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The King of the North
Daniel 11:40-45
by

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The Old View Critically Examined -- the New View Vindicated and Brought to Date

"I would gladly exchange a thousand errors for one truth."
J. N. Andrews

PART ONE

Twelve Objections Against the Old View

1. Are the French Revolution, Napoleon's Egyptian campaign and the Turkish wars of the 12th century mentioned in Dan. 11:40-45? It seems strange in the outset, that these three events of local importance, lasting respectively only four years, fifteen months and again four years, should find room in a prophecy covering 2400 years of world events, while making no mention of the recent two world-wars.
2. Out of 45 verses, nine (36-44), one-fifth of the whole chapter, are said to be devoted to the above-mentioned local episodes. At the same time, no room is found in our denominational view for the Papacy and its baneful supremacy for more than a thousand years! The mere mention of this omission would almost be sufficient to settle the question written above.
3. Verse 36, which we have claimed predicts the French atheistic period, says that "the king shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished. But "the indignation" refers to God's judgments at the coming of Christ (see Isa. 26:20 and Nahum 1:6), while the French atheistic movement was all over in four years "three days and a half", says the Revelator.
4. "The term 'king' might be applied to many forms of government, but it would not be a felicitous symbol for the anarchy of the French Revolution", says W. T. Bartlett. (Brief Notes on Daniel 11:36-45.)
5. Our interpretation makes the expression "the king" of verse 36 to read "a king." This liberty with the text made it possible to bring in the French Revolution instead of the Papacy. Elder Uriah Smith, who adopted this view held by a few interpreters, did not do so without some misgivings which he frankly recorded in Thoughts, as follows: "The only objection against applying (the expression 'the king' to a new power lies in the definite article 'the'; for, it is urged, the expression 'the king' would identify this as the one last spoken of. If it could be properly translated 'a' king, there would not be any difficulty." But the "objection" lies in the original text, with which no man has a right to tamper. In fact, this liberty is at the bottom of the sad deviations which now confront us in the understanding of this part of the prophecy.

6. The great vision of Dan. 11 embraces all future times from the days of Persia and therefore must be parallel with the visions recorded in chapters 2, 7, and 8, including particularly the Papacy which occupies one half of that period. Verses 32 to 35 describe the sufferings of the true church during twelve centuries. From verse 36 onward, the prophetic pen minutely describes the long reign of papal apostacy and blasphemous assumptions, as is ably demonstrated by M. C. Wilcox, W. J. Fitzgerald and W. T. Bartlett in their tracts.

This important fact was pointed out by James White during the General Conference and camp-meeting of 1878. We are told that "early in the meeting, Elder Uriah Smith presented to the great congregation the same thoughts that he had been presenting in the Review. . ." (W. C. White, private letter, dated March 6, 1919.)

Elder White arose at the close of the sermon and stated, almost in the very words that follow: "Elder Smith has given a very fine talk on the eleventh chapter of Daniel, and his interpretation seems plausible; but IF (and you know how Elder White could emphasize words) IF the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay in the second chapter represent Rome, and IF the non-descript ten-horned beast and the little horn of the seventh chapter represent Rome, and IF the little horn of the eighth chapter which waxed exceeding great represents Rome, the king of the north represents Rome also. These are four parallel prophecies, brethren, reaching down to the coming of our Lord." (M. C. Wilcox, Is it Heresy? p. 3 1908.) By "king of the North", if that was the exact expression used by Elder White, he no doubt meant the Papacy or wilful arrogant "king" of verses 36-39.

7. These verses 36-39 describe the Papacy in almost the identical words used later in 2nd Thessalonians 2, and in Revelation 13. Brethren, Wilcox, Bartlett, and Fitzgerald, each of whom published a tract on the matter in 1910, 1913, and 1915, respectively, give striking proofs of their fulfillment in the history of the man of sin.

