

[\(Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, Part 4\)](#)

[3-A: “Vile Person” Arrives on the Scene \(11:21-23\)](#)

[3-B: Rise to Power of a Modern “King of the North” \(11:24-25\)](#)

[3-C: Who Are the Kings of the North and South?](#)

[3-D: Setback to America \(11:26-27\)](#)

[3-E: Setback to “King of the North” and Turning Point \(11:28-30\)](#)

[3-F: The Great Tribulation \(11:31-35\)](#)

[3-G: Nature of the anti-Christ “King of the North” \(11:36-37\)](#)

[3-H: The “God of Forces” \(11:38-39\)](#)

[3-I: Among the Nations, Earth’s Final War \(11:40-45\)](#)

We now enter a more controversial section of Daniel 11, from verses 21 to 35. It seems that much of what Gabriel intended to get across here has lain buried under the rubble of mistranslation and misinterpretation. Over the centuries, well-meaning scholars and teachers have tried - a little too hard perhaps - to view these Scriptures in the light of past events, rather than seeing them as indications of future events. Now, with the benefit of more historical hindsight, we should be able to get a more accurate understanding of what this portion of Daniel 11 was meant to tell us. (However, it will take some digging to get there.)

The commentary in this Part 3 will view the passage in verses 21-35 of chapter 11 through the lens of the Modern Age. It could also be viewed through the lens of ancient times. And there are no end of commentaries to explain how this section of chapter 11 applies to the reign of an ancient king, Antiochus Epiphanes, and the wars that went on between Syria and Egypt in ancient times. Perhaps this was acceptable as a sort of intermediate fulfillment, and it may even have been of some benefit for the Jewish nation of old during their times of persecution.

But hopefully, it will become clear through the following in-depth study of this portion of Gabriel’s message that the final and ultimate fulfillment is yet to come in this End of the Age era. That is what we need to focus on now in this day and age. We need to change lenses so we can get the vision of how these inspired words from the past apply to our Modern Era.

3-A: “Vile Person” Arrives on the Scene (11:21-23)

To recap so far: After predicting the rise of Medo-Persia and Greece in verses 2-4, the angel Gabriel continues his revelation about Israel’s future with a lengthy description (11:5-20) of wars that would arise between the two Greek dynasties who ruled ancient Syria and Egypt. This struggle between the kings of the north and south, as they are called, leads up to the arrival of “*a vile person*” here in verse 21.

Verses 21-23 “**And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.**

“With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.

“And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people.”

In the chronology of history, we would assume this “*vile person*” to have been the next Syrian “*king of the north*”, Antiochus IV Epiphanes - a historical figure who fit the role of a “*vile person*” quite well. But as we shall see, Gabriel is at the same time referring to someone else. This “someone else” is the Antichrist figure of the End Time.

How do we know this? In the very next verse we are told, “*and also the prince of the covenant.*” Or, to translate it more accurately: “*and [he is] also the prince of the covenant.*” This peculiar statement serves to identify and link the “*vile person*” to the previous revelation in Daniel 9:27 about a “*prince*” who confirms a “*covenant*” in the time of the End.

Now most commentaries on these particular Scriptures (from verse 21 on to 35) emphasize more the activities of the ancient king as having fulfilled the predictions given in them. On the surface there may be some reason for thinking this way. But as we study this passage in more depth, a modern day setting begins to emerge, and we see that the passage fits better an End of the Age scenario and description of the “*vile person*”, better known now as the Antichrist.

Significant along these lines is the fact that up to this point (11:20) the events mentioned in Gabriel’s message can be matched easily with the events of recorded history; but from here on the historical events don’t seem to match the way they should.

Studying the various conflicting interpretations and commentaries, one gets the impression that much scholastic effort has been spent on trying to force the historical evidence to fit into a mold - with the intent of applying these Scriptures (11:21-35) to ancient history as if they had already been fulfilled long ago in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes when the reality is that they were meant to apply to a future age, the era of the Antichrist.

To understand this a little better - this peculiar dual nature of the prophetic message - we could check out Daniel's experience in chapter 8. Daniel's idea there (about the vision foretelling a near-future persecution of the Jewish nation) wasn't wrong; it just wasn't the whole story. So Gabriel comes along to correct him on this, saying, *"Understand, son of man, the vision refers to the time of the end... Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be."* (8:17, 19) Gabriel's intervention explains what the complete, ultimate fulfillment of the vision would look like.

And for this revelation also, Gabriel issues a similar guideline: *"I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come."* (10:14) The pattern in this chapter 11 is similar: the passage from verses 21 to 35 can be interpreted in terms of the ancient ruler Antiochus Epiphanes and his wars and persecution campaign. But that doesn't give us the complete picture, which will appear only in the End of the Age, our near future.

Indeed, it would seem quite a mismatch if the revelation, having had such a grand introduction with the appearance of Christ in His supernatural glory (10:4-9), should dwell so much on predictions about an obscure ancient ruler, and not dwell more on a *"many days yet to come"* scenario: the events leading up to the grand climax of human history - what Jesus' disciples were so curious about and referred to as the *"end of the age"*. (Matthew 24:3)

Since the approach of applying this passage (verses 21-35) to the Modern Era and the Antichrist is not the standard or generally accepted approach, it will take some extra, in-depth analysis to see how it is better to apply the passage to distant future events rather than to the past.

Having just said that, however, it should be conceded that the angel Gabriel, more than likely, was trying to draw attention to this ancient ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes. As a model of the Antichrist, he fits the role quite well, and his example

can help us understand a few things about the future Antichrist and his reign.

For instance, Antiochus IV was the first pagan monarch to exploit the Jewish people for their faith, rather than for their territory or wealth or work-force as previous conquerors had done. And he even went so far as to desecrate the ancient Jewish temple, sacrificing a pig on the altar and then later erecting a statue to the Roman god Zeus.



Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his persecution of the Jewish people

The Scriptures foretell that the Antichrist, in like fashion, will be obsessed about the faith in God of not only the Jewish people, but of the Christian world, and probably the Islamic world as well, and any other religions that choose the Higher Authority of God as opposed to that of the Antichrist. Furthermore, he also will desecrate a Jewish “*holy place*” (with his modern-style “[*abomination of desolation*](#)”).

◇ ... The war of these two kingdoms [ancient “*king of the North*” versus ancient Israel] ... typically characterizes and portrays the relation of the world-kingdom to the kingdom of God. This war arose under the Seleucidan Antiochus Epiphanes to such a height, that it formed a prelude of the war of the time of the end. The undertaking of this king to root out the worship of the living God and destroy the Jewish religion [portrayed in chapter 8], shows in type the great war which the world-power in the last phases of its development shall undertake against the kingdom of God, by exalting itself

above every god, to hasten on its own destruction and the consummation of the kingdom of God. (from *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1866)

And another feature about the ancient ruler: His last name Epiphanes means “the Manifest [god]”. Like many ancient emperors, he had no qualms about exalting himself into the status of a divine being. In like fashion, the Antichrist will pursue a modernized version of the ancient practice of emperor worship: “*Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*”. (2 Thessalonians 2:4) “*He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god*”. (Daniel 11:36)

For a further discussion on this subject regarding other examples in the Book of Daniel of historical figures who were meant to foreshadow the future Antichrist and his empire, see [Appendix 1: Forerunners of the Antichrist](#).

So, although the spotlight shifts here from the “*one who imposes taxes*” in verse 20 (Seleucus IV Philopater) on to the “*vile person*” of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, this is not the whole story. For at this point the spotlight suddenly turns into a telescope and peers many centuries into the future onto another “*vile person*”. This person is like a spiritual descendant, in the Modern Age, of the ancient king, and, like his ancient ancestor, will carry on a campaign of religious repression against the people of God.

In the very next verse we are told, “*Yea, also the prince of the covenant*” (from KJV translation). This peculiar statement is often misunderstood and probably should have been translated, “*Yea, [he is] also the prince of the covenant.*” Through this statement, Gabriel is simply reminding Daniel of the previous revelation (in chapter 9, verse 27) about the Antichrist “*prince*” who “*shall confirm a covenant with many*” at the end of the “*70 weeks*”. (See in [Post 6 of the Daniel 9 series](#) for more information on that.) He is linking his former message of about three years earlier to this new one in chapter 11.

In the former message (chapter 9, verse 27), Gabriel had said that, after confirming the covenant, the “*prince*” later turns against it. (This violent repudiation of the covenant, by the way, is the last great signpost before the End - that provocative deed which will thrust the world into its last period of history known as the Great Tribulation.)

This chapter 11 pictures the same scenario - with different wording and in more detail: first is the identification in verse 22 of the *“king of the North”* as the same *“prince of the covenant”* from the previous revelation (in chapter 9); then there is mention of the *“league [covenant] made with him”* in verse 23; this is followed by his repudiation of it when he *“defiles the sanctuary”* (in verse 31). The *“covenant”* is mentioned five times in this chapter (verses 23, 28, 30, 32), and it is fairly obvious from the *“time appointed”* and *“time of the end”* phrases that this *“covenant”* is meant to take place at the tail end of history, not somewhere back in ancient times.

So to be consistent with the rest of the passage, it should be safe to assume that when Gabriel is referring to the *“prince of the covenant”* here in verse 22, he means by that the *“prince”* who would *“confirm a covenant with many for one week”* - the same one whom he had already mentioned some three years earlier (in Daniel 9:27). As we go along, it will become clearer that the *“prince”* (the Antichrist) and the *“covenant”* belong in the End of the Age era.

	DANIEL 9:26-27	DANIEL 11:21-23, 28, 30-32
Confirms/ authors covenant	“The prince that shall come... shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (7 years):	“A vile person... yea, [he is] also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully...
Breaks covenant	and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate”	And his heart shall be against the holy covenant... He shall have indignation against the holy covenant... and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries...”

Chapter 11 enlarges on what Gabriel told Daniel 3-4 years earlier (in chapter 9) about the *“prince”* who would *“confirm the covenant”* and then break it

Now at first glance it might be easy to think that the passage is saying that the *“vile person”* is going to kill the *“prince of the covenant”*: *“He (the vile person) shall... seize the kingdom... they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant.”* (11:21-22) Judging by the way the

passage was translated, this would be a logical conclusion. At this point, however, it will help to dig into some of the nuts and bolts of ancient Hebrew and how it gets translated.

The following discussion may seem rather technical, a little tedious perhaps, but probably necessary towards the purpose of determining what this ancient prophecy is really getting at. In times past, doing this kind of exercise on these verses was not so essential, but now that we are entering the era that the prophecy focuses on, it is imperative to clarify and understand more precisely what this ancient message is really saying. To begin this exercise, the following quote from a lively lecture on the subject might make a good introduction:

◇ I have always taught that the prince of the covenant is the Antichrist!... Now it says, *“Yea, also the prince of the covenant!”* Now, listen, because this is one of those places in which, if you don’t watch out, you’re going to get overthrown!... Don’t stop here and don’t link it too closely with what has just been read, because originally the Bible was not even divided into chapters and verses, neither was it even punctuated! The Old Testament in the Hebrew doesn’t have any punctuation, so you can make a mistake and divide things where they shouldn’t be divided, and run them together where they shouldn’t be run together. There is kind of a pause here, and it looks almost like the translator has linked it together: *“Yea, also the Prince of the Covenant.”* Now, this sounds like, if you... punctuate it and run it together the way the translator did here that put these verses together, it sounds like, “Oh! The Prince of the Covenant got run over too! He too got broken, right?” But what it is saying here is: *“Yea”*— and if the translator had only thought to add one more little word here it would’ve made it clear: *“Yea, (he’s) also the prince of the covenant!”* This is literally what this passage means. It does not mean, *“Yea, also the Prince of the Covenant”* is broken. I’ll grant you, that’s what at first sight it might look like and sound like, if you don’t really know your Bible and all the rest of the passages... (excerpt from lecture by [David Berg](#) - May, 1979)

Since there were no periods, commas, or verse divisions in the original Hebrew (typical of languages in their early stages of development), then it should be no problem to adjust verses 22-23 as follows with a period and verse division after the word *“broken”*:

Verse 22: With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken.

