(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 Fortresses"* (11:38-39)
3-I: Among the Nations, Earth's Final War (11:40-45)

*

3-H: The *"God of Fortresses"* (11:38-39)

11:38 **"But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.**
11:39 **"Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain."**

***

***But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know* (11:38)**

Paradoxically, right after the statement in the previous verse 37 (that the Antichrist *"king of the North"* won't *"regard any god"* but *"shall exalt himself above them all"*), here we are told the opposite (that he does have a god): *"he shall honor a god of fortresses"*. Further on, we will learn how this *"god of fortresses"* is not a *"god"* in the true sense of that term; rather it is just a form of self-worship.

In any case, the phrase *"god of fortresses"* does provide a helpful key to understanding what was meant in verse 31 about the *"abomination of*

***desolation"*. In ancient times most *"abominations"* were abhorrent practices, or objects, that were part of the worship and service of a demon god. So, what demon *"god"* should the *"abomination of desolation"* be associated with? Where is the clue for this? Well, right here in verse 38 – this *"god of fortresses"*.**

Here we have the *spiritual* background or motivation for the Antichrist's *physical* act of sending *"the abomination of desolation"* into the *"sanctuary fortress"*. Here, as if by way of explanation for that shocking event (of verse 31), we are given a look into the Antichrist's spiritual life: *"he shall honor a god of fortresses"*. Because of his *"honor"* for this strange new god of war, the Antichrist is motivated to send the destroying *"abomination"* into the *"sanctuary fortress".*

So, who or what exactly is this *"god of fortresses"*? There are two sides from which to look at this question. Firstly, to understand it from the physical point of view, we note that the same word (*fortress*) is used in the phrase *"sanctuary fortress"* in verse 31 (also translated as *"sanctuary of strength"*). In that verse the context tells us that it is referring to a sanctuary devoted to God. The word for *"fortress"* is often applied like this – in a spiritual sense, as in *"The Lord is the strength* (or *"fortress"*) *of my life"*. (Psalm 27:1) But when *"fortress"* refers to those who are relying on their own strength, then it takes on a different meaning of physical strength rather than spiritual strength.

And in this case, the context of warfare in this chapter would point to the specific meaning: "god of military strength". So, "god of war" would more or less sum up what the *"god of fortresses"* is. Indeed, scholars have often thought of this *"god of fortresses"* as a reference to some ancient god of war, such as Mars or any other of a number of similar gods.

Well true, this is a god of war. But since this is *"a god which his fathers* (ancestors) *did not know"*, and since the setting for Gabriel's words are the End Time, the modern day, then we know this is not an ancient idol or god of war. There are going to be some differences.

The word *"fortresses"* points to the fact that for this *"god"* military fortifications are very important. In ancient times, to fortify a city required building high walls; and it also meant stockpiling an arsenal of weapons.

Back in those days, high walls were an important means of fortification for cities. Even whole nations tried to protect themselves with walls, e.g. the Great Wall of China and Hadrian's Wall in England. But nowadays, high walls would serve little useful purpose, so the emphasis has changed in these modern times towards amassing a great arsenal of high-tech weaponry. This is how to "fortify" a city or nation in this day and age – either with anti-missile weaponry and warning systems (a "wall" of sorts) or with offensive weaponry (guns, bombs, missiles, etc.).

In the margin of many Bibles the alternative translation is given: *"god of munitions"* – probably in recognition of the fact that weaponry and associated war materials are a necessary feature of any "fortified place". And the word *"munitions"* certainly does fit the modern reality better. A modern politician or general might say that the Antichrist will place great stress on his weapons-building program. Daniel 11:38, however, expresses it in a more spiritual way: *"He shall honor the god of fortresses* (or munitions)*."*

So rather than calling this a *"god of fortresses"* (which conveys the impression of a high-walled enclosure), a more appropriate translation might be *"god of munitions"* or *"god of forces"* (KJV)*.* War and the munitions that go along with it are the "gifts" that this god bestows. These create a high "wall" of fortification against enemies and enable the Antichrist and his military forces to plunder and conquer much of the rest of the world.