8. Our books teach that Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (1798-1799) was a fulfillment of verse 40: "And at the time of the end, shall the king of the south push at him", that is to say that Egypt shall draw the sword against France. The facts are that it was exactly the reverse that took place. All French historians tell us that, wholly unprovoked, General Bonaparte, "actuated by personal ambition" and wishing "to humble England, proposed to the Directory to conquer and colonize Egypt.

9. "There is no reason," wrote M.C.W. in 1910, "for counting Turkey and Turkey's vassal (Egypt) -- one power really -- as both king of the North and king of the south." (Page 32.) In his tract, W. T. B. lays down the following negative propositions: (a) Turkey "did not enter" the glorious land in 1798, and Daniel 11:41 "does not" apply to Turkey since that year; (b) Daniel 11:42 and 43 "does not" describe the relations between Turkey and Egypt since 1798; and (c) Daniel 11:44 does not refer to the Crimean War. Turkey could have fulfilled these verses only by running in a triumphant and desolating war over her own territory."

10. It should not be forgotten that, according to the sixth Trumpet, Turkey has been, ever since 1840 (the end of the 391 year-period), prophetically laid on the shelf, and politically, under the tutelage of the Western powers, who were bound to preserve, what they called "the integrity of the Ottoman empire." The striking inconsistency of our old view was unwittingly made palpable in a series of articles published in 1912 in one of our periodicals.

In the last article of the series, the Turkish power was called "prosperous" and yet "waning," "conquering" and yet "weakened in territorial dominions," "whittled away," "humbled," "dismembered," "humbled in the dust," "disintegrated," and "dissolved." This disintegrating process is described at length in D. & R., showing the rapid and successive loss by the Sublime Porte of Serbia, Bosnia, Moldavia, Wallachia, Greece, Roumania, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Roumelia. The conclusion drawn by the interpreters of that time, including Thomas Newton, and adopted by us, was that the Turk would very soon be obliged to leave Europe.

This took place at the end of World War No. 1, but the Ottoman government did not settle at Jerusalem, as was expected, neither was this event immediately followed, as announced in our standard book on prophecy, by the "standing up of Michael, the beginning of the reign of Christ (at) his coming in the clouds of heaven." The writer did not hesitate to say "that it would not be reasonable to suppose that any great amount of time (such as one day or an hour) would elapse between these events." (Pages 293, 294.)

11. To my knowledge, the Testimonies mention Daniel 11 only once, and that is in Volume IX, p. 14. This is the statement: "The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes spoken of in the prophecies will take place." This declaration was first published in 1909. It says distinctly that at that time, in 1909, "the world was stirred with the spirit of war," and that, soon after 1909, "the scene of trouble" spoken of would "take place." What was this "scene of trouble" "ready to take place," after 1909, and therefore still in the future, if not the two world wars of 1914 and 1939? In view of these statements, what room is there left in Daniel 11:40-45 for the Balkan and the Crimean wars of 1856 and 1878, which we have held were the last ones before the end?

12. Verse 35 reads: "And some of them that are wise shall fall, to refine them and to purify and to make them white, even to the time of the end." (R.V.) The expression "time of the end" is first found in chapter 8:17 and 19, thus: "The vision belongeth to the time of the end . . . to the appointed time of the end." In these verses, the "time of the end" is directly connected with the 2300 years ending in 1844. The same expression and the same date are again brought together in chapter 12: "Seal the book, even to the time of the end. . . . The words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white, and be refined." Verses 9 and 10. Then come the two periods 1290 and 1335 years, ending respectively in 1798 and 1844, making it evident that "the time of the end" begins at the last date mentioned. Elder Smith and the revisers -- although choosing 1798 -- did not consider this position as altogether safe, for they add prudently: "if this application is correct."

"The date 1844, on the face of it, marks the time of the end," writes Bartlett. "If everything in Scripture were as clear and easy of proof as that 1844 was the date marking the 'time of the end,' everything would be extremely simple." (Brief Notes, pp. 4-7. See also Fitzgerald, A Bible Study, pp. 17-19.)

But the fact that the refining, purifying process of Reformation and post-Reformation days extends "to the time of the end" (verse 35) does not imply as has been assumed, that the events in the next verse start from the very year marking the time of the end. The two distinct series of events, namely, the sorrowful history of the little flock and the blasphemous, cruel career of the apostate church run in parallel lines and extend to the same point of time,

which is respectively called "the time of the end", and "ending of the indignation" (verses 35, 36). When this time is reached, a new series of events is said to begin, and that "in the time of the end" (v. 40), but not necessarily from a stated year. The literal meaning of the text is thus commented upon by M. C. W.:

"'To the time of the end' in verse 35 means up to the date of the beginning of the 'time of the end.' . . . 'At the time of the end' in verse 40 could as well be rendered 'in the time of the end.' The Hebrew preposition in verse 35 is adh, to. But in verse 40, 'at' is from the prefix beth. The same prefix, in the first verse of the Bible, is translated 'in,' 'In the beginning;' and so elsewhere. 'In the time of the end,' not necessarily at the beginning of, or even early in, that important though not definitely limited period. So Spurrel renders, 'And in the time of the end, the king of the south shall repel him.' From verse 40 and onward are predicted events to occur 'IN the time of the end.'" (Page 31.)

The twelve objections presented above are raised here with a sense of humility at the thought that we have been so long exhorted by an inspired pen to "investigate closely every jot and tittle what we think is established truth, comparing scripture with scripture, (as) we might discover errors in our interpretation of Scripture." (R. & H., July 12, 1898, reprinted July 2, 1908.) Should we not therefore now give careful attention to the new interpretation of Daniel XI, 40-45 brought to our attention 35 years ago by three earnest Bible students and here brought to date?

P A R T T W O

DANIEL XI, 40-45 OBJECTIVELY CONSIDERED AND HISTORICALLY PICTURED

I What powers are meant by the "king of the south" and by the king "pushed at" by him?

After an eclipse of nearly fourteen centuries, both the king of the north and the king of the south reappear suddenly on the field of prophecy. It cannot be expected that these two powers have remained what they were so long ago. Their territories have changed hands several times. As to the "king of the south" first mentioned, most interpreters, including Uriah Smith, agree that this name belongs to the power having the military control of Egypt. This control has been in the hands of the British empire for the last sixty-five years, that is since 1882.

The vision tells us that "in the time of the end" (thus after 1844) the "king of the south shall push at him." This expression is understood to mean "a toss" or "menace," rather than a real conflict. What that act of intimidation may be on the part of England, we may not know until it has taken place. It appears to be mentioned here merely as a signal of what is immediately to follow.

The next question is: Which is the kingdom "pushed at?" In other words, who is meant by the pronoun "him"? The grammatical rule requires to look for the antecedent of the pronoun, that is for the last object mentioned. This rule is recognized by Uriah Smith, when he writes that "the definite article in 'the king' should identify this power as the one last spoken of." (D. & R., 1887, 267)

The power last spoken of is Papal Rome. But a military menace directed against the Vatican by a military power seemed strange and dark to the men who were seeking for light on this prophecy. Yet bound as they were to remain strictly faithful to the inspired text, they imagined a political confederacy

of states led by the Vatican. If H. C. Wilcox and his followers had lived a little longer, they would have seen the reward of their strict adherence to the inspired Word. An unexpected event in the history of the Papacy was approaching. In February, 1929, the news was sent to the world that Cardinal Gasparri, secretary of State to the pope, with Benito Mussolini, for the Italian kingdom, had met in the palace of Lateran and together signed a political pact uniting the two powers on all matters military and political. This Concordat was introducing a new era for the two parties who had, for a thousand years, scrambled for the possession of Italy. The Papacy was promising under oath that she would henceforth follow and foment no other policy than that chosen by the Italian State.

On his side, the Italian government forever relinquished to the Catholic Church all its rights on the Vatican State, and agreed to reimburse to the Papacy a ransom of two billion lira, of which one half was immediately paid in present currency. By this contract, Italy, the original territory of the Roman Republic, had become the political ally, the protector and yoke-mate of the Catholic Church.

This Concordat, signed on Feb. 11, 1929 reads as follows (art. 29):

"Before taking possession of their dioceses, the bishops shall take the following pledge at the hands of the State representative: Before God and the Holy Gospels, I vow and promise that myself and my clergy shall respect the person of the king and any government established according to the constitutional laws of the state. I also pledge that I shall neither attend nor participate in, any assemblage hostile to the Italian State, . . . I allow it to be done by any member of my clergy; but sponsor the interests, peace, and prosperity of the country."

Under this new relation, it is evident that any antagonism on the part of England against Italy would be equivalent to an act of hostility against the dual religio-political successor of imperial and papal Rome, the "king" mentioned in verse 36.

II Who is the "king of the North?"

Verse 40: ". . . and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." Who is meant by the "king of the north?" One thing sure is that he cannot be the dismembered and trembling Turkey, but a mighty and fully equipped military power. He is not to be found either among any of the Balkan States, as they are today, all of them under the iron tutelage of a giant empire lying north and east of them. This power, however, may justly lay claim to the title of "king of the north." Let us consider one of his main reasons for that claim. It is thus furnished by the author of D. & R. himself:

"The desire on the part of Russia (to have a sea-port and harbour in a warm climate) has been cherished as a sacred legacy since the days of Peter the Great (who) left to his successors a celebrated 'last will and testament,' the 9th article (of which) enjoined the following policy: 'To take every possible means to gain Constantinople, . . . for he who rules there will be the true sovereign of the world; excite war continually in Turkey and Persia; penetrate to the Persian gulf.' The eleventh article reads: 'Interest the House of Austria in the expulsion of the Turk from Europe, and quiet their dissensions at the moment of the conquest of Constantinople, (having) excited war among the old states of Europe.'"

Then comes a list of facts in the Russian history to show how persistently this line of policy has been followed." Among these facts a conversation of Napoleon on the isle of Saint-Helena with sir Hudson Lowe is quoted as follows: "In the course of a few years, Russia will have Constantinople. . . . This I hold to be as certain as if it had already taken place. All the cajolery and flattery that Alexander practiced upon me was to gain my consent to effect that object. I would not give it, foreseeing that the equilibrium of Europe would be destroyed. Once mistress of Constantinople, Russia gets all the commerce of the Mediterranean, becomes a naval power, and then God knows what may happen." Uriah Smith continues thus:

"Constantinople is regarded, by general consent, as the grand strategic point of Europe, and the powers have each sagacity or jealousy enough to see, or think they see, the fact that if any one of the European powers gains permanent possession of that point, as Russia desires to do, that power will be able to dictate terms to the rest of Europe."

D. & R. then quotes leading papers of the time as saying:

"This desire of Russia is called by the San Francisco Chronicle 'The realization by the Northern Colossus of Peter the Great's will.'" Then the Allgemeine Zeitung as foreseeing that "the eventual entry of the Russians in Constantinople cannot longer be regarded as impracticable," and the Detroit Evening News; of Feb. 18, 1887 as adding: "The indemnity imposed by the Berlin Conference held on Jan. 25 of this year and accepted by the bankrupt Porte, reached the sum of 600 million dollars, which amounted to giving the CZAR a permanent mortgage, implying the threat of foreclosing it at any time by the seizure of the remainder of European Turkey."

Do not current events today demonstrate with clearness that it is not unreasonable to look to Russia as the coming king of the North?

Another reason too for looking to Russia as the forthcoming "King of the North" is the growing rivalry and competition between this power and Great Britain over the oil regions recently discovered in the Near-east countries placed under British mandate. This gives the reason why the sudden rush on the part of the "King of the North" is not directed Westward, but Eastward, the region offering the least resistance and the greatest advantages.

