

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

[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 \(11:40-45\)](#)

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

**11:24** “He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.

**11:25** “He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him.”

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***He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province (11:24)***

The same pattern of invasion is used here as described in verses 21-22: peaceful entry followed by forceful conquest. But now it seems the “vile person” has shifted his power-seizing efforts from his home base to this “province”, probably the same “small number of people” of the previous verse (in Hebrew, “small nation”- maybe Palestine or Syria?). It sounds like it might be a nation whom he wants to use as a base of operations from which to make his conquest of the Mid East.

According to the previous verse 23, he was working “deceitfully”

among them so that he could become *“strong”*, and the passage now seems to continue along this line, explaining how he goes about it. Apparently, it’s a seductive spread-the-wealth scheme that lures this nation into allowing the Antichrist *“king of the North”* to establish himself there.

He will enter *“peaceably, even into the richest places of the province”*. This is rather unusual since it is the richer areas of a nation that are most protected and vigorously defended against invasion. So it would appear from this verse 24 that the Antichrist - similar to how it happened for Hitler in his early days - will be received with open arms into this nation which, presumably, is further away from his home base and located somewhere in the Mid East.

That this *“small nation”* might be the modern nation of Syria is an interesting possibility to consider... for a few reasons: 1) Syria has stood against Israel for many years, and when the *“king of the North”* invades Israel, as the prophecy predicts will happen (in verse 41), Syria will surely be one of the main participants in that invasion. 2) Syria is a long-standing ally of Russia and has become a focal point of confrontation between the Russian and American superpowers. 3) It would be remarkably consistent with the *“king of the North”* terminology as applied to ancient Syria if the modern nation of Syria, through a close partnership with Russia, once more adopted the mantle of *“king of the North”* by virtue of becoming a kind of Russian *“spearhead”* or staging ground for future wars in the Middle East and against Israel.

Now it doesn’t necessarily follow from all of this that Syria is the *“small nation”* and *“province”*, or that Syria will play the *“king of the North”* role. But regardless of that, it looks, from the way events are moving in the Mid East these days, like Syria is going to play a major role in future Mid East conflicts and will have little other choice but to operate under the sponsorship and direction of her powerful northern neighbor. Syria hosts Russia’s only military base outside of the former Soviet Union, and as we can see in the [news articles in Appendix 1](#), it doesn’t seem likely that Russia will allow Syria to be dominated for very long by western powers.

[2025 update: In December, 2024, the Assyrian nation did get taken over by a western-leaning government, the former Al-Qaeda faction know

as HTS. How long this will last is hard to know. The new leader of a new and smaller Syria has pledged not to interfere with Russia's bases on the west coast of Syria. Russia in turn aims to provide reconstruction and humanitarian assistance to Syria.

Well, these (and following commentary) are just a few suggestions about what these somewhat mysterious prophetic words mean; at this point though, it is mostly conjecture, and we won't really know the precise interpretation until these ever-changing events unfold into some kind of final form. But in the meantime these speculations are interesting to reflect on.]

***He shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches. (11:24)***

Economics can be a difficult subject, and trying to figure out how this passage should be applied is puzzling. Anyway, following are some thoughts on how we might be able to understand this sharing-the-wealth tactic of the *"king of the North"*.

Modern means of producing and distributing financial assets are vastly different from ancient times. Wealth is a much more flexible tool than it used to be. The role of money as a power broker and means of conquest has grown over the years and reached a degree of effectiveness never possible in olden days. And like the propaganda tactic (*"flatteries"*), it has been refined into a fine art in today's world. Financial and media domains of influence are sources of immense power compared to what they were in ancient times. And these upgraded forces will prove to be a key factor in bringing the Antichrist to power.

These new tactics of conquest - money and media manipulation - differentiate modern invasions from those of ancient times. With less dependence on military tactics only, it is easier nowadays for a superpower to invade a nation *"peaceably"* as is pointed out in both this verse 24 and verse 21: *"come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by flatteries"* (11:21-KJV); *"enter peaceably... disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches."* (11:24-NKJV)

Nowadays this very thing is happening in the Eurasian continent. For

years China has been investing in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, connecting this vast land area with roads and railroads. And many other trade and infrastructure projects are going on, not only in Eurasia, but with nations in South America and Africa. The basic philosophy is multi-polarity, not trying to undermine nations' sovereignty while engaging in fair trade practices. This more enlightened approach, born out of communist philosophy, will not last forever and will probably devolve into totalitarian tyranny eventually, but for now it has much greater appeal than the rapacious greed of America's economic enslavement of the world community. Let's just say that China's approach is more righteous than that of America's - the lesser of two evils.

So here again this peaceable entry strategy is another indication that this section of the angel's message pertains not to the ancient past, but to the distant and modern day future. It is much easier in the modern day to prepare the hearts of people ahead of time for conquest - through propaganda or media manipulation and through lavishing wealth on them - and so *"enter peaceably"* rather than engage in a big military confrontation.

Regarding the money weapon, superpowers like to use it to keep smaller nations in line by undermining their economies and making them poor. In the game of empire-building, major powers have always had imperialistic designs on smaller nations for the purpose of exploiting their wealth. This happened on a grand scale during the Colonial Era. European nations were enriched by their colonies.