And that is the great difference from days gone by. Other *"beast"* superpowers, those from ancient times, also conquered by means of their military prowess, just as the final Antichrist will do. But the updated version of nowadays features a greater emphasis on weaponry. This may be why the angel did not say "god of war", but used a phrase that would point also towards the greater importance of "munitions" in the warmongering of this future era. And probably that is why this *"god of fortresses* (forces/munitions)" is given a high profile here in the Daniel 11 chapter.

For no ancient god of war ever had at his disposal such colossal destructive power as exists now through modern armaments, including nuclear weapons. Possession of these weapons has become a major

“fortification” that nations seek after. Such nuclear capability, according to military strategists, acts – similar to the fortified “walls” used by cities in ancient times – as a deterrent against attack from other nations.

And furthermore, in the domain of conventional weapons, modern warfare has seen many a battle lost or won on the basis of whoever had the more up-to-date weapons technology. During the Colonial Era, the Europeans were able to subjugate less advanced nations simply because swords and spears were no match against the Europeans’ rifles and cannons. At the start of World War I, the German army with its machine guns easily mowed down hordes of French and British soldiers who were armed with outdated artillery.

We have seen then, from the physical side, how this *“god of fortresses”* will manifest in the war activities of the final Antichrist. Let us now take a look at the non-physical side, at how this mysterious *“god of forces”* affects the Antichrist himself.

In the ancient language, the usual wording for “God of strength” would appear as *eloah maoz*. But here the word “strength” was written in the plural form (*eloah mauzzim*), which differed from the usual singular form. When referring to spiritual strength (from God), the singular form is all that’s needed. But when referring to physical, especially military, strength, the plural form is needed. One gun might be enough for one person. But a nation or a king will, of course, need a multitude of different weapons. Judging by this and by the context, we can tell that the passage is not referring to the true God, but rather to a “god of military strength”, a *“god of munitions”*.

Open worship of this god of military strength appears nowadays in the form of military parades of soldiers and armaments. Such obvious displays are bound up in the Antichrist’s own worship of himself.

Let us see then how this mysterious phrase *“god of fortresses”* provides us with an interesting example of how the ancient language could express a historical reality that would not arrive until several centuries into the future. To start with, this Hebrew word for “god” – *eloah* – fits the modern reality surprisingly well. For it is a word that can be taken in a secular way. When not used to denote the true God, then the

word meant *"any god"*.

And particularly, it could be used in connection with those who rely on their own strength as if that were god. On this point, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* offers this helpful bit of information about the word *eloah* (pg. 49):

> **There is a proverbial expression, Hab 1:11, of an obstinate self-confident man, "whose strength is as his god", i.e. who despises every god and confides in his own strong hand and sword… Arms are intended.**

Apparently then, this word *eloah* could be used sometimes to refer to those who worshiped their own arm of flesh and had tossed aside all former gods or idols. And that "arm of flesh" is usually understood to mean "armaments", or military strength.

It might be worth taking a closer look at the passage in Habakkuk that Gesenius was referring to – about the ancient Babylonians; for it seems to pre-figure certain features about the Antichrist:

> ***"I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own. They are a feared and dreaded people: they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor. Then they sweep past like the wind and go on – guilty men, whose own strength is their god.* (Habakkuk 1:6-7, 11 – NIV)**

These words about the Babylonians, who *"promote their own honor… whose own strength is their god"*, echo loudly through the centuries into modern times. Nations have always admired and worshiped their *"own strength"*, but in modern times it has gone a step further.

Our secular, humanist culture de-emphasizes completely the role of the "gods". Humanity's great achievements are never considered as having resulted from their help. In modern society, the general belief is that the supernatural has nothing to do with human affairs. It is man's own ability and strength that always gets the credit.

