

## War of Gog and Magog

Some commentators have argued that the war described at the end of Daniel 11 is the same as the war described in Ezekiel 38:1–39:16.<sup>75</sup> The chief point of correspondence between the two passages is that both describe an invasion of Palestine from the north (Ezekiel 38:6, 15; Daniel 11:40). Another is that both place Libya and Ethiopia among the combatants (Ezekiel 38:5; Daniel 11:43). But these are all incidental similarities. For many reasons, we may confidently reject the theory that both passages treat the same war.

1. This theory imagines that the future king of the north (Daniel 11:40) will be a king of Russia. But, in context, the term must refer to a Seleucid king.

2. The same theory regards the king of the north as the enemy of the Antichrist. Yet, since the Antichrist will also be a Seleucid king, the Antichrist and the king of the north must be the same person. No prophecy distinguishes between them.

3. This theory produces a strained interpretation of Daniel 11:40. Supposedly, the Antichrist will sustain a two-pronged attack, one from the south and the other from the north, when he is serving as Israel's protector. Supposedly also, he will have assumed this role under the terms of a peace treaty with Israel, a treaty elsewhere described as his covenant with many (Daniel 9:27). But, as we argued earlier, the view that Israel will be a principal party to this covenant has no basis. Nor is there any basis for the current shibboleth of prophetic correctness that the Antichrist will fool Israel into accepting him as a friend.

4. This theory treats the closing verses of Daniel 11, beginning with the statement, "And he shall enter into the countries" (verse 40), as an account of the Antichrist's response to the two-pronged attack. So understood, the account suggests that the attack will be directed against Israel, and that his covenantal obligations will compel him to intervene on Israel's behalf. But his purpose when "he shall enter also into the glorious land" (verse 41) hardly seems defensive, for the text continues, "And many *countries* [an unwarranted addition by the translators] shall be overthrown" (verse 41). In other words, when he enters Israel, he will meet resistance that he will overcome by striking down many Israelis. Furthermore, Israel is conspicuously missing from the list of countries that will escape the Antichrist's hand of violence (verse 41).

5. God Himself will miraculously intervene to stop the invasion foreseen in Ezekiel 38 (verses 18–23). But Daniel 11 offers no hint of anything supernatural assisting the Antichrist's military campaign. Indeed, it is hard to imagine him proceeding with a wide war of conquest after "an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone" (Ezekiel 38:22) together with a great shaking of the whole earth (Ezekiel 38:20) had destroyed a huge army rushing into Israel. Such a display of

divine power would put the fear of God into all men, small and great. It would profoundly disrupt affairs of government and, at least temporarily, immobilize the engines of national ambition. Intrigues and wars would not continue as usual.

6. The wars described in Ezekiel and Daniel are wholly different in their aftermath. After God stretches out His hand to crush the invaders led by Gog, the nations will give God His due of glory and honor.

Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.  
Ezekiel 38:23

. . . I [will] make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not *let them* pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.  
Ezekiel 39:7

But after the Antichrist's war of expansion, the nations will heap glory not upon God, but upon the Antichrist. Moreover, they will not stop polluting God's name. Never will His name suffer such revilement as it will during the closing days of the Tribulation. Clearly, then, Ezekiel 38:1–39:16 and Daniel 11:40–45 deal with different periods of history.

7. One of the strongest reasons for assigning Ezekiel 38:1–39:16 to the period of the Tribulation depends on a mistranslation. In the KJV, God says of Gog, "And I will . . . leave but the sixth part of thee" (Ezekiel 39:2), words intimating that Gog will have a future beyond the time of its defeat on the mountains of Israel. But the correct translation is, "And I will . . . lead you on."<sup>76</sup>

8. The invasion of Gog and Magog will occur when Israel dwells in security (Ezekiel 38:8, 11), without defense (Ezekiel 38:11), and in possession of such wealth and privilege as to provoke the envy of other nations (Ezekiel 38:12–13). The alliance that will then form against Israel will embrace most or all nations of the world. From the north will come Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah (Ezekiel 38:1, 6)—in other words, all the peoples of Russia, Asia Minor and central Europe.<sup>77</sup> Their allies will include Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya (Ezekiel 38:5).

The conditions described in Ezekiel cannot possibly come to pass during the era of the Tribulation. At that time, Israel will not stand so far above other nations that even Europe will look upon her enviously. Nor will Israel have attained such an accord with her neighbors that she will have thrown away her weapons. The geopolitical situation that Ezekiel describes will develop only during the Millennium, when Israel enjoys God's special favor.

9. Scripture itself leaves no doubt as to when the events in Ezekiel 38:1–39:16 will take place. The Book of Revelation unequivocally places Gog and Magog's invasion of Israel at the end of the Millennium (Revelation 20:7–10). This invasion will be Satan's last crusade against God.

The rebels will be devoured by fire from heaven, and Satan will be consigned to eternal incarceration in the lake of fire.

### **Time frame of the wars in Daniel 11:40–45**

The king of the south will make his push during the “time of the end” (verse 40). This expression, *eth qets*,<sup>78</sup> occurs repeatedly in the Book of Daniel.<sup>79</sup>

1. In chapter 8, the expression dates the culminating events of the vision (verse 17). At the time of the end, the Antichrist will desecrate the Temple and persecute the Jews (verses 11–13).