And we see it happening today: The United States has used the tactic of buying off the elite in many a poor, undeveloped nation. By this means the U.S. has gained unhindered access to the resources of several Third World nations. China, with its huge rising middle class, is extracting resources from many nations in Africa and South America.

But China is operating in wiser fashion than the U.S., whose approach is somewhat devious and self-serving compared to China's. In the U.S. it is not the government, but the big financial institutions who are wheeling and dealing with smaller nations - too much profit motive and no vision for long-term development. Their devious lending strategies have obliged borrowing nations to hand over jurisdiction of their resources to these

outside “developers”.

The “*king of the North*” will also to use the financial weapon, but instead of exploiting the wealth of the “*province*”, he does just the opposite and disperses it. Going by this, it would appear that the Antichrist, before his invasion, has already infiltrated amongst the richer and more powerful sections of the country (“*the richest places of the province*”), and perhaps this is what is meant in the previous verse that “*he shall act deceitfully... and become strong with a small number [nation] of people.*”

Evidently, the Antichrist *king of the North* will have access to a vast amount of wealth (probably from his ally the *False Prophet Beast*), which he can use to his advantage - in this case, in the form of an enormous bribe from what sounds like ill-gotten wealth (“*plunder*” and “*spoil*”) of military or economic conquests. (To get a look at current events that seem to offer a sort of “*preview*” of what this verse 24 might be pointing towards, see again the news articles in [Appendix 1.](#))

Whether or not the Antichrist will have any real concern for that nation is doubtful, since it seems he’s just using this “*small number of people*” so that he can “*become strong*”. (11:23) Perhaps he’ll need to use that nation as a beachhead or staging ground from which he can make his invasion of Israel and the Middle East.

Now these verses 21-24 have described events from the point of view of the local politics and economies of the nations the Antichrist must use as stepping stones in his climb to world power. But what happens on a local scale can sometimes be a microcosm of what happens on an international scale. In our modern world especially, there is much standardization of technology and culture because of the ease of communication through media and computer technology and through travel.

Perhaps then, the Antichrist will use, or will have used already, many of the same tactics on a worldwide scale as he is seen to be using on a smaller scale (in the “*kingdom*” of verse 21 and the “*small number of people*” and “*province*” of verses 23-24). His tactics of entering peaceably with flatteries and dispersing the wealth will serve to gain him the support

of the world at large. That is, his access to the media will foster acceptance, even worship of him on a worldwide scale, and his access to and manipulation of financial wealth will help him to solve the problems worldwide of a deteriorating world economy.

For decades the world's wealth has been concentrated in the hands of the "merchants" of the Harlot empire (Revelation 18:23), and surely, this is one of the main causes for the world's present dire financial turmoil). Following a very different policy, the Antichrist and his backers (the False Prophet Beast) will instead "disperse" the wealth.

Indeed, Russian-Chinese international policies are already working towards this. As mentioned already, the Belt and Road Initiative is that massive infrastructure project, spearheaded by China, which seeks to upgrade and integrate economies all through Asia and even into Europe. The project is steadily becoming an alternative to the American capitalist system, and this Russian-Chinese combine seems poised to become the next world empire.

Where this will go in future is a good question: according to [Revelation 13:16-17](#), it will end in the mark-number credit system, which could be used to relieve the world's financial distress (for those who worship the Antichrist, that is, not for those who want to continue worshipping God). These plans will, of course, go a long way towards consolidating the Antichrist and False Prophet's hold on the springs of power and on the allegiance of the world's people.

Although such policies are much needed in the world and would appear to be very just, it is well to remember that the power-brokers promoting such plans will be doing it with the aim of getting a tighter grip on the reins of world power.

For awhile these reforms will give their totalitarian rule a benign façade. How successful the new wealth re-distribution scheme will be, we don't know, but one thing is certain: it makes a great platform or promise which a politically astute leader (the Antichrist) can generate a wave of euphoric hysteria and thereby gain the favor of the masses.

Whatever happens in the initial stages of the Antichrist's popularity,

and despite whatever promises he makes, or even delivers on, we can be sure the new regime will show its true colors eventually, especially when it tries to force its secular religion of materialism and man-worship on the world. What seemed at first like benign dictatorship will devolve into oppressive tyranny.

It may resemble some aspects of Hitler's rise to power: very popular in the beginning, not just in Germany, but in many other nations Hitler was admired for his strong leadership. And fixing Germany's economic problems was a key factor that won him favor amongst the German people. Then, once firmly in the seat of power, his true colors showed, and Hitler transformed into the oppressive warmongering tyrant, as he is remembered now in history.

In like fashion, the Antichrist will start off as the agent of much-needed change in the world, even as God's instrument of chastisement on His wayward people. But eventually, he too will transform into a Hitler-like "*vile person*", as he is called in verse 21.