To show how this has manifested in recent history, here is a quote from one of Hitler's speeches; in it he seems to offer a congratulatory prayer of "worship", not to God or any other god, but simply to himself and the German people, praising them (and him) for their glorious self-effort in raising Germany out of defeat into the great new powerhouse known as the Third Reich.

> **"Germany's future depends on *us alone*, on *our* hard work, *our* determination and perseverance – just as our forefathers had to build Germany by *their own efforts*… My love for my people is unshakeable, and I am utterly convinced that one day the millions who now curse us will salute with us what *we have labored so hard to create* – the new German Reich in all its greatness, in all its honor, might, glory and justice! Amen."**

In a similar fashion, we can imagine that the Antichrist will try to discredit "religion", even get the world to think they have to ignore or fight against God and to work hard (and self-righteously) to build a society where God is left out of the picture. And so, for the Antichrist the *"god"* that he worships is his own (military) strength. Anything beyond that is tossed aside as superstition.

Hopefully, that answers the question of how the passage (Daniel 11:36-37), with its emphatic statement that the Antichrist doesn't worship any god at all, can make an abrupt u-turn in verse 38 from this anti-supernatural outlook, and say that *"he shall honor a god of fortresses"*. Because it's not a real god; it's just an arm-of-the-flesh god, in particular the military strength that the Antichrist will possess; that's what he worships – himself and his own military might.

This secular and modern style of "worship" was difficult to describe in an ancient language. In an ancient culture, it was incomprehensible how the world, and in particular the Antichrist, could turn away from "religion" of any kind and instead fall into the worship of self, of the state, the world of humanity – a so-called "brave new world" without any god at all.

In recent times this kind of thinking has found its expression in utopian communist ideals; no doubt, another "brave new world" scheme will resurrect sometime in the near future with the rise of the Antichrist and

his new world order.

Primarily then, this Hebrew word *eloah* meant *"god"* in the usual sense of a higher, supernatural power. But in the ancient language it could also express, as in this case, the practice of self-worship, or worship of one's own strength.

It was another one of those wordings by which Gabriel was able to express in an ancient language the modern reality that exists in our science-oriented, non-superstitious age – an age when the eradication of any concept of God, or gods, has about reached its peak and has been replaced by the practice of self-worship, the atheistic worship of the world of humanity and the material realm instead of any kind of Higher Power. It is worth noting too that this future *"king"* doesn't worship *"the god of forces".* Rather *"he shall honor the god of forces." "Honor"* is more characteristic of the more distant relationship that the scientifically-oriented people of modern times have towards the supernatural realm.

To summarize, from the non-spiritual point of view, this expression *"god of fortresses"* expresses how the Antichrist, upon turning away from the true God, turns to relying on himself and his own arm of flesh; or as the Ancients would have expressed it, he becomes his own *"god"*. Thanks be to Gabriel, and the Lord, for Their long-range foresight and perceptive understanding of the future modern reality and for their adept use of the ancient Hebrew language to give expression to it!

From the spiritual point of view, we can understand that the Antichrist, because of his turning away from God, winds up falling under the spell of a demon god of war. Under the cover of self-worship, this is what's actually happening.

In other words then, his *"god"* is just one that's not officially recognized; yet this god is still very much in control of the Antichrist and his crew of warmongers. Whether or not they are aware of the spiritual powers of Darkness behind their warmongering, is difficult to say. For all we know, they may be engaged in worshiping this demon god of war. But if so, it would be done secretly – since publicly, the Antichrist doesn't *"regard any god"* but *"shall exalt and magnify himself above every god"*. (11:36-37)

This peculiar, atheistic worship of man and his military prowess, without reference to a higher power, is a phenomenon peculiar to modern times, and we've seen this practiced devoutly in military-dominated societies (like some Communist nations or Hitler Germany). Since the Antichrist doesn't worship any god, then what else is there but himself, and his own arm, his armaments?