2. In chapter 11, the expression shows when the Antichrist will appear (verse 35). To mark the transition from ancient history to modern history, the concluding words of verse 35 say, in essence, that the narration will now jump ahead many years to the time of the end. Then will come the king who considers himself superior to God (verse 36).

3. Again in chapter 11, the expression reveals what historical period will produce the conflict leading to the Antichrist’s subjugation of three horns (verse 40).

4. Twice in chapter 12, the expression specifies when the mysteries of the Book of Daniel will finally be dispelled (verses 4, 9).

These references to a climactic eschatological period are not disjointed from earlier revelation in the Book of Daniel. The first view that the book furnishes of things to come is Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which likens the final period of world history to the feet and toes of a great image. This period is doubtless the same as the end time foreseen in Daniel’s later visions. In our commentary on chapter 2, we argued at length that the period of the feet and toes began with Israel’s national renaissance in 1948. It follows that the time of the end has already begun. We are now more than sixty years into its unfolding.

Does Scripture furnish any signs allowing us to verify that we indeed live in the time of the end? The signs we are seeking appear in Jesus’ extended sermon on prophecy, the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25), given in response to questions that certain disciples brought Him concerning the future. They asked Jesus for “the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world [*sunteleia tou aionos*<sup>80</sup>]” (Matthew 24:3). The phrase “end of the world” (better translated “end of the age”<sup>81</sup>) is one Jesus had used in the Parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:39–40, 49; also used later in 28:20).<sup>82</sup> It appears to be His slight reworking of Daniel’s similar phrase “time of the end.” The only Gospel where Jesus’ version of it appears is Matthew, which was written especially for the Jews.<sup>83</sup> The writer no doubt expected them to be familiar with the prophecies of Daniel. Jesus Himself taught that the Book of Daniel is the key to understanding the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:15).

When the disciples asked Jesus for “the sign . . . of the end of the world” (Matthew 24:3), He understood them to mean the time of the end, and He responded with a lengthy preview showing its distinguishing features. He divided it into three successive periods, concluding His survey of each with a brief statement concerning “all” or “all these” or “all these things” that He had just described.

First would come the opening period.

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Matthew 24:4–6

Then would come the beginning of sorrows. “Sorrows” is Jesus’ term for the period more commonly known as the Tribulation.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

Matthew 24:7–8

Last would come the remainder of sorrows; that is, the remainder of the Tribulation.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

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.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Matthew 24:9–34

## The opening period

If these three periods make up the whole time of the end, and if the time of the end began in 1948, the opening period already lies partly or wholly in the past. Let us see whether the actual history of the world since 1948 matches the beginning phase of the end time.

Jesus told His disciples that the opening period would be characterized by (1) the coming of many religious deceivers (verse 5) and (2) wars and rumors of wars (verse 6).

1. The three attributes of these deceivers help us recognize the modern fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy.

a) They would "come in my name" (verse 5). That is, they would not be Hindus, theosophists, New Age gurus, or even cult leaders like Sun Myung Moon. Rather, they would claim to be Christians and would be so regarded by the generality of mankind.

b) They would be "many" in number and would "deceive many" (verse 5). Jesus was evidently not talking about madmen or cult leaders. People like Charles Manson and David Koresh are always few in number, and they have limited influence. Rather, Jesus was foreseeing developments in regular organized Christianity.

c) They would say, "I am Christ" (verse 5).

Two movements in the church of the twentieth century, particularly since 1948, fit Jesus' prediction.

a) Since 1900 and especially since 1948, mainline Protestantism and even segments of Catholicism have been dominated by a theology known as Modernism. The basic tenet of Modernism is that the historical Jesus was no more than a man. From the belief that all humanity shares the essential nature of Christ has followed the presumption that everyone has Christ-potential—that everyone can, by following His example, become His equal in compassion, moral virtue, penetrating intelligence, and spiritual consciousness. In whom did the leaders of Modernism believe that Christ-potential had been more fully realized than in themselves? Indeed, many among them believed and taught that they were as Christ. Yet though they heaped upon themselves and their followers the flattery that they were imitating Christ, knowing Christ, and becoming Christ, they were in fact walking in obedience to their father, the devil.

b) During the same period, a new brand of false Christianity arose that has gained millions of adherents. This is the modern tongues-speaking movement, embracing all churches that call themselves Pentecostal or charismatic. The leaders of this movement represent themselves as Christ, which means “anointed,” in the sense that they claim to have an anointing equivalent to that of Jesus and the apostles.<sup>84</sup> They pretend that by a mere exhalation of their lips or wave of their hand or chanting of their voice they can communicate the Spirit to others, the result being some immediate and dramatic sign of His presence. The usual sign is babbling, which, in an attempt to dignify it, the people in this movement call speaking in tongues. Other signs might be violent agitation of the body, swooning, falling down, or even hysterical laughter. All this is a counterfeit Christianity leading people away from a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2. The prophecy, “And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6), generally describes the whole twentieth century, but its precise fulfillment has fallen after 1948. It has three components, each separately and exactly coming to fruition in recent times.

