

Caught Unprepared
Part 1 – The Deception

Believing on Their Word

No one likes finding out that they have been deceived. We are taught from childhood that Christians are to be honest, for Christ is the prince of truth. We feel insulted when we find out that we have been the victim of deception, whatever that deception may be. Something deep in our hearts rebels at the idea that someone else would think so little of us that they would tell us a lie. We associate truth and honesty with light, while we associate deception with darkness.

There are two powers in the world. One is the prince of light and truth, the other, the prince of darkness and deception. Jesus is the prince of light and truth, for “he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” *John 3:21*. But Satan “was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” *John 8:44*.

It is Satan who tries to deceive and turn the truth into a lie. We are told that “Satan is working that the history of the Jewish nation may be repeated in the experience of those who claim to believe present truth.” *Selected Messages Vol. 2, page 111*.

“The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ, have been presented before me again and again to illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ – how the enemy sought every occasion to take control of the minds of the Jews, and today he is seeking to blind the minds of God's servants, that they may not be able to discern the precious truth.” *Selected Messages Vol. 1, page 406*.

But how can God's chosen people, those who claim to believe present truth, be deceived by Satan? Well, how did he deceive the Jews? They were also God's chosen people, who kept the Sabbath and claimed to believe present truth.

“While the Jews desired the advent of the Messiah, they had no true conception of His mission... They had studied the prophecies, but without spiritual insight. Thus they overlooked those scriptures that point to the humiliation of Christ's first advent, and misapplied those that speak of the glory of His second coming. Pride obscured their vision. They interpreted prophecy in accordance with their selfish desires.” *Desire of Ages, pages 29-30*.

Could Satan possibly attempt to deceive God's people today by misinterpretations of prophecy? After all, his people have been the expositors of end time prophecy. While protestants were based solidly on the Bible, Adventists have been based solidly on the books of Daniel and Revelation. We know the end time scenario like the back of our hand. Surely Satan could never deceive us where prophecy is concerned. But think about it a little bit. If you are waiting for the loud cry and latter rain to come in the future, when it is actually falling around you now, would not that be a fatal mistake? Undoubtedly it would.

“It may be falling on hearts all around us, but we shall not discern or receive it.” *Review and Herald, March 2, 1897*.

But the latter rain falls during the time of trouble, right? “At that time, while the work of salvation is closing, **trouble will be coming on the earth**, and the nations will be angry, yet held in check so as not to prevent the work of the third angel. **At that time the ‘latter rain,’ or refreshing from the presence of the Lord, will come, to give power to the loud voice of the third angel**, and prepare the saints to stand in the period when the seven last plagues shall be poured out.” *Early Writings*, page 85 (*emphasis added*).

This leads us to ask the question, when does the time of trouble begin? Adventists would immediately say it begins at the Sunday law. But are you sure of that? When we examine the prophecies we find the time of trouble in Daniel 12:1 “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.”

At what time? To answer this we must read the preceding verses. Daniel 12:1 is actually the continuation of a vision that began in Daniel 10. When the book of Daniel was written it was not divided up into chapters and verses as it is today. These chapters and verses were added in the 16th century. So, to determine the time being spoken of, we must go to the end of chapter 11.

Verses 40-45 of Daniel 11 speak of the doings of a power called the king of the north who comes to his end without help and “at that time” Daniel 12:1 takes place. But what happened to the Sunday law? In order to find the Sunday law in these verses, we must use a spiritual interpretation, rather than a literal one. But whether we use a literal or spiritual interpretation we must first identify this power that comes to his end.

The identity of this king of the north has been a subject of debate in Adventism for many years. Current Adventism says he is the papacy and we have been told that this is what the Adventist pioneers, including William Miller and James White, taught. A few Adventists are teaching that the prophecy applies to Turkey and modern Islam, because this is what Uriah Smith taught in his book on Daniel and Revelation. Some think that it has a modern day application involving the conflicts in Syria and Libya, but back in the 1990’s some thought it had to do with the gulf war in Kuwait. Outside Adventism, the ideas are even more widely spread, from the view that it was the Ottoman Empire to the idea that it is Russia. How are we to navigate this maze of interpretations? Fortunately, we have a guide in the Spirit of prophecy that can help us.

But doing a search on the king of the north we find out that sister White never uses this phrase, so that isn’t helpful at all. After careful searching we find this “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 of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place.” *Testimonies Volume 9*, page 14.

What are we to do in the absence of any direct instruction on this point? “The truth has been set forth at the appointed time by the very men whom God was leading to do this special work. These men followed on step by step in the very fulfillment of prophecy, and those who have not had a personal experience in this work, are to take the Word of God and believe on ‘their word’ who have been led by the Lord in the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages... It is true that there are prophecies yet to be fulfilled. **But very erroneous work has been done again and again, and will continue to be done by those who seek to find new light in the prophecies, and who begin by**

turning away from the light that God has already given... But the Lord does not lay upon those who have not had an experience in His work the burden of making a new exposition of those prophecies which He has, by His Holy Spirit, moved upon His chosen servants to explain.”

Selected Messages Volume 2, pages 111-112.

Since the pioneers, including William Miller and James White, taught that the king the north was the papacy, we should believe on their word, right? But maybe we ought to start by seeing for ourselves what their word was.

Reviewing the Prophecies

In order to understand what the pioneers wrote on Daniel 11:40-45 we need to review the prophecies of Daniel, to have them fresh in our minds.

The first prophecy of Daniel is found in Chapter 2. It is a dream given, not to Daniel, but to king Nebuchadnezzar, and then forgotten by him. His magicians and soothsayers were no help, so he ordered them all killed, but Daniel begged for a little time and promised the king an answer. When the king granted his request for time, he and his three companions prayed and God gave Daniel the same dream and its interpretation.

The dream was of a great image, an object that would incite great respect in a pagan monarch. But this image was made of different metals, each metal representing succeeding kingdoms. The head of gold was Babylon. The breast of silver was Medo-Persia. The belly and thighs of brass were Greece. The iron legs were Rome and the feet of iron and clay were the division of Rome into the ten kingdoms of Europe. In the days of the ten kingdoms a stone, cut out without hands, or without human efforts, strikes the image on the feet and breaks it into pieces, before filling the whole earth. This represented the second coming and Christ's kingdom.

As you can tell, this prophecy is simply a general outline of history and leaves out a lot of detail about the papacy and other important events of history. It doesn't even mention Christ's first advent in the time of Rome.

But in Daniel 7 there is another prophecy, this one given to Daniel himself. This time God uses wild, ravenous, beasts to represent the same kingdoms he presented to Nebuchadnezzar as various metals. Why the change of symbols? Isn't this inconsistent? But remember, that in the first vision God was talking to a heathen monarch who viewed his kingdom as great and wonderful, so God chose to use a symbol that would attract his attention and excite his respect. An image, being an object of worship did exactly that. Daniel, on the other hand, being a captive of this kingdom, would not view it with such reverence and love. God chose to represent the kingdoms as ravening beasts, which more accurately reflected their true character and better fitted Daniel's own experience.

Again, God begins with the kingdom currently in power, using a lion with eagle's wings to represent Babylon. A bear with three ribs in its mouth to represent Medo-Persia. A leopard with four heads was Greece, and a great and terrible beast was Rome. But this time there is more detail added, particularly about the fourth kingdom. This time ten horns represent the divisions of Rome and there is a little horn that represents the papacy, this is followed by the judgment and the kingdom of Christ. But again, much

is passed over. The first advent is, again, not mentioned.

