

Continuing prophetic description of a coming enemy of God

• Antiochus Epiphanes – made a deity out of war and ruled by manipulation and corruption

The angel is still giving a prophetic description of a coming enemy of God and of Israel. When he came he turned out to be Antiochus Epiphanes. He would have no regard for the gods of his ancestors, says the angel. ³⁸‘Instead of them, he will honour a god of fortresses.’ The next phrases explain the meaning of this line. ‘To this god which his fathers never gave any recognition he will give honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. ³⁹He will take action against the strongholds of fortresses with the help of a strange god.’ Verses 38b–39a explain verse 38a. Antiochus made a deity out of war. He worshipped war in his habit of pouring his energy and wealth into demolishing fortresses. Antiochus would be totally irreligious. His only god was war! He was in fact his own god. He turned war into a god in the way in which he lived, honouring his god by dedicating to war all the wealth that he had. Verse 38a does not mean the fortress was the god! Rather it means Antiochus worshipped the violence which he loved so much when he destroyed fortresses. His ‘strange god’ is not any ordinary deity worshipped by his forefathers. It was his weird love of violence and his seeing himself as God ‘manifest’ (‘Epiphanes’ means ‘deity manifested’). Not only did he make himself his god. He ruled by manipulation and corruption. ³⁹‘Anyone that he will acknowledge he will greatly honour. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land as their reward.’

A change of direction at verse 40

“The time of the end” – the distant future – another step forward to the fourth kingdom mentioned in chapters 2 and 7

Everything in Daniel 11:38–39 fits well with what we know of Antiochus. But there comes a change in the direction of the text at Daniel 11:40. Most expositors realize that somewhere in Daniel chapter 11 there comes a change. The early Christian father Jerome thought that the entire passage from 11:21 onwards (that I have interpreted as referring to Antiochus) actually referred to ‘antichrist’. Others think that a change comes after verse 36 and moves from Antiochus^{□1} to antichrist^{□2} or from **facts** about Antiochus to **guesswork** about Antiochus (a common view among the more destructive expositors). My own view is that the predictions concerning Antiochus end at verse 39. Now there comes a further reference to ‘the time of the end’ which (from Daniel’s viewpoint) means ‘in the distant future’. The terms ‘king of the south’ and ‘king of the north’ come back in again. These two terms have been used in Daniel 11 to refer to **different** kings. They are not terms for any particular individual. The fact that these terms come back in again at this point suggests that the writer – in his report of the angel’s words – is taking another step forward in the history of Israel. His survey so far has only concerned the **third** kingdom – the Greek empire. But there were **four** kingdoms in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7. We may expect the story to go further than the days of Antiochus.

• Conflict to the areas to the north and south of Israel – Egypt and Rome

⁴⁰‘Then at the time of the end the king of the south will push against him in battle, and the king of the north will come against him like a storm with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood.’ The words ‘at the time of the end’ suggest that we are taking a step forward further into the future. Reference to the kings of the north and the south suggests that once again we are looking at the conflict between areas to the north and south of Israel. In Daniel 8:17, 21, the third empire has to come to an end before ‘the time of the end’ can come and God’s kingdom be established. ‘The king of the south’ must (in the light of previous references) refer to Egypt. The ‘him’ must (in the light of the last nineteen verses) refer to Antiochus or **any king of Syria**. Who is ‘a king of the north’? He is unidentified of course. Daniel simply was told that some northern foe would come against the Syrians. But

□1 11:21-35
□2 11:36-45

• Greek domination ends giving way to Rome.

• Many lands came under Roman rule including Egypt

• But the Roman Empire will end just as all the previous empires came to an end

The four kingdoms must give way to a different kind of kingdom altogether

• The Son of Man – on the clouds of heaven comes to the Father...

actually the next stage on in the history of Israel involved the Roman invasions of Syria and Israel. At the time of the last of the Seleucids (whose name was Antiochus Asiaticus) the Roman general Pompey attacked Syria and the Seleucids came to an end. Pompey then captured Jerusalem. The Greek domination over Israel was finished; Roman domination began. The angel said, ⁴¹'He will also invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand.' Many lands came under Roman rule, but Edom, Moab and Ammon were left independent. Pompey commenced a conflict against them but did not finish it. Of this 'king of the north' it is said: 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.' Eventually powerful Egypt also became a Roman province (in 27 BC). The Libyans and Nubians were nearby to the south and remained submissive to Rome.

Then this 'king of the north' received alarming news. ⁴⁴'Then reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many.' Shortly before 54 BC the Parthians in the north-east became a threat to Rome and in that year Pompey's colleague, Crassus, set out to destroy them. ⁴⁵'He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain.' On the way Crassus stopped in Israel. He arrived on Israel's coast, and made his way to Jerusalem where he stole treasures from the temple. But the Roman empire will end just as all the previous empires came to an end. Of the northern king it is said: ⁴⁵'Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.' Crassus in fact was killed by the Parthians.

Daniel's interpreting angel has picked out events relevant to Israel from the days of the Persians (in whose empire Daniel lived) till the days of the Roman occupation of Israel. It has been an expansion of the theme of the four kingdoms that we had in chapters 2 and 7. Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans each rose to power. Each went through periods when they persecuted God's people. Each ended without crushing the people of God. The angel has shown how the people of God will survive despite the rise of powerful pagan empires. Four beastly empires will rise, say the spokesmen of God's word in Daniel's prophecy. But then there must come the beginning of something new. The Son of Man will come to the everlasting Father, on the clouds of heaven, to receive a different kind of kingdom altogether.



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible* (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

Slices for the Nations	Slices for Sponsors	Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the Slices web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations

To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk
 Details of the availability of *Preaching Through The Bible* books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk