

THE KING OF THE NORTH AND THE END-TIMES

DANIEL 10:14 to 12

This is the last of the 5 major prophecy passages in the book of Daniel. It is a single prophecy running from 10:14 to the end of chapter 12 — with Daniel’s vision recorded in 11:2 to 12:4. After the vision Daniel has some questions about it and these are answered in 12:5-13. As with the passage concerning the “Seventy ‘sevens’” this one was written in Hebrew and so is particularly relevant for Jews. Although the book of Daniel was written at some time before 539 B.C. the fulfilment of its 5 major prophecies mainly concerns what is future from our time. So after setting the time of his receiving the vision as in the 1st year of Darius the Mede, Daniel is then told how the dynasty proceeds and leading to the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great.

THE ANCIENT SECTION – FROM KING CYRUS TO THE SPLITTING OF ALEXANDER’S KINGDOM

11: 2: *FOUR PERSIAN KINGS*

❖ “Three more kings are going to arise in Persia...Then a fourth...will arouse the whole empire against Greece.” These kings must be relevant to Israel, so they are not the kings of the historical sequence in Persia’s history, but rather fell within the period of the 70 ‘sevens.’ So Sir Robert Anderson understands these monarchs to have been:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Darius II Nothus (Neh. 12:2) | 423-404. B.C.E |
| 2. Artaxerxes II Mnemon | 404-359. |
| 3. Artaxerxes III Ochus | 359-338 |
| 4. Darius II Codomannus | 338-336. |

11:3: *ALEXANDER THE GREAT*

❖ “And a mighty king will arise.”

Alexander came to power in Greece in 336 and invaded Persia in 334 but died in 323.

11:4: *THE SPLITTING OF ALEXANDER’S KINGDOM*

❖ “...his [*Alexander’s*] kingdom will be broken up and parcelled out to the 4 points of the compass... his sovereignty will be uprooted and given to **others** besides them.”

After Alexander died his kingdom was split into four parts:

Macedonia/Greece (Cassander);	Asia Minor/Thrace (Lysimachus);
Syria/Mesopotamia (Seleucus I Nicator);	Egypt/Palestine (Ptolemy Lagus)

In time two parts became dominant so that there was a dynasty of **Seleucid kings** in the area of *Syria/Iraq*, and a dynasty of **Ptolemaic kings** ruling over *Egypt*. This has led many interpreters to propose that these dynasties were the fulfilment of Daniel 11:5-21 or beyond.

THE GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE KING OF THE NORTH - KING OF THE SOUTH SCENARIO

Daniel **11:5-21** HCSB

For reasons that shall be explained later we do not believe that the following typical interpretation fits the passage of Daniel 11 according to context:

❖ ⁵ “The king of the South [Ptolemy I Soter (323-285)] will grow powerful, but one of his commanders [Seleucus I Nicator (312-280)] will grow more powerful and will rule a kingdom (Babylonia, Syria, and Media) greater than his. After some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter [Berenice] of the king of the South [Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246)] will go to the king of the North [Antiochus II Theos (261-246)] to seal the agreement. She will not retain power, and his strength will not endure. She will be given up, together with her entourage, her father (should read “child”), and the one who supported her during those times [Antiochus, Berenice and their child were murdered by Antiochus’ existing wife Laodice]. In the place of the king of the South (Ptolemy II Philadelphus), one [Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221)] from her (Berenice’s) family will rise up, come against the army, and enter the fortress (Antioch) of the king of the North [Seleucus II Calinicus (246-226 son of Laodice)]. He will take action against them (from 246-241) and triumph. He will take even their gods captive to Egypt, with their metal images and their precious articles of silver and gold. For some years he will stay away from the king of the North (a peace treaty in 240), who will enter the kingdom of the king of the South and then return to his own land.

¹⁰ “His sons [Seleucus III Ceraunus (226-223) and Antiochus III The Great (223-187)] will mobilize for war and assemble a large number of armed forces. They will advance, sweeping through like a flood, and will again wage war as far as his fortress. Infuriated, the king of the South [Ptolemy IV Philopater (221-203)] will march out to fight with the king of the North [Antiochus III The Great], who will raise a great multitude, but the multitude will be handed over to his enemy. When the multitude is carried off, he will become arrogant and cause tens of thousands to fall, but he will not triumph. The king of the North will again raise a multitude larger than the first. After some years he will advance (in 202) with a great army and many supplies.