In Daniel 8 and 9 there is another vision, this one was given right at the end of the Babylonian kingdom and begins with a ram representing Medo-persia. This is followed by a he goat representing Greece, and this time Rome is represented by a little horn growing from the goat. This vision does not mention the break up of Rome. But in chapter 9, which is a further explanation of chapter 8, we are given detail about the exact time of Christ's first advent, before jumping to the judgment and Christ's kingdom.

The fourth and final prophecy of Daniel is found in chapters 10-12. This prophecy is unlike any of the others in that there are no symbols here. We find no images made of metal or ravening beasts, there are no horns, simply kings and kingdoms. In fact, in Daniel 11:2 Gabriel says to Daniel, "And now will I show thee the truth." This does not mean that the other visions were not true, but rather that this time he isn't going to use symbols. In this vision the angel is simply explaining what will happen in plain language.

The first part of the prophecy is pretty easy to understand and there is very little disagreement on it. It is simply too obvious that it is speaking about Alexander the Great and the divisions of his empire. But by the time we get to verse 40, we reach an area of major disagreement. We are going to look closely at what the pioneers had to say about verses 40-45 and in addition we are going to need to look at verses 36-39, as they set the stage for what follows. In order to understand the discussion we need to consider carefully the grammar of verse 40.

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." *Daniel 11:40*

We find in this verse a lot of action with several different players. Two are easily identified as the king of the north and the king of the south, but there are also three pronouns. Remember your English lessons in school? A noun is a word that refers to a person place or thing. A pronoun is a word such as he or him that refers to a noun that was used previously. The word to which the pronoun refers is called the antecedent. The antecedent always comes before the pronoun that refers to it.

For example: Sam went to town. He bought a shirt.

It is clear that Sam is the one who went to town and bought the shirt.

But if you reverse this: He went to town. Sam bought a shirt.

You know that Sam bought the shirt but you don't know who went to town. Keep this in mind.

The first pronoun we find in this verse is **him**. This is the power that the king of the south pushes at "And at the time of the end shall the *king of the south* push at **him**." The noun that **him** refers to must be identified in the previous verses.

In verse 36 we read "And the king shall do according to his will" *Daniel 11:36*. From this point to verse 40 all the pronouns obviously refer to this "willful king." So in verse 40 we see three powers. The

willful king, the king of the south, and the king of the north. “And at the time of the end shall the *king of the south* push at **him**: and the king of the north shall come against **him** like a whirlwind.”

This is where things get a little confusing. Proper English grammar would dictate that the second **him** would refer to the same willful king power that the first **him** refers to. Thus “the king of the south shall push at the willful king and the king of the north shall come against the willful king like a whirlwind.” There are plainly three powers here.

But current thought on this verse confuses the issue. Ignoring the correct grammatical structure of the verse, we are told that when the king of the north is brought into the picture, the verse is renaming the first **him** (or willful king). Thus the antecedent (noun to which a pronoun refers) comes after the pronoun that refers to it. Something never done in English grammar. With this rendering the verse reads the king of the south shall push at the king of the north, and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind.” You can easily see that this drastically changes the meaning of the verse. Instead of three obvious players there are now two players and the second him refers to the king of the south instead of the willful king, who is eliminated completely by confusing his identity with that of the king of the north.

This grammatical structure of verse 40 is essential to keep in mind when we consider the positions taken on this subject by the pioneers.

William Miller and the Adventist Pioneers

If we are to “believe on their word,” as we read earlier, we need to know what their word was, right?

Today it is generally understood that James White, as well as the majority of the principle leaders in the Millerite movement, believed the king of the north to be the papacy. This is taken by many as solid evidence that the king of the north is to be identified with the papacy. We, ourselves, have made this statement many times, until we decided to look at the actual quotes from the pioneers. Let’s take a look at what they said, beginning with William Miller.

William Miller plainly teaches that the willful king of verses 36-39 was the papacy. Now, if we make the assumption that we talked about earlier, that the willful king is renamed the king of the north in verse 40, we can assume that William taught that the king of the north was the papacy. But let’s not make any assumptions here, for he also had something to say about verses 40-45.

“We therefore begin at the 40th verse of the 11th chapter of Daniel, ‘and at the time of the end’ of this papal civil power. Now, another person has obtained this civil power: this was Bonaparte, the ruler of the French nation... At this time, then, our prophecy begins, and Bonaparte is the person designated by the pronouns he and him in the prophecy.” *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ About The Year 1843; Exhibited in a Course of Lectures by William Miller pages 104-105.*

He goes on to show that the prophecy is perfectly fulfilled by Napoleon and that he came to his end with none to help him in 1815. To come to this conclusion he interprets the “glorious land” and “between the seas” to mean Italy. Now, that is definitely not what we expected to find him teaching. Could this reference be a mistake?

Here is another statement from Miller where he paraphrases verse 40: “And at the time of the end (of Antichrist), shall the king of the south (Spain) push at France (Vendean war) and the king of the north (Great Britain) shall come against France, like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and the French (or Bonaparte the principle ruler;) shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.” *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ About the Year A. D. 1843, and of His Personal Reign of 1000 Years. 1833. (Parenthesis Supplied by Miller.)*

This makes it even clearer that William Miller did not believe the king of north to be the papacy. Joshua Himes paraphrases it the same way “If this is correct, then France is intended by he or him in this prophecy. In order then, to give my view, the reader will permit me to paraphrase these few remaining verses: And the time of the end (of Anti-christ,) shall the king of the south (Spain) push at France (Vendean war) and the king of the north (Great Britain) shall come against France, like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and the French (or Bonaparte the principal ruler;) shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.” *Signs of the Times and Expositor of Prophecy, vol 2, No. 7, July 1, 1841, History of Bonaparte, 1290 days. (Parenthesis Supplied by Himes.)*

Charles Fitch said it this way, after quoting Daniel 11:40-45, “Here we have a most striking epitome of the history of Bonaparte. All that was here foretold was true of him, as history abundantly shows. He did plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in Italy, which we know is between two seas, and which has ever been the glorious holy mountain of the Romans. On the 15th of May 1796, Bonaparte took possession of Milan in Italy – and at that place on the 26th of May, 1805, he was crowned king of Italy. Thus he planted the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain of the Romans. But he came to his end on a solitary Island, as we well know, and none helped him. All these predicted events therefore are now in the history of the past.” *Signs of the Times and Expositor of Prophecy, Vol 3, No. 8, May 25, 1842 Extract from Fitch’s Sermons, No. 6.*

Josiah Litch is the only Advent leader we have been able to find who handled the prophecy differently. In regard to the willful king he says, after quoting Daniel 11:35-36, “Such a system as is here described was the French Revolution. It was founded in Atheism, and triumphed in the overthrow of everything which interposed a barrier to their object. The seed of this revolution were sown by Voltaire, the noted French infidel, who in early youth vowed to dedicate his life to the extermination of Christianity.” *Prophetic Expositions, vol 2; or A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Time of Its Establishment, 1842.*

We see from this that Litch did not agree with the other three that the willful king was the papacy. When he got to verse 40 he explains it this way, “ ‘The king of the south shall push at him.’ At whom? The answer is, at the subject of prophecy in the preceding verses – the revolutionary government of France. That power is clearly antecedent to ‘him,’ in this verse. ‘The king of the south.’ And who is the king of the south? The answer is given in the exposition of the first six verses of the chapter, which the reader can examine. It is clearly the government of Egypt. I do not know that there is a dissenting voice to the application of this term to Egypt in the former part of this chapter; nor can I see any good reason why there should be in the latter part, as long as it was literally fulfilled in Egypt. That a collision did actually take place between the French and Egypt is notorious... Next came St. Jean D’ Acre, in Syria, ‘the king of the north,’ which was to come against him ‘like a whirlwind.’ ” *Prophetic Expositions, vol 2; or A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Time*

of Its Establishment, 1842.