Verse 23: And yea, he is also the prince of the covenant; and after the league is made with him, he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small nation.

In ancient Hebrew key words were sometimes omitted (usually the words for “is” or “are”), and thus, translators had difficulty knowing when to insert an extra word and when not to. These “nominal sentences”, as Hebrew scholars call them, were used extensively in the ancient language. All through the Old Testament, we can find such examples; to differentiate them, these added words are printed in italics in most Bibles. (See examples in [Appendix 2](#).)

In the case of Daniel 11:22, the italicized words “*he is*” should have been added so the passage would make better sense. Otherwise, it sounds as if the “*vile person*” is going to kill the “*prince of the covenant*”. That would make no sense since that means he would be destroying himself.

Another feature about this “*prince of the covenant*” phrase: it is preceded by the Hebrew word *gam*. Regarding this, one reliable Hebrew lexicon has this to say:

“[*Gam*] is sometimes put at the beginning of a sentence... Not infrequently it is used as an intensitive, *even*... It often only serves to make a sentence emphatic and sometimes may be rendered *yea, indeed, truly*, or else it shews that the next word takes a considerable emphasis.” [from *Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament* (English translation from German), 1846, pg. 174]

So, this little word *gam* is a helpful indicator to show that this “*prince of the covenant*” phrase should be treated as a complete sentence.

It also serves to transform the sentence - “*yea, (he is) also the prince of the covenant*” - into a sort of proclamation; it was a way of drawing attention to the fact that, although the prophecy had been dwelling on ancient times and the rule of the Seleucids, and now Antiochus Epiphanes, at this point it is shifting to a different character in a different era (but at least someone who will resemble in many ways the ancient king, the ancient “*vile person*”).

Many commentaries, however, have suggested that the “*vile person*” and the

“prince of the covenant” were two different persons - namely, the Seleucid emperor Antiochus Epiphanes and the Jewish high priest who was murdered around that time. This idea assumes that the word ***“covenant”*** refers to the covenant between God and humankind; therefore, the ***“prince of the covenant”*** would refer to the high priest of God’s people of that era, the Hebrew nation. Here is what one helpful (but technical) scholarly discussion, about the meaning of ***“covenant”*** in Daniel 9:27, has to say on this subject:

“Covenant” does not necessarily mean the covenant of God (Old Testament or New Testament Covenant), since the assertion that this word occurs only in this book with reference to the covenant of God with Israel (Hgsth.) does not also prove that it must here have this meaning... *laarabiyim* [with the many] (OT:7227) with the article signifies the many, i.e., the great mass of the people in contrast with the few, who remain faithful to God; cf. Matt 24:12. Therefore the thought is this: That ungodly prince shall impose on the mass of the people a strong covenant that they should follow him and give themselves to him as their God.

(from Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, 1866)

In a nutshell, the above passage offers a sound explanation for how the ***“covenant”*** does not have to mean the covenant of God (Old or New Testament).

As noted before, the ***“covenant”*** (in verse 22) is also expressed as a ***“league”*** (in verse 23). The word ***“covenant”*** (*berith*) often (but not always) refers to covenants between God and humankind, whereas ***“league”*** (*chabar*) is used for agreements made between groups and individuals, between human beings.

As a parallel structure, the words ***“league”*** and ***“covenant”*** are supposed to refer to the same thing. Thus, the use of the word ***“league”*** serves the purpose of fine-tuning our understanding of what kind of ***“covenant”*** the ***“prince of the covenant”*** is presiding over. It is a down-to-earth political agreement between groups/nations of human beings. God is not involved, at least not directly.

◇ A Note on Hebrew Parallelism:

Commonly used in ancient Hebrew was the literary device known as **parallel structure**. For example, in Psalm 19:1 we read, ***“The heavens declare the glory of God.”*** Then in the second part of the verse the same idea is repeated more or less: ***“and the firmament [expanse of***

heaven] *shows His handiwork.*" The words "*heavens*" and "*firmament*" both mean pretty much the same thing. And there are countless examples of this literary technique to be found throughout the Old Testament. It was a way of adding some variety to literary expression and some extra information. For example the word "*handiwork*" gets across an additional point about God as the Creator.

In Daniel 11 it appears that Gabriel was trying to use the same technique in his discourse with Daniel. In verses 22 and 23 we find the words "*covenant*" and "*league*". And in verses 23 and 24 the words "*small number of people*" (or "*small nation*") and "*province*".

It helps to understand this point since, otherwise, it might be easy to think that these words are referring to different things when it was only a matter of using different terminology for the same thing (and thereby adding variety, color, and extra meaning to literary expression).

And if we assume a parallel structure here, so that the "*covenant*" in verse 22 is the same as the "*league*" in verse 23, then it must be that the "*prince of the covenant*" in verse 22 is the same person in verse 23 with whom the "*league is made*". All that to say, it would not make sense for the "*prince of the covenant*" in verse 22 to have been "*broken*" or killed; otherwise, how could he, if he is also the one with whom the "*league is made*" in the next verse 23, carry on his activities in that verse, and right on to the end of the chapter?

Furthermore, reading ahead to verses 30-31, we learn more about the activities of the "*vile person*" (who is the "*king of the North*") that he will "*return in rage against the holy covenant*", and his forces "*shall defile the sanctuary*" and "*take away the daily sacrifices*". This is saying the same thing (with more detail) that Gabriel had told Daniel three years earlier about the "*prince*" who would "*confirm a covenant*" but then would "*bring an end to sacrifice and offering*" (9:27).