¹⁴ “In those times many [Philip V of Macedon and allies] will rise up against the king of the South [Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181)]. Violent ones among your own people will assert themselves [Jews aiding Antiochus] to fulfill a vision, but they will fail [General Scopas punishes them]. Then the king of the North will come, build up an assault ramp, and capture a well-fortified city (Sidon). The forces of the South will not stand; even their select troops will not be able to resist (Scopas surrenders). The king of the North who comes against him will do whatever he wants, and no one can oppose him. He will establish himself in the beautiful land (when he enters Jerusalem in 198 Antiochus is viewed as a deliverer) with total destruction in his hand. He will resolve to come with the force of his whole kingdom and will reach an agreement with him. He (Antiochus) will give him (Ptolemy V) a daughter [Cleopatra] in marriage (193) to destroy it (Ptolemaic dynasty), but she will not stand with him [Antiochus] or support him. Then he will turn his attention to the coasts and islands [Mediterranean] and capture many. But a commander [Roman – Lucius Cornelius Scipio] will put an end to his taunting (routed the Syrians at Thermopylae - 191 then defeats Antiochus at the Battle of Magnesia – 190); instead, he will turn his taunts against him (Antiochus forced to sign Treaty of Apamea 188). He [Antiochus] will turn his attention back to the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble, fall (killed 187), and be no more.

²⁰ “In his place one will arise [Seleucus IV Philopater (187-175)] who will send out a tax collector [Heliodorus to collect taxes to pay Rome] for the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he [Seleucus IV] will be shattered, though not in anger or in battle” (poisoned by Heliodorus).

²¹ “In his place a despised person will arise [Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163)]; royal honors will not be given to him, but he will come during a time of peace and seize the kingdom by intrigue.”

However, this interpretation forces history into the Bible text and there are many reasons why verses 5-21 should be taken as prophecy about future kings as forerunners of the final antichrist, as we shall shortly see. Nevertheless, there is great disagreement among interpreters as to how the passage from verse 22 should be understood.

1. Many interpret this “*despised person*” of verse 21 as being: Antiochus IV Epiphanes through to verse 30 and then verses 31-45 as a reference to the **Antichrist**.

2. Some go even further and interpret this “**despised person**” as being Antiochus IV Epiphanes right through to verse 45 and so leaving *no mention of future events involving Antichrist*.
3. Others take the “**despised person**” as being *Tiberius Caesar* up to verse 24 and then propose that the “king of the North” changes to many different individuals and empires through history up to the 20th century.

REASONS WHY THE SELEUCID AND PTOLEMAIC DYNASTIES, AND TIBERIUS CAESAR ARE NOT IN VIEW IN ANY PART OF DANIEL 11:5-45

Although the passage from 11:5 to 11:35 or 45 is often interpreted as concerning the history of the Greek Empire in Syria/Iraq and including Antiochus IV Epiphanes as a significant persecutor of the Jews, there are factors that demand that this entire passage refers to the end-times and to concern the final antichrist from verse 21. These factors are:

THE HISTORY OF ANTIOCHUS IV DOES NOT FIT VERSES 36-45

Unlike Daniel’s description of “the King of the North” Antiochus did not exalt himself above every god or “reject the god of his fathers”, or worship “a god unknown to his fathers.” He worshipped the Greek pantheon of gods including Zeus to whom he made an offering in the Jerusalem temple. Furthermore, Antiochus came to his end at Tabae in Persia, rather than in Palestine the appointed place for “the King of the North” to come to his end. So evidently Antiochus IV Epiphanes was not the subject of Daniel’s prophecy from verse 36 to the end.

FACTORS SHOWING THAT TIBERIUS CAESAR DOES NOT FIT VERSES 21-24

Tiberius, who was Caesar from A.D. 14 to A.D. 26, is proposed by a few interpreters to be the “**despised person**” of verse 21-24. However, it was not the case with Tiberius that “*royal honors will not be given to him*” nor that “*he will come during a time of peace and seize the kingdom by intrigue*” as is the case for the **despised person** of verse 21. Furthermore, the idea that the Roman Praetorian Guard was the “**small nation**” (verse 23) is stretching language too far. The Praetorian Guard was no more than a “**small army**” — it was certainly not a nation. There is no great leap forward of about 250 years in verse 25 and no change to a different person i.e. Emperor Aurelian (In the 270s A.D. he captured Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra). As we shall see in a moment if Tiberius was the “**despised person**” he would have to exist right down to the end-times because Daniel 11 concerns a single person from verse 21 to the end. So evidently Tiberius Caesar was not the subject of Daniel’s prophecy in verses 21-24.

“ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION” FUTURE FROM JESUS’ DAY

At 11:31 Daniel spoke of the “*Abomination of Desolation*” some 600 years before Jesus included it (Matt. 24:15) in his great Olivet prophecy and connected the “*Abomination*” with his return (Matt. 24:30). So Jesus viewed it as coming into existence future from his time. Now Jesus’ comment was some 300 years after Antiochus IV Epiphanes existed and so showing that he was not the subject of Daniel’s prophecy from verse 31 to the end.

ONLY ONE “KING OF THE NORTH” FROM VERSE 21 TO THE END

In following the antecedents of ‘he’, ‘him’, and ‘his’ in the vision the “**despised person**” noted in verse 21 is the same person right through to verse 45 where he is shown to come to his end. Therefore, there is no break at either verse 31 or verse 36 as if introducing a new person as proposed by some interpreters. (Please see STUDY 7 which shows that “the King of the North” is Antichrist — “the Man of Lawlessness” in Paul’s description in 2 Thess. 2).

ONLY THREE KINGS OF THE NORTH IN TOTAL

Again, in following the antecedents of ‘he’, ‘him’, and ‘his’ in the vision it is evident that the passage does not speak of six kings of the North as is forced to fit into Daniel 11:5-20 in the general interpretation. The **first “king of the North”** is from verses 6-19; **the second** is in verse 20. So evidently the Seleucid dynasty was not the subject of Daniel’s prophecy from verse 5 to verse 20. Note that **the third and last** [*The Antichrist*] is spoken of in verses 21 to 45.

ONLY TWO KINGS OF THE SOUTH

Again, in following these antecedents in the vision it is evident that Daniel 11:5-20 does not speak of five kings of the South, but only of two — **the first “king of the South”** is detailed in verse 5 and 6; **the second** is from verse 7 to the end of chapter 11. So evidently the Ptolemaic dynasty was not the subject of Daniel’s prophecy from verse 5 to the end.

THE BALANCE OF THE PROPHECIES

There is an evident balance in the first 4 major prophecies in Daniel such that the much larger section is given over to end-time events. Therefore, the balance is maintained when the larger portion of the vision in chapter 11 is interpreted as also referring to the end-time. In fact, the smaller portion of Chapter 11 i.e. verses 2-4 lead down to the same point as chapter 8:1-8, namely, the division of Alexander’s empire.

“LATTER DAYS” = END-TIMES

- ❖ “...to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people **in the latter days** for the vision pertains to the **days yet future.**” (10:14).
- ❖ “The two kings, whose hearts are bent on evil, will speak lies at the same table but to no avail, **for still the end will come at the appointed time**” (11:27).
- ❖ “**At the time of the end**, the king of the South will engage him in battle, but the king of the North will storm against him” (11:40).

The phrase “the latter days” refers to events that will occur just prior to and just after the coming of the Kingdom of God so the prophecy must be significantly about the end-times.

THE VISION ENCOMPASSES THE RESURRECTION

The resurrection follows immediately after this last King of the North has come to his end:

- ❖ “Now at that time ... Many of those **who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake**, some to eternal life, and some to shame and eternal contempt” (*Dan. 12:1, 2*). This means that last King of the North must exist in the end-times.

THE INTERVAL AT VERSE 4

In his book *Histories and Prophecies of Daniel* G. H. Lang notes the work of leading Bible scholar S. P. Tregelles who shows:

- (a) That the unnoticed interval is found between verses 4 and 5.
 - (b) That at verse 5 the thought passes direct from the days of the ancient Grecian empire to the end days.
 - (c) That verses 5-20 foretell the political events that will lead up directly to Antichrist, and
 - (d) That verses 21 to the end give his career.
- Daniel **11:6** shows that the break has occurred early in this passage when it says, according to the Hebrew, “*at the end of the years.*”

EARLY CHRISTIAN INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11

Almost sixteen hundred years ago Jerome stated that:

Those of our persuasion believe all these things are spoken prophetically of Antichrist who is to arise in the end time.

Chrysostom and Theodoret also took the same view. Today the majority of scholars take at least verses 36 to 12:3 as being applicable to the Antichrist.