Now regarding this tactic of entering "*peaceably*" and dispersing the wealth, this bears some resemblance to the old Communist strategy. Instead of winning the rich, however, the Communists tried only to get the poor on their side through propaganda - promising to take the wealth of the rich and give it to the poor. Winning the people's hearts like this made it much easier to stage Communist revolutions and thereby conquer many nations of the world.

By this means the Soviet empire was able to greatly expand its influence during the Cold War days of the last century. No doubt this sort of propaganda will play an important role in implementing the Antichrist and False Prophet's new financial scheme on the world.

However, under the Antichrist and False Prophet this sharing-the-wealth tactic will operate with a new twist: there will be the same take-from-the-rich-and-give-to-the-poor strategy, but apparently, the idea will be a little smarter - win the poor, yes, but without driving away the rich whose capable leadership will be needed to run industries properly and efficiently. This we can guess will be the approach because the passage here tells us that "*he shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places.*"

**Failing to engage the wealthy was one of the big mistakes made in the Communist revolutions in Russia and China (and in the French Revolution in 1789). After getting rid of the ruling aristocracies, there was no one left who knew how to run the manufacturing and agricultural industries. And these nations suffered great economic decline as a result.**

**During the Nazi revolution in Germany of the 1930s, things happened differently however. Hitler wisely opposed the “dump the capitalist aristocracy” plan that some of his more zealous but less practical followers were advocating. In fact, to make sure that didn’t happen, Hitler murdered the main proponent of that plan along with 200 supporters in that infamous massacre known as “The Night of the Long Knives”. Having thus gained control of Germany’s industrial base without destroying its leadership was a major factor in transforming Germany into a prosperous nation and one that was strong enough to wage war against Europe and America from 1939 to 1945.**

**And here might be where this peculiar statement fits, *“he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers.”* That is, the Antichrist and False Prophet’s financial plans will reverse and correct the policy of their predecessors in the land of Russia. The mistakes of the former Communist Revolution, and even earlier, the French Revolution, will not be repeated because whatever new regime takes over there will not try to wipe out the elite leaders of industry. And presumably, that is the policy carried out in this smaller nation, where they *“enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province.”***

**And going back even further into the ancient past of Daniel’s time, then also it was customary for invaders to overthrow the ruling elite and replace them with their own nation’s rulers. From the Old Testament Scriptures we know that the Assyrian and Babylonian kingdoms weakened their conquered territories by dispersing the elite classes, carting them off into captivity in other lands. Now, in this prophetic message Gabriel is talking to Daniel, who as a young man was sent as a captive to Babylon. So maybe Gabriel was trying to show the contrast: how, in the distant future, tactics of conquest were going to change from what Daniel had personally experienced.**

**What is unique about our modern situation are the new avenues of**

power - media and finances - that have entered the picture, making it possible to conquer nations without using military force. Under this arrangement, the ruling classes of “conquered” nations stay intact but become puppets more or less of their “conqueror”. There is a hint of this, by the way, in the symbolism of the “beast” and his “ten horns” with their “ten crowns”. They are only “horns”, small nations, who can only do what their “head” tells them to do, yet they still have their “crowns”. (Revelation 13:1) (More information in post [“Ten Horns Coming into View?”](#))

In summary: Unlike how Daniel’s “forefathers” would have done it, the modern “king of the North” will make his invasion “peaceably” into the small territory and into its richest places. And instead of destroying the leaders of industry, it seems he will manage to harness them to his own cause and war campaigns. And instead of exploiting that nation for its resources, as conquerors usually do, he “shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches”.

***He shall devise his plans against the strongholds (11:24)***

By means of all this financial manipulation and propaganda, the Antichrist will steadily strengthen his position of power. Then, having made his “peaceable” infiltration into this “small nation”, he will be ready to take over in full force. “He shall devise his plans against the strongholds”, or in the KJV, “He shall forecast his devices against the strongholds”.

Whether that means against the “small number of people”, or against surrounding nations, or both, is not clear at present. It could be that once the small nation realizes they are getting sucked into a big war and being used and taken over by the Antichrist, there will be some opposition, and the Antichrist will have to flex some military muscle to get this small nation to see things his way.

Or perhaps just as likely, judging by the next verse 25, the “strongholds” could be situated in areas/nations that are allies of the “king of the South” (symbolic, it would appear, of America and her Mid East allies). In fact, we may be seeing a hint of this in Russia’s recent intervention in Syria. Russia is supporting the ruling elite, “the richest

*places of the province*”, whereas U.S. strategy has been to overthrow Syria’s government. (America has used this practice of regime change several times to overthrow rulers too independent of her interests: Godhafi in Libya, Allende in Chile, Trujillo in Panama, Mosaddegh in Iran, etc.)

Resistance against America’s proxy armies (“strongholds”) in the Mid East could lead into the sort of major confrontation we see happening between the two “*kings*” in the next verse 26. (Whether the above scenario is accurate or not is difficult to determine, so for now, it is best to see this as just a possibility.)

Regarding this peculiar phrase “*devise his plans*”: The most literal translation of this Hebrew phrase would be “*devise his devices*”, two English words that have a common origin. The Hebrew words used here - *chashab* and *machashebeth* - also have a common origin. The word *chashab* means “to think, reckon, compute”. This denotes a higher, more intense level of thinking than other more casual forms of thinking.