In chapter 9 this "*prince*" was pictured making war on Jerusalem in the 70th "*week*", the last seven years of history. In that prophetic message, Gabriel outlined a period of "*70 weeks*" (490 years) that would transpire between "*the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem*" in 446-445 B.C. and the return of the Messiah "*to make an end of sins... to bring in everlasting righteousness*". (9:25,24)

In that "*70 weeks*" time span, there is a gap after the end of 69 "*weeks*" (483 years) when Jesus was crucified. And this "*gap*" fast-forwards the prophetic

message into modern times and the brief period of Antichrist's rule right before the Second Coming. This is a big subject and is covered in some detail in the post ["Christ's Second Coming Predicted"](#).

So, if we understand in Daniel 9:27 that the *"prince" who "shall confirm a covenant"* is a figure who will appear in the End of the Age, then we can safely assume in Daniel 11:22, by this *"prince of the covenant"* phrase, that the prophetic message has shifted into the End of the Age era and will go on to describe in more detail the activities of the same End Time *"prince"* of the previous revelation (of Daniel 9). And this is confirmed for us later on in verses 27, 35, and 40 where the phrase *"time of the end"* is used.

It is as if Gabriel is saying here, "By the way, in case you're wondering, this *'vile person'* happens to be the same one that I was talking about in the previous revelation (9:27). You remember the one? That *'prince'* who confirms then violates the *'covenant'*? Well, I'm talking about him again now."

It seems straightforward enough. Verse 22 makes it clear that this *"vile person"*, this *"king of the north"*, should be identified with the same *"prince who confirms the covenant"* of the previous revelation in Daniel 9:27. And if that is the case, then it is natural to understand the *"prince of the covenant"* phrase in verse 22 of this chapter 11 as a sort of junction point where the passage makes a switch (or telescopes) from the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes to that of the future Antichrist. So, all that to say, it seems out-of-sync with the rest of Gabriel's discussion to assign some ancient Jewish high priest into the role of *"prince of the covenant"*.

That phrase, *"yea, [he is] also the prince of the covenant"*, is nothing more than a proclamation to identify who the *"vile person"* is; and a guidepost - to direct us out of the ancient past into the distant future. It was nothing more than Gabriel's way of linking the present discussion to his former discussion with Daniel from chapter 9.

It seems more reasonable to understand that the angel, in his reference to the *"prince of the covenant"*, is merely trying to maintain a link with his previous message. And he is using that link - about the prince who breaks the covenant (in 9:27) to re-direct the flow of his message in chapter 11. We could say that he is adjusting the telescope; it is being extended from the *"vile person"* of Antiochus Epiphanes to the final *"vile person"* - the Antichrist of modern times who is called

here *“the prince of the covenant”*.

It is as if Gabriel is saying, “The leader or ‘*prince*’, mentioned in the previous revelation (Daniel 9), who had much to do with the formation of the 7-year ‘*covenant*’, is coming back into the picture, and from here on his activities will be the main subject of discussion.”

But rather than saying it in so many words, the angel simply gives some extra emphasis to the *“prince of the covenant”* phrase (by using the Hebrew word *gam*, translated by the words “*yea*” and “*also*” in the KJV translation).

And in the mind of the angel who is speaking to Daniel, it connects his present discussion with the previous revelation in Daniel 9:27 about a “*prince*” who would “*confirm a covenant with many for one week*”. It’s also the angel’s way of saying that he’s going to elaborate on the sketchy bit of information given three or four years earlier in Daniel 9:27 about this mysterious “*covenant*” and the “*prince*” who confirms it.

And as far as the actual ancient history is concerned, there is no real basis for the general tendency in scholastic circles to relegate this *“prince of the covenant”* phrase into the ancient past. The historical facts simply do not support the view that the “*prince of the covenant*” phrase has something to do with ancient historical events. (See quotes on this subject in [Appendix 3](#).)

And indeed, it would make little sense to suppose that the angel who, three or four years earlier (in Daniel 9:27), had delivered the message about a “*prince*” who would “*confirm a covenant*”, should suddenly start talking about an entirely different “*covenant*” and an entirely different “*prince*”.

Assuming that this is Gabriel talking, then in his mind the previous message he had given Daniel was still current. (In the Celestial Domain time is experienced in a different way to how we experience it.) And it would have been natural for Gabriel to refer back to what he had said before and try to connect the two messages. For him this new message wasn’t so new; it was more like a continuation of his previous message from chapter 9; he was just building on it and filling in more details.

Like a rudder, this *“prince of the covenant”* phrase redirects the flow of the prophetic message. Or, we could say, like a marker or signpost it shows us where we are and where we’re headed. So at this point the prophecy telescopes from the

ancient Seleucid kingdom into the modern era (or near future). This is not as unusual as one might think; this peculiar sort of catapulting from an ancient historical era to the modern era pops up in all the other revelations Daniel had about the distant future.

For example, in chapter 2 about the vision of the *“image”*, the iron legs of Rome shift to the iron-clay feet of the End Time kingdom. There are similar shifts elsewhere: in chapter 7, the *“fourth beast”* is symbolic of both ancient Rome and the modern Antichrist kingdom; in the *“70 weeks”* prophecy there is a shift from ancient Roman times (in verse 26) straight into modern times (verse 27); in chapter 8 the revelation about the ancient Greek kingdom’s rise to power under the *Little Horn* switches suddenly into the End Time; there the clue was the phrase *“in the latter time of their kingdom”*. (8:23)

These messages in the Book of Daniel assume the existence of the Israeli nation. They were given to a Jewish prophet who was anticipating the coming of the Messiah and seeking God about the fate of his nation, which at the time looked rather bleak. So naturally, these predictions about the End of the Age events prior to the Second Coming are linked to the history and fate of the nation of Israel.