He goes on to show that the rest of the prophecy is fulfilled by Napoleon who came to his end in 1815. Of the leaders of the Advent movement, we've only been able to locate statements on the king of the north by Miller, Himes, Fitch, and Litch. They all agree that the power that came to its end in verse 45 was Napoleon, but they don't all agree on who the king of the north was.

These four are probably the most prominent leaders in the Millerite movement, but this is certainly a far cry from what we thought they said. Not only did none of them say that the king of the north was the papacy, but they didn't think that the king of the north came to his end in verse 40, and all of them saw three powers in verse 40, not two. They clearly followed the logical grammar that we discussed earlier.

But what about James White? He was the exception, right? We have heard over and over about his disagreement with Uriah Smith and that James White believed that the king of the north was the papacy. But when we carefully study everything we can find that he wrote we discover that he never tells us in detail how he interpreted the prophecy.

In 1847 he printed a booklet that included articles by him, Ellen White, and Joseph Bates. In the article by James White entitled *The Time of Trouble* he makes this statement. "But as I cannot harmonize either of these views (speaking of two views of when Michael stands up) with the Bible, I wish to humbly give my brethren and sisters my view of these events... Michael is to stand up at the time that the last power in chap. 11, comes to his end, and none to help him. This power is the last that treads down the true church of God: and as the true church is still trodden down, and cast out by all Christendom, it follows that the last oppressive power has not 'come to his end;' and Michael has not stood up. This last power that treads down the saints is brought to view in Rev. 13:11-18. His number is 666." *A Word to the "Little Flock" pages 8-9. (Parenthesis supplied)*

This statement is taken by some to mean that James and Ellen White, and Joseph Bates agreed that the king of the north was the papacy. This seems to be stretching things a bit, when James White is presenting it as "my view." We have been unable to find anything by Joseph Bates on the subject and Ellen White says almost nothing about it. But it is thought because six pages of this book were written by sister White that she had to have agreed with her husband's view of things, but she published many articles in the *Review* and this is never taken to mean that she agreed with all the views of everyone else who published articles in the same *Reviews*. The same could be said of Joseph Bates, just the fact that he wrote part of the book does not mean he wholeheartedly agreed with James White's personal view. Since he says nothing about it, we just can't be sure of his position.

Please notice that James White did not say "the papacy is the king of the north, which is the last oppressive power." He says that the papacy is the power that comes to his end. In fact, in the December 12, 1854 issue of the *Review and Herald* he quotes the following from the *Bible Examiner* "We do not believe that Russia is 'the king of the north.' It is our *opinion* that any power that reigns over Syria – for the time being – 'the king of the north,' spoken of Daniel xi; hence that the Turkish Dynasty is *now* that power... No arguments, nor ridicule, that has yet appeared, has in the least shaken our mind; yet we do not affirm that we are right; *events* may convince us that we are wrong in this matter. We have no theory at stake, and shall feel, we think no mortification to find we are – just what we believe all others

to be – *fallible*.” *Review and Herald*, December 12, 1854. (Italics in the original.) James White makes no qualifying statement either before or after this quote to indicate that he or the denomination does not agree with this view, and as editor, he surely must have had something to do with including the quote in the paper.

We find another interesting statement in *The Sounding of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation 8 and 9*, published in 1859. “There is scarcely so uniform an agreement among interpreters concerning any part of the apocalypse as respecting the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets, or the first and second wo, to the Saracens and Turks... and the close coincidence, or rather express identity between the king of the south, or the king of the north, as described by Daniel, and the first and second wo, will be noted in the subsequent illustration of the latter.” Again, these are not words from the pen of James White himself, he is quoting a passage from Keith. It would, however, have been a simple thing for him to leave out this portion of the passage, if he did not agree with it. It adds little to the exposition he is making of the seven trumpets. But he left it in and makes no qualifying statement about it. This leads us to the startling conclusion that James White may have believed that the king of the north was Turkey, even though he clearly believed that the power which comes to its end is the papacy.

But there are also other articles in the *Review* on this topic. In 1853 Otis Nichols published an article in the *Review and Herald* titled *Papacy and France*. In this article he presents the view that the king of the north is England and the king of the south is a coalition of the French and the papacy. Here again we see the idea that the king of the north and the willful king are two separate powers. He closely follows Miller’s reasoning but says verse 45 is unfulfilled. There is also an article by Hiram Edson in 1856 titled *The Times of the Gentiles* in which he discusses the reasons why the United States is the “glorious land” of Daniel 11. It seems that James White agreed with Edson on this point because he brings it out 21 years later in a *Review* article in 1877. But Edson does not elaborate on the king of the north except to say this: “Verses 36-39 contain a catalogue of the acts and doings of the Papal king; and verse 40 foretells an event which should mark the time of the end, where the indignation would cease; viz, ‘And at the time of the end the king of the South shall push at him.’ He also foretells that the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, and gives a prophetic history of his campaign, at which time Michael would stand up, and there or then should be a time of trouble such as never was.” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, vol 7, January 10, 1856. He obviously puts verses 40-45 in the future the same as James White apparently does.

We have read and cataloged every *Review and Herald* and every *Signs of the Times* article available on the General Conference Archives website in which the phrase king of the north appears, as well as numerous other church periodicals and writings by the pioneers. Based on what others were writing at the time, we could easily conclude that James White was looking for two opposing powers, one from the south and one from the north, to attack the papacy, and lead to its demise. But, lacking any definite word from him on this, we would be better to leave the poor man in peace, and not try to force him to support any position on the interpretation of these verses.

Not a single one of the pioneers from 1840 to 1870 say that the king of the north was the papacy. Of the eleven references we found, four of them say it was Great Britain, two say that it was Syria (the Ottoman Empire or Turkey in their day), one says that it is Russia, and the rest are unclear. As for who comes to his end in verse 45, four say that it was Napoleon Bonaparte, three say that it is the papacy and the rest are unclear. The willful king is the only one that seems to have any kind of unanimity, but even on this the opinions are far from unanimous, six say that he is the papacy and one says that he is

France, the rest are unclear. (For a detailed chart of our findings on the pioneers and their statements, please see the chart *Pioneer Interpretations of Daniel 11:40-45*.)

This leaves us with the surprising conclusion that the majority view of the Advent pioneers was that the king of the north was Great Britain, the king who comes to his end in verse 45 was Napoleon and the willful king was the papacy. The only point on which we can truly claim a unanimous opinion among the pioneers is the fact that the grammar of verse 40 requires three powers to be in conflict.