And the word *machashebeth* is the result of that kind of “thinking” - plans, plots, strategies, inventions, and so on. It could either be a mental result (a complex strategy or plot or scheme of some kind), or it could be a physical result (something more down-to-earth and practical - an invention of some sort, something more intricate and complex than the usual run of manufactured objects).

Interestingly, in modern Hebrew *machashebeth* means “computer”. Since the passage here is set in the context of war, we could easily understand this “*devise devices*” phrase as a reference to the intricate computer-guided weaponry that scientist have invented in recent times. (For more information on this peculiar phrase, see [Appendix 2.](#))

However we may want to understand this phrase *chashab machashebeth* - whether as a reference to ingenious strategy or to ingenious weapons (or both maybe) - one thing is clear from it: this “*vile person*” possesses great skill in the art of warfare. This high-level strategy and/or weaponry is the deciding factor that gives the Antichrist “*king of the north*” the advantage in these power struggles. And this fits in well with what Revelation 13:3-4 reveals to us about the

***“beast” (the Antichrist), that “the world marveled and followed the beast... saying, ‘Who is able to make war with him?’”***

All in all, these phrases about devising devices are quite mysterious, and one feature in them that stands out is this: the ***“devise devices”*** phrase, like the ***“enter peaceably”*** phrase, is repeated twice (here and in the next verse 25). That is unusual and seems to clue us into the fact that the angel, who surely knew what he was talking about, was trying to draw attention to certain peculiar features about how the ***“king of the north”*** would conduct his warfare. And looking at the phrases more closely - both the ***“devise devices”*** and ***“enter peaceably”*** phrases - we see how they could easily be applied to the kind of warfare that our modern world is so busily engaged in.

***He shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers (11:24)***

And related to the ***“modern world”*** theme is the peculiar statement, ***“he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers.”*** This applied to the unique way in which the ***“king of the north”*** will ***“disperse the riches”***, how he cunningly manipulates wealth to his advantage, which seems to be a peculiar feature of modern times - the powerful and flexible financial system that enables power-brokers to force a nation to bend to their will, and in this case enables the Antichrist to make his ***“peaceable”*** entry into the ***“province”*** spoken of here. Without trying to overthrow the rich and powerful (but just weaken them), he succeeds in conquering the nation.

But besides the realm of financial manipulation, this ***“fathers... forefathers”*** phrase seems to link also to the next phrase: ***“and he shall devise his devices against the strongholds.”*** As discussed earlier, this could be a reference to another peculiar feature of modern times: the weapons used now in warfare.

So it is these peculiar strategies of conquest - entering peaceably by dispersing the wealth and devising devices - that are the reason for the angel’s statement that ***“he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers.”*** They differ so much from the warfare tactics of the past, and the most logical reason is because the events described here are not

happening in the past, but in the Modern Age.

In ancient Hebrew the word for *“father”* or *“fathers”* had a fairly wide range of meaning other than as a reference to one’s biological father. (Some Bible versions translate *“forefathers”* as *“ancestors”* or *“fathers’ fathers”*.) The phrase was commonly used to refer to distant ancestors and, most likely, the term here does not refer to the generation of the king of the north’s grandfather. It might even be the angel’s way of referring to the *“forefathers”* mentioned earlier in his discourse: Antiochus III and Antiochus Epiphanes and the other kings mentioned whose exploits and character pre-figure those of the Antichrist.

To Gabriel this might have seemed like a good way to get across the idea that the activities of the *“king of the North”*, taking place in a distant future age, would be much different to how things were normally done in Daniel’s day and age. The Hebrew text uses a threefold repetition of the word *“fathers”*, which suggests that a great span of time has elapsed. *“He shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers’ fathers.”* (KJV)

Similar phrases are repeated in verses 37-38: *“he shall regard neither the God of his fathers... a god which his fathers did not know.”* We shall look into these verses 37-38 later on, but briefly, they describe the modern secular *“religion”* that the Antichrist will follow, a belief system devoid of religious trappings, and therefore, a religion that *“his fathers did not know”*.

Interestingly, these phrases (in verses 37-38) are sandwiched between two *“time of the end”* phrases (in verses 35 and 40). Evidently then, their setting is the modern era. So it would seem, by way of association at least, that this verse 24, which likewise contains a reference to something that was unknown to *“his fathers”*, should also have the same setting as verses 37-38 - namely, the *“time of the end”*.

So here we have another small clue or indicator that this passage (from verse 21 on) is supposed to be majoring on the End Time, not the ancient past. Whereas in verses 2-20 the subject matter clearly dwells on events of the ancient past, and so as one would expect, there is no mention of the king of the North doing anything very different from his *“fathers”* or

***“forefathers”***. These peculiar phrases seem to be reserved for events taking place in the ***“time of the end”***, the modern era, when religion and technology have transformed so much that their present forms were totally unknown to the people of ancient times.

