

*Charts: The Last Reciprocal War: #18 & #19*

## PREFACE

If we followed only the Revelation narrative we could be forgiven for thinking that after Antichrist establishes his hold on the entire world at the midpoint of the Tribulation, his only conflict, his only war, is the one with Christ at Armageddon. In that, we would be mistaken.

We are at an opportune juncture in this study—before we examine the last two Bowl judgments—to set aside Revelation for a while and return to the prophecies of Ezekiel, but especially Daniel, to establish more of the details of future world history. The events we will be examining do *not* fall right where we left off in Revelation 16; we will be backing up a little in the narrative, to get a proper perspective on the events; most, however, do occur during the second half of the Tribulation, when the beast—Antichrist—is in power. But let us look first at a key passage that *some* say occurs during the Tribulation, but others (including this teacher) say occurs much later. That will be in Ezekiel, but let's begin in Revelation. [Please Turn to Revelation 20.](#)

## EZEKIEL'S PROPHECY

The end of Chapter Nineteen records the dramatic conclusion to Armageddon: the beast and false prophet are seized and thrown alive into the lake of fire, with the rest of their army being killed by the word spoken by Christ Jesus. Note how this chapter ends in v21: "...and all the birds were filled with their flesh." We will be referencing this again in a moment.

As I have mentioned before, it is remarkable that the seven-year Tribulation is discussed over fourteen *chapters* (6 to 19), while the thousand-year millennium is briefly mentioned in just seven *verses*. Curious, but there it is.

From Revelation we learn that it is war that bookends the Millennium. Christ's victory at Armageddon serves as the *prelude* for the Millennium, and the *postlude* is supplied by the just-released Satan and his armies surrounding "the beloved city."

**Read Revelation 20:7-9.**

So please note that within a span of just twelve verses in the Revelation we have Armageddon, the Millennium, and the final "war" against Messiah and the Jews before God convenes His Great White Throne of judgment. [Please Turn to Ezekiel 38.](#)

Not everyone agrees, of course, but my position—certainly not unique—is that Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe this final, post-Millennial conflict. We will look further into this when we reach the end of the Millennium in this study, but for the moment I would like to point out my reasons for placing this not earlier in the first half of the Tribulation ([Walvoord](#)), not describing Armageddon itself, not just before the Millennium ([Alexander](#)), but later, *after* the Millennium.

- First is the “Gog ([gogue](#)) and Magog ([maw-gogue](#))” connection, which is tossed into Revelation 20:8 almost as an afterthought: “...and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war...” The Ezekiel chapters are all about “Gog of the land of Magog”—that is, Gog, the chief prince or ruler of geographical areas Meshech ([meh'-shek](#)) and Tubal ([too-ball](#)), in the region of Magog.
- Second, the war described by Ezekiel takes place during a time of peace and security for Israel. **Read Ezekiel 38:14-16.** Although (per Walvoord) the first half of the Tribulation will be *relatively* secure for Israel, with its covenant with the beast, the Millennium will be far more peaceful and secure for Israel.
- Third, some claim that the Ezekiel chapters speak of Armageddon because of the connection with “every kind of bird and...every beast of the field” being invited to come feast on all the dead bodies, which is indeed mentioned as part of the aftermath of Armageddon:  
Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.”  
Revelation 19:17-18

Yet note that the Revelation passage makes no mention of other beasts—only birds. I see no problem with the fact that the post-Millennial war in the Revelation makes no mention of the birds or animals, for this would be the natural conclusion to the slaughter of *any* such battle.

So I would place the Ezekiel-described conflict—the Gog and Magog narrative—immediately after the Millennium, when Satan is released from his thousand-year confinement to rally his troops for his one last shot against Israel.

[Now, please turn to Daniel 11.](#)

## DANIEL'S PROPHECY: THE WAYS OF THE BEAST

Daniel 11:1-35 is all *historical* prophecy, by which I mean that it is future to Daniel—being told to him by a heavenly messenger—but past, recorded *history* to us. It is a prophecy intricately detailed and accurate with known historical accounts, but as such does not concern this present study, for, from our perspective, it has already been fulfilled in the past. Verse 35, however, segues into *eschatological* prophecy:

### Read Daniel 11:34-35.

This portion of Scripture—specifically Daniel 11:1 to 12:4—beautifully illustrates why we can trust God's word regarding the Last Things.

As the Lord God said in the negative in Deuteronomy 18, “You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken” (Deuteronomy 18:21-22a). Even skeptics agree that the historical prophecy of Daniel 11—that part that was fulfilled centuries in the past—is so incredibly accurate, that many insist that it is not prophecy at all, but *had* to be written *after* the events themselves. But it was not. That is why we can treat the eschatological prophecies in God's word as reliably true: because His prophecies of earlier events were fulfilled.