a) Jesus was clearly describing a time beset by many wars. The year at the outset, 1948, was preceded in the twentieth century by two world wars, the widest and most destructive wars the world has ever seen. The second, ending right before 1948, ushered mankind into the era of atomic weapons. Efforts after World War II to build a lasting peace were stymied by nationalistic aspirations in the third world and by adamant antagonism between the democratic West and the Communist East. Since 1948, wave after wave of strife has erupted upon the sea of nations: the Indian partition, the Chinese Revolution, the Korean War, several Arab-Israeli wars, the civil war in Indonesia, the Vietnam War, the war in Afghanistan, the war in Bosnia, the Gulf War, wars in Africa, wars in Latin America, wars everywhere. It is obvious that although wars and rumors of wars have been incessant throughout history,

bloodshed mounted to a climax in the twentieth century. It has been estimated that in all of the wars in human history before 1900, about forty million combatants died. Yet the casualties in wars from 1900 to 1987 were about thirty-eight and a half million.<sup>85</sup> By the end of 1999, wars in the twentieth century were surely more deadly than in all previous centuries combined.

b) Jesus' specific prediction was not that there would be wars, but that mankind would hear about them. In Jesus' day, people in one region of the world had no knowledge of events in regions far away. But today, as a result of modern communications, every war, no matter how remote, reaches the attention of the media and becomes world news. In the last two centuries, and particularly in the last century since the advent of radio, the daily news has been obsessed with war and with diplomatic maneuverings either to avert or resolve international conflict. The year 1948 was when consumer demand for television, invented about twenty years earlier, began to surge. Television added to war news a vividness and immediacy that greatly magnified war's place in public consciousness. Never before in history had men heard so much about war. Never before had war been such a continuing preoccupation.

c) Not only did Jesus say that there would be wars and that men would hear about them; He said also that they would hear about rumors of wars. In what other period of history was man as obsessed with the mere possibility of war as he was after atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Throughout the Cold War, fears of a nuclear holocaust haunted mankind. I can remember as a child hearing the sirens and putting my head down on my school desk as part of a civil defense drill preparing us for a nuclear attack. I can remember the disbelief and disquiet that followed Sputnik—also, the grim apprehension that gripped America during the Cuban missile crisis. Nuclear war was never more than a rumor, but no other rumor of war has so transfixed the minds of men and so shaped a whole period of history. The collapse of the Cold War did not bring mankind to a tranquil assurance of future peace. A new worry has emerged to unsettle the minds of people everywhere. Ever since violent Muslim extremism spread to a worldwide theater of operations in the 1990s, and especially since 9/11, people in the Western world have been unable to escape from the daily possibility of a terrorist strike close to home. Terrorism has therefore become another menace generating endless rumors of war, such as Jesus envisioned in the end time.

## **Two periods distinguished**

The most natural interpretation of Jesus' saying, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: . . . the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:6), is that the end will come after wars and rumors of wars have ceased.

Since they have never ceased, this saying appears to contradict the hypothesis that the time of the end has already begun. The end that is “not yet” so long as we hear of armed conflict is not the end of the age (*sunteleia tou aionos*) or the time of the end (*eth qets*), however. The Greek word is not *sunteleia*, but *telos*,<sup>86</sup> which refers to a final end, an end toward which all events are moving.<sup>87</sup> Elsewhere in the Olivet Discourse, the word is used twice.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end [*telos*<sup>88</sup>], the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [*telos*<sup>89</sup>] come.

Matthew 24:13–14

The succeeding two verses locate the *telos* in relation to other events.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

Matthew 24:15–16

Thus, the *telos* is the period starting when an abomination of desolation is erected in the Temple. The Book of Daniel indicates that this desecration will come right before the last half of the seventieth week (Daniel 9:27); in other words, right before the last 3½ years of the Tribulation. Hence, this must be the period that Jesus envisioned when He used the word *telos*.

Jesus’ cryptic observation that “the end is not yet” while the world lies in the turmoil of wars and rumors of wars implies that the last 3½ years of the Tribulation will fall upon men when they think that world peace has finally been achieved. Paul reiterated the same lesson.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:3

He was alluding to another saying in the Olivet Discourse.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matthew 24:38–39

As in his references to *sunteleia tou aionos*, so also in his references to *telos*, Jesus was reviewing a concept already elucidated in the Book of Daniel. The Danielic word parallel to *telos* is *acharith*. Various translations “last end” (Daniel 8:19), “latter time” (Daniel 8:23), and “end” (Daniel 12:8), this word occurs in chapters 8 and 12.<sup>90</sup>

1. In chapter 8, the word refers to the time when the Antichrist will be able to implement his evil designs against the Jews and the Jewish sanctuary. Two things in particular will come to an end: divine indignation (verse 19) and ungodly gentile authority (verse 23).

2. In chapter 12, *acharith* appears in Daniel's question, "What *shall be* the end of these *things?*" (verse 8). In reply, the Lord said that the end will be a time of purification for God's people (verse 10); moreover, that the end will correspond in some fashion to terms of 1290 days and 1335 days (verses 11–12). Both terms will start at the abomination of desolation, the first closing at an unspecified event, the second at an event that will be a great blessing to those who see it. It has been shown that the last 3½ years of the Tribulation also start at the abomination of desolation. Clearly, then, *acharith* and *telos* refer to the same period of history.

### **Parallel accounts in the New Testament**

Since Jesus' Olivet Discourse and also the entire Book of Revelation are brimming with allusions to the Book of Daniel, it is reasonable to investigate whether they refer to the wars of Daniel 11:40–45. Commentators who cannot find these wars in later prophecy overlook the obvious correlations between this passage in Daniel, the passage in the Olivet Discourse describing the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:7–8), and the passage in Revelation describing the coming of four horsemen (Revelation 6:1–8).

A brief look at Daniel 11:40–45 will serve as a basis for examining the other two passages.

