is that this is a northern nation, which is moving southward to Egypt, the location or place where the Antichrist has just conquered (Dan. 11:43). This northern threat may very well include another Arab nation or coalition of nations that are trying to detest their participation with Antichrist’s Assyrian and Roman Empire. One cannot be dogmatic regarding the identity of this northern country or coalition of countries to the north. We must not be dogmatic when filling in the blanks regarding the identity of this northern force. Perhaps they are countries such as Lebanon or Turkey, which are poised north of Egypt, and which protest the Antichrist’s rise to world power in the European arena.

Others suggest that this northern invader might be the country of Iraq who has cut off oil flow to the military machine of the Antichrist. However, this seems like an unlikely scenario since the Antichrist seems to emerge from this area as a leader in the Revived Roman Empire and will undoubtedly make Babylon his commercial capital during the End Times (Rev. 17). Whoever it might be, we do know that some northern nation or allied countries will try and place their bid for a place of prominence and power in

the Middle East and contest the Antichrist's rise to power in Europe and the Middle East.

Again, there are some who suggest this northern army may be a reference to Russia and some of her allies (Ezek. 38-39) who join these other countries in a mid-tribulational battle. However, as already stated, it must be noted that Russia is never called "king of the north" in relationship to the land of Egypt. Furthermore, this cannot be referring to Russia's invasion in Ezekiel 38-39, since the invaders from the north are destroyed by God in the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 38:19-23; 39:1-12), whereas in this case, the clear implication from the prophetic text is that the Antichrist goes about to destroy the invading northern soldiers and accomplishes his task, as in the previous campaigns.

Daniel 11:44

"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many."

It's clear from Daniel 11:44 that this coalition of eastern and northern powers is yet another attempt to overthrow Antichrist's End Time power as a new Caesar of the Roman Empire. It's also obvious that the warfare mentioned in this section of Scripture extends over a period of time and that more than one battle is involved. However, the text says that the intent of the Antichrist is "to destroy" his northern and eastern enemies and apparently this is exactly what he does.

Daniel 11:45 reads:

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

In order to have a more strategic military location in the Middle East, the Antichrist will, at some point, plant himself in Jerusalem, which is "between the seas" (the Mediterranean and Dead seas – vs. 45). He will establish his military palace and position in this strategic location for the rest of the Tribulation Period (three-and-one-half years) and control the major oil

reserves of the world which are linked with his Revived Roman Empire in Europe and the Middle East. His military location in Jerusalem will also set the stage for the Antichrist to begin His persecution of the Jewish People (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 24:15-21; Rev. 12). One thing is certain; Jerusalem will become his military palace or headquarters (Dan. 11:45), while Babylon will be his political and economic palace or headquarters (Zech. 5; Rev. 17-18).

The Bible says, “he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Dan. 11:45). This will occur after the divine time clock of the seven years has run its course (Matt. 24:29). This means the Antichrist will eventually be destroyed along with all the armies of Armageddon with the brightness of Messiah’s return (Rev. 19:17-21). Although no other world power could defeat him, the KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS will defeat him at His Second Coming.” Later revelation reveals that Jesus Christ will return from heaven and destroy him (Rev. 19:19–20; Zech. 14:1–4).

## View #2

### **King of the North = Antichrist (Syria)**

Daniel 11:40 once again speaks of a coalition of nations contesting Antichrist’s bid for world dominance and power. However, in the second view the king of the north follows the previous revealed history of Daniel 11 and maintains the connection of Syria with the king of the north.