But for the last 2,000 years there was no Israel (and no Second Coming either). So there has to be a *“jump”* - from the ancient time to the distant future, a day when Israel would be restored as a nation (and a time when Earth is desperately in need of God’s intervention). So, like the other passages in Daniel’s Book about the future, the passage in chapter 11 also *“jumps”* abruptly out of the ancient Greek empire of the Seleucid king into the far distant future.

And the signal for that *“jump”* comes here with the proclamation, *“yea [he is] also the prince of the covenant”*. Up until verse 21, the *“road”* was leading towards Antiochus Epiphanes, but then in verse 22, a key signpost appears, directing us off that road, and we turn onto another road, the one that travels straight into modern times and its anti-Christ ruler. Again, it will help to remember that time is measured differently in the Celestial Realm; what may stretch into centuries by earthly reckoning, in that Realm may seem nothing more than a few days. (Psalm 90:4)

It has been said that time is God’s way of keeping things (historical events) from happening all at once. In the Spirit Realm historical events from our Earthly Realm can appear to be happening all at once. Daniel 9:26 and 11:31-35, 41 deal with

specific historical events to come - the invasion of Jerusalem in 70 AD and persecution of the saints in the End Time. Yet the wording in those verses leaves the impression that these are ongoing events that have happened, or will happen, from time to time throughout human history. As history unfolds in our world, what was compressed spreads out over many centuries, so the same event can get repeated in different forms at different moments of our historical "time".

Up to this point (verse 21 in Daniel 11), the prophecy had been talking about the ancient struggles between Syria and Egypt, but now the angel switches to a different time and a different "*king of the North*". The Syrian dynasty came to a close soon after the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. So it was needful to re-assign the "*king of the North's*" identity to that of the "*prince of the covenant*", the anti-Christ ruler of the End Time, whose reign would in some ways resemble that of the ancient dynasty.

A question that might come to mind at this point: could it be that the "*prince of the covenant*" in 11:22 is the author of the covenant while the "*prince*" in 9:27 is a different person who only "*confirms the covenant*"? (This doesn't seem likely, but for further discussion on this issue, see [Appendix 4](#).)

Now, although the passage signals here that it is veering off into the End Time, this doesn't have to mean that Antiochus Epiphanes has been completely forgotten. Verse 22 states, "Yea [he is] also the *prince of the covenant*", which suggests that the message can include both personages, ancient and modern. History continually repeats itself in different forms and under different technologies. So this section (verses 21-35) can almost be read on two levels - like a double image in photography where two pictures appear on one frame.

This is like so many of the prophecies and visions that God gave in the Old Testament, which were designed with this in mind - to illustrate future realities. Perhaps a certain event was taking place back in the ancient time (or about to take place), and this event served as a springboard to catapult the prophet into a future age (the End Time) when events similar to what was going on back then would be taking place.

This pattern was especially obvious in the prophetic revelation of chapter 8. Daniel thought the vision was pinpointing a ruler that would arise soon to persecute the Jewish people (and that did happen). But the angel Gabriel comes along to correct that impression, telling Daniel, "*Understand, son of man, that the*

vision refers to the time of the end... Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter end of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.” (8:17,19)

The odd thing about this vision’s fulfillment is that the activities of the ancient Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes paralleled closely what Gabriel had to say about the activities of the final Antichrist king. And here in chapter 11, there is a similar pattern.

Now, because the angel seems to draw some attention to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (as a sort of preview of what the Antichrist’s reign will be like), many scholars have tried to interpret verses 21-35 as already fulfilled in past events, with perhaps a faint echo of reference to the future Antichrist of the End Time. In actuality, it should be the other way around: the events of antiquity echo faintly the future events to which the prophecy is referring directly .

In short, Bible scholars of the past generally wanted to make these words fit in with the events of ancient history, not realizing that this portion of the prophecy is supposed to be about the future rather than about the past. It was not an already-fulfilled prophecy, as many of them thought.

And, of course, that way of thinking and approach affected the way that verse 22 was translated - in such a way that the link to the *“prince of the covenant”* of Daniel 9:27 was obscured.

Remembering that this is probably the archangel Gabriel speaking, it shouldn’t seem unusual that he would have been capable of seeing the future, and where there is overlap or similarity of events from two periods of time, he might even be capable of referring to both at once (as he seems to do here in verses 21-22, and other verses as well). As an angel, we could imagine that his mind was capable of working on several levels at once and that he could visualize the near future and the distant future simultaneously.

In the mind of Gabriel, it seems that these two widely time-separated eras of history are being visualized at the same time. Or to say it in another way, the angel pointed briefly towards Antiochus Epiphanes because he knew his example from ancient times would foreshadow the Antichrist’s persecution of the people of God in modern times.

Gabriel uses this two-persons-in-one method of explaining future events. In his previous revelation to Daniel in chapter 9 (verse 26-27), he speaks of the ancient Roman Caesar and the future Antichrist as if they were the same person. And in chapter 8, the ancient Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes and the final Antichrist are viewed as if they were the same person.

In the first case (9:26-27), the invasion and destruction of Jerusalem is the common factor between the ancient and the modern personages. And in chapter 8, the common factor between them is their obsession with themselves as deities and with their persecution against those who refuse to adopt their religion. Having made clear this resemblance of the ancient king Antiochus Epiphanes with the final Antichrist in chapter 8, the angel in chapter 11 barely touches on this matter, and instead, focuses more on the activities of Earth's final ungodly ruler, the *"king of the North"*.

Gabriel uses these former antichrist-type personages from ancient times as a sort of backdrop or illustration that makes it easier to understand the distant future activities of the final Antichrist.

But that doesn't mean that the events described after verse 21 in chapter 11 are describing events of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Since the ancient events do not match properly with Gabriel's message, they may at best be understood as a secondary shadowy fulfillment. The primary fulfillment is yet to come... in the very End Time. We are on the exciting threshold of seeing these events happen - the ultimate fulfillment of these words from long ago!