So these phrases about ***“his fathers”*** and ***“forefathers”*** are another signpost, directing us to understand the modern character of these wars of the Antichrist ***“king of the North”***. It signals for us that the passage from verse 21 on should be understood as describing events of a distant future; the passage should not be relegated into ancient history, as past Bible scholarship has usually taught.

***But only for a time (11:24)***

Whatever form the king of the North’s actions ***“against the strongholds”*** may take, it seems to be for just a short time. This ***“only for a time”*** phrase may refer to a preliminary move that prepares the way for the major battle to come in the next verse (26). Or it may just refer to the battle itself, that it will be a short-lived one. For some reason the warring parties stop fighting and try to sit down and talk (as we learn in verse 27).

***He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. (11:25)***

This foretells a major confrontation taking place, either between superpowers, or perhaps just as likely, between their proxy states and allies. In ancient times there was much warring going on between Egypt and Syria. In the end Syria and Antiochus Epiphanes got the upper hand but never really conquered Egypt. That is something that has been left to the Antichrist to achieve. (11:42-43)

In this particular war, the ***“king of the North”*** wins because his forces ***“shall devise plans (forecast devices, KJV) against ”*** the ***“king of the South”***. As mentioned earlier, this little phrase or ***“sound byte”*** seems to take us out of the realm of ancient times. It’s like a clue or a glimpse of what modern warfare will be like - with its dependence on clever ***“devices”***: sophisticated computer technology, advanced satellite systems

for spying, high-grade weapons that track their targets, and on and on the list could go.

Till now, the U.S. has had the tactical advantage in military technology, and Russia was behind. But Russia is catching up, even surpassing U.S. technology. Looking at the example of Nazi Germany, we know that a nation can, under the right (or wrong) kind of leadership, re-arm and prepare itself for war in a fairly short span of time.

(See [Appendix 3](#) news articles about Russian-Chinese advances in military/computer technology that could in the future upend U.S. military superiority.)

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These verses 21-25 have required no small amount of explanation, and one may wonder, why does it have to be so difficult to figure out what this passage means? There are a few reasons:

1) Ancient Hebrew had a limited vocabulary, which makes it difficult to pinpoint the precise shade of meaning for words.

2) Grammatical signposts such as commas, periods, verse divisions did not exist in the ancient language.

3) For these Scriptures about the End Time, it is especially difficult to translate them without knowing the context. Interpreters and scholars of the past did not have the advantage of knowing the context because the historical setting had not yet arrived. So it was easy to assign the setting of a prophetic passage to the wrong historical era. Nowadays, that historical setting has arrived. And this necessitates a review of how certain passages should be interpreted - like this one in Daniel 11. We understand modern technology and culture, and thus we can see more easily how the passage would fit better into a different context - namely, that of modern times. Which brings us to the fourth reason why so much explanation is needed...

4) Similar to how an archeologist has to carefully clear away the rubble of centuries to expose the ancient artifacts that lie buried underground, the same is true in some (not all) cases of interpretation of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. There is a bit of a

process to go through in peeling away some of the well-meaning explanations of past generations of scholars, while at the same time trying to uncover the truths that have lain buried underneath them for so many generations.

Taking these factors into consideration, we can understand how easy it would be to assign an inaccurate interpretation to some of the ancient Scriptures. Especially in prophetic passages like these dealing with future history, since history tends to repeat itself, it is quite easy to place the passage in the wrong historical era.

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

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### [Appendix 1](#)

#### [Russian Defiance Is Seen as a Confidence Builder for Syria's Government](#)

By Anne Barnard, [NY Times](#) - March 21, 2014

##### **DAMASCUS, Syria**

....

The Syrian government is acting with new assurance as its ally Russia moves to take over the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine, dismissing American objections and signaling growing assertiveness against the West. Russia has been the Syrian government's most powerful backer...

...bonds are deepening, on both official and grass-roots levels, between Moscow and Damascus, Cold War allies that now see themselves standing together against Western aggression.

....

To Russian and Syrian officials and their supporters, the Syrian war and the standoff over the Crimean Peninsula are essentially part of a single, larger battle, against post-Cold War American unilateralism. They see themselves as resisting Western conspiracies to topple inconvenient but legitimate presidents...

Russia's stance has fostered a new Russophilia among a new generation of government supporters here...

....

The Syrian government, not unlike President Obama's critics in Washington, sees the recent events as part of a decline in America's influence and a rise in Russia's. By meddling in the affairs of other countries, from Iraq to the former Soviet countries... the United States provoked the world and squandered its position as the sole global power after the Soviet Union's collapse.

..."Even a small country like Syria is standing up to the United States."...

....

During the Cold War, Syria, led by Mr. Assad's father, President Hafez al-Assad, was squarely in the Soviet orbit...

...thousands of Syrians brought back Russian wives, many still here despite the war. Half of the university professors here were educated in Russia. Among Syria's government and opposition alike are Soviet-era alumni who speak Russian fluently and fondly remember their days as students in Moscow.

....

Then came the Syrian revolt... With Iran and China, Moscow sustained the Assad government financially.

### **RUSSIA AND SYRIA: An Old Base (Friendship) Gets a Facelift**

By Uwe Klussmann, [\*Der Spiegel\*](#) - June 22, 2006

....

