

# THE MIDDLE EAST IN PROPHECY

The Middle East is one of the most volatile regions in the world and Bible prophecy reveals that much of the events of the Great Tribulation will be centred in this region. The end-time events that will climax in the return of Jesus Christ are explained to us in a thumbnail outline at the end of chapter 11 in the Book of Daniel. Tonight, using that thumbnail sketch, I would like to explain the events that will occur in the Middle East during the Great Tribulation.

In Daniel 11:40 we read: “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind.” We have two key powers fighting each other – the king of the north and the king of the south. Before we can understand the events to come we need to identify these two key powers.

The prophecies at the end of Daniel 11 are the climax to a long series of prophecies starting from the time of Alexander the Great. After Alexander died his Greek empire was divided amongst his four generals. The division based in Syria to Israel’s north was ruled by the Selucids. The other division based in Egypt was ruled by the Ptolemies.

The kings of these two Greek kingdoms are referred to as the king of the North and the king of the South in the prophecies about them in Daniel 11 with Israel being piggy in the middle as these two kingdoms fought for control of the land of Israel. Now both these Greek kingdoms were conquered by the Roman empire in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the Roman empire became the new King of the North starting from verses 36 and 37 which speak of the Roman emperor worship.

By comparing these prophecies with others that speak of a revival of the Roman empire in the end time and that end-time Assyria, which we understand to be the modern Germans, is the end-time conqueror of the nation of Israel we can have confidence that a central European based power is the king of the North. In other words, the king of the north is effectively still Rome.

Now the identity of the king of the south is a little less clear. Rome conquered the previous King of the South. Obviously the king of the south will be based south of Israel to be given that title. Egypt is specifically mentioned as one of the many conquered nations so this power could be Egypt but it could also be a much wider power. Some possibilities include a single Islamic caliphate, a confederation of separate Arab nations or a confederation of Islamic terrorist groups transcending national borders. The use of the word king implies a ruler with sovereignty but it may not have to be interpreted quite so strictly which might allow for the last possibility. There are several possibilities for the identity of the king of the South which we’ll need to wait and see which one it turns out to be.

One passage we have used in relation to the identity of the King of the South is Psalm 83 which speaks of a number of Arab and other Middle East peoples in conspiracy with Assyria to destroy Israel. Anciently that verse was fulfilled in David’s day in 1 Chronicles 19 when the Mesopotamians provided 32 000 chariots to assist Ammon in its rebellion against David which quickly involved many other nations in which Israel with God’s help prevailed. There is a question mark over Psalm 83 being a future prophecy because in Psalm 83 the Assyrians are allied with the Arabs while in Daniel 11 they are fighting each other.

With that background let’s go back to Daniel 11 and start with verse 40: “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.”

The king of the South pushes or attacks (depending on which version you read) the King of the North for some unstated reason and then the King of the North retaliates and conquers many

countries both via sea and land with a very swift attack reminiscent of Hitler's blitzkrieg or lightning war. In an old WCG brochure entitled "The Middle East in Prophecy" Keith Stump in commenting on this passage writes:

"Why will Europe feel compelled to intervene in the Middle East? Here prophecy is silent. Europe's ire might well be precipitated by a sudden cut-off of vital oil supplies—the industrial lifeblood of the Continent. Or it might be triggered by some sort of jihad—'holy war'—waged against the West by Muslim fundamentalists. Whatever the provocation, prophecy reveals that Europe will act swiftly to protect its interests—dispatching troops into the Middle East! The European power—this king of the north or Beast—will occupy both the state of Israel and some of her Arab neighbours, according to this clear prophecy of Daniel. Europe will attempt to impose peace on the war-torn Middle East—by force of arms! The Beast will seek to do what diplomats and statesmen have failed to do." (The Middle East in Prophecy, p.33).

Continuing on in verse 41: "He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 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 *shall be* at his steps."

The glorious land as we'll see in verse 45 appears to refer to the land of Israel. Many nations will be conquered but Edom, Moab and Ammon will be spared. These three ancient lands today are all in the land of Jordan. It should be noted that Jordan is probably the most moderate of the Middle East nations around Israel and generally terrorists are not known to be Jordanians so this may be part of the reason they are allowed to retain their sovereignty.

The King of the North will take over the gold and silver of Egypt. Taking Egypt's gold reserves through conquest as Hitler did when he conquered much of Europe is perhaps one factor in how this future system will prosper. The reference to the Libyans and Ethiopians seems to indicate further conquest into Africa. The Roman empire as well as Hitler in World War 2 both saw North Africa as vital to control access throughout the Mediterranean. Similarly, controlling Egypt through to Ethiopia helps to ensure control of the Red Sea.

Revelation 11:2 indicates that this battle is right at the beginning of the Great Tribulation as Jerusalem is stated there as being trod by the Gentiles for 42 months – the whole length of the Great Tribulation and Jerusalem being trodden will include the future fulfillment of the abomination of desolation. When Israel is invaded one would expect a response from America and Britain but this time around things will not end well for America and Britain. There are many prophecies that speak of Assyria conquering the modern Israelite nations and not just the Jews in Israel at this time such as Jeremiah 30 and Isaiah 10 which time doesn't permit going into.

Their defeat appears to happen quite quickly. Hosea 5:7 indicates both Israel and Judah will fall within a month which didn't happen anciently. Isaiah 9:14 which may be a future prophecy speaks of Israel being destroyed in just a day. Is this perhaps a reference to the unthinkable – a surprise nuclear attack?

Coming back to Daniel 11 the next event referred to in verse 44 appears to be mirrored in Revelation 9 which appears to occur between 2 and 3 years later. "But news 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 take away many."

The European power will be troubled from the north and east or north-east and go out to destroy this threat. In Revelation 9 an unidentified power appears to unleash bio-chemical warfare followed by another attack from the east with a 200 million army. The first attack is likely to be that referred to

in Daniel 11:44. The second attack is probably a counterattack from the far east to a European biochemical assault.

In Revelation 16 the king of the east cross the Euphrates and gather at Armageddon or the plain near Megiddo in north Israel which is controlled by Europe who they have come to fight in the Middle East. It is at this point in time that Jesus Christ returns and defeats these armies and brings an end to the bloodshed of the Great Tribulation.

In Daniel 11:45 we read: "And he [the beast] 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."

Zechariah 14 tells us "Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle ... And the LORD shall be king over all the earth."

Jesus Christ will return with his saints who will be resurrected and He will at long last bring peace to the Middle East and this world that so desperately needs it. God speed that day when He brings His wonderful Kingdom to this earth which we all look forward to.