So, even though the Antichrist *"sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"* and *"magnifying himself above every god"*, nevertheless, he has his own god that he honors – this *"god of fortresses"*. (2Thessalonians 2:4, Daniel 11:36) It's a sort of self-god whose power is rooted in war weaponry.

In reality though, the Antichrist is only following the Devil, especially his warmongering side. And it's manifested in this cruel military might of war weapons and abominations and what have you, including the worst of all nowadays, the atomic bomb.

Now, it is often thought that the *"abomination"* should be identified with the *"image"* of Revelation 13; and therefore, it would be some kind of image, or idol, of the Antichrist. But the *"abomination"* is supposed to be capable of *"making desolate"* (as in war); and this links it quite naturally with something like the *"god of fortresses"*, a military god of war and munitions.

So, instead of being an image of the Antichrist, it should rather be viewed as a representation or creation of the *"god of fortresses"*. The *"god of fortresses"* then would be the object of worship (at least for the Antichrist and his crew of warmongers). And presumably, the function of its abominations is to help this demon god cause desolation in the earth – whether it be confined to a certain *"holy place"*, or spread out as nuclear devastation over a vast territory. The *"image"*, on the other hand, as the Revelation Book spells it out, is an object of worship designed for the world at large and functions in such a way that everyone can easily participate in worship of the Antichrist.

To conclude: This phrase in verse 38 about the *"god of fortresses"* is an important clue to show what god the *"abomination"* is supposed to be attached to. And because the Antichrist *"honors a god of fortresses"*, he is

fully engaged in the business of waging war. He opposes anything that might hinder his military campaigns (and worship of himself). The *"god of fortresses"* (really his self-worship, especially his military strength) motivates him to send a destroying abomination into the sanctuary. And that signals the start of all-out war against the religious forces whom the Antichrist knows will oppose his plans for world takeover and worship of himself. (See the series of posts in *Unraveling the Mystery of the Abomination* for more information.)

Note: See Appendix 1 for some helpful quotations pertaining to the mysterious *"god of fortresses"* phrase.

*

He shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things (costly gifts – ESV) (11:38)

Here is another feature about modern warfare that this phrase serves to highlight: the great expense that must go into all the invention and research, manufacture and maintenance required to possess a large arsenal of complex weaponry and vehicles of war.

*

Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god (11:39)
Or, as another translation words it,
He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god (NIV)

Now in the margin of some Bibles, similar to the *"god of fortresses* in verse 38, the alternative translation for *"mightiest fortresses"* appears: *"fortresses of munitions"*. In the modern world exist some extremely well-armed nations (especially America, surely one of those *"mightiest fortresses"*) against whom the king of the north will have to use his *"foreign god"* (of war and munitions).

And this phrase *"foreign god"* points to another feature of the Modern Age. For it seems to foresee the non-religious culture that would arrive in the distant future. (The earlier discussion about the use of the Hebrew

eloah in the phrase _"god of fortresses"_ went into some detail about this.) In our modern day those supernatural deities known as the "gods" have to stay out of sight as they go about the same old dirty work they've been doing for centuries.

It may be a bit of a digression, but for the interested reader Appendix 2 explores the cultural background to the _"god of fortresses"_ and how the ancient gods of Mars, Mammon, and emperor-worship are continuing to flourish in our modern culture – even though our modern science-oriented culture claims to have divorced itself from belief in the supernatural.

*

***Which he shall acknowledge* [*a foreign god*], *and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain."* (11:39)**
A more accurate translation, with a somewhat different meaning, as found in most modern versions, reads,
***He will honor those who submit to him, appointing them to positions of authority and dividing the land among them as their reward* (NLT)**

As the king of the north rises to supremacy, he will reward those nations who ally themselves with him. Earlier (in Post 2C), we learned about the fall of ancient Carthage to the rising power of Rome. As news of Rome's victory against the forces of Hannibal began to sweep through the Mediterranean world, smaller nations began to ditch their ties to the fading Seleucid empire, while falling all over themselves to gain Rome's attention. And today, as the rising power of the Russia-China combine becomes more obvious to other nations in the world, there will be a rush to _"submit"_ to that power for the sake of their own protection and _"reward"_.