The triumphant march of the Northern King through Northern Asia-Minor, Syria and Palestine down to Egypt is directed against "him". The power meant by this second "him," which completes the triangle seen by Uriah Smith, can only be found by following the grammar rule referred to above, which requires looking for the last power mentioned in the text. That power is the king of the south, or Egypt as protected by England; and England is the very power placed in charge of the countries overrun by the king of the north, and the one most interested in watching over the Suez canal, the jugular artery of the British empire, unless the United States take its place.

III. The new Capital "between the Seas."

The vision says nothing about a new seat set up in Jerusalem. It speaks about a capital "between the seas," which we have long believed and taught was the holy city in Palestine. But, like the flight of the Turk, this has to be revised, being out of harmony with both the text and historic facts. In the first place if the selection of a new capital is placed at the end of the invasion, it is no doubt in order not to interrupt the brief story of the campaign,

and likely takes place at its beginning. Secondly, the text does not say that "he shall plant his palace . . . in the glorious holy mountain," but toward it. The preposition "in", if literally translated from the original "leb," should be rendered "toward," as any one may verify by consulting a Concordance giving the Hebrew words. As to the expression "between the seas," it cannot properly apply to Jerusalem. How can the immense expanse of the Mediterranean Sea be associated and compared with a pond misnamed "sea," which is only a dead, asphaltic, fishless body of water and not even a lake? Again, Jerusalem is 13 miles away from the Dead Sea and 34 from the Mediterranean.

Now look at Constantinople, of which Uriah Smith writes that it has long been a "a bone of contention between the great powers." Think of its ideal situation, of its impregnable position, surrounded as it is with forts dominating the Bosphorous, and which Napoleon called "the key of the world." This city is literally saddled "on the seas," the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmora united by the Dardanelles to the Mediterranean. The time most likely chosen by Russia to remove its seat of government thither would naturally be at the beginning of its onset through the Balkans, thus not losing any time before rushing on to their goal.

IV End of human wars.

"And many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape out of his hands; even Edom (the descendants of Esau) and Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon (the descendants of Lot). He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians (Arabians, Descendants of Ishmael) shall be at his steps." (verses 42, 43.)

"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury, to destroy and to make away many. . . Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." (Verses 44, 45.) Here Daniel is joined by John, the Revelator, describing the sixth plague, that is the "gathering of the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

The first event of this last war is the death-blow inflicted on the Turkish republic, called figuratively "the drying up of the great river Euphrates," "that the way may be made ready for the kings that come from the sun-rising." (R.V.)

C O N C L U S I O N

This corrected view of the last verses of Daniel XI throws a glaring light on the coming climax of human political ambition and rebellion against God. It shows the evident parallelism of this grand chain of prophecy with the other visions of Daniel, such as held by the late James White.

Lausanne, October 7, 1947, ;
J. Vuilleumier

APPENDIX I -- JAMES WHITE STATEMENT
ON THE "KING OF THE NORTH"

And there is a line of historic prophecy in chapter eleven, where the symbols are thrown off, beginning with the kings of Persia, and reaching down past Grecia and Rome, to the time when that power "shall come to his end, and none shall help him." If the feet and ten toes of the metallic image are Roman, if the beast with ten horns that was given to the burning flames of that great day be the Roman beast, if the little horn which stood up against the Prince of princes be Rome, and if the same field and distance are covered by these four prophetic chains, then the last power of the eleventh chapter, which is to "come to his end and none shall help him," is Rome. But if this be Turkey, as some teach, then the toes of the image of the second chapter are Turkish, the beast with ten horns of the seventh chapter represents Turkey, and it was Turkey that stood up against the Prince of princes of the eighth chapter of Daniel. True, Turkey is bad enough off; but its waning power and its end is the subject of the prophecy of John and not of Daniel.--James White at Battle Creek Camp Meeting. Review and Herald, October 3, 1878.