From v36 to 12:3 the time frame shifts to the second half of the Tribulation—the Great Tribulation. How do we know this? Because it depicts military movement and conflict that could only occur after the beast is at the height of his power, and, more importantly, does not occur anywhere else in recorded history—and especially not with the Antiochus Epiphanes narrative.

Verses 36-39 fill in a number of the details about Antichrist's rule that are missing from the Revelation narrative.

### Read Daniel 11:36-37.

v36

“Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished, for that which is decreed will be done.

We *have* read of this in Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians ([2 Thessalonians 2:3-10](#)). But we do read something new in the next verse.

“He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all.

Some conclude from the phrase “no regard...for the desire of women” that the beast will either be homosexual or asexual. But there is a better interpretation.

The Hebrew used by Daniel for “desire” (*hemdat*) is in a construct that means not a desire *for* women, but that which is desired *by* women, and probably points to the universal desire of all Jewish women of the time that they would be so privileged as to be the one to give birth to the Messiah. As Walvoord summarizes, “In other words, [the beast] would disregard the gods of the past as well as the promised Son of God who is to come from heaven.”

### Read Daniel 11:38-39.

#### vv38-39

“But instead he will honor a god of fortresses, a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price.”

“**The God of forces**” in the KJV is better translated, “**a god of fortresses.**” The Hebrew *mauzzim* means places of safety, protection, or refuge—not the troops in them. Nonetheless this paints a picture of the beast as one who places his trust not just in himself, but in military might—the power to make war. Remember how Antichrist was *first* portrayed in the Revelation? [Turn back to Chapter Six, v2](#). In the very first seal we are shown

...a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

His crown will be a crown not of royalty, but of victory (*stephanos*), and his purpose from the beginning will be to conquer the nations, to conquer religion, to conquer society itself.

*Keil & Delitzsch*: 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.

“A god whom his fathers did not know” does not necessarily label the beast as a Jew; it just means that his god is not a traditional god worshiped by those who came before him: not Zeus, not Mars, not Jupiter, not Yahweh. Instead it will be a brand new “god” of warfare.

*(v39) He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god;*

In our vernacular the word “foreign” implies someone or something that lives elsewhere—i.e., foreign to *us*, but not foreign to those where it usually dwells. But the word *nekar* (nee-car) can also mean just “strange,” as the KJV has it. The term “god” here is used loosely; it is the personification of a philosophy. Put simply, the beast will be wholly devoted to war.

And just as all kings and emperors, tyrants and dictators from the vast annals of history, Antichrist will dole out favors in the form of land grants to those who support him.

#### DANIEL’S PROPHECY: WORLD WAR

Everything so far has been background for what inevitably follows. If one worships war, there can be no surprise at what comes next: war—a world war.

#### **Read Daniel 11:40-41.**

*v40*

“At the end time the king of the South will collide with him, and the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, with horsemen and with many ships; and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through.

These verses (vv40-45) seem to reinforce my position that the seat of the beast’s power is Israel—specifically Jerusalem—for without stating it outright, this whole narrative is Israel-centric. A king from the south approaches, probably Egypt, but also including some nations of north Africa; a second king approaches from the north, quite possibly Russia with some neighboring nations. Later there will be “rumors from the East,” no doubt of impending invasion. What lies at the focal point of these threats?

Israel.

The phrase “at the end time” (or “at the time of the end”) nails the setting for this prophecy. This means, for one thing, that we need not waste time conjecturing about who this “king of the South” or “king of the North” might be. In the lifetimes of most people reading these words we have seen nations change hands or be renamed, be reshaped by war or treaty, borders shifted or wiped out. And this passage speaks of nations in place well beyond today—at a minimum, seven years beyond today, but probably more.

The word translated “collide” in the NASB (*yitnagach*) means to “butt with the horns, to push against, even to gore”; it is a term of warfare drawn from the natural world—the way two bighorn sheep will slam their heads together in a dual for dominance. This is not coincidental imagery. [Please turn back to Chapter Eight.](#)

### **Read Daniel 8:4.**

This is how the assault from the south is described, whereas the advance from the north—the word translated “storm” (*saar*) means to sweep or whirl away, as in a whirlwind.

Parenthetically, the prophetic visions of Chapter Eight are similar to Chapter Eleven, in that the first portion (vv1-22) is historical, while the second portion (vv23-26) foreshadows the beast of the end times.

When we blend into this narrative what we know from Revelation and Daniel Chapter Nine, we can easily see these two threats from north and south as signs of active rebellion against the world dictator, Antichrist. We all have a tendency to see history—and even, as here, *future* history—in simple, uncluttered terms; we see it in basic black and white, rather than the shades of gray it really is. Just because the beast has proclaimed himself ruler of the world, and even if the majority welcome him in that position, there still can be disgruntled leaders that, even if technically in the beast’s coalition, will actively rebel against him.