**“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south (Egypt and her coalition of countries such as Libya and Sudan) push at him (Syria – the king of the north - an extension of Antichrist’s military arm, power, and future kingdom): and the king of the north (Syria – under the Antichrist’s leadership and backing who is the Gentile Syrian king of the End Times) shall come against him (king of the south) like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships (in a joint invasion); and he (Antichrist) shall enter into the countries (a coalition of countries with Egypt), and shall overflow and pass over.”**

Daniel 11:44 then envisions a second coalition coming against Antichrist: **“But tidings (announcements or reports) out of the east (China, Iran,**

*Afghanistan, and Pakistan – Oriental and Islamic countries immediately east of Israel), and out of the north (Lebanon, Turkey, or some other nations that are not yet linked to his military machine and which reside north of the region of Egypt and southern countries that Antichrist has just attacked), shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.”*

This view opposes the more popular understanding of these verses by fellow dispensational writers and is summarized by John Whitcomb: “Although agreeing that three distinct kings are seen in Daniel 11:40-45, most premillennialists understand the pronoun *he* in these verses to refer to the Antichrist, not the king of the north (Syria).” However, this popular conclusion seems to break with what the Bible is actually teaching in verse 40 and the previous narrative. Up to this point the “king of the north” has referred to the Syrian king (vv. 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15). Therefore, it is more consistent to apply the phrase “king of the north” to Antichrist, the leader of a coalition that includes Syria at this specific time, as he invades Egypt. As the southern coalition of nations comes against the king of the north (Antichrist and Syria), the northern king will destroy the southern alliance.

Although Renald Showers favors the same view as Whitcomb he does accurately state: “Since Daniel was not told the kings of the South and North in verse 40 differ from those in verses 1-35, we can conclude verse 40 refers to the rulers of Egypt and Syria during the last seven years of this present age.” I agree with this but at the same time it seems we should therefore conclude that the “king of the north” is the Antichrist who is backing Syrian during the End Times. It’s being fair with the flow of text. However, many of my fellow dispensationalists see these two countries becoming a united alliance against Antichrist during the End Times. In concluding this, they turn the tables on the previous narrative making Egypt and Syria countries fighting against a third person (Antichrist) instead of keeping the “king of the north” as Syria and Antichrist which was previously Antiochus and Syria.

Renald Showers concludes:

“Who is the ‘him’ of verse 40 whom Egypt and Syria will attack during the last seven years before Christ’s Second Coming to Earth? Since the

Antichrist is described immediately before verse 40, it is obvious he is the one whom Egypt and Syria attack.”

This conclusion seems to be foreign to the actual text. But there is unanimous agreement among dispensational expositors that the Antichrist is being referenced in verse 40. However, not all dispensationalists agree on remaking the “king of the north” into an enemy that attacks the Antichrist. Some, including myself, hold the position that the “king of the north” is actually describing the End Time Antichrist. There is an alternate and better understanding of these key verses of Daniel that is prophetic, dispensational, and more accurate to the understanding of the context and flowing of the narrative.

If we follow the flow of the historical narrative into the prophetic narrative, we should maintain that the Antichrist is the typical fulfillment of Antiochus Epiphanes, the king of the north. Although some prophetic students have attempted to make the “king of the north” as a nation attacking the Antichrist, it’s better to see the king of the north as the land of Syria, as in the previous narrative, a Syria that is now and extension of Antichrist’s kingdom and arm of power. So, essentially, the Antichrist is seen as the new king of the north in this prophetic passage.

Therefore, the pronoun “he” (Dan. 11:40) refers to the Antichrist who attacks the king of the south coalition and it will be the Antichrist who is backing the nation of Syria during the End Times (king of the north) which has become part of his Revived Roman Empire. In other words, Syria becomes an extension of Antichrist’s empire and therefore appropriately describes the movements of Antichrist (the king of the north) during the middle of the Tribulation Period, as he ascends to the place of supreme ruler over the earth. This conclusion keeps Syria as “king of the north,” as in the previous context, but also brings the Antichrist into the picture.

#### **a. His antitype**

It’s better to take the “king of the north” as a reference to the Antichrist, who is backing Syria during the End Times, a land which has become part of the Antichrist’s End Time Roman kingdom. In this interpretation, there is no

change from the historical to the prophetic narrative. The Antichrist is actually depicted as the king of the north, just like Antiochus was the king of the north (Syria).