We are left with the question, how can we “believe on their word” when “their word” is so scattered? Was there ever an agreement on this important point? Surprisingly, the answer is yes.

In the year 1873 Uriah Smith published his book *Thoughts on Daniel*. In this book he brings out the idea that the willful king of verse 36 was the French revolution and the king of the north of verse 40 was the Ottoman Turks, who would come to their end just prior to the close of probation and the second coming. It has been asserted by some that this was an entirely new view brought in by Uriah Smith without the approval of his brethren and that he was alone in publishing it. Was it really a new view, when Josiah Litch had already preached something similar before 1844?

The only thing truly new about Smith’s view was the thought that it was the king of the north who would come to his end in verse 45, and he goes to great length to explain why he thinks this. We have not been able to find any published statements confirming the idea that Uriah Smith was alone in his views. Rather it seems that most of the brethren agreed with him. The only published opposition came from James White. In the same article in 1877 where he mentions the “glorious land” he cautions against definite predictions based on unfulfilled prophecy and then says “It may be said there is a general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and Russia as the fulfillment of the portion of the prophecy which will give confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message. But what will be the result of this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected, is an anxious question.” *The Review and Herald*, Nov. 29, 1877, “*Unfulfilled Prophecy*.”

What does he mean by a “general agreement”? Doesn’t this mean that most Adventists thought that the king of the north was Turkey? Why would he call it a “general agreement” if only Uriah Smith presented this view of the king of the north?

Other than James White, there seems to have been little or no opposition to the position taken by Uriah Smith. In fact his view became the keynote of almost every Adventist prophecy presentation. It was used to show that current world events indicated Christ’s coming to be very soon. The Advent message gained widespread interest and many heard the truth and were converted by this presentation on the king of the north. The majority of official Adventist publications from 1873 till somewhere around 1950 took this view of the king of the north. We even have advertisements for the Signs of the Times and the Watchman from 1913 inviting people to subscribe to these magazines to read articles on the Eastern Question and Daniel 11:45.

It is clear that the concept that the pioneers viewed the papacy as the king of the north is completely unfounded. But on who’s word should we believe? Are we then open to make our own exposition of this prophecy, independent of the pioneers? But what of the verse in Peter? “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” *2 Peter 1:20*. Let’s take a look at the Spirit of

Prophecy and see what she has to say on this topic.

The Eastern Question, Ellen White and Uriah Smith.

In order to understand the discussion and what occurred in the church from 1870 to 1950, we need to understand the background of what was called the eastern question. “The ‘Eastern Question’, in European history, encompasses the diplomatic and political problems posed by the decay of the Ottoman Empire. The expression does not apply to any one particular problem, but instead includes a variety of issues raised during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, including instability in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire. The Eastern Question is normally dated to 1774, when the Russo-Turkish War (1768–1774) ended in defeat for the Ottomans. As the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was believed to be imminent, the European powers engaged in a power struggle to safeguard their military, strategic and commercial interests in the Ottoman domains. Imperial Russia stood to benefit from the decline of the Ottoman Empire; on the other hand, Austria-Hungary and the United Kingdom deemed the preservation of the Empire to be in their best interests. The Eastern Question was put to rest after World War I, one of whose outcomes was the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.” *Wikipedia article “Eastern Question”*

Simply put, the eastern question was, what happens to Europe when the Ottoman Empire collapses? During the 1870’s through World War I, the secular news papers were filled with references to the eastern question and the military build up in Europe that resulted from tensions related to it. It is important to understand that the Ottoman Empire has not existed since 1922. Turkey, today, is not the Ottoman Empire. But in Uriah Smith’s day the Ottoman Empire was commonly known as Turkey, a name derived from the Turk, the ethnic group from which the Ottoman Empire arose. This empire extended from Greece to Iran, down to Egypt and controlled Palestine and parts of Saudi Arabia.

A number of wars were fought about the Eastern Question during the 19th century. Among them were the Crimean war of the 1850’s and Russo-Turkish war of the 1870’s. It was also the primary cause of World War I. With this in mind, let’s take a look at what we can find out about Ellen White’s view of this subject.

Ellen White has very little to say about Daniel 11. She only says “The prophecies of the eleventh of Daniel have almost reached their final fulfillment.” *Review and Herald, November 24, 1904*. She never mentions the king of the north and says only this about the Eastern Question “Sunday morning boats and trains poured their living freight upon the ground in thousands. Elder Smith spoke in the morning upon the Eastern question. The subject was of special interest, and the people listened with the most earnest attention.” *Life Sketches, page 225*. This same statement is repeated in *Testimonies, Volume 4, page 279* and *Review and Herald September 6, 1877*. There is, however, an incident of interest related by Arthur White in his biography.

“One of the testimonies to individuals, delivered most likely only in oral form, was addressed to James White—a reproof for his course of action just before the combined camp meeting and General Conference session. He and Uriah Smith held conflicting views on the prophecy of the ‘king of the North’ pictured in Daniel 11, and the power presented in verse 45 that would come to his end with none to help him. White, in his Sabbath morning address September 28 in the newly pitched camp-meeting tent, countered Smith’s interpretations. He felt that Smith’s approach, indicating that the world was on

the verge of Armageddon, would threaten the strong financial support needed for the rapidly expanding work of the church.

“Ellen White’s message to her husband was a reproof for taking a course that would lead the people to observe differences of opinion among leaders and to lower their confidence in them. For the church leaders to stand in a divided position before the people was hazardous. James White accepted the reproof, but it was one of the most difficult experiences he was called to cope with, for he felt he was doing the right thing. At no time did Ellen White reveal which man was right in the position he held. That was not the issue. The crux of the matter was the importance of leaders presenting a united front before the people.” *Ellen G. White Biography, Volume 3, The Lonely Years, 1876-1891, pages 96-97.*

The incident is handled differently by Raymond Cottrell. “The following evening he repeated the same line of reasoning at the close of an address by Uriah Smith in which reference was made to the Eastern question, before delegates assembled at the seventeenth session of the General Conference.

“That James White should thus differ publicly with Uriah Smith at the close of a sermon whose main emphasis had been the nearness of Christ’s coming indicated an imminent crisis which might have resulted in schism within the church. Bitter feelings were apparently taking the place of brotherly love and something was urgently needed to save a dangerous situation from further deterioration. It seems that Sister White counseled her husband after that evening meeting to the effect that his taking public issue with Elder Smith was a mistake. Regardless of the respective merits of the views presented his course was clearly in error and it was wise to let the matter drop, at least for the time being. Of this experience Sister White later wrote:

“‘My husband had some ideas on some points differing from the views taken by his brethren. I was shown that however true his views were God did not call for him to put them in front before the brethren and create differences of ideas...’ (E. G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 76, 77, which is considered by trustees of the Ellen G. White estate to refer to this incident).” (Raymond F. Cottrell, in his *Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon*) Quoted in *The Truth Concerning Mrs. E.G. White, Uriah Smith, and the King of The North* page 14-15. (The parenthetical information about the Ellen G. White trustees was supplied by Louis Were.)