Once again, in v40, ambiguous pronouns cause us problems—i.e., who is the “he” in “and he will enter countries, overflow them and pass through”? Does this refer to the king of the South, the king of the North, or the world ruler? I side with Walvoord here, that the “he” throughout vv40-45 is the “king [who] will do as he pleases” from v36—that is, Antichrist, the beast. And Walvoord quotes H. C. Leupold, who agrees.

*Leupold:* The variety of the resources that are to be employed against the Antichrist indicate how great his power must be at the latter end— ‘chariots, horsemen, and many ships.’ But the Antichrist will not be slow to repel the attack. He himself shall ‘come into these lands,’ that is, the lands of those who have assailed him, and ‘shall sweep along and pass through.’

As always there are other positions, but in this passage assigning the “he” to either of the other kings dramatically changes the interpretation of the proceeding verses. I believe assigning it to Antichrist makes the most sense in the following verses. Thus we conclude that the beast will successfully repel these insurrectionists to the extent that his forces will move into their own lands.

The movement of forces in this war is represented in Chart #18—a map of the Middle East with the nations in place today; what they will be during the Tribulation is anyone’s guess. The text offers few specifics, so the flow of combat simply portrays the general movement from the various directions. What is shown is the overwhelming response from the beast: more than just defending his base of power, he energetically fights back, even moving deeper into the territory of the insurrectionists.

Chart #19 shows essentially the same information, but in a timeline format, with key succeeding events included.

### *vv41-42*

“He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon. Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape.

Again, there are varied interpretations of this enigmatic passage, which time does not permit us to discuss. The prominent variant interpretation is that Antichrist is the King of the North; thus his entering of “the Beautiful Land” in v41 (i.e., Israel) is one of conquest as a foe. If that were the case, however, how does one reconcile that with his coming into the temple earlier, at the midpoint of the Tribulation, to declare himself equal with God? I believe v41 describes the beast returning to his home base, as it were, or returning for the first time with all his armies in tow.

Reading these two verses it is clear that we are not being told the whole story—not surprising, since it is enigmatic prophecy, not the account of an historical conflict. But we see the beast having success—

“he will enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall... Then he will stretch out his hand against other countries, and the land of Egypt will not escape”

—as well as failure—

“but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.”

This last group of lands, “Edom, Moab and Ammon,” is today within the precincts of the nation of Jordan, and located roughly east and southeast of today’s Israel. On our map, Ammon is shown as “Amman.”



#### vv43-44

“But he will gain control over the hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the precious things of Egypt; and Libyans and Ethiopians will follow at his heels. But rumors from the East and from the North will disturb him, and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.

I don't want to read too much into this, but one gets the impression that the beast, Antichrist, may be getting desperate at this point. He takes over Egypt and takes possession of all its riches, but at the same time Egypt's western neighbor, Libya, and Ethiopia, south east of Egypt, are surging after him. On top of this the beast hears new disturbing rumors from the East—which had thus far stayed out of the conflict—and the North, which he had supposedly neutralized earlier.

*...and he will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many.*

I am no military tactician, but it seems to me that this is not a good sign for the embattled Antichrist. He responds now not with calm calculation, a cool head, but a raging fury, a burning anger. That is, he is reacting *emotionally*, rather than sensibly. He may be flailing about at this stage. But then, he is near the end of his run. Remember, there is good reason to believe that concomitant with this world war are most of the Lord's bowls of wrath being poured out upon the earth.

What a mess!

#### v45

Verses 40-44 cannot be set with any degree of specificity in the timeline of the Great Tribulation. These events certainly fall *somewhere* during the second half of the Tribulation, and probably closer to the end than the middle, but more than that we cannot say. We also cannot speak to the *duration* of this war: three and one half years, two, one? We cannot say. But with v45 we realize we are getting very near the end.

“He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain; yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.”

The first part of this verse points us toward Armageddon. Antichrist will set up his royal residence/military headquarters “between the seas and the beautiful mountain”—interpreted by most to mean between the Mediterranean and the Dead or Salt Sea; the reference to the “beautiful Holy Mountain” is to Jerusalem. [Look at the inset map in the upper right-hand corner of Chart #18.](#) To the left is the Mediterranean, at the bottom of the map is the Salt Sea, with Jerusalem circled next to it. Megiddo is circled above, just below the Valley of Esdraelon.



*Walvoord:* Geographically, [Armageddon] relates to the Mount of Megiddo located adjacent to the plain of Megiddo to the west and the large plain of Esdraelon to the northeast. Megiddo is the Hebrew word corresponding to the Greek word Armageddon. This area was the scene of many of the great battles of the Old Testament such as that of Barak and the Canaanites in Judges 4 and the victory of Gideon over the Midianites in Judges 7. Here also occurred the deaths of Saul and Josiah. The area, though it is a large one, is not sufficient for the armies of all the world, though the valley of Esdraelon is fourteen miles wide and twenty miles long. What this Scripture seems to indicate is that this area is the central point for the military conflict which ensues. Actually the armies are deployed over a 200-mile area up and down from this central location.

Daniel here does not record the battle itself, just the placement of Antichrist in the vicinity, in preparation for it.

*...yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.*

The second part of this verse prophecies the fate of the beast. After a relatively brief rise to the height of worldwide power, this man imbued with satanic power will meet an abrupt end. He will not even be permitted a judicial hearing or a period of imprisonment, as will his master, but we know from the Revelation that he will be summarily executed—not into the peaceful sleep of death, but the eternal torment of a *living* death.

And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. (Revelation 19:20)

And there will be no one to help.

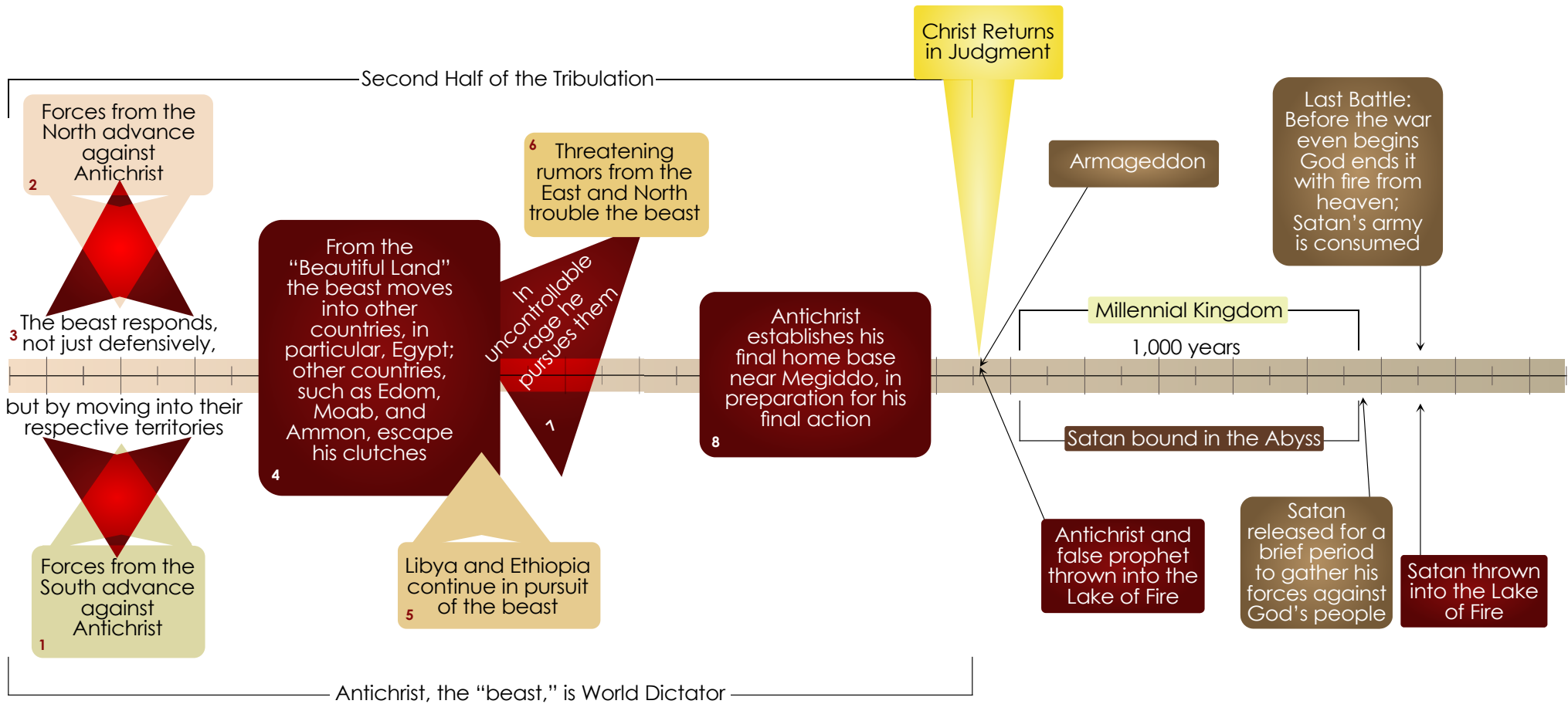
And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19:21)





# THE TRIBULATION

The Last Reciprocal War



## Footnotes

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Daniel 11:40	Daniel 11:40	Daniel 11:40	Daniel 11:41-43	Daniel 11:43	Daniel 11:44	Daniel 11:44	Daniel 11:44

