

## The Last King of the North

Dan. 11.

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(B.T. Vol. N1, p. 6-7.)

As is known, great uncertainty pervades even believers as to the closing verses of this chapter and their true application. It may be well to show enough proof to any mind open to conviction that the truth is here so plainly revealed that doubt is inexcusable. And this is the more desirable, because, as long as hesitation exists, there cannot be the simple strength of faith, not only in believing this scripture, but in apprehending many others with which it is connected.

Let it then be distinctly noted that, though the kings of the north and south occupy the chapter from ver. 5 (Seleucus Nicator and Ptolemaeus Lagi with their successors), this comes to a halt at verse 32, after which we hear no more of Antiochus Epiphanes; of whom far more had been said than of any other, because of his deliberate and desperate efforts to uproot the law of God in the land and to Hellenise the Jews, even to Greek idolatry in the temple itself. The Maccabean resistance is pursued after that, and the various fortunes of the Jews in verses 33-35, which evidently not only indicate a continuance of sifting and trial, but point "to the time of the end." This needs no argument; it is indisputably asserted by the prophet. The great break is therefore here; and we are directed to look on from that Maccabean day of "exploits," followed by a period of instruction and falling on one side, and purging of the others for many days, without a word about kings of the north and south; but beyond this is "a time appointed," left quite indefinite, when "the time of the end" is to come.

Then suddenly we hear of one entirely distinct from either line of those kings. It is no longer the Lagidae nor the Seleucidae, but a monarch who becomes an object of attack to future kings of the south as well as of the north simultaneously or nearly so. He will be beyond doubt a king in "the land" of Israel between the kingdoms of the north (Syria and Asia Minor) and of the south (Egypt). Verses 36-40 are entirely devoted to this portentous ruler, only the last of which brings in the king of the south pushing at him, and the king of the north tempestuously assailing him (that is, the wilful king in Palestine).

It is of the utmost moment to observe that from that ver. 40 it is no longer the king in the land that is described, but his northern adversary. Some of the fathers blundered here, as do many moderns, who take the closing verses 41-45 as said of the Jewish king in that future day; whereas they are demonstrably an account of the king of the north and his awful end.

First, it is on the face of the passage that this northern king is the person last spoken of through the greater part of ver. 40; and therefore grammatically "he" is the one continued throughout the following verses as the great actor who at length comes to an abrupt end. Next, he is said to "enter also into the beautiful land" (Judaea) as well as many others. This does not apply properly to the king who was at home and reigning there, but to an enemy from without. Thirdly, it cannot be "the king of the south," seeing that ver. 42 informs us in plain terms that "the land of Egypt shall not escape," and again that "he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt," and, quite as serious an effect of his overthrow, that "the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." Fourthly, what arrests and recalls him in his southern victories is "tidings out of the east and out of the north." It is plainly bad rumours out of his own dominions which trouble him. "Therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the

tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the mountain of holy beauty" (vers. 44, 45). Here we have him back, incensed to the highest degree and bent on the destruction of the Jews. For the beautiful holy mountain is none other than that which distinguished Jerusalem and its temple, as the seas on either hand are the Mediterranean and the Salt or Dead Sea. "Yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him." Compare Dan. 8: 23-25.

From other scriptures, as Isa. 11: 4, 2 Thess. 2: 8, Rev. 19: 20, we know that the false prophet, king in the land, the Antichrist, is to perish with his western ally the Beast (or revived and apostate Roman Emperor), when the Lord shines forth in the day of His appearing; whereas the last king of the north comes up afterwards to a no less terrible catastrophe, when He takes His place with His people in Jerusalem and fights against this mighty ravager at the head of those nations whom he compels to follow his banner. Of them Zech. 14 speaks, of the first attack when he was partially successful, before he hurried to the south, and of utter destruction when he comes up again in his fury, not knowing that Jerusalem is then Jehovah-Shammah.