The Antichrist fulfills the *typology* of Antiochus as well as the *territorial* dimensions that Antiochus possessed, as king of the north, which is modern-day Syria, within the ancient dimensions of the land of Assyria. During the End Times, Antichrist's war machine in Europe will obviously back this smaller land of Syria and she will become a "king of the north," which is representative of Antichrist's personal interests and military power. The king of the north in Daniel's prophetic text is Antichrist's domain (Syria) under the leadership of the new, End Times Antiochus Epiphanes.

There is a lot of merit to this view, when connecting it to the flow of thought in the previous narrative between the north and south battles. Historically, it was Antiochus, king of the north (Syria), who was attacking the king of the south (Egypt). Therefore, it would seem that one could maintain this same link to the historic past and do so with confidence. In this view, Antichrist replaces Antiochus and becomes the king of the north and the north (Antichrist's expanding Assyrian/Roman kingdom) is seen attacking the south (Egypt and the African alliance).

Some argue that the mention of "the king" (Dan. 11:36) is different than the previous "king of the north," since his northern association to Egypt is not mentioned in verses 36-45. In other words, he is only called "a king" but not associated with a "king of the north." However, this observation seems to be looking for a needle in a haystack in order to prove a prophetic point. The historical narrative moves right into the prophetic narrative without losing perspective on the northern emphasis of this king continuing to do battle with the south.

Others suggest that Antichrist only foreshadowed Antiochus as a *person* but not as a *member* of the Seleucid line called "kings of the north." There is some merit to this observation; however, the battles described in verses 40-45 are speaking of the same geographical regions, which were previously mentioned in the historical narrative. Once again, this would



lead us to believe that the northern emphasis of this End Time king (Antichrist) is also applicable to the same geographical region mentioned in the previous historical narrative.

Although Antichrist is not a member of the Seleucid family line, he is a future leader over a future empire (Revived Roman Empire) that encompasses the land of Syria. Therefore, he could be seen as a mighty king backing and assisting Syria, who governs many lands throughout the Middle East and Europe.

In addition, some could suggest that the “king of the north” is not an appropriate designation for the Antichrist, since his country is not directly north of Palestine, but west of Palestine. Therefore, some prophecy scholars have always identified the Antichrist as “king of the west” even though no Scripture gives him this specific designation or title. Antichrist might be considered a king of the west in his position to Palestine and the Middle East; however, we must remember that directions that are given in the prophetic text of Daniel 11:40-43 are in relationship to Egypt – not Palestine.

Once again, it stands to reason that the End Time Antichrist will control large areas of the old Roman Empire, including Syria, which is part the Middle East, as he rises to world power and dictatorship. Furthermore, the Seleucid (Macedonian) Empire, created out of the eastern conquests of Alexander the Great, not only included Syria, but a vast territory north and east of Israel, which was part of the Assyrian and Roman empires. The same will be true in the future.

The former empire included much of Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, and Babylonia. Therefore, it would be appropriate to identify the Antichrist as “king of the north” in fulfilling the typology and territory of Antiochus, since his attack on Egypt would have to come from the northern land (Syria), which was part of these ancient Assyrian and Roman Empires from which He presumably comes. We know that the domain of Syria became part of the Roman Empire in 64 B.C. as a result of Pompeii’s conquest. Today Syria is becoming a key player in the Middle East with a growing military power that will be used by the Antichrist, during the End Times, to attack Egypt

and overtake her land and riches, annexing her to the ancient Roman Empire once again.

Those who make the claim that the Antichrist is being attacked by two other nations (king of the north and king of the south) must build a case for three kings. But Daniel 11:40-43 seems to be talking about only two kings (king of the north and king of the south) and not three kings (king of the north, king of the south, and Antichrist). Keil gives three arguments supporting the view that the passage (vv. 40-43) mentions only two kings: (1) the nearest antecedent of the second pronoun “him” is the “king of the south”; (2) vv. 40–43 describe an invasion from the north against the south; and (3) the passage does not mention an attack against both the “king of the north” *and* “the king of the south.”