But by far the clearest rendering of the event is given by D. E. Mansell in an article in the *Ministry Magazine* in 1967, “But Smith continued to make predictions concerning the nearness of Turkey’s end, and in June, 1878, went so far as to express the opinion that ‘we have reached the preliminary movements of the great battle of Armageddon’ (*Review and Herald*, June 6, 1878, p. 180). The inevitable clash between the two leaders came during the camp meeting that preceded the 1878 General Conference held in Battle Creek, Michigan. According to witnesses present at the camp meeting, Uriah Smith spoke at one of the early meetings on the Eastern question and again expressed the opinion that the Russo-Turkish war then in progress might develop into Armageddon. When Smith finished his discourse, James White spoke for seventy minutes, during which time he publicly rebutted Smith’s view... The first part of White’s rebuttal appeared in the *Review and Herald* of October 3, 1878, and was to have been continued, but it stopped right there. Why? William C. White, son of James and Ellen White, relates that a day or two after the meeting at which Smith and White spoke, Ellen White was given a vision showing that her husband erred in publicly disagreeing with Smith. After coming out of vision, she related to her husband what she had been shown. James White accepted the rebuke and discontinued his series of articles. In rebuking her husband, Mrs. White did not attempt to resolve the

question of the identity of the king of the north. Indeed, the question is not settled in any way in her writings.” *D. E. Mansell, Ministry Magazine, November 1967.*

Not one of these three men was present when the events recorded took place. They are all secondary sources. But we do find an interesting statement by John Loughborough in 1915. “One Brother who had intimated in his writing on the subject that the king of the North might be the pope, told me that Sister White told him he ‘never should have intimated any such thing, and that his idea would only create confusion.’ This was not put in print, but it was what he told me in Autumn, 1878.” *J. N. Loughborough to Wilfrid Belleau, Sanitarium, California. March 25, 1915 College Place, Washington, (Box 3).* While we do not know for sure who this brother is, the dates do line up and James White is the only brother we know of who was publicly teaching a view similar to this at that time.

It is interesting to note that Sister White rebuked James White for differing from his brethren but does not rebuke Smith. If Smith was the only one holding these views of the king of north, as it has been claimed, why did she not rebuke him for bringing in a difference of opinion? If his position was in opposition to the unanimous opinion of the pioneers, why wasn’t he rebuked for causing confusion?

Mrs. White was never afraid to rebuke Uriah Smith and did so on many occasions, in particular about the rejection of the 1888 message. But all of this was after he published his book on Daniel and Revelation.

She does have this to say about *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* by Uriah Smith “Of all the books that have come forth from the press, those mentioned are of the greatest consequence in the past and at the present time. I know that ‘Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation’ has done a great work in this country. I know also that the light given me by God in the books I have published has done a good work, and I praise the Lord for this. Other books have stood in their lot and place.” *Pamphlet 79 Special Instruction Regarding Royalties (1899)*

In 1902 she says “The people in the world need to know that the signs of the times are fulfilling. Take to them the books that will enlighten them. ‘Daniel and the Revelation,’ ‘Great Controversy,’ ‘Patriarchs and Prophets,’ and ‘Desire of Ages,’ should now go to the world. The grand instruction contained in ‘Daniel and the Revelation’ has been eagerly read in many lands by those who were hungering for truth. This book has been the means of bringing many precious souls from darkness to light. It should everywhere be given a wide circulation.” *Pacific Union Recorder, November 6, 1902.*

In 1905 she said this, “Instruction has been given me that the important books containing the light that God has given regarding Satan’s apostasy in heaven should be given a wide circulation just now; for through them the truth will reach many minds. ‘Patriarchs and Prophets,’ ‘Daniel and the Revelation,’ and ‘Great Controversy’ are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will open many blind eyes.” *Review and Herald, February 16, 1905.*

We also find this statement, “Especially should the book Daniel and the Revelation be brought before people as the very book for this time. This book contains the message which all need to read and understand. Translated into many different languages, it will be a power to enlighten the world... Let our canvassers urge this book upon the attention of all. The Lord has shown me that this book will do a good work in enlightening those who become interested in the truth for this time. Those who embrace the truth now, who have not shared in the experiences of those who entered the work in the early

history of the message, should study the instruction given in Daniel and the Revelation, becoming familiar with the truth it presents. Those who are preparing to enter the ministry, who desire to become successful students of the prophecies, will find ‘Daniel and the Revelation’ an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein. Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers. They need that one teach them what is meant by godliness and truth. The great, essential questions which God would have presented to the people are found in ‘Daniel and the Revelation.’ There is found solid, eternal truth for this time. Everyone needs the light and information it contains.” *Manuscript Releases, Volume 1, page 61.*

“The interest in Daniel and the Revelation is to continue as long as probationary time shall last. God used the author of this book as a channel through which to communicate light to direct minds to the truth. Shall we not appreciate this light, which points us to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, our King?” *Manuscript Releases Vol. 1 page 62.*

If this book is to be of importance for all of probation, why does it receive so little attention today? But didn’t Uriah Smith’s book contain major errors that Sister White said needed correcting? The only statement we can find in proof of this is referring to the controversy regarding the daily. “Then in this connection, obviously speaking of Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation, which she held in high esteem, she wrote: ‘In some of our important books that have been in print for years, and which have brought many to a knowledge of the truth, there may be found matters of minor importance that call for careful study and correction. Let such matters be considered by those regularly appointed to have the oversight of our publications. Let not these brethren, nor our canvassers, nor our ministers magnify these matters in such a way as to lessen the influence of these good soul-saving books.’—Ibid. (see also 1SM, p. 165).” *Ellen G. White Biography, Volume 6, The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915, page 258.*

It is interesting that the book was edited at least twice after this but the teaching on the king of the north being Turkey was not changed. The denominational view was that the king of the north was the Ottoman Empire. Speaking of the last revision of the book in 1944, we read “Other doctrines, or interpretations, not specifically corroborated by the Spirit of prophecy were handled on their merits. Where there was a marked difference of view, the decision was in favor of the author’s presentation, with no intention that the decision settle the difference. For this reason the ‘daily’ of Daniel 8 was left almost exactly as the author wrote it. The interpretation of the ‘king of the north’ was unchanged. Some other points, very minor in character, on which there is no current differing, were modified slightly.” *Ministry Magazine, May 1945.* This is interesting, when we consider that at least one statement of Smith’s in regard to Revelation 12 was entirely reversed by the revision committee. But we will not take time here to consider the relative merits of revising and reversing an author’s work after his death and presenting it as though he wrote it that way himself.

Even A. G. Daniels, the general conference president, published an entire book on the king of the north subject in 1917 titled *The World War, Its Relation to the Eastern Question and Armageddon.*

We also find this interesting statement in the same letter by John Loughborough we quoted earlier. “As to where you can get information on ‘the king of the North,’ I think you will find it in Bro.