S.P. TREGELLES' INTERPRETATION OF
THE KING OF THE NORTH - KING OF THE SOUTH SCENARIODaniel **11:5-20**

From the above factors it is evident that from verse 5 to verse 20 the subject matter is of **two yet future** kings of the North (vss.6-19 and 20) and their issues with the two kings of the South. They are north and south of “the beautiful land”— Israel so that, based on the ancient Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms, they must rule over Syria/Iraq and Egypt respectively. The second of these kings of the North lasts only “a few days” (vs. 20). Yet at his sudden demise the “despised person” – the final antichrist makes his first appearance as the third and last “King of the North.” As Tregelles demonstrates, and with the agreement of others, there is **an interval between verses 4 and 5** and “that verses 5-20 foretell the political events that will lead up directly to Antichrist” i.e. the end-times, so that **two** kings of the North are forerunners of the final “king of the North” — Antichrist.

THE FINAL ANTICHRIST AS ‘THE KING OF THE NORTH’

Daniel **11:21-31** HCSB

The following events appear to occur during the first half of the 70th ‘Seven.’ i.e. to the middle of the ‘Seven.’

❖ “In his place **a despised person** will arise [**1st appearance of Antichrist**]; royal honors will not be given to him [**by the 10 king confederacy**], but he will come during a time of peace and seize the kingdom by intrigue.”

²² A flood of forces will be swept away before him; they [**3 horns – 7:8**] will be shattered, as well as the **covenant** [**with antichrist**] **prince**. ²³ After an alliance is made with him, he will act deceitfully. He will rise to power **with a small nation**. ²⁴ During **a time of peace**, he will come into the richest parts of the province and do what his fathers and predecessors never did. He will lavish plunder, loot, and wealth on his followers, and he will **make plans against fortified cities**, but only for a time.

²⁵ “With **a large army** he will stir up his power and his courage **against the king of the South** [**1st campaign**]. The king of the South will prepare for battle with an extremely large and powerful army, but he will not succeed, because plots will be made against him. ²⁶ Those who eat his provisions **will destroy him** [**The king of the South**]; his army will be swept away [**in verses 40-42**], and many will fall slain. ²⁷ The two kings, whose hearts are bent on evil, will speak lies at the same table [**outwardly collaborating**] but to no avail, for still the end will come at the appointed time. ²⁸ The king of the North [**for the 1st time antichrist is a king**] will return to his land with great wealth, but **his heart will be set against the holy covenant** [**of Israel**]; he will take action, then return to his own land.

²⁹ “At the appointed time he will come again to the South [**2nd campaign**], but this time will not be like the first. ³⁰ Ships of Kittim [**Western navies**] will come against him, and being intimidated, he will withdraw. Then he will rage against the holy covenant and take action. On his return, he will favor those who abandon the holy covenant [**apostates**].”

Here we see Antichrist's two military campaigns against "the king of the South." His further wars involve Israel and finally the kings gathered at Armageddon.

PARALLELS WITH THE OTHER DANIELIC PROPHECIES

11:21: The **Despicable person** will arise, on whom the honour of kingship has not been conferred (by the 10 kings) *in a time of peace* seizes the kingdom by intrigue.

= 7:8: '**Little Horn**' came up among them [*the 10*] and uproots 3 horns.

= 8:9: '**Small Horn**' comes out of the 4 conspicuous horns grows great toward the South, the East and the Beautiful land.

= 8:23: **A king** will arise skilled in intrigue.

= 9:26, 27: **The Prince** who is to come makes a firm covenant.

ANTICHRIST SETS UP THE ABOMINATION AND
TRIGGERS THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Daniel **11:31-35** HCSB

The following events to verse 45 are the climax of Antichrist's rule and occur during the second half of the 70th 'Seven.' i.e. to the end of the 'Seven.'

- ❖ ³¹ "His [*Antichrist's*] forces [*apostate majority of Jews*] will rise up and desecrate the temple fortress [*the sanctuary*]. They will abolish the daily sacrifice and **set up the abomination of desolation** [*for 1290 days*]. ³² With flattery he will corrupt those [*apostate Jews*] who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will be strong and take action. ³³ Those who are wise among the people will give understanding to many, yet they will die by sword and flame, and be captured and plundered for a time [*The Great tribulation*]. ³⁴ When defeated, they will be helped by some, but many others will join them insincerely. ³⁵ Some of the wise will fall so that they may be refined, purified, and **cleansed until the time of the end**, for it will still come at the appointed time."

PARALLELS WITH THE OTHER DANIELIC PROPHECIES

▪ **THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION**

11: 31a: His [*the king of the North's*] "forces desecrate the sanctuary."

= 9:27: The prince is the one who makes desolate.

11:31b: The king of the North does away with **sacrifice**...sets up the **Abomination of Desolation**.