Tanner dismisses these arguments as not conclusive. He argues that the Antichrist cannot be the northern king because Antichrist has a connection with the Roman Empire, not the Seleucid Empire. The Roman Empire, however, included Syria, with parts of Mesopotamia subject to it. For this reason, it is likely that Antichrist will come from this region. If the Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes is the type of Antichrist, it logically suggests that the antitype will also be from this same region. The “king of the north” is everywhere else the Syrian king. As noted before, the Roman Empire included Syria. It is more logical that the Antichrist will also be from this region of the world.

### **b. His Assyrian Connection**

In the future, the Bible predicts that the Antichrist will come from the same geographic region of the Old Roman Empire, and more specifically, from the land of Assyria. Therefore, he could qualify as a northern invader of Egypt that is governing the land of Syria, which is part of his vast, growing empire.

Micah 5:5-6

“And this man (Messiah) shall be the peace (the promise of coming peace during the Millennial Kingdom), when the Assyrian (Antichrist and his world armies) shall come into our land (Palestine): and when he shall tread in our

palaces (during Armageddon and the End Time when the armies of the world surround Jerusalem – Zech. 12:9; 14:1-3), then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod (a synonym for Assyria – modern day Iraq) in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian (Antichrist and his End Time armies), when he cometh into our land (Palestine), and when he treadeth within our borders.”

The connection of the future “king” to the land of Assyria is important when one considers the origin and identity of the future Antichrist. Of course, Assyria was the main threat to the Israelites in Micah’s day, but this prophecy predicts their victory over the Assyrians in the future, when they once again come against Israel during the End Times. In the future, Israel will be victorious over Assyria. Of course, this did not happen in the history of Israel; Assyria defeated the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. Therefore, this prophecy must continue the vision into the distant future and refer to another time when the Assyrians, representative of Antichrist and Israel’s enemies, will once again invade the Promised Land during the End Times (Zech. 12:9; 14:2–3). However, during the future, God will miraculously empower the Israelites to rise up against the invaders and grant them initial victory (Zech. 12:1-9).

The expression “seven shepherds, and eight principal men” reminds us that the Israelites will have more than enough leaders that God will use to help the Jews defeat the approaching Assyrian enemy (Antichrist and the converging armies in Palestine). The “land of Nimrod” is a synonym for Assyria (Gen. 10:8–9; 1 Chron. 1:10) and the strategic areas of its territory. In particular, this area of Babylon will be the political and commercial headquarters of the End Time Antichrist (Revelation 18).

I’ve taken time to expound these prophetic verses to once again reiterate the Antichrist’s connection to the ancient land of Assyria. Therefore, a “king of the north” emphasis in Daniel 11:36-45 would certainly be appropriate, since Syria, where Antiochus ruled during his era, was part of the ancient land of Assyria. The emphasis on a terrible king, who ruled in the same ancient area of the Seleucid/Assyrian/Roman dynasties, will be a player during the End Times. Therefore, Antichrist can appropriately be identified

with a northern Syrian ruler, who is once again ruling in the same geographic area of these ancient empires, a ruler that will become a world power over many countries in his geographical region, and fight against Egypt and many countries during the End Times.

### **c. His assistance to Syria**

Syria was the capital of the Seleucid Empire (312-64 B.C.) but it was also part of the Assyrian and Roman Empires. It will also be part of the future Revived Roman Empire which will be formed during the End Times (Rev. 17:12). Therefore, Syria can prophetically represent a power to the north that the Antichrist *controls* and which will be an extension and representative of his military arm. As a result, the Antichrist, who controls and assists Syria militarily, can be identified as the king of the north in Daniel 11:40. Syria is seen to be a familiar participant in the ancient past empires of world history and it also becomes a player in the End Times, since it is part of the Antichrist's End Time kingdom, over which he rules.