Daniel's book on *The World War*. Brother Uriah Smith laid no claims to "inspiration," but his view on the king of the North is well established by Sister White in speaking of one occasion when he spoke on the 'Eastern Question.' This you can read in *Volume 4 of the Testimonies*, page 278-279, where she called the discourse 'a subject of special interest,' etc. It would bother those holding another view, than what he advocated, to find a word from her favoring their views." *J. N. Loughborough to Wilfrid Belleau, Sanitarium, California. March 25, 1915 College Place, Washington, (Box 3).*

But there was a man named Milton Charles Wilcox who began to agitate a different view. Milton Wilcox was the dean of theology at the College of Medical Evangelists (later Loma Linda University) and a book editor for the Pacific Press. He was also editor of the *Signs of the Times* from the 1890's till around 1913. He is easily confused with Francis Wilcox, the editor of the review. Milton Wilcox printed a series of articles in the *Signs of the times* about his views in 1912. These are the only articles from 1877 until the 1980's that take a position on the king of the north different from Uriah Smith. In these articles he says "NOT ONE OF HIS SUCCESSORS AMONG THE SELEUCIDS EVER, RULED IN THRACE, OR WHAT IS NOW TURKEY. Antiochus Magnus claimed territory there, and thought to rebuild Lysimachia, but never did. Therefore, the possession of Thrace, or what is now Turkey in Europe, as an identification of the king of the north, has no bearing upon the prophecy. For if so, Ceraunus should be the next king of the north after Lysimachus, or following Seleucus Nicator, instead of Antiochus Soter for CERAUNUS WAS RULER OF THRACE, followed by others, until the Roman conquest of B.C. 168; but no one argues that Ceraunus became king of the north. The great fact is that the king of the north in this prophecy is the great dominant power, whatever its nation or king, north of Palestine, successors to Babylon, of the 'north country,' and so prophecy regards it." *Signs of the times, April 16, 1912. (Emphasis supplied by Wilcox)*

Of course the possession of Thrace had no bearing on the prophecy, no one ever claimed that it did. Rather, it was the power that controlled Syria that was considered the king of the north. As for Wilcox's argument that it is the power that controlled Babylon that was the king of the north, he ignores the fact that in 1912, Turkey, or the Ottoman Empire, did indeed rule over both Syria and Babylon and was the dominant power in the region.

Further on in the series he makes a more drastic change to another teaching of the church. He says, "But the persecution and the corruption goes on, and has gone on, 'even to the time of the end; because it is yet for the time appointed.' Once more are we brought to the end of the great period with which these visions have to do, the 2,300 days." *Signs of the Times, April 23, 1912.* Here he changes the time of the end from 1798 to 1844. We are reminded of the James White's caution to Smith in 1877 "Positions taken upon the Eastern question are based upon prophecies which have not yet their fulfillment. Here we should tread lightly, and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement." *James White, Review and Herald November 29, 1877.* This is taken by some to mean that Uriah Smith was moving landmarks of the Advent faith, but it is not Smith whom we find doing this, it is Wilcox, who moves the landmark of the time of end.

Wilcox places Great Britain as the king of the south and says that verse 40-45 are yet to be fulfilled. He is the first person in Adventism to write an article placing only two powers in conflict in verse 40. For he says "Those days ended in 1844. 'The king of the north' is still the great dominating power of the north, Rome, as in previous prophecy... The king of the south is the opposer of the king of the north, the power occupying Egypt... England is to-day in control of Egypt... The king of the south will contend with the *king* of the north; and the *king* of the north... will come against the king of the south

like a whirlwind with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships..." *Signs of the Times*, April 30, 1912. He completely ignores the grammatical structure that require three powers to be in conflict in this verse and focuses instead on the idea that the phrase "at the time of the end" should read "in the time of the end."

It is interesting that shortly after publishing his series on Daniel 11, Wilcox left the editorship of the *Signs of the Times*. In 1914 articles began to appear in the *Signs* stressing the Ottoman Empire as the king of the north. As far as we know, Wilcox's articles are the only articles to ever appear in either the *Signs* or the *Review*, which state that the king of the north is the papacy.

In the month long 1919 Bible conference Wilcox presented his views at length. This conference was called by A.G. Daniels to discuss matters of difficulty in Adventist theology. There were several subjects covered but the most prominent are the nature and mediatorial work of Christ, the king of the north, and the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy. "These issues were not settled in 1919, but became a topic of debate through the rest of the twentieth century. What did catch most Adventists by surprise, after the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts were discovered in 1974 in the newly organized General Conference Archives, was the candor and extent of such discussions." *Adventist review : Sifting Through the Past*.

After reading through the transcripts for this meeting it seems that nearly half the discussion was about the king of the north. This discussion clearly reveals that the official denominational position for the previous fifty years had been that the Ottoman Empire was the king of the north. Some even claimed that the church had been preaching it for seventy years. Near the end of the conference H.C. Lacey made this comment, "What shall we do when we are face to face with different views on Daniel and Revelation?... I think we should tell them the present denominational position. Daniel 11 is the biggest thing among us at the present time, and I should say, teach them the old view, which is the one the majority of our people believe; but if you feel that there is a sufficient demand for the new view, I would give them that in a private way." *Manuscripts of the 1919 Bible Conference*, page 1176.

What was the old view? The denominational position? The view held by the majority of the people? It was that the king of the north was the Ottoman Empire. The "new view" was that it was the papacy. Throughout the conference the old view, the then current denominational position, referred to Turkey and C.M. Sorensen, after presenting the old view, had this to say "The preaching of this subject in the fear of God, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, has done a great deal of good in days past. It has brought a great many men and women to a conscious realization that God lives and moves, and that human affairs are subject to God's overruling providence. Those values are still in that mode of presentation... There is both chronological and geographical unity in this prophecy." *Report of Bible Conference Held in Tacoma Park, D.C. July 1-19, 1919*, page 250.

Wilcox presented his new view extensively. The assertion was never made during this conference that there was any majority view among early Adventists on this point. According to the people presenting the new view, there had been no consensus of opinion on the king of the north until Uriah Smith "foisted" the idea of Turkey onto the Adventist church. Even Wilcox openly points out that William Miller taught that verses 40-45 were fulfilled by Napoleon.

At one point it was mentioned that the brethren in the early days would stop and pray over a matter of difficulty such as this and it was urged that they stop the meeting and pray. But those holding the

new view continued talking and there is no indication that the praying was ever done. The meetings ended without any agreement being reached.

These meetings in 1919 remind us of this statement “So it will be in these last days. The cause of Christ will be betrayed. Those who have had the light of truth, and have enjoyed its blessings, but who have turned away from it, will fight down the Spirit of God. Inspired with a spirit from beneath, they will tear down that which they once built up, and show to all reasonable, God-fearing souls that they can not be trusted. They may lay claim to truth and righteousness, but their spirit and works will testify that they are betrayers of their Lord. The attributes of Satan they call the movings of the Holy Spirit.” *Review and Herald*, May 24, 1898.

Many of those who embraced the new view said they had been teaching the old view until doubts overcame them and they couldn’t teach it anymore.

During these meetings it was also stressed repeatedly that changing the church’s position on Daniel 11 would not in any way affect the presentation of the Eastern Question, as it could be found in the trumpets and the battle of Armageddon.

From 1870 to 1950 the Adventist church’s official position was that published by Uriah Smith in *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*. This is even acknowledged in it’s publications after 1950. But the general Adventist does not know it. Even among Historic Adventists there is little knowledge about what the church used to teach on this prophecy. Why is this history not better known? Why do we today think that the pioneers taught that the king of the north was the papacy when their writings don’t indicate this? Why are we not told that there was an official Adventist position on this prophecy for eighty years? Could it be that the history has been rewritten?

Rewriting Adventist History and Doctrines

Before 1870 there was no general agreement among the pioneers about the identity of the king of the north. It is even impossible to pinpoint a majority viewpoint or identify precisely how James White interpreted the prophecy of Daniel 11. But after the publication of Uriah Smith’s *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* the church quickly became united on identifying the Ottoman Empire as the king of north. Even Ellen White seemed to side with Smith on this interpretation but she never said definitely one way or the other.