1. The time is defined as the time of the end (verse 40).
2. First will come a war of limited extent, when the king of the south pushes against the Antichrist (verse 40).
3. Then will come a wider war when the Antichrist retaliates, overrunning several countries (verses 40–43).
4. Next will come a much wider war, when the king of the north engages enemies to the east and north (verse 44).
5. The result of this wider war will be tremendous devastation. "He shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many" (verse 44).

The Olivet Discourse offers much the same scenario for the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:3, 7–8); that is, for the beginning of the Tribulation.

1. The time is defined as the end of the world; that is, the end of the age (verse 3).
- 2–3. Nation will rise against nation (verse 7). As used by Jesus, the term "nation" implies a people like the Jews, a people homogeneous

in ancestry and culture. Even when they were under a foreign power exercising authority over diverse peoples, the Jews always believed that they were a nation unto themselves (John 11:50–52). At the outset of each war between the Antichrist and the king of the south, the former will be the ruler of Syro-Iraq, and the latter will be the ruler of Egypt. Both antagonists will lead a single nation only. So, the conflict between them is appropriately described as a struggle of nation against nation.

4. Then kingdom will rise against kingdom (verse 7). As used by Jesus, the term “kingdom” implies a group of nations, for a typical kingdom in Jesus’ day was a racial and ethnic conglomerate. Herod the Great, as he is undeservedly called, ruled over the Jews and Samaritans as well as many gentile settlements.<sup>91</sup> After the Antichrist invades the south and conquers the whole Arab world, he will become the ruler of a kingdom in the sense intended. The enemy that he then confronts is apparently an alliance of nations to the east and north of Syro-Iraq. So, the ensuing war is appropriately described as a struggle of kingdom against kingdom.

5. The result will be great human suffering (verse 7). Two of the three disasters that Jesus enumerates—famines and pestilences—could well arise in the aftermath of war.

The prophecy of the four horsemen rehearses the same sequence of events (Revelation 6:1–8).

1. The time is defined as the time which is at hand (Revelation 1:3). The New Testament often views climactic end-time events as imminent (Hebrews 10:37; James 5:7–9).

2. The opening of the first seal brings a limited war (Revelation 6:1–2).

3. The opening of the second seal brings a wider, more destructive war (Revelation 6:3–4). The opening of the third seal reveals some of the adverse global effects (Revelation 6:5–6).

4. The opening of the fourth seal brings a major war affecting a fourth of the world (Revelation 6:7–8).

5. The world then sinks into a deplorable condition (Revelation 6:8).

The passage in the Olivet Discourse is our foundation for dating the two parallel passages. Since Jesus was speaking of events at the beginning of the Tribulation, we can place the events in Daniel 11:40–45 and Revelation 6:1–8 at the same time. In other words, the Tribulation will commence with the opening of the first seal and the attack of the king of the south upon the king of the north.

Let us examine in detail what Revelation prophesies concerning the wars of the Antichrist.

## Opening of the first seal

The event dominating this moment in history will be a war, conducted by a rider on a white horse.

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Revelation 6:1–2

Each of the horsemen participates in what is obviously a highly symbolic tableau. The color of the horse, the objects carried by the rider, the words intoned in the background, and the rider's mission—all combine to mirror, in an oblique but picturesque manner, events on the earth. The first tableau represents a seemingly just war (the horse is white) waged mainly with bombs and missiles (the weapon is a bow, designed to kill at long range), under the leadership of a man chosen by general consent (a crown is given to him), who is partially successful and partially unsuccessful. The expression “conquering” points to an accomplished purpose—he will in fact conquer some territory. The expression “and to conquer” suggests that he will reach beyond the lands he has conquered to attempt even more conquests, but will fail.

What is the war of the white horse? A reasonable conjecture equates it with the first war Daniel places in the time of the end (Daniel 11:40)—the war of the king of the south against the king of the north. It will be nation rising against nation, for it will pit the nation of Egypt against the future nation embracing Syria and at least northern Iraq. As the symbolism requires, it will be a just war, because the target of the attack will be the man who embodies evil, the Antichrist. Besides being consistent with other accounts of the war, the tableau yields new information. The war will be prosecuted mainly with long-range weapons, and the king of the south will be someone who leads Egypt's war effort with the backing of other nations.

The popular notion that the first horseman is Christ does not bear examination. The description of Christ in Revelation 19 shows that the first horseman must be someone else. Christ in His pose astride a white horse is magnificent (Revelation 19:11–16), whereas the rider who precedes another three is nondescript—he is worthy of no fuller portrait than the words “he that sat on him” (Revelation 6:2). The rider carries a bow, whereas Christ need not rely on any device existing apart from Himself. His sword, a far more effective weapon, proceeds from His own being and employs His own inherent power. Christ wears many crowns, each a *diadema*<sup>92</sup> (a priceless royal crown<sup>93</sup>), whereas the rider on a white horse owns a single *stephanos*<sup>94</sup> (a mere garland, such as was customarily bestowed on the winner of an athletic contest<sup>95</sup>). It is therefore plain that this rider is not true royalty. Rather, he seems to be

a politician who successfully maneuvers into a commanding position. It is plain also that although he champions a good cause, seeking to overcome a man who epitomizes evil, he is woefully inferior to Christ. He will fail not only to achieve a lasting peace, but also to defeat his foe. Sometime after the king of the south conducts his crusade against the north, the Antichrist will fight back and overcome him. Not long afterward, the world will slide into the worst chaos and calamity ever known. The world will not find remedies for the ills of mankind until the man comes who will rule with divine wisdom and power.