Unfortunately, the predominant view in Biblical scholarship sees Gabriel's message from verses 21 to 30 or 35 mostly in terms of ancient history. Why has this happened, we may wonder? Well, it is quite understandable. In former times Bible scholars did not have the benefit of the kind of historical hindsight that we have today.

In particular, they had not witnessed the return of the Jewish people to Israel. So it was natural to think that the *"70 weeks"* time span in Daniel 9 could have run its course long ago or that the king of the North's wars and activities against the Jews and the temple in Daniel 11:21-35 were fulfilled in the exploits of Antiochus Epiphanes. Since the nation of Israel had been dismantled and no longer existed, it was difficult to see how these Scriptures could be fulfilled other than by assuming that they had been fulfilled in the time of ancient Israel.

Furthermore, it is a natural human tendency to want to “explain” everything rather than to admit there are some prophetic messages whose time has not yet come to be explained except in the vaguest of terms. But now, since Israel has returned to existence in the modern world, it is needful to re-calibrate and to understand these Scriptures in the light of modern historical conditions.

For former teachers then, it was difficult to see how the message at this point could veer off into the future, no longer focusing on past events, at least not directly. Although scholars have tried to apply this passage to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, nevertheless, because of our greater historical hindsight, it is becoming evident that the complete, ultimate fulfillment is yet to come.

Although the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes bears some resemblance to Gabriel’s message, there are also plenty of differences. Trying to view Antiochus Epiphanes as the primary fulfillment of this passage seems to be more an exercise in trying to force the historical evidence to fit into a preconceived mold. If one pounds hard enough, the evidence may appear to fit. But probably it is a wiser approach to understand that, from this point on, the historical evidence that fits nicely with Gabriel’s message has yet to appear on the world scene.

By the way, there are several other clues pointing to the fact that the prophecy has veered into modern times, the End Time: we have seen already the phrase “*prince of the covenant*” - first clue. There are others that will be considered as we go along. Then after verse 35, Gabriel’s message swings completely out of any hint of similarity to past events. Up till that point some passing reference will be made to ancient events, for interest’s sake, and even for the purpose of throwing some light on how to interpret the prophecy as it applies to our present day and the near future.

Getting back then to our commentary:

And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty. (11:21)

As we know by now, the next Syrian king was Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Even though he was not the rightful heir, he usurped the throne from his brother in 175 B.C. and so was not given “*the honor of royalty*”. This “*vile person*”, true to this

description, carried out a ruthless campaign of repression against the Jewish people.

But he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. (11:21)

Antiochus had managed to “*come in peaceably*” and snatch the kingdom from his nephew “*by intrigue*”. It was not any kind of violent overthrow.

Now since we know from the next verse that the “*vile person*” is also the modern Antichrist, then we should look at how this verse would apply to him. And here it might help to go by the version found in several translations, “*He shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries*” (KJV) - by slipperiness and false promises. (See [Appendix 5: Definition of the Hebrew word for “flatteries”](#).)

Although we haven’t seen yet how exactly the Antichrist will get swept into power, we already know that this tactic of coming in “*peaceably... by flatteries*” has been perfected to a fine art in today’s world. Through the modern institutions of universal voting and media manipulation, sometimes the most vile of persons can rise to great prominence without firing a shot, seizing the reins of power through their broadcasting “*flatteries*” to a nation of uninformed people easily swayed by rhetoric and false promises.

Hitler was a good, or rather bad, modern day example of someone who made clever use of propaganda and the voting system to maneuver himself into the leadership of the German Third Reich.

These devious voting and propaganda tactics have become standard practice - common in modern republican societies where the monarchical system of government has been abolished. Thus, a would-be ruler does not inherit “*the honor of royalty*”, receiving it with all the majesty and honor that the kings and queens of old were given. Instead, he has to “*obtain the kingdom by flatteries*” (by smoothness and slipperiness).

This word “*peaceably*” also conveys the idea of unexpected takeover in a society that is seemingly secure and well-to-do. The initial grab for power probably happens in Russia, by the way, which, as we understand from Ezekiel 38-39, will be the Antichrist’s power base. (For more information about Russia as the final empire, see posts in the [Ezekiel 38-39](#) series)

We might wonder though, how could Russia become powerful enough to carry out such a grand campaign of warfare now that she has become so weakened since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s? Perhaps this situation could be compared to what happened in the last century when Germany lay in shambles after World War I, demoralized and humiliated; such conditions made it easy for a demagogue (Hitler) to rally the people and restore Germany to its former greatness. So it would not be surprising to see history repeat itself in this way in the land of Russia.

Russians haven't forgotten the old glory days of the Soviet Union, and the Antichrist could easily capitalize on that as he re-builds the nation into a great superpower. In fact, we are already seeing Russia re-bounding these days, both militarily and economically. (See articles: ["Western Armies are Losing Their High-Tech Edge"](#) and ["New World Order in Meltdown, But Russia Stronger Than Ever"](#).)

Incidentally, it is worth mentioning here that this new section (verses 21-35) starts right off the bat (here in verse 21) fitting nicely into the modern context - better, it would seem than into the context of ancient times.

With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken. (11:22)

Then once he has a firm hold on the reins of power, the Antichrist will begin to flex his military muscle and show his true colors. Again we can look at what happened in Hitler Germany. During the early years of Nazi rule, other European nations saw what Hitler had done in Germany - how he had saved the nation from communism and economic collapse. With that kind of track record and his big armies and weapons, Hitler was welcomed almost as a savior in some nations like Austria and Czechoslovakia where there were large German populations. Other nations like Poland and France were quickly overrun by the German armies. So this was an example of a political leader who rose to power by the use of "flatteries", then "with the force of a flood... swept away" his opponents and nearby nations.