From the perspective of Egypt ("king of the south"), Antichrist's kingdom can then be viewed as a kingdom to the north, a vast powerful kingdom in Europe and the Middle East, which Syria will once again be part of during the End Times. In short, since Syria will be an extension of Antichrist's military power during the future Tribulation Period, the Antichrist can be viewed as a northern Syrian power coming down to conquer Egypt, since Antichrist's war machine will back Syria (Dan. 11:38). As a result, Syria, representative of Antichrist's Revived Roman Empire to the north, will crush all enemies that rise up against him.

William Newell suggests that the king of the north is the Antichrist: "In reading Daniel 11:40, it may be well to interpolate slightly in order to establish the identity of the willful king as the last 'king of the north' which it seems apparent he must be, in order to fulfill completely the typical foreshadowing of Antiochus."

### **d. His attack on the south**

In the second view, the understanding of Daniel 11:40 would once again be like this: “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south (Egypt with her coalition of countries) push at him: and the king of the north (Syria backed by the arm and power of Antichrist) shall come against him (king of the south) like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries (a coalition of countries with Egypt), and shall overflow and pass over.”

This understanding of this text sounds reminiscent of the previous explanations of battles between the south and north (Dan. 11:11). In this scenario, it's the Antichrist who is the “king of the north” and he is seen attacking the invaders from the south.

Daniel 11:44 would then be understood in this way:

“But tidings out of the *east (China, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan – Islamic countries immediately east of Israel)*, and out of the north (*Lebanon, Turkey, Russia - who are not yet linked to his military machine*), shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.”

This particular interpretation and understanding of these verses cannot be ruled out as a viable understanding and option of this portion of the prophetic word. In fact, this interpretation should be given much attention in light of the flow of the historical narrative. The Seleucid Empire, Syria, and Antiochus Epiphanes are historically portrayed in Daniel 11:1-35 but Antichrist, Syria, and his End Time Roman Empire are portrayed in Daniel 11:36-45, which includes the land of Syria. The kingdom of the north continues right on into the future, which was represented in the previous verses by Syria. Again, consistency demands that we interpret the southern (Egypt) and northern (Syria) kingdom in the same way. However, the scene changes from history to prophecy, as the Antichrist's End Time kingdom fulfills the typology and territory of the past kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes.

The Antichrist, which is now identified as “the king of the north” (Dan. 11:40), is seen battling it out with the “king of the south” (Egypt), just as previously revealed in Daniel chapter eleven. However, the battle in Daniel

11:40-45 leaps through the centuries and takes us into the End Times. Thus, history merges into prophecy and “the king of the north” (Antichrist’s Roman kingdom) is doing battle with “the king of the south (Egypt’s southern kingdom – African army).

In these battles, which occur at the middle of the Tribulation Period, the “king of the north” (Syria) is in view, as in the previous historical records. It’s interesting that the land of Syria, where Antiochus ruled, was part of the historic Assyrian dynasty, and the land of Assyria is the place where the future king (Antichrist) will emerge and rule (Micah 5:5-6). In fact, this ancient land will become the place of his future political headquarters in Babylon (Revelation 18). The empire of Assyria, which includes Syria, is part of the greater Revived Roman Empire that Antichrist will redevelop during the End Times, as the central nucleus of His kingdom and for military power (Dan. 7:24; Rev. 17:12-13). The personal Antichrist (the Assyrian King), who *controls* Syria, will actually fight against the king of the south and overcome this southern kingdom of Egypt and the African coalition of nations (“enter into the countries and shall overflow and pass over” and “many countries shall be overthrown” - (Dan. 11:40-41).