### **Opening of the second seal**

Although the king of the south will push against the Antichrist and enjoy some success, his campaign will ultimately collapse. Whether immediately or after some delay, the Antichrist, as leader of greater Syria, will fight back.

Then will come an even more appalling war.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Revelation 6:3-4

The second tableau represents a bloody war (the horse is red) waged mainly by close combat (the weapon is a sword), started by a powerful ruler with divine authorization to take peace from the earth. The rider on the red horse doubtless represents the Antichrist himself. The statement that “*power* was given to him that sat thereon” teaches that even the Antichrist will have no power except by divine permission. He is the man God has appointed to show the human race all the blackness of hell, so that the wicked will have no excuse for preferring their wickedness.

Let us return to Daniel 11 for a closer look at this war. When the Antichrist counterattacks with all his strength, he will meet little effective resistance. He will easily overrun all opposition. Exactly what nations will he overthrow? The Scripture of Truth presents the following order of engagement:

1. The countries (verse 40). The countries he will first pass over in his sweep southward before he enters Israel are probably his closest neighbors, Lebanon and Arab Palestine.

2. The glorious land (verse 41). Here is the same name for Israel used earlier in the visions of Daniel (Daniel 8:9; 11:16). The translators have inserted “countries” into the prediction that “many . . . shall be overthrown,” but probably the reference is to many in Israel rather than to many countries. These few prophetic words are fraught with glimpses

of horrible battle scenes, inflicting upon Israel a great loss of life. The vision recorded in Daniel 8 places the conquest of Israel last in the Antichrist's expansionist wars (verse 9). Likewise, according to the vision recorded here in chapter 11, the Antichrist does not build his palace in Israel until he has returned victorious from his pushes southward and eastward (verse 45). We infer that although he will subdue and overrun Israel at the beginning of these conflicts, he will not leave behind an army of occupation when he pursues other conquests. He will take firm control of the nation only after he is done using his armies elsewhere. Yet his initial conquest will be complete enough to deprive Israel of its military might. Perhaps he will commandeer Israel's weapons and mechanized equipment for his own use. Perhaps the nuclear weapons of Israel will fall into his hands.

3. Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon (verse 41). As the forces of the Antichrist advance, these territories will escape the onslaught.

4. The countries (verse 42). The countries he will take by stretching forth his hand (verse 42) as he continues southward are probably Saudi Arabia together with the adjoining sheikdoms of the Arabian Peninsula.

5. Egypt (verse 42). The Antichrist's campaign of aggression will achieve its primary objective when he invades Egypt.

6. The Libyans and Ethiopians (verse 43). The Antichrist will not send his armies farther because the Libyans and Ethiopians will offer no resistance. Indeed, these nations, or at least the masses within them, will enthusiastically receive him as their leader. Like puppy dogs, they will follow "at his steps" (verse 43).

### **The modern nations matching the names in prophecy**

The list "Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon" designates three nations of antiquity that lay within the modern state of Jordan.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, when prophecy foresees that "these shall escape out of his hand" (verse 41), the meaning is that the Antichrist will bypass Jordan when he vanquishes other nations in the vicinity. Since Amman, the capital of Jordan, lies on the site of ancient Rabbah, chief city of the Ammonites,<sup>97</sup> and since the present king of Jordan resides in Amman, it is likely that the expression, "the chief of the children of Ammon," is an obscure reference to this modern king. The Antichrist's future policy of restraint toward the king and people of Jordan intimates that he will regard them as friends, or at least not as enemies.

Later, the Antichrist will invade Egypt (verse 42). The reference to Egypt is not in the least problematic, for ancient Egypt was essentially the same as modern Egypt.

Yet significant questions arise from the prediction that “the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps” (verse 43). The actual proper names in Hebrew are *Lubim*<sup>98</sup> and *Cushim*<sup>99</sup> (Cushites<sup>100</sup>). The most ancient references to Cush indicate that it was originally a fairly small region along the Upper Nile, just north of modern Khartoum.<sup>101</sup> Thus, ancient Cush lay within the present boundaries of Sudan. The term *Cushim* probably refers to the northern Sudanese, who in the modern world are predominantly Muslim. The identity of the *Lubim* has long been a matter of some dispute. Yet most scholars agree with the translators of the KJV that the term means the Libyans. Ancient Libya was, however, much larger than modern Libya. In the view of Greek and Roman writers, it stretched from Egypt all the way across North Africa.<sup>102</sup> Thus, the *Lubim* may include the peoples of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria as well as Libya. Therefore, when prophecy reveals that the *Lubim* and *Cushim* will hail the Antichrist as their leader, the meaning is that without a fight he will take control of all the Arab nations to the south and west of Egypt.

### **Hints of modern warfare**

To a careful reader, two aspects of verse 40 stand out as peculiar, and often a peculiarity in Scripture is a signpost to hidden meaning.

1. The verse states that with his chariots, horsemen, and ships the Antichrist “shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.” The translation seems entirely correct.<sup>103</sup> Yet how could seagoing ships participate in any of these movements? How could vehicles for water transport assist in carrying his armies as they entered into, overflowed, and passed over the countries bordering Syro-Iraq? Since they pass over land, the vehicles intended here are evidently not seagoing ships, but airships. Prophecy speaks of “ships” because there is no better word in ancient Hebrew to convey the modern idea of warplanes.