How exactly this might apply to the Antichrist of the future would be difficult to say, but perhaps a good guess is that he will use his popularity and force of arms to consolidate his control over nearby nations, especially those who used to belong to the old Soviet Union and are now only loosely tied to Russia through the organization known as the Commonwealth of Independent States. In fact, this process has already started. (See post ["Ten Horns Coming into View?"](#))

And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully. (11:23)

In this next verse 23, there is mention of a *“league”*; this continues the train of thought about the *“covenant”* from the previous verse and fine-tunes our understanding about it and about the *“prince”* who confirms it. As mentioned earlier, the two words are an example of the common Hebrew literary device of parallel structure; they are two words for the same thing, and the second word may add some extra information.

In this case, the word *“league”* clarifies that this is not the kind of sacred covenant between God and man that appears often in the Old Testament. Rather, this *“covenant”* is a very down-to-earth *“league”* - like a political agreement made with certain groups of people. As far as the *“vile person”* of verse 21 is concerned, this *“league”* is little more than a ploy that he uses to buy some time during which he can *“act deceitfully”* and *“become strong with a small number of people”*.

He is certainly no high priest or religious leader or anything like that. He’s just a political ruler, a *“vile person”* who agrees with other nations to allow religious and political freedom in Israel for a time but with little intention of actually keeping the agreement.

And this agrees with what Daniel 9:27 says about the Antichrist that he would *“confirm a covenant with many”* and then later *“in the middle of the week”* would violate the terms of that agreement - which is about the same thing that verse 23 here says about the *“vile person”* that *“after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully”*.

Another relevant point: In all the passages where the word *“covenant”* appears (Daniel 9:27 and 11:22,28,30,32), there is no definite article in the ancient Hebrew - which is why the majority of translations render the opening of Daniel 9:27 thus: *“he shall confirm A covenant”*. The indefiniteness here doesn’t point well to the kind of covenant that would exist between God and humankind. Not until verse 11:23, which uses a different Hebrew word for *“covenant”* does the definite article appear. This word, translated as *“league”* (KJV), refers exclusively to covenants on the earthly level between individuals or groups of human beings.

Regarding the question of whether or not this passage about the *“league”* and about becoming *“strong with a small number of people [or “small nation” *]”* should be relegated to the past, here again the historical facts do not match very

well with the events of ancient history. As mentioned in Appendix 2, there is no record of any important *“league”* or *“covenant”* made by Antiochus Epiphanes in ancient times, much less one that initiated a time span of seven years (as specified in 9:27). (*The most common translation for the Hebrew word *goi* used here for “people” is “nation”.)

In addition is the question of who are the *“small number of people”*? (11:23) The parallel term *“province”* in verse 24 fine-tunes the meaning, suggesting a small nation, through which, in verse 23, *“he shall come up and become strong”*. Ancient Syria did have dealings with Egypt and was trying to conquer it, but Egypt could hardly be called a *“small number of people”*, certainly not in ancient times.

Although there are some resemblances to what happened during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, it seems better to understand the passage as describing something that has not yet happened. And again, this clues us in to the fact that the angel’s message has switched into the End Time and is dealing with events pertaining to the modern day Antichrist.

So, who might the modern day *“small number of people”* or “small nation” be, we might wonder? This is just speculation, but it may well refer to the nation that the Antichrist will use as a staging area or platform from which he can invade Israel and the Mideast. The small modern nation of Syria is a good candidate for that role. Or another possibility: perhaps it refers to a small oppressed people (like the Palestinians) who provide a legitimate enough excuse for the Antichrist to engage in a war of liberation in the Mideast. (Of course, since none of this has happened yet, right now we can only guess at how these words should be understood.)

Continue to [**Part 3B: Rise to Power of a Modern “King of the North”**](#)

Appendix 1: Forerunners of the Antichrist

Generally, the prophecies in the Book of Daniel start out as predictions about rulers or kingdoms who were to arise back in ancient times. But then at some point in these prophecies, they fast-forward into the End Time. That is, the near-future view in a prophecy can easily telescope into a view of the distant future.

A telescope pointing in a certain direction may at first focus on objects nearby,

but then, as you adjust it, it will focus on objects far away. And many prophecies seem to work in a similar fashion. For example, Daniel's prophecy in chapter 8 focuses at first on one of the ancient Greek rulers, but with little difficulty - because it's aimed in the right direction (to a Mid East conqueror who persecuted God's people of the Old Testament) - it was easy for the Lord to adjust the prophecy into a more long-distance view and focus it on the final Antichrist (also a Mid East conqueror and persecutor of God's people).

Such was the case also with Daniel's vision and prophecy in chapter 7 about the *"fourth beast"*. It does double duty, describing both ancient Rome and the End Time Antichrist empire. Similarly, the prophecy in chapter 11 about the *"vile person"* refers to both Antiochus Epiphanes, an ancient Assyrian king, and the final Antichrist.

So, these ancient rulers (especially Antiochus Epiphanes and the Roman Caesars), on whom were based Daniel's revelations about the End Time Antichrist and his empire, had certain characteristics that would also feature prominently in the Antichrist empire of the future.

In Daniel 8, we read of a *"little horn"* coming after a *"notable horn"* (Alexander the Great). This *"little horn"* serves as a dual symbol for both the ancient king Antiochus Epiphanes and the final Antichrist. And the reign of Alexander the Great also exhibits certain features of the final empire: a reign of short duration, a swift conquest of the Mideast.

In Daniel 9, there is a Roman *"prince"* who *"shall destroy the city and the sanctuary"* - Jerusalem and her temple. This serves as a springboard into the future when another *"prince"* (the Antichrist) shall do the same.

And this passage in Daniel 11, verses 21-22, about the *"vile person"*, works in a similar fashion. It could be compared to what is known in photography as a double image. That is, it's a two-in-one picture of two eras of history wherein a similar event took place - namely, the rise of an anti-Christ figure who invades Jerusalem and desecrates its *"holy place"*.

The same type of double imaging occurs in Daniel 7 about the *"fourth beast"* who is supposed to symbolize ancient Rome; yet at the same time he is quite obviously representative of the End Time Antichrist kingdom. This we can tell by the embellished description of the *"fourth beast"* - having *"huge iron teeth"* and

“nails of bronze”, “[ten horns](#)”, and “a mouth speaking pompous words”.