= 8:11: Horn removes the regular sacrifice ... sanctuary was thrown down.

= 9:27: he will put a stop to sacrifice etc and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate.

TIMING:

12:11: From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the Abomination of Desolation is 1,290 days.

▪ **DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION**

11:33: The insightful will fall by the sword, flame and captivity.

= 7:21, 25: Horn **wars with saints** for **3½ times**.

= 8:10, 24: Horn causes stars to fall to earth. He will destroy ... the holy people

12:7: it would be for **3½ times**; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FINAL ANTICHRIST AS
‘THE KING OF THE NORTH’

Daniel **11:36-11:40** HCSB

- ❖ ³⁶ “Then the king will do whatever he wants. He will exalt and **magnify himself above every god** [*likely to be an atheist*], and he will say outrageous things against the God of gods [*now turns against Christians*]. He will be successful until the time of wrath [*his wrath against God’s people*] is completed, because what has been decreed will be accomplished. ³⁷ He will not show regard for the gods of his fathers, [*he suppresses all other religions*] the god longed for by women [*female worship of Tammuz and related deities//Rev.13:11-18*], or for any other god, because he will magnify himself above all. ³⁸ Instead, he will honor **a god of fortresses** [*the personification of war i.e. militarism*]*—a god his fathers did not know—*with gold, silver, precious stones, and riches. ³⁹ He will deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of **a foreign god** [*military power*]. He will greatly honor those who acknowledge him, making them rulers over many and distributing land as a reward.”

PARALLELS WITH THE OTHER DANIELIC PROPHECIES

11:36: The king of the North **magnifies** himself above every god.

= 7:8, 20: Horn has eyes like a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.

= 8:11: Horn magnified itself to be equal to the Commander of the host.

And 8:25: The king will magnify himself and destroy many while they are *at ease* and oppose the Prince of princes.

THE CLOSING STAGES OF ANTICHRIST’S CAREER

Daniel **11:40-12:3** NIV

- ❖ ⁴⁰ “**At the time of the end** the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. ⁴¹ He will also **invade** [*in Jehoshaphat Campaign/Valley of decision in Joel 3*] **the Beautiful Land** [*Israel*]. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand [*possibly they are rescued because that is the general area where the ‘woman’ flees to*]. ⁴² He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. ⁴³ He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Nubians in submission. ⁴⁴ But reports from the east and the north will alarm him [*Media destroying the City of Babylon (Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51:11, 28) ‘kings from the East (Rev. 9:13-16; 16:12)*], and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. ⁴⁵ He will pitch his royal tents between the seas [*the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea*] at the beautiful holy mountain [*Zion*]. Yet **he will come to his end**, and no one will help him.” (*Tiberius Caesar did not die in Palestine*).
- ❖ **12:1** “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise [*throwing Satan out of heaven Rev.12:7-9*]. There will be a time of distress [*Great Tribulation*] such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. ² Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life [*1st resurrection*], others to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. ⁴ But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.”

PARALLELS CONCERNING ANTICHRIST'S END

11:45: yet he [*the king of the North*] will come to his end with no one to help him.

= 2:44: The set up Kingdom will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms.

= 7:11: The Beast...slain and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.

And 7:26: Little Horn's "dominion will be taken away and destroyed forever."

= 8:25: But he [*the king*] will be broken.

= 9:26: His end will come with a flood (judgment).

And 9:27: until a complete destruction is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

7:12: For the rest of the beasts [*Lion, Bear, Leopard*] their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was given them for an appointed time.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON THE FIFTH VISION

Daniel **12:5-13** NIV

- ❖ "Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "**How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?**" The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a **time, times and half a time**. *When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, [at the end of the Great tribulation]* all these things will be completed." I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "**My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?**" He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and **sealed until the time of the end**. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand. "From the time that **the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up**, there will be **1,290 days**.¹² Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the **1,335 days**.¹³ "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

So the answer to the question "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" is **1,290 days** which begin when Antichrist sets up "the abomination that causes desolation." Then there is a further 45 days to a particular 'blessing.'

NOTE: Additional timing information was already given in Daniel 8:13, 14:

- ❖ "Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular **burnt offering**, the transgression that **makes desolate**, and the giving over of **the sanctuary** and host to be trampled underfoot?"¹⁴ And he said to me, "**For 2,300 evenings and mornings**. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state" (ESV). (Please see Study 9).

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SUGGESTED READING

The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel by G.H. Lang

Empires of the End-Time by Charles Ozanne (from the Open Bible trust)