2. The verse foresees chariots and horsemen but no horses. In the prophecy of Gog and Magog, horses have a prominent place, Ezekiel stating explicitly that the invading force will ride upon them (Ezek. 38:4, 15). But in Daniel’s prophecy, no horses accompany the chariots and horsemen. The omission favors two conclusions.

a) The term “chariots” (v. 40) has a broad sense, signifying all wheeled assault vehicles. The closest modern counterpart of the chariot is, of course, the tank. This is the horseless chariot that will be the backbone of the Antichrist’s ground forces.

b) The term “horsemen” (v. 40) refers to the crews that will drive the Antichrist’s fleet of tanks and armored trucks. Indeed, the Hebrew word for a horseman has the more general meaning “charioteer.”<sup>104</sup>

## The Antichrist's plunder

As a result of pressing southward, the Antichrist will gain control of Egypt's gold, silver, and other precious things (v. 43). Not only will the Antichrist raid stores, banks, and government vaults, but also he will seize many priceless antiquities. Either then or at a later time, he may haul these antiquities to Babylon and incorporate them in the decoration of his sumptuous new capital.

## Opening of the third seal

The war of the red horse will have a major impact on the whole world, an impact revealed by events after the opening of the third seal.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Revelation 6:5-6

The third tableau shows the great havoc wrought by the war giving the Antichrist control of all the Arab countries. Black, the color of sackcloth and ashes, represents the mourning that will be heard everywhere. The exorbitant prices that the voice dictates imply severe shortages of grain. A penny will buy only a measure of wheat or three measures of barley. A penny, or denarius, was a typical day's wages,<sup>105</sup> and a measure, or *choenix*, of grain—approximately one quart—was considered the daily ration for one man.<sup>106</sup> The result will no doubt be famine, one calamity that Christ places after the wars at the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:7).

Since the first two riders portray actual men (the first being the king of the south, the second being the Antichrist), it is probable that the third rider, the one holding a pair of balances, also portrays an actual man—a man who, at the moment when this snapshot of history is taken, looms as the most prominent figure on the world stage. He may be someone who will seek to solve the world's economic crisis, perhaps by bringing all nations into a grand economic union. The voice in the midst of the cherubim is a foil to the voice that, in a vision of Daniel, provoked the bear from the sea to "arise, devour much flesh" (Daniel 7:5). The earlier voice was demonic, perhaps coming from Satan himself. What resounds after the third rider appears is the voice of God, asserting that He, not Satan, is sovereign over the affairs of the earth. The command, "Hurt not" (Revelation 6:6), means, "Do not treat unjustly," suggesting that the prices of olive oil and wine will be held down.

The pattern of inflation during the time of the third rider reflects modern agricultural practice. Because the growing of cereal grains has

become largely mechanized, the prices of wheat and barley are tied to the price of petroleum. But the petroleum market has little effect on the trade in olive oil and wine, which are still produced largely by traditional methods. It appears, then, that the cause of famine after the opening of the third seal may be a choking off of petroleum exports from the Middle East.

At this time, the Antichrist will control a large share of the world's oil reserves, and he will no doubt use his commanding position to force other nations into compliance with his agenda. He will withhold petroleum exports from any countries that do not fully meet all his demands, whatever they might be. At the very least he will want other nations to recognize his legitimacy as ruler over much of the Middle East. Later, he will use his economic power to vault himself to leadership of the whole U.N. But evidently many nations will at first resist his demands, for prophecy implies that for a time the world will suffer severe shortages of petroleum.

### **Opening of the fourth seal**

During the next phase of divine judgment, the world will sink to a deplorable condition.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Revelation 6:7-8

Lest anyone imagine that the fourth rider is another man, prophecy tells his name. He is Death, sitting on a horse the color of death. The suggestion is that the prominent figure during this time will be no living man, but an anonymous dead man representing all who will die. And coming after him is Hell (literally, *Hades*<sup>107</sup>), who takes those swallowed up by Death. The color intended by the word rendered "pale" in the KJV is actually pale green.<sup>108</sup> Elsewhere in the New Testament, the word denotes the color of grass (Mark 6:39; Revelation 8:7) or of vegetation generally (Revelation 9:4).<sup>109</sup> So, in the account of the last horseman, the word describes the ghastly pallor of a moldering body. The meaning is that the fourth rider introduces a time when the world will be covered with rotting corpses.

A wave of death will sweep over a fourth part of the earth. The causes of this catastrophe will be warfare, famine, and "death" (Revelation 6:8), doubtless referring to all other causes besides the first two. Chief among the other causes must be pestilence. So, the opening of the fourth seal will bring a complete fulfillment of Christ's prediction that

famines and pestilences will plague the beginning of sorrows (Matthew 24:7). The agency behind much of the mayhem and suffering will be “beasts of the earth” (Revelation 6:8), an allusion to the Book of Daniel, which uses beasts of the earth as symbols for earthly kingdoms (Daniel 7:17). The bestial nature of these kingdoms will never be more evident than in the great carnage wrought during the ascendancy of Death and Hell.

The war described here is a much wider war than the ones brought by the white and red horses. This will be a war engulfing the nations throughout a vast territory and bringing wholesale destruction. No doubt it is the war commencing when the Antichrist attacks enemies to the east and north. The ensuing conflict is aptly described as kingdom rising against kingdom, because by now the Antichrist will rule many nations of the Arab world, and the enemies he attacks may be a group of nations united within the same regional association.