Moscow's last remaining naval base outside of the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) lurks behind a tall metal fence [in the harbour of Tartus, Syria].

....

...after the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, the Soviet fleet disappeared from Mediterranean waters and the Tartus base became dilapidated.

But this quickly changed... As in the old days... Russian-Syrian relations are about to experience "an upswing."

....

Syria is Russia's most important partner in the region. Thirty-five thousand Syrians hold degrees from Russian universities. At a Kremlin reception for Syrian President Bashar Assad, Putin... praised the two countries' "special and sincere relations"-and promptly forgave about \$10

billion in Syrian debt accumulated over the years, principally as a result of arms purchases. Over three decades, the current president's father, Hafiz Assad, received military equipment valued at about \$25 billion from the Russians...

....

Western experts estimate that up to 2,000 Russian military advisors... are currently serving in the Syrian military. Russian officers hold teaching positions at Syria's military officer training academy.

....

### **Russia modernizing Syria ports for its warships**

**World Tribune** - April 15, 2010

**MOSCOW** — The Russian Navy has been expanding cooperation with Syria.

...Moscow was modernizing naval facilities in Syria's port of Latakia and Tartous to accommodate Russian Navy warships.

....

In September 2008, the Kremlin launched negotiations with the regime of President Bashar Assad to convert Tartous into a permanent Russian Navy base. Officials said Moscow also offered to modernize the Syrian Navy port at Latakia.

....

Tartous was said to have been expanded to accommodate large Russian warships...

....

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### **Appendix 2: "Devise his Devices" - Strategy or Weaponry?**

***"Devise his plans."*** The most literal translation of this Hebrew phrase would have been "devise his devices", two English words that have a common origin. The Hebrew words used here - *chashab* for "devise" and *machashebeth* for "devices" - also have a common origin. The word *chashab* means "to think, reckon, compute". This is thinking on a higher plane, at a more intense level than the more casual form of thinking would be. And the word *machashebeth* is the result of that kind of "thinking" -

plans, plots, strategies, inventions, and so on.

This also bears some resemblance to our English words “engine” and “ingenious”, which also have a common root. It takes “ingenuity” to invent an “engine”. In fact, the Hebrew word for “engine” is *chishshebonoth*, which is also related to *chashab* and *machashebeth*. In 2Chronicles 26:15 it is stated that the Jewish king Uzziah “*made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal.*” (KJV) In this Scripture all three words (engines, invented, cunning) are related and used to describe the manufacture of these ingenious devices, what in those days were their state-of-the-art weapons of war - catapults of various types.

Now the word *machashabeth* in this verse 24 and in the next verse 25 is the noun form of the Hebrew verb *chashab* (“to think”) - just as the English word “device” is the noun form of the verb “devise”. To “devise” is to do the mental work needed to produce a clever “device” of some kind. The Hebrew word for “device” (*machashabeth*) can be translated in two ways, similar to how the English word “device” can be understood in two ways. It could either be a mental result (a complex strategy or plot or scheme of some kind), or it could be a physical result (something more down-to-earth and practical - an invention of some sort, something more intricate and complex than the usual run of manufactured objects).

In the Old Testament *machashebeth* was translated often as “cunning work” in reference to the intricate carved objects of gold, silver, brass, and so on that were made to adorn the Jewish temple; but mainly, it was a general term for anything that was a clever invention, something that required much skill and ingenuity to make. In modern Hebrew the word *machashabeth* has come to mean “computer”, which is one of the most ingenious “devices” that scientists have ever invented. So the ancient word *machashebeth* probably could be applied to any of a whole array of modern inventions - computers, weapons, TVs, cameras, and there’s no end of things it could stand for.

Now in this verse 24 and in the next verse 25, the Hebrew word *machashabeth* was translated as “plans”, suggesting that some clever strategy was used as the means for achieving victory in the battles

mentioned in these verses. To the translators this version of the word for “device” probably seemed to fit into what they assumed was the context for this passage - the wars of Antiochus Epiphanes in ancient times.

But if the context were modern times, how might this word be translated? Now in these cases where the translation of a Hebrew word is uncertain, it usually helps to look at the context in order to find an accurate meaning for the word. And what is the context here? Besides being set in modern times, the context is also that of warfare.

Noteworthy is the fact that these “devices” seem to be a key factor in bringing these “strongholds” under the Antichrist’s control and in defeating his enemy, the “king of the South”. Both kings are “stirred up to battle”, each “with a great army”. Now of course we know that strategy, planning, these types of “devices” have always played a major part in any age in any war.

But there seems to be something different here. In modern times ingenious weapons of war have become a much more important component in warfare than ever before in history. And this aspect could be what the angel was trying to get at here (using the limited vocabulary available in those days to describe such futuristic realities).

Further ahead, as we focus on the phrases “*abomination of desolation*” and “*god of fortresses/munitions*”, we shall see even more clearly how Gabriel was trying to get across what he foresaw would be the unique aspects of future warfare with its unheard-of-in-those-days weaponry. He was trying to show that, by means of some kind of clever futuristic inventions (by “devising his devices”), the Antichrist would gain the upper hand in this war against the “king of the South”.

