



Daily Verse and Comment

Daniel 11:40-42

(40) "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm *them*, and pass through. (41) He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. (42) He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

New King James Version

Students of Bible prophecy have often wondered about the role of the "king of the South" in the end time. Daniel 11 describes the back-and-forth fighting and intrigue between the Seleucid Empire based in Syria—the king of the North—and the Ptolemaic Empire of Egypt—the king of the South. Obviously, during the time of their conflict, these nations were north and south of Jerusalem, respectively, and their battlegrounds were often in the land of Israel.

Neither of these two empires exists any longer. However, verse 40 speaks of "the time of the end," meaning the period just before the [return of Jesus Christ](#). Which nations, then, are the kings of the North and the South?

Because the Roman Empire swallowed up both of the older empires, it could at one time have been said to be both. However, Diocletian split the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western halves in AD 284, and in 324, Constantine established the eastern capital at Byzantium, renamed Constantinople (now Istanbul). The Western Empire fell in 476, to be succeeded down the centuries by several resurrections of a Holy Roman Empire.

The Eastern Empire, however, proved more enduring, lasting until 1453 when the Turks under Mahmed II took the weak and tired city of Constantinople after a 53-day siege. Once again, there were rival kings of North and South, though this event merely formalized an ongoing struggle between Christian Europe and Muslim Middle East. This situation remains intact today: Even now, we are witnessing the bitter and violent conflict between the Western and Islamic civilizations.

Notice in verse 40 that the king of the North invades and conquers "countries," suggesting that the king of the South is composed of several nations, much like the modern Middle East.

The King James Version uses "push at him" instead of "attack him," and this is to be preferred, as the Hebrew verb means "to thrust." It could be a military attack, but it could equally be an economic, religious, or cultural assault. Whatever it is, the king of the North reacts to it swiftly and forcefully.

We should also note verses 41-42. In them, [God](#) directs our attention to the area targeted by the king of the North: "the Glorious Land"—the land of Israel—[Edom](#), Moab, Ammon (all three part of modern Jordan), and Egypt. It is clear that, if this prophecy speaks of our day, the king of the South is represented by the Arab peoples of the Middle East.

Could we be seeing this prophecy beginning to come to pass? Perhaps the waves of predominantly Muslim immigrants into Europe have woken the emerging colossus of the North to some of the troubles the clash of cultures can cause. If these problems should be combined with major terrorist attacks on European soil, an armed response would seem to be unavoidable.

However, the leader, the person who is the king of the North, is still lacking. No strong man has stood up in Europe to take the lead in solving some of these problems. The stage, though, is being set for such a ruler to galvanize both the leadership and citizenry of Europe to unite to fight against the enemies of their civilization (see [Revelation 17:9-14](#)).

Though it is probably not the catalyst, Europe's immigration woes could provide some of the fuel for the coming conflagration. This is an area on which Christians should keep a watchful eye ([Mark 13:32-37](#)).

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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