The news from the east and north that he will find troubling (Daniel 11:44) must be intelligence that certain adversaries are preparing to mount war against him. To identify the nations that will plot against him could only be guesswork, but as we have argued before, the likeliest are Iran and Turkey. These, especially Iran, have their own oil reserves, and they also have or will have their own nuclear weapons, so they will feel less inclined to cooperate with the Antichrist’s scheme of self-promotion. He will respond to the threat at his borders by making a preemptive strike, which will be totally successful. The phrase “utterly to make away many” (verse 44) suggests that after the Antichrist has rained destruction on his enemies, it will be impossible even to find their bodies. The magnitude and thoroughness of the devastation suggests a nuclear war.

Apparently other nations in the region will come to the defense of Iran and Turkey, but the Antichrist will vanquish them all. Before he is done, a fourth part of the earth will be ravaged by war. It would be unwise to forecast exactly which lands will suffer. Yet it is not overdrawn speculation if we suppose that the ruin of war will reach from Eastern Europe to China.

### **The Antichrist’s palace**

After the Antichrist returns victorious from snuffing out all his enemies, he will build a palace “between the seas in the glorious holy mountain” (verse 45), although he will already have palaces elsewhere. “Between the seas” means that the palace will lie between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The glorious holy mountain is Mount Zion, site of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.

The new palace will be a splendid structure, consisting of many buildings, but all these buildings that impious hands will strew across

the Holy Mount will have no more permanence than “tabernacles” (verse 45); that is, tents.<sup>110</sup> God will soon remove them.

## *Fate of the Victor*

*verse 45b*

45 . . . Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.
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### **The Antichrist’s death**

Much information is packed into the few words that describe the end of the Antichrist (verse 45). They imply that he will try to defend himself, but will fall, because no one will come to his aid. The most plausible surmise is that these words predict his assassination. He will die not from natural causes, but from a violent attack.

The event anticipated in verse 45 does not correspond to the Antichrist’s final collapse at the end of the Tribulation, when he will be consumed by the spirit of the Lord’s mouth and destroyed with the brightness of the Lord’s coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8). At that time he will have neither ability nor opportunity to defend himself, for “he shall be broken without hand” (Daniel 8:25). That is, whereas at one time he was killed by the hand of an assassin, he will at last be put out of the way permanently by the invisible and irresistible power of God.

### **The Antichrist’s resurrection**

Those commentators who think that verse 45 describes the Antichrist’s downfall at the end of the Tribulation have no alternative but to treat the next verse, Daniel 12:1, as a flashback. As will be shown, the next verse speaks of an event at the midpoint of the Tribulation. To presume that the narrative jumps backward in time is most unreasonable, however, considering that all the other visions of the book as well as the final vision so far do not depart from a strict chronological order.

The placement of verse 45 in the narrative shows clearly that the Antichrist will be killed sometime before the last 3½ years of the Tribulation. Yet the Book of Daniel teaches that he will be a dominant world figure during “the last end of the indignation” (Daniel 8:19), “when the transgressors are come to the full” (Daniel 8:23). Moreover, this same book asserts that he “shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished” (Daniel 11:36). How can he prosper during the final phase of the Tribulation if he is already dead? The answer, merely implied in Daniel but plainly set forth in Revelation, is that he will not stay dead. As we showed in our discussion of Daniel 7, he will by God’s permission return

from the grave. Then he will point to his resurrection as proof that he is at least Christ's equal. Indeed, he will use every tool of force and propaganda to convince the masses that he is greater than Christ.

# Notes

## Chapter Eleven

<sup>1</sup>Parker and Dubberstein, 14–17.

<sup>2</sup>Yamauchi, 138–145.

<sup>3</sup>Parker and Dubberstein, 17.

<sup>4</sup>Yamauchi, 194–223.

<sup>5</sup>Wood, 282.

<sup>6</sup>Russell, 16.

<sup>7</sup>Wood, 282.

<sup>8</sup>Pfeiffer and Vos, 217.

<sup>9</sup>Pareti, 340.

<sup>10</sup>For a popular survey of historical events fulfilling Daniel 11:5–35, see Walter K. Price, *In the Final Days* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 33–163. For a fuller treatment of the same period, see M. Rostovtzeff, “Ptolemaic Egypt” and “Syria and the East,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 7: *The Hellenistic Monarchies and the Rise of Rome*, ed. S. A. Cook, F. E. Adcock, and M. P. Charlesworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928). See also Montgomery, 427–460; Russell, 16–52; Wood, 283–304. The older discussions contain dates that are not in line with recent discoveries. For correct dates, consult the chronological tables in the second edition of *The Cambridge Ancient History* as well as Parker and Dubberstein, 20–23.

<sup>11</sup>Green, 3:2069.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.* Green’s literal translation omits “for” and transposes “he” and “years.”

<sup>13</sup>Others finding the same sense include Montgomery, 428; E. Young, *Commentary*, 237; Leupold, 485; Wood, 286.

<sup>14</sup>Montgomery, 437; Wood, 287.

<sup>15</sup>Brown et al., 914; Green, 3:2069.

<sup>16</sup>Montgomery, 438.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*; Wood, 290.

<sup>18</sup>Montgomery, 438; Green, 3:2070.

<sup>19</sup>Montgomery, 438; Wood, 290.

<sup>20</sup>Wood, 290.