#### ◇ Limited Vocabulary of Ancient Hebrew:

**An important aspect of ancient Hebrew that should be kept in mind: With its rather limited vocabulary (normal for languages in their early stages of development), a Hebrew word could encompass many different shades of meaning, which in English could be translated by several different words. For this reason translators often experience difficulty in trying to pinpoint the best word to use for an ancient Hebrew word. In these cases, to**

**eliminate some of the guesswork, it helps to look at the context and other clues that will aid in finding a more or less accurate translation of the word or phrase in question.**

**Since there were no words in ancient Hebrew for the kind of modern technology used in warfare nowadays, it seems that the angel was obliged to use some fairly general terminology. Even if these ancient words - *chashab machashebeth* - could not pinpoint the exact meaning, as far as the translation side of it goes, we would not be straying outside the boundaries of the general sense of this phrase to select something like this: “he shall develop/deploy his computerized weapons against the strongholds”. Although there is no undeniable proof that this is correct or legitimate, the context of warfare in modern times does at least suggest that it might be a good translation to use.**

**Translating this phrase as “devise plans” would fit well with events in Antiochus IV Epiphanes’ day. But is that what the angel Gabriel was really getting at here? By mentioning twice this “devise devices” phrase, it seems the angel is trying to draw attention to something unusual, something different. Now there is nothing unusual about clever war strategies; they have always been used in warfare. And if that’s all this phrase was meant to convey, then it should have been used several times already in Gabriel’s message in those parts of it that refer to the warfare going on in ancient times. As far as clever strategy is concerned, there has been plenty of that mentioned already in verse 21 and here in verse 24: the king of the North’s subtle infiltration tactics of first entering “peaceably” into nations that he intends to conquer.**

**But now what big change has taken place in how the world practices its dark art of warfare? It lies most obviously in the kind of weaponry which we use nowadays. Gone are the clumsy inventions of yesteryear, which have almost nothing in common with modern weaponry: computer-guided missiles and drones, explosive devices of all kinds, machine guns, nuclear weapons, and so on.**

**Since it would appear that the message has actually shifted into the End Time (because of the “*prince of the covenant*” phrase in verse 22), then would it not make more sense to understand this “devise devices” phrase as applying to something unique to modern times? Could it not**

mean that, through his clever use of various modern inventions, the Antichrist will gain the upper hand in this war against the “*king of the South*”?

Through cyber warfare perhaps (which the Russians have used before to cripple a nation’s communications systems and the Americans/Israelis have used before to cripple Iran’s nuclear program)? Or some of these hi-tech weapons that exist nowadays in a nation’s military arsenal? Or the use of spy satellites? Or some form of biological warfare? Or perhaps a combination of these modern “*devices*”? Or maybe some weapon we haven’t even heard of yet?

Any of these could be categorized as inventions or “*devices*” that are the product of much ingenious thought and would fit nicely within the scope of what these Hebrew words could mean. And any one of these weapons would be unheard of in ancient times, but as a feature of modern warfare would be worthy of mention in a message given by an angel of God to outline what was going to happen in the distant future.

In olden days this phrase was rather puzzling, and translators couldn’t quite figure out what to do with it. Although still rather puzzling, it is starting to make a little more sense now in this age of advanced technology.

[\[RETURN\]](#)

### [Appendix 3](#)

#### [Western armies are losing their high-tech edge](#)

Peter Apps, Reuters, 5 July 2018

When America goes to war, its soldiers, sailors and pilots typically have long been used to having a spectacular technological edge. Those days are ending fast.

...U.S. commanders are now considering the prospect of war against enemies who may be capable of deploying overwhelming firepower and sophisticated new technology. Confrontations with Russia and China in particular are escalating far faster than predicted-with the realistic

**prospect either nation could outgun U.S. forces in their immediate neighborhood in the early stages of any conflict.**

**The Pentagon is increasingly worried about rapid proliferation of Chinese and Russian anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems, putting U.S. military planners in an unfamiliar position...**

**Meanwhile, hybrid and information warfare are themselves reshaping the rules of international confrontation in ways the West has yet to truly tackle-and which emerging technology is continually making more complex.**

**...commanders and analysts suspect new advancements in areas such as cyber warfare, drones, and artificial intelligence may at least equally benefit America's foes-not least because they are proving much more willing to test them in action.**

**Almost every week brings new developments...**

**Technologies that until recently were only found in the hands of the United States and its closest allies are now much more widespread...**

**....**

**Upcoming breakthroughs may make that even worse. Increasingly, military experts talk of an arms race between major nations on artificial intelligence that could be as crucial to this century as the race for atomic weapons during World War Two...**

**...the first nation to deploy an electromagnetic pulse weapon on the battlefield to disable enemy systems would reshape the face of warfare. Once again, it is far from obvious that is a race the United States will win.**

**...experts worry whether the next generation of technology-such as robotic vehicles-will prove functional in a major conflict where a sophisticated enemy might be able to shut them down. More seriously, Western analysts worry critical national infrastructure may already have been penetrated by cyber attackers who could turn off essential systems on the first day of any conflict.**