What _"land"_ the passage is referring to is not too clear. But likely, it will be those territories in the Middle East that the Antichrist and his allies will have conquered, which invasion is described further ahead in verses 40-45.

Here is what one commentary has to say about this portion of Scripture:

Verse 39 also mentions that the Antichrist *"shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."* Likely this means he will parcel out his conquered territories to those *"strongholds"* who go along with him and his policies; and it will be done *"for gain"* – in some way that will be profitable monetarily, either for the Antichrist or the *"strongholds"* or both.

… The words contain the altogether common thought that the king will bestow honour, power, and possessions on those who acknowledge him and conduct themselves according to his will, and they accord with the character of Antichrist in a yet higher degree than with that of Antiochus.

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

*

Continue to Part 3-I: Among the Nations, Earth's Final War

***

Appendix 1: Quotes pertaining to the *"god of fortresses* (forces/munitions)"

… There has been no little speculation as to the meaning of this passage, and as to the god here referred to; but it would seem that the general idea is plain.

It is, that the only god which he would acknowledge would be force, or power, or dominion. He would set at nought the worship of the god of his fathers, and all the usual obligations and restraints of religion; he would discard and despise all the pleadings of humanity and kindness, as if they were the weaknesses of women, and he would depend solely on force. He would, as it were, adore only the "god of force," and carry his purposes, not by right, or by the claims of religion, but by arms. The meaning is not, I apprehend, that he would formally set up this *"god of forces,"* and adore him, but that this would be, in fact, the only god that he would practically acknowledge. In selecting such a god as would properly represent his

feelings he would choose such an one as would denote force or dominion…

The general sentiment is, that all obligations of religion, and justice, and compassion, would be disregarded, and he would carry his purposes by mere power, with the idea, perhaps, included, as seems to be implied in the remainder of the verse, that he would set up and adore such a foreign god as would be a suitable representation of this purpose… and, as we say now of an avaricious or covetous man that he is a worshipper of mammon, though he in fact formally worships no god, and has no altar, so it might be affirmed… of heroes and conquerors in general, that the only god that is honored is the god of war, of power, of force; and that setting at nought all the obligations of religion, and of worship of the true God, they pay their devotions to this god alone.

Next to mammon, the god that is most adored in this world is the "god of force"… [as in Revelation 13:4, *"and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*]

[from *Barnes' Notes on the Old and New Testaments,* 1879-1885]

***

On the other hand, he will honour the god of fortresses. That [*mauzzim* – Hebrew word for *"fortresses"*] is not, with Theodotion, the Vulgate, Luther, and others, to be regarded as the proper name of a god, is now generally acknowledged. But as to which god is to be understood by the *"god of fortresses*," there is very great diversity of opinion. [Some] think on Mars, the god of war, as the one intended; [Some] regard Jupiter Capitolinus… others, Jupiter Olympius… Melkart, or the Phoenician Hercules… But according to the following passage [*"a god which his fathers did not know"*], this god was not known to his fathers. That could not be said either of Mars, or Jupiter, or Melkart. Add to this, "that if the statement here refers to the honouring of Hercules, or Mars, or Zeus, or Jupiter, then therewith all would be denied that was previously said of the king's being destitute of all religion" (Klief.). The words thus in no respect agree with

Antiochus, and do not permit us to think on any definite heathen deity… The *"god of fortresses"* is the personification of war, and the thought is this: he will regard no other god, but only war; the taking of fortresses he will make his god; and he will worship this god above all as the means of his gaining the world-power. Of this god, war as the object of deification, it might be said that his fathers knew nothing, because no other king had made war his religion, his god to whom he offered up in sacrifice all, gold, silver, precious stones, jewels.

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

***

… when a period can be dominated by complex and expensive weapons that only a few persons can afford to possess or can learn to use, we have a situation where the minority who control such "specialist" weapons can dominate the majority who lack them. In such a society, sooner or later, an authoritarian political system that reflects the inequality in control of weapons will he established.

At the present time, there seems to be little reason to doubt that the specialist weapons of today will continue to dominate the military picture into the foreseeable future. If so, there is little reason to doubt that authoritarian rather than democratic political regimes will dominate the world into the same foreseeable future…

[from *Tragedy and Hope, A History of the World in Our Time* By Carroll Quigley, 1966]

[RETURN]

*

Appendix 2: About the "*Foreign God*"

Here Gabriel refers to the *"god of fortresses"* as a *"foreign god"*. And in its modern day guise this *"god"* would be *"foreign"* – different from the ancient gods. Modern culture is steeped in secular materialism and has little, if any, tolerance for acknowledging that any kind of Higher Power,

or the Supernatural, could be involved in the affairs of humankind. Thus, any official recognition of such a *"god"* would be unthinkable in today's world. And this may have something to do with why the word *"honor"* was used here rather than the word "worship", for this is a modern "god" who is not worshiped in the same way as gods were in ancient times.

Such a discreet god was quite *"foreign"* to Daniel and the people of ancient times. For they were accustomed to seeing much outward manifestation in their religious worship. For example, the ancient god of war, Mars, would be represented by an idol, something easy to worship; and in those days idols were the most common type of *"abomination"* around.

But in this modern secular era when "religion" has gone out of fashion, anything that might be construed as superstitious and unscientific, any "god" the Enemy wants to foist on the world, has to appear as if it's not religious. He has to disguise it with the secular garments of science and technology – a *"foreign god"*, in other words, a god who is not supposed to be recognizable as a god, as in the old days of idol worship.

And there is another *"foreign"* feature about this *"god of fortresses"* – the destructive *"abominations of desolation"* that are attached to it. How peculiar to the minds of those in ancient times would be these modern weapons of atomic bombs, war tanks, guns, war planes, etc., inventions totally unimagined back then. Never did such a peculiar, faceless, no-name god like this exist in old time. But with the onset of scientific materialism and inventions of modern weaponry, the ancient gods had to take on a new form.

The ancient god of war, Mars, has morphed into this *"god of fortresses* (munitions)" – *"a foreign god"*, and *"a god which his fathers did not know"* – unknown to former generations, but known to us in these *Last Days*. Although nowadays we have no *"abomination"*, no visible idol to represent this god, we do see this god manifested in all its *"abominations of desolation"*, these horrible inventions of destruction that are used in modern warfare and paraded before a nation's citizenry in showy displays of military grandeur.

Perhaps some will worship this *"god of fortresses"* in secret behind

closed doors, but for the most part the world will worship it without knowing that they are worshiping it. We might say of a greedy person, "so-and-so worships Mammon", even though he or she doesn't actually observe any religious ceremonies in devotion to the god of greed. Likewise, those who admire military exploits and hardware, and their accompanying power and self-exaltation, it could be said of them, "they worship the god of war," even though there is no idol of Mars present to worship.

In whatever way the Antichrist goes about his worship of the *"god of fortresses"*, the result of it will enhance his capability in warfare. And this leads, indirectly, to another form of worship among the general populace – namely, that of the Antichrist himself. *"They worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?'"* (Revelation 13:4) We could compare this to Hitler (a worshiper of the *"god of fortresses"*) and how his success on the battlefield did much to generate worship and adulation of him during the 1930s and 1940s.

As noted already, it is because of the secular nature of modern culture that there are no visible religious trappings that can be associated with this *"god of fortresses"*. However, there is a belief system, something non-visible but quite evident in modern culture, that is yoked tightly onto the worship of this god; and it is easy to identify.