In 1922 the Ottoman Empire ended but the world continued. The church still preached and published that the king of the north was Turkey but there was a quandary about verse 45. It had to be still future, didn’t it? Had Uriah Smith and virtually the entire denomination been wrong for fifty years? In 1928 we read in the *Review* “Adventists have not followed cunningly devised fables. Others since the war have had to touch up their views and rewrite their books. Our message has stood the strain of the storm. We can hold to it loyally, and set it forth with all courage. We have not had to retract one point of faith or change a single exposition of prophecy clear across from the Eastern question to the Western world. We in Europe surely see the king of the north coming to his end with none to help him” *Luise H. Christian, Review and Herald*, January 12, 1928.

Again in 1933 we read, “We cannot rejoice in this new birth of a false religion, but we can and

should realize that the revolution in Turkey, which dethroned and banished the sultan and established a so called republic upon the ruins of the monarchy, did not write finis over against our denominational view of the king of the north.” *Calvin P. Bollman, Review and Herald, March 16, 1933.*

In 1938 we read, “Let us grant that finite reckoning entered into some of the declarations as to the impending fulfillment of the prophecy concerning the king of the north. And let us grant also that the developments of the last twenty years have proved unexpected to us. But after we have granted all that, we have, not undermined the historic interpretation of this prophecy of Daniel, not in any degree. Our interpretation of that prophecy is as worthy of acceptance as when it was first preached.” *F. D. Nichol, Review and Herald, December 8, 1938.*

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the church continued to teach the old view for the next thirty years. The 1888 edition of the *Bible Readings for the Home* contains a detailed study on the Eastern Question. Immediately preceding it is the study on the Seven Trumpets. A smaller study but basically saying the same thing is found in the 1915 edition. The book published in 1949 is almost the same. But something changed in the 1950’s. The 1963 edition left out both the study on the Eastern Question and the study on the Seven Trumpets. This is surprising when we consider what was said in the 1919 Bible Conference that removing the Eastern Question in Daniel 11 would not change the seven trumpets.

Even the tone of the *Review* changed drastically. We read in 1952 “Through the years some of these brethren have written to us asking why this or that question is not settled by the General Conference. The questions may range all the way from, Who is Melchizedek? to, Who is the king of the north? We have always replied that the General Conference never attempts to settle theological questions by a committee vote or by any kind of pronouncement.” *F. D. Nichol, Review and Herald, September 4, 1952.*

1965 we find this “It is never right to make differences of opinion on moot points prominent, nor to press one’s private views upon others.” *Raymond Cottrell, Review and Herald, January 20, 1965.*

In 1982 we read “It might be well, in the future, to allow the Turk, the Pope, and the ‘king of the north’ to go their own respective ways and not try to determine every move they might make. Our record for predicting has been less than perfect.” *N. Gordon Thomas, Review and Herald, January 20, 1982.* In 2004 we find the following “At the time of the end for the kingdom of Judah, Babylon was the enemy from the north (*Jer. 1:14, 15*). In the book of Revelation, Babylon is the code name for spiritual Rome – the papacy. Thus, the king of the north in the time of the end is the papacy. This harmonizes with Daniel 11:36-39, where the king who exalts himself is also the papacy.” *Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly, 4th Quarter 2004.*

So what happened in the 1950’s? Why do we today believe that the pioneers taught that the king of the north was the papacy? The 1950’s saw many changes in the church publications. It was the decade of the Martin/Barnhouse affair and the publication of the book *Questions on Doctrine*. It was also the decade of the publication of the *SDA Bible Commentary*. This work was significant. “It is difficult for Adventists living 50 years later to grasp the revolutionary approach to Bible study in Adventism represented by the *Commentary*. For the first time in its history the denomination produced a document that dealt with the entire Bible in a systematic and expository manner... More important however, is the fact that the *Commentary* moved away from the central tradition of Bible study in Adventism with its apologetic purpose and proof-text method. In the place of a defensive approach to the Bible, the

Commentary editors sought to let the Bible speak for itself. The historical, contextual, and linguistic approach to the Bible that the *Commentary* utilized sought to get the Bible before the church not as an ‘answer book’ for the concerns of the Adventist Church but as God’s word to His people across the centuries. The *Commentary* took the humble position of seeking to hear the Bible rather than setting forth the only possible interpretation of it. Thus the *Commentary* recognized alternate interpretations of various passages so that the readers could come to their own understanding.” *A Search for Identity, The development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs*, by George Knight, page 163.

Did you understand what he just said there? “The *Commentary* moved away from the central tradition of Bible study in Adventism with its apologetic purpose and proof-text method.” The apologetic purpose simply means to defend a doctrine or belief. The proof-text method is the method of comparing scripture with scripture, which the Bible itself teaches. The *Commentary* moved away from the historic Adventist method of defending our faith by comparing scripture with scripture. It used, instead, the method of studying the context, original language, and time period when the passage was written to determine it’s meaning. On the surface this sounds just fine, for we are to consider time and place, right? But the key here is that this method is being presented in opposition to the first method, so what we are being told is that the *Commentary* used an opposite method to that of the Adventist pioneers. A method opposed to that approved by God Himself.

Another significant statement here is this, that it “sought to get the Bible before the church not as an ‘answer book’ for the concerns of the Adventist Church but as God’s word to His people across the centuries.” Again, on the surface this appears good. After all, the Bible is God’s word in all ages. But combined with the previous statement, it’s really saying that the Bible doesn’t really apply to us today. It was written more for the people and society living at the time of it’s writing. It doesn’t apply as specifically to us because we live in a different society today.

Compare the statement with this one from Pope John Paul II “The Bible, in effect, does not present itself as a direct revelation of timeless truths but as the written testimony to a series of interventions in which God reveals himself in human history. In a way that differs from tenets of other religions (such as Islam, for instance), the message of the Bible is solidly grounded in history.” *Presented by the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1993-04-23). “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church” Quoted in Wikipedia article “Biblical Hermeneutics” subsection “Roman Catholic Principles of Hermeneutics.*

Are not these two statements strikingly similar? Not only did the *Commentary* move away from the Biblically approved method of interpretation but it adopted the Catholic method!

Also, consider this from the *Review* in 1994 “For us, as for previous generations, truth meets us at the confluence of three streams: the Bible, our heritage, and life in our day.” *William Johnsson, Review January 6, 1994.* Is this not also the Catholic view that truth is determined by the Bible, tradition and the modern world? The next step is to exalt tradition above the Bible as the only infallible guide to truth. Therefore, truth is relative to the times in which we live. Statements like these are subtly leading us back to Rome.

The final comment we would like to note here is “Thus the *Commentary* recognized alternate interpretations of various passages so that the readers could come to their own understanding.” Again, on the surface, this sounds similar to the idea of freedom of conscience and letting the Bible interpret

itself, but again this idea is being taught as opposing the historic Adventist methods approved by God Himself. It also reminds us of a statement in the Spirit of Prophecy “The fact that the people were more interested in Christ’s teaching than they were in the dry, tedious arguments of the Jewish teachers, maddened the scribes and Pharisees. **These teachers spoke with uncertainty, interpreting the Scriptures to mean one thing, and then another. This left the people in great confusion.** But as they listened to Jesus, their hearts were warmed and comforted.” *Review and Herald*, March 5, 1901.