**That sheer level of uncertainty may itself make conflict more likely, with nations more likely to strike first to gain a tactical advantage while struggling to realistically assess what their enemies can and wish to do...**

## **The Global War of 2030**

**By Alfred McCoy, TomDispatch, October 02, 2017**

**[This piece has been adapted and expanded from Alfred W. McCoy's new book, *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of U.S. Global Power.*]**

**For the past 50 years, American leaders have been supremely confident that they could suffer military setbacks in places like Cuba or Vietnam without having their system of global hegemony, backed by the world's wealthiest economy and finest military, affected.... In this fast-changing world, only one thing was certain: when it really counted, the United States could never lose.**

**No longer.**

**...Increasingly, Pentagon planners find, the "self-image of a matchless global leader" provides a "flawed foundation for forward-looking defense strategy... under post-primacy conditions."...**

**....**

**Some telltale numbers... the U.S. economy would grow by nearly 50% over the next 15 years, while China's would expand by 300%, equaling or surpassing America's around 2030.**

**Similarly, in the critical race for worldwide patents... China actually took the lead in this critical category with 801,000 patents, nearly half the world's total, compared to just 285,000 for the Americans.**

**With supercomputing now critical for everything from code breaking to consumer products, China's Defense Ministry outpaced the Pentagon for the first time in 2010, launching the world's fastest supercomputer, the Tianhe-1A. For the next six years, Beijing produced the fastest machine and last year finally won in a way that couldn't be more crucial: with a supercomputer that had microprocessor chips made in China. By then, it also had the most supercomputers with 167 compared to 165 for the United States and only 29 for Japan.**

**Over the longer term, the American education system, that critical source of future scientists and innovators, has been falling behind its competitors...**

**....**

**...Since the end of World War II, Washington has attempted to control the strategic Eurasian landmass from a network of NATO military bases in**

**Europe and a chain of island bastions in the Pacific. Between the “axial ends” of this vast continent, Washington has, over the past 70 years, built successive layers of military power ...**

**Simultaneously, however, China has conducted what the Pentagon in 2010 called “a comprehensive transformation of its military”... Beijing can target “its nuclear forces throughout... most of the world, including the continental United States.”... In emerging military domains, China has begun to contest U.S. dominion over cyberspace and space, with plans to dominate “the information spectrum in all dimensions of the modern battlespace.”**

**China’s army has by now developed a sophisticated cyberwarfare capacity through its Unit 61398 and allied contractors that “increasingly focus... on companies involved in the critical infrastructure of the United States-its electrical power grid, gas lines, and waterworks.”...**

**China has already made major technological advances that could prove decisive in any future war with Washington. Instead of competing across the board, Beijing, like many late adopters of technology, has strategically chosen key areas to pursue, particularly orbital satellites, which are a fulcrum for the effective weaponization of space...**

**Playing catch-up... Beijing launched the world’s first quantum satellite that transmits photons, believed to be “invulnerable to hacking,” rather than relying on more easily compromised radio waves...**

....

**...the RAND Corporation recently released a study, War with China, predicting that by 2025 “China will likely have more, better, and longer-range ballistic missiles and cruise missiles; advanced air defenses; latest generation aircraft; quieter submarines; more and better sensors; and the digital communications, processing power, and C2 [cyber security] necessary to operate an integrated kill chain.”**

**In the event of all-out war, RAND suggested, the United States might suffer heavy losses to its carriers, submarines, missiles, and aircraft from Chinese strategic forces, while its computer systems and satellites would be degraded thanks to “improved Chinese cyberwar and ASAT [anti-satellite] capabilities.”...**

....

**World War III: Scenario 2030: The technology of space and cyberwarfare is so new, so untested, that even the most outlandish scenarios currently concocted by strategic planners may soon be**

superseded by a reality still hard to conceive...

....

...As the globe's still-dominant power, Washington must spread its defenses across all military domains, making its strength, paradoxically, a source of potential weakness. As the challenger, China has the asymmetric advantage of identifying and exploiting a few strategic flaws in Washington's otherwise overwhelming military superiority.

For years, prominent Chinese defense intellectuals like Shen Dingli of Fudan University have rejected the idea of countering the U.S. with a big naval build-up and argued instead for "cyberattacks, space weapons, lasers, pulses, and other directed-energy beams." Instead of rushing to launch aircraft carriers that "will be burned" by lasers fired from space, China should, Shen argued, develop advanced weapons "to make other command systems fail to work." Although decades away from matching the full might of Washington's global military, China could, through a combination of cyberwar, space warfare, and supercomputing, find ways to cripple U.S. military communications and thus blind its strategic forces..

....

Every weapon begets its own nemesis. Just as musketeers upended mounted knights, tanks smashed trench works, and dive bombers sank battleships, so China's superior cybercapability [in the author's hypothetical war] had blinded America's communication satellites that were the sinews of its once-formidable military apparatus, giving Beijing a stunning victory in this war of robotic militaries. Without a single combat casualty on either side, the superpower that had dominated the planet for nearly a century is defeated in World War III.

[\[RETURN\]](#)

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