This new "religion", as we may call it, emerged in the 1700s when the old customs of superstition and idolatry were being discredited. That era marked the dawn of what is known as the Age of Reason, the Age of Enlightenment. People started looking to science for their answers instead of the supernatural realm. The new rational outlook of that day had some good points in that it eliminated some needless and harmful superstitions. But as often happens in history, the new trend went to an extreme; and it soon began to eat away at the foundation of man's faith in the true God and His Word.

In the mid-19th Century, evolution theory came along, and by the time of the 20th Century, a truly *"foreign"* belief system had sent its roots deep into the collective psyche of mankind. Nowadays, this religion of pseudo-science, or scientific materialism as we may call it, has succeeded in weakening all previous faiths, whether Christian or non-Christian. In

fact, this new "religion" has permeated almost all aspects of modern life and belief and given rise to ideologies of humanism, atheism, communism, and so on – philosophies that were quite *"foreign"* to Daniel and those of ancient times.

For example, who in ancient times could have imagined a political philosophy like communism sweeping half the world as it did in the 20th century? The idea of an officially anti-religious state with no "god", no supernatural deity of any kind, was absolutely unthinkable in Daniel's day. But that ideology was the Devil's seed for modern times, and it spread like wildfire during much of the 20th century. And it should be no surprise to see some new version of the same thing crop up again in the near future.

Now, if scientific materialism is humanity's new belief system, what connection might it have with a *"god of fortresses"*, a god of war? We can probably answer that question by observing what the inventions of science get used for. Let's take the example of Albert Einstein who discovered how to tap the resources of nuclear energy, a great discovery. Much to his disappointment, however, Einstein saw his discovery, which he envisioned should serve a peaceful purpose, getting harnessed into the cause of war, the atom bomb. And what the world's military hasn't stolen for itself, it has discovered in its own research laboratories and projects.

Continually, we observe how the theories and discoveries of science, be they helpful or harmful, somehow get harnessed into the service of war. Like an invisible hand lurking behind the scenes, the spiritual power behind the *"god of fortresses* (munitions)" is on the prowl, directing scientific endeavor towards war and making war weapons.

Besides physical inventions of destruction, in the abstract realm of ideas, pseudo-scientific thinking has also caused much harm. For example, the survival-of-the-fittest philosophy from evolution theory was used by Hitler, before World War II, to justify genocide as a means of establishing the supremacy of the Aryan race. The same rationale is used nowadays to justify war as a means of curbing population growth.

When human society does not trust in God's care and concern for His creations, pseudo-philosophers will rise to the fore to theorize along such lines. How convenient for world leaders to swallow this one. Why worry

about being a peacemaker or finding ways of sharing their wealth with a world that, after all, needs to downsize its population? War and starvation are surely two expedient methods of accomplishing this unfortunate, but necessary, purpose.

Such are the logical, but misguided, conclusions of those who seek a shortcut to supremacy in the world and look not to the wisdom and power of a loving God to solve these overwhelming problems of our modern times.

Scientific materialism then has become the religion of modern times, although it's not supposed to be a religion. Yet because it has usurped so many of the functions and beliefs that used to belong in the religious realm, it may as well be called a religion – a *"foreign"* one in which neither God, nor the supernatural, have any part. It is a religion of no religion. And it has worked, just as a false religion would, to draw people away from the true God.

This is not to say that scientific endeavor, if exercised from the standpoint of faith, could not greatly benefit humankind and confirm his faith in God. Sad to say, however, the application of scientific thought has resulted in too many destructive inventions, and along with that, destructive beliefs that mock the truth of God's Word and the existence of the supernatural realm, and its relevance to our earthly existence.