About this passage we cannot say it is talking only about Rome, nor can we say it is talking only about the End Time empire; rather it's talking about both. And the same could be said for this passage in verses 21-22 of Daniel 11. Even for some of the verses following 21-22, there are some striking similarities of the ancient ruler's activities with those of the final Antichrist.

The Daniel 7 passage highlights the strong and extensive military rule that characterized ancient Rome and presumably, the Antichrist empire as well. The Daniel 11 reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, on the other hand, draws attention to the Antichrist's persecution campaign against the people of God and his desecration of a future *“holy place”* that is to be established in Jerusalem.

[\[RETURN\]](#)

Appendix 2: Nominal sentences in ancient Hebrew

In the Book of Daniel (NKJV translation) we can find the italicized words

“it is” in several places - 2:11, 3:14, 6:15, 9:7,9:13, 9:15, 11:35;
“there was” in 1:4;
“there is only” in 2:9;
“is the case” in 3:17;
“is the one” in 6:26;
“was there any” in 8:4;
“they are” in 8:20;
“it refers” in 8: 26;
“there shall be” in 9:25, 12:11;
“it shall be” in 12:7.

And here is a random selection from the Book of Proverbs (7:12, 8:32, 9:13 from the KJV translation) - *“is she, are they, she is”*.

Words were written in italics like this just to show that they were not there in the original Hebrew manuscripts but were added by the translators so that, in the English language, the passages would be easier to understand.

[\[RETURN\]](#)

Appendix 3: Do historical facts point to any persons from ancient times as the “prince of the covenant”? Relevant quotes:

◇ There has been some diversity of opinion as to who is meant by “*the prince of the covenant*” here. Many suppose that it is the high priest of the Jews, as being the chief prince or ruler under the “covenant” which God made with them, or among the “covenant” people. But this appellation is not elsewhere given to the Jewish high priest, nor is it such as could with much propriety be applied to him.

(from *Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible* by Albert Barnes and James Murphy. Originally published in 1853)

◇ The interpretation of [“covenant prince” as referring to] the high priest Onias III, who at the commencement of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes was driven from his office by his brother, and afterwards, at the instigation of Menelaus, was murdered by the Syrian governor Andronicus at Daphne near Antioch, 2 Macc. 4:1 ff., 33 ff. (Rosenmüller, Hitzig, etc.) - this interpretation is not warranted by the facts of history.

This murder does not at all relate to the matter before us, not only because the Jewish high priest at Antioch did not sustain the relation of a “*prince of the covenant*,” but also because the murder was perpetrated without the previous knowledge of Antiochus, and when the matter was reported to him, the murderer was put to death by his command (2 Macc. 4:36-38).

Then, regarding the issue of whether or not the “*covenant*” appeared at this time, the commentary continues:

Thus also it stands in no connection with the war of Antiochus against Egypt. The words cannot also (with Hävernicks, v. Leng., Maurer, Ebrard, Kliefoth) be referred to the Egyptian king Ptolemy Philometor, because history knows nothing of a covenant entered into between this king and Antiochus Epiphanes, but only that soon after the commencement of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes the guardians of the young Philometor demanded Coele-Syria from Antiochus, which Antiochus the Great had promised (see above, p. 792) as a dowry to his daughter Cleopatra, who was betrothed to Ptolemy Philometor, but Antiochus did not deliver it up, and hence a war arose between them...

In other words, there is nothing unusual about this agreement. Kings have always made agreements, and this particular agreement seems rather ordinary (an obscure dowry arrangement between those two ancient kings) compared to the extraordinary nature of the role in human history that the prophetic passage gives to this “*covenant*”, as an important signpost for the End of the Age.

...The description in vv. 22-24 bears an altogether general character... We must therefore, with Kranichfeld, understand *b^ariyt* (OT:1285) *n^agiyd* (OT:5057) [prince of the covenant] in undefined generality of covenant princes in general, in the sense already given.

That is to say, since the “*prince of the covenant*” had not yet arrived, then there is only this “undefined generality” about him. Because he is coming in the future, we can’t really pinpoint who it is.

[from Keil & Delitzsch *Commentary on the Old Testament*, originally published 1866]

[\[RETURN\]](#)

Appendix 4: What about the possibility that verses 11:22 and 9:27 refer to the same End Time “covenant” but to different people?

Could it be that the “*prince of the covenant*” in 11:22 is the author of the covenant while the “*prince*” in 9:27 is a different person who only “*confirms the covenant*”? Could the phrase in 11:22 refer to the person who authored the “*covenant*” but gets “*broken*” by the Antichrist who, although he once confirmed the covenant, now turns against it?

Maybe, but this does complicate things somewhat. And it doesn’t seem likely that such fine or added shades of meaning should be squeezed out of the simple and rough structure of the ancient Hebrew language. Although the art of Biblical interpretation demands that we do not gloss over but understand fully what passages of Scripture are saying, at the same time it also demands that we avoid the pitfall of reading more into the ancient text than what is really there.

It seems too much of a departure from the overall context to view this “*prince of the covenant*” phrase as anything more than a link and a signpost: a helpful link to the previous revelation in Daniel 9:27, and a signpost to re-direct the flow of Gabriel’s prophetic message into the future - not unlike how Daniel’s previous revelations “jumped” suddenly from ancient events into the distant future.

[\[RETURN\]](#)

Appendix 5: Definition of the Hebrew word for “flatteries”

Hebrew *chalaqlaqqah* - flattery, slipperiness, fine promises, smoothness

- a) slipperiness**
- b) fine promises**

(from *The Online Bible Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* and *Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*, Copyright (c)1993, Woodside Bible Fellowship, Ontario, Canada. Licensed from the Institute for Creation Research.)

[\[RETURN\]](#)

Continue to Part 3B: Rise to Power of a Modern “King of the North”