According to the flow of thought, it seems best to take the king of the north as the personal Antichrist who has emerged from the ancient land of Assyria, even as Antiochus Epiphanies was the king of the north (Syria), which was part of the ancient Assyrian Empire. This scenario corresponds to the previous historical discussions (Daniel 11:15). The Antichrist (king of the northern land of Assyria) is then seen fighting against the southern countries which have merged together as a coalition of nations to contest his rise to world dictatorship within Europe and the Middle East.

As the campaign continues, the war machine of the Antichrist (Dan. 11:38) defeats all the military attempts to overthrow his surging power in the Middle East (Dan. 11:44) and he rises to world dictatorship, establishing his military headquarters in Jerusalem for the remainder of the Tribulation Period (Dan. 11:45).

Daniel 11:41-43 prophetically declares:

“He shall enter also into the glorious land (*Israel – indicating that the troops will be gathering to destroy Israel*), and many countries shall be overthrown (*the countries represented by the troops in Israel*): but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon (*modern area known as Jordan*). He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians (*Egypt’s Arab allies - modern-day Libya and Sudan*) **shall be at his steps**” (*be following at his heels trying to destroy the Antichrist*).

When moving from the historical to the prophetic narrative, one could naturally take the Antichrist, as the king of the north, who has taken control of Syria and the greater part of the ancient land of Assyria, even as Antiochus Epiphanies was the king of the north in the previous historical narrative. He is seen fighting against the southern country of Egypt (African nations) and those other countries north and east that contest his iron rule in the Middle East. In the prophetic scenario, these countries have merged together as a coalition of nations that contest his rise to world power and dictatorship. Along with the southern confrontation, an eastern and northern threat will also attempt to defeat the Antichrist and his kingdom (Dan. 11:44), which he has brought together in Europe and the Middle East (Rev. 17:10).

There is merit to viewing the Antichrist as the final “king of the north” and understanding this important prophetic passage of Scripture in this way. This interpretation fits the flow of thought from the previous historical narrative regarding the battles between the king of the north and south and answers to Antiochus. I tend to espouse this view and understanding of these prophetic events realizing that dogmatism cannot be maintained about some of the exact details. One thing is certain, a ruler will emerge on the world scene, whose power and grip on the Middle East will be challenged, but he will emerge victorious and become the superpower and dictator of the world.

Revelation 13:4-8

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

### **Conclusion**

Once again, the “time of the end” (Daniel 11:40) refers to the midway point of the Tribulation Period, when Israel will begin to be persecuted (Dan. 12:1) and when Antichrist makes his bid for world dominance and dictatorship. The converging armies will attempt to defeat his power in the Middle East but will not avail. After the defeat of the coalition of armies in the Middle East, the king that comes down from the north will be the undisputed power of the ancient land of Assyria, and in a much broader sense, become the new Caesar of the restored Roman Empire in Europe and the Middle East (Dan. 7:24). His power, riches, and close proximity to the rich oil fields of the world, along with housing the commercial capital of the world (Rev. 18) will make the Antichrist the greatest military and economic power on the planet. As a result, the world will be submissive to him and actually worship him.

The chronology of this prophetic scenario, at the midway point of the Tribulation Period, seems to be part of an ongoing campaign of battles that will result in the Antichrist becoming world dictator. This is a chain of events that will take place during “the time of the end” (vs. 40), or the middle of the Tribulation Period (Dan. 12:1), which leads up to Antichrist’s world dictatorship.



Daniel's study of "the time of the end" (Dan. 11:40; 12:9) includes various events that will occur at the middle of the Tribulation Period and during the last three- and one-half years of this terrible time of judgment. We learn that it will be a time of intense war (Dan. 11:40-45), great persecution for Israel (Dan. 12:1), revival in the study of Bible prophecy (Dan. 12:4), and the time of Israel's discipline and purging (Dan. 12:8-10). All these events will transpire during the middle and final three- and one-half years of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week which leads up the final Battle of Armageddon and Second Coming of Christ to planet earth (Rev. 19:17-21).