The *Bible Commentary* presented the Bible differently than it had been presented before in Adventism. It changed the way the king of the north was handled too. After presenting both views of the willful king it refers readers to the 1954 article in *Ministry Magazine* for a historical view of verses 36-39. Verses 40-45 are passed over with a few comments about some who view it as Turkey and a quote from James White’s 1877 *Review* article on unfulfilled prophecy.

The *Ministry Magazine* article referred to was published in 1954 by a committee appointed by the General Conference to study Daniel 11:36-39. The manuscripts they studied to reach their conclusions were almost entirely by contemporary authors. There were two editorials from the *Review*, one by Uriah Smith and one by James White, that they studied along with these contemporary authors. Interestingly enough the “editorial” by Smith consisted of a one paragraph quote from a contemporary newspaper followed by a one sentence comment by Smith about the power who comes to end in verse 45. Their conclusions were that the willful king was considered to be the papacy unanimously by the pioneers for 25 years after 1844. They quote William Miller and James White to support this.

If we are to include William Miller as an Adventist pioneer, I think it only right to include Josiah Litch as well. After all, he introduced the date of August 11, 1840. for the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and it came to pass. This event is mentioned in the *Great Controversy* (see *Great Controversy* page 334-335). We have already seen that Litch taught that the willful king was France, so the claim of unanimity among the pioneers is destroyed right there.

Then the single sentence by Uriah Smith in 1862, following a quote about the papacy, is taken as support for the idea that the pioneers were unanimous in their opinion that the papacy is the willful king and the king of the north. While this quote does indicate that Uriah Smith, in 1862, thought that the papacy was the king who comes to his end, it doesn’t in any way confirm a unanimity of opinion on the subject among Adventists. As we have seen, Adventists in 1862 did not view the willful king and the king of the north as the same power. The idea that both the willful king and the king of north were the papacy was not introduced until 1912. The *Ministry Magazine* article goes on to speculate that Uriah Smith changed his views to the king of the north being the Ottoman Empire because he believed that the papacy would not regain its power.

The article then states, “Not until the events so confidently predicted did not materialize, and the papacy, instead of having ‘fallen to rise no more,’ again became a decisive influence in international affairs with the resumption of temporal power in 1929, did our Bible students undertake a re-examination of these prophecies.” *Ministry Magazine*, 1954, page 24. They are admitting here that the denominational position had been that the willful king was the French Revolution.

The article goes on to list the reasons why the willful king is the papacy and then declares verses 40 to 45 to be still future and refrains from making any predictions about the fulfillment of those verses.

The *Ministry Magazine* article's presentation of the pioneers' views on Daniel 11 seems to be taken almost entirely from a paper written by Raymond Cottrell entitled *Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon* that we quoted from earlier. Who was Raymond Cottrell? He was a Seventh-day Adventist missionary, teacher, editor, and writer who worked extensively on many major Adventist publications. He was born in 1911 in California but grew up in China. His knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin caused him to be hired by the Conference for various research projects. He was the associate editor for the *Bible Commentary Series* (and wrote most of it himself), and the *Review*. He served as editor of the magazine *Adventist Today* and as consulting editor of *Spectrum Magazine*. He was the founding secretary of the Bible Research Fellowship which was the precursor to the Bible Research Institute. He served as secretary from its founding in 1943 till it disbanded in 1954 over disagreements with the Conference president over the king of north. In 1948 he wrote the paper *Pioneer Views on Daniel 11 and Armageddon*. He says in reference to this paper "It was popularly believed that Uriah Smith's book *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* presented the pioneer view that Daniel 11:45 refers to Turkey as the king of the north and the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16:12 to a literal battle on the plain of Megiddo. Aware that the pioneers thought the papacy to be the king of the north and Armageddon a spiritual battle between the forces of good and evil, I made an exhaustive study of early Adventist literature on the subject, which formed the basis of this paper." *Papers of Raymond F. Cottrell Collection 238, page 13.*

In 1951 he put together all his notes on the topic and submitted them to the committee who published their report in the 1954 *Ministry Magazine* article. Notice that he did his "exhaustive study" with the purpose of proving that the pioneers believed the king of the north to be the papacy, but the committee's report turned out to be on the willful king. Raymond Cottrell is the only person we know of who claims to have made an exhaustive study on the topic. This must mean that he read every Adventist publication available to him from the time period of 1844 to at least 1873. All of the references we have found about the Adventist pioneer views of the king of north since the 1950's have ultimately used his study as their source. It is Raymond Cottrell who created the modern Adventist tradition of the pioneers' views on the king of the north. A tradition that we have already proved to be completely false.

In the paper he submitted to the research committee, he references six documents from 1842 to 1877. Two of these documents deal exclusively with Armageddon and cannot be used to prove anything about the king of the north. Of the remaining four, two are by James White, one is the paragraph in *A Word to the Little Flock*, the same paragraph we quoted earlier, and the other is the 1877 article in the *Review* that we also talked about earlier. Of the remaining two documents, one is the one sentence "editorial note" by Uriah Smith in 1862, and the other is a paragraph by William Miller about the willful king of verse 36. The quote from William Miller he takes completely out of context and claims that Miller is speaking of verses 36-45 when applying the prophecy to the papacy, but we know from Miller that he applied verses 36-39 to the papacy and verses 40-45 to Napoleon. Cottrell leaves this fact out completely. His conclusion is that "The view making Rome the power of the last verses of Daniel 11 and the battle of Armageddon the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan was held unanimously by the pioneers of the Advent Message to the year 1863, and may therefore be designated appropriately the 'Pioneer View.' More than a third of a century after 1844 it was spoken of in the *Review* as one of the 'landmarks' of the Advent Message... The pioneer view was an integral part of the study and teaching of William Miller on the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, and thus of the Advent Message itself from its very inception." *Raymond F. Cottrell, Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon, Revised Edition, 1951, page 21.*

As we have seen from direct quotes from Miller and other pioneers, this conclusion is completely false and even worse, it is an outright lie. It is very surprising that an “exhaustive” study of the topic would reveal so little evidence, that what there is must be twisted to support the conclusion. There is something very wrong when we must twist the evidence and ignore parts of it to make it fit our preconceived opinions. But this is what Cottrell does repeatedly throughout his papers on the topic.

In 1958 he was given the task of revising *Bible Readings for Home* to bring it more in line with the teaching of the newly published *Bible Commentary* “so that we wouldn’t be saying something out of one corner of our mouth and something else out of the other corner.” *Raymond Cottrell, A Notable SDA Scholar Gives His Taped Recollections on the Investigative Judgment*. Could it be that he is the one responsible for removing both the *Seven Trumpets* and the *Eastern Question* studies from the *Bible Readings*? In the course of his work on the book he tried to prove the Adventist sanctuary doctrine from Daniel 8:14 using Biblical exegesis and hermeneutic principles.

What does this mean? The word hermeneutics means to interpret a text and is derived from the name of the Pagan god Hermes. He was the god of travelers, shepherds, thieves, and literature. One of his exceptional traits was deception and falsehood. Biblical exegesis uses the methods of higher criticism condemned in the Spirit of Prophecy. It is the method we discussed earlