

Statement No. 1
Rome's Place in Daniel 11
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Statement: An examination of Daniel 11:16 supports the conclusion that Rome's role in the chapter's discussion of the kings of the North and South is that of an outside, third power, and not as the king of the North.

"But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed."

Most non-Adventist commentaries consider Daniel 11:16 to be a continuation of the narrative in verse 15, referring to Antiochus III the Great, who militarily wrested Palestine from Egyptian control. Adventists, on the other hand, have traditionally viewed verse 16 as the grand entrance of Rome into the prophecy by its defeat of the Seleucid kingdom. The expression "he that cometh" is applied to Rome, and the "him" against whom he comes is the Seleucid king.

It largely boils down to the correct identity of the first instance of the word "him" in the verse. As usual, the masculine singular personal pronoun is here indicated by a pronominal suffix attached to the Hebrew word for "against." This must necessarily refer back to a masculine singular antecedent. Several of the nouns in verse 15 are either feminine or plural, or both, eliminating them as grammatical candidates. Only through some sort of literary personification of the "south" in verse 15 is it possible to produce an antecedent that would allow one to apply the "him" to Egypt, which is necessary in order for "he that cometh" to be Antiochus.

But an easier antecedent for the "him" is the word "king" in verse 15, which doesn't require us to jump through any literary hoops, for one would naturally assign to a king the masculine singular personal pronoun "him." This natural reading of the text favors the king of the North as the one being attacked in verse 16, rather than being the attacker.

Those who feel that verse 16 describes Antiochus' conquests, on the other hand, would point out two considerations: (1) the lack of any clear textual break in the narrative after verse 15 that would allow us to transition to a new power, and (2) the literary parallels between verses 15 and 16, which would lead one to connect the two verses together in the narrative. Those parallels are significant:

Verse 15	Verse 16
"shall come"	"he that cometh"
"shall not withstand"	"none shall stand"
"chosen people"	"glorious land"

It is clear, therefore, that verse 16 must be tied in some way to verse 15. Considering all the factors involved, I would like to suggest that the relationship of verse 16 to verse 15 is a relationship of comparison rather than of continuation. All that Antiochus the Great accomplished in verse 15 would be exceeded immensely by the power that comes against him. Verse 15 boasts that when Antiochus comes, "the arms of *the south* shall not withstand." But verse 16 presents the comparison, declaring that "*none* [nobody at all] shall stand before" the

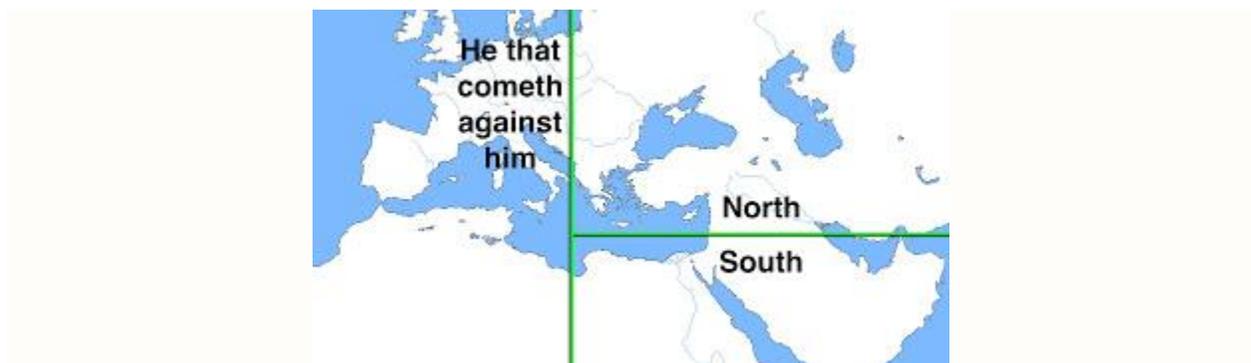
power that comes against Antiochus.

Perhaps the best explanation for the lack of a major break or transition in the text after verse 15 is that Antiochus' story, in fact, does not end here; it only experiences a momentary interruption for a brief parenthetical comment for perspective. Yes, Antiochus did capture Judea. But he that cometh against him would do according to his own will, and none would stand before him. This new invader would also stand in the glorious land, which by his hand would indeed be consumed. This brief preview introduces Rome, a new power, into the prophecy, which would ultimately annihilate Jerusalem.

While the merits of assigning verses 17-19 to Antiochus, chronicling the specific details of his downfall, are well substantiated, several factors support recognizing verse 16 as a snapshot preview of Rome's imminent takeover:

1. The phrase, "shall do according to his own will," indicates that this power is not bound by any existing circumstances. The expression may appropriately be applied to the development of a new power on the prophetic stage, as William Shea has pointed out. *Daniel: A Reader's Guide* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 246. Applied to the great empire builders Cyrus (Daniel 8:4) and Alexander the Great (Daniel 11:3), the phrase just doesn't seem to fit a struggling Seleucid who is about to surrender the prophetic spotlight over to another empire that is truly worthy of the expression.
2. It is certainly not true that "none shall stand before" Antiochus III. For when he came into confrontation with Rome, Antiochus could not stand.
3. As a result of conquering Palestine, Antiochus III did stand in the glorious land. But that is about as far as we can apply the verse to him. The word "consumed," meaning complete destruction or annihilation, is too strong of a word to describe Antiochus' relation to the glorious land. He was actually fairly gracious to the Jews.
4. If nearly one fourth of the entire chapter, ten verses (verses 10-19) out of forty-five, involve the career of Antiochus III, that would assign to a single individual a stature without equal in Daniel 11 or elsewhere. Even Alexander the Great, the only prominent individual in Chapter 8, gets only two verses in Chapter 11. Ascribing the superlative declarations of verse 16 to Antiochus III places far too much relative emphasis on this insufficiently worthy individual.

For these reasons, Rome fits the description of verse 16 much better.



But how it happened that this newly emerging empire in the West could end up stealing the prophetic spotlight from the successors of Alexander is a story that must be told. It was the activities of Antiochus III that lured the armies of Rome for the first time into Asia. Daniel

11:17-19 tells us all about it.

After noting Antiochus' determination to expand his kingdom, verse 17 discusses the treaty he made with Ptolemy V of Egypt, pledging to him his daughter, Cleopatra I. After this, moving to reclaim the Thracian territory that his ancestor Seleucus I Nicator had conquered from Lysimachus, Antiochus turned "his face unto the isles" (verse 18), and crossed over into Europe. This alarmed the Romans, who in 191 BC declared war against him. Defeated at Thermopylae, Antiochus retreated to Ephesus. The Romans pursued, and the decisive battle was fought at Magnesia in 190 BC. The Seleucid army was vanquished. The result was that Antiochus had to surrender all of Asia west of the Taurus mountains, all of his war elephants, all but twelve warships, and agree to pay 15,000 talents, which involved an annual tribute, to Rome. Thus came to an inglorious end the great Seleucid Empire. In 187 BC Antiochus was murdered in his own homeland (verse 19) for robbing a temple to make his payment to Rome. He was the last Greek king of the North to appear in the prophecy.

It is important to note that the rulers of Rome, which occupy the next ten verses (20-29), are never referred to as kings of the North. That's because their capital was in the West. From Rome they would control both the North and the South, but their identity was not to be found in either. They were of Rome, the stronghold from which they forecasted their devices (verse 24) lying beyond the dominions of Alexander's Diadochi. Rome was not the king of the North, but "he that cometh against him" (verse 16). Not until the Time of the End would the chapter's focus return to the East.

For an interesting account of the history of verses 17-19, see A. T. Jones, *The Great Empires of Prophecy*, Chapter 19, paragraphs 30-44.