The rise of unrestrained rationalism has divorced human society from the supernatural, hence from God, and has nudged him into the realm of his carnal mind and science-oriented culture. In contrast with the world of yesteryear, the modern world worships the mind and intelligence, and the power and superiority that go along with them; this is a major temptation in these Last Days – *"a god which his fathers did not know"*.

And this exaltation of man's reason has caused his heart to become colder and his faith in God to become weaker, and has turned him aside into the clutches of *"a foreign god… which his fathers did not know"* – science, technology, and the use and misuse of the natural forces of creation.

The modern world has become a special breeding ground from which

this new version of a war god can emerge to carry out his dirty work. The modern philosophy of scientific materialism, although *"foreign"* to Daniel and those of ancient times, has become the normal, accepted belief system for modern society.

This modern "religion" belittles the role of God, or any god, in the formation of the natural world, and by extension, in the development of human history, whether on a personal level, or on a societal and international level. It is the ultimate deception – no God, no supernatural world, just the barren utopia of the world system and its man-made creations.

Besides giving rise to this *"foreign god"* of war, scientific materialism has spawned a few other "foreign gods" as well. For example, the god of wealth (Mammon) operates through a commercial system based on modern scientific technology. The inventions of electronic funds transfer, credit systems, etc. have enabled this *"foreign god"* to proliferate promiscuously in the modern world; and it will eventually dominate modern society through a new worldwide credit system known in the Revelation Book as the *"mark of the beast"*.

Another god is the Antichrist himself whom the world will worship; only nowadays, we would call it political adulation, instead of emperor-worship. And what will inspire this worship? Again, science and modern technology to the rescue. Because of the discovery of how to broadcast images all over the world, the forces of Darkness will be able to generate worship of the Antichrist on a scale unimagined in times past when crafted images and idols were the only means available for propagating worship of a deity or demagogue.

So, these "foreign gods" of materialism and demagoguery will also flourish in the End Time… along with the *"god of fortresses/munitions"*. The passage in Daniel 11 focuses on the *"god of fortresses/munitions"* because war happens to be the main area of concern for the Antichrist *Beast*. But besides that modern day version of a war god, there are these other updated versions for the ancient gods of Mammon and of emperor-worship.

And, for all these gods, the "foreign religion" of scientific materialism

plays a key role in allowing them to rise to the fore in their modern guise. They are all "strange gods" because of their secular face, and because of the extraordinary power they wield now through modern inventions of weaponry, electronic funds transfer, computer surveillance, and media technology.

Nevertheless, it's the same Devil aiming to destroy the world through war, enslave its masses through materialism, and capture its allegiance through a demagogue.

Or, to put it another way: chasing material wealth is the religious "service" that most of the world gives their time and energy to; scientific materialism is the belief system that has deceived their minds; and the Antichrist, along with the False Prophet's utopian system, having conquered the Earth with the help of the *"god of fortresses"*, will become the modern version of empire/emperor-worship. Fear of the Antichrist, coupled with devotion to him, will capture the allegiance and worship of the world for a time.

Daniel could not have understood much about modern science and its military inventions, nor the modern philosophies of evolution, rationalism, and our secular culture, but Gabriel was able to explain it to him anyway – mainly through his paradoxical statement that the Antichrist would magnify himself above all gods yet would plunge into the service of a war god.

This would not result from any sense of religious devotion in the Antichrist, but simply from being wrapped up in admiration of his own (military) strength. The ancient practice of devotion to a god of war would continue, only disguised now (as a *"foreign god"*) under the atheist garb of science, militarism, and demagoguery.

And has this happened in modern times? An outstanding example was Hitler Germany; a whole nation fell under the spell of a militarist warmonger, and this caused untold destruction in the world of the 1940s. Here was a startling example of how the superstitious practice from ancient times of devotion to a god of war (and accompanying emperor worship) could resurrect itself, even in this modern age of rationality and scientific enlightenment.

[RETURN]

*

Continue to Part 3-I: Among the Nations, Earth's Final War