<sup>21</sup>Literally, “and destruction in his hand.” See Green, 3:2070.

<sup>22</sup>Green, 3:2070.

<sup>23</sup>Wood, 291.

<sup>24</sup>Montgomery, 441; E. Young, *Commentary*, 239.

<sup>25</sup>Leupold, 490; Wood, 291.

<sup>26</sup>Montgomery, 441; E. Young, *Commentary*, 239; Leupold, 490; Wood, 291; Green, 3:2070.

<sup>27</sup>Montgomery, 443.

- <sup>28</sup>Green, 3:2070.
- <sup>29</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid.; E. Young, *Commentary*, 240; Wood, 292–293.
- <sup>31</sup>Montgomery, 450; Wood, 294; Green, 3:2070.
- <sup>32</sup>Wood, 295.
- <sup>33</sup>NASB. See E. Young, *Commentary*, 241; Wood, 295; Green, 3:2070.
- <sup>34</sup>Brown et al., 617.
- <sup>35</sup>The same translation with slight variations appears in Wood, 295; Green, 3:2070.
- <sup>36</sup>Wood, 296.
- <sup>37</sup>Green, 3:2071.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup>Montgomery, 455.
- <sup>40</sup>Russell, 29, 45.
- <sup>41</sup>Ibid., 32.
- <sup>42</sup>J. E. Harry, “Antiochus I,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. James Orr, 5 vols., revised ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), 1:158.
- <sup>43</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, 75.
- <sup>44</sup>James Strong, *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament with Their Renderings in the Authorized English Version*, in *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (repr., McLean, Va.: MacDonald Publishing Co., n.d.), 32; Montgomery, 461; Russell, 32.
- <sup>45</sup>Felix Guirand, ed., *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, trans. Richard Aldington and Delano Ames (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1959), 219.
- <sup>46</sup>R. Young, 411.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid.; Green, 3:2072.
- <sup>49</sup>R. Young, 412, 418.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., 418; Strong, *Hebrew*, 12; Green, 3:2072.
- <sup>51</sup>Compare with Green, 3:2071–2072. See also Brown et al., 752.
- <sup>52</sup>Unger and White, 159; R. Young, 412–418.
- <sup>53</sup>R. Young, 418.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid., 424.
- <sup>56</sup>Green, 3:2069.
- <sup>57</sup>Walvoord, 274.
- <sup>57</sup>Wood, 307.
- <sup>58</sup>R. Young, 365.
- <sup>59</sup>Stevenson, 24.
- <sup>60</sup>R. Young, 939.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>62</sup>Brown et al., 731–732; Strong, *Hebrew*, 69.

<sup>63</sup>The translations of Green (3:2072), E. Young (*Commentary*, 249), and Wood (306) differ but slightly from this and from each other.

<sup>64</sup>Wood, 307.

<sup>65</sup>Green, 3:2068–2072.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 3:2068.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 3:2071.

<sup>68</sup>Wood, 307.

<sup>69</sup>Green, 3:2072.

<sup>70</sup>Brown et al., 648.

<sup>71</sup>Compare with Green, 3:2072; Wood, 307.

<sup>72</sup>Green, 3:2072.

<sup>73</sup>R. Young, 572.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 565–572.

<sup>75</sup>Wood, 309.

<sup>76</sup>Green, 3:2000.

<sup>77</sup>Arthur C. Custance, *Noah's Three Sons: Human History in Three Dimensions*, vol. 1 of *The Doorway Papers* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 82–85, 88–91, 96–97.

<sup>78</sup>Brown et al., 893; Unger and White, 113, 429.

<sup>79</sup>Brown et al., 893.

<sup>80</sup>Berry, 92.

<sup>81</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, 799.

<sup>82</sup>Berry, 50–51, 92, 119.

<sup>83</sup>The almost identical expression “end of the ages” occurs once in the epistle addressed particularly to the Jews, in Hebrews 9:26.

<sup>84</sup>*The Great Apostasy: The Lost Sign*, DVD produced by *The Christian Sentinel*, n.d.

<sup>85</sup>R. J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 3, 71.

<sup>86</sup>R. Young, 298.

<sup>87</sup>Vine, 356–357; Arndt and Gingrich, 818–820.

<sup>88</sup>R. Young, 298.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 297, 590; Stevenson, 1.

<sup>91</sup>Pfeiffer and Vos, map 7.

<sup>92</sup>R. Young, 211.

<sup>93</sup>Vine, 250.

<sup>94</sup>R. Young, 211.

<sup>95</sup>Vine, 250.

<sup>96</sup>If the reader wishes to verify that modern Jordan incorporates the ancient kingdoms of Edom, Moab, and Ammon, he can superimpose a map of the region today upon a map of the region in Old Testament times.

<sup>97</sup>Pfeiffer and Vos, 176.

<sup>98</sup>Green, 3:2072.

- <sup>99</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>100</sup>Brown et al., 469.
- <sup>101</sup>Pfeiffer and Vos, 47.
- <sup>102</sup>John D. Davis, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 4th revised ed. (n.p., 1924; repr., Baker Book House, 1961), 452.
- <sup>103</sup>Green, 3:2072.
- <sup>104</sup>Strong, *Hebrew*, 97.
- <sup>105</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, 178.
- <sup>106</sup>Ibid., 891.
- <sup>107</sup>R. Young, 474.
- <sup>108</sup>Vine, 507.
- <sup>109</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>110</sup>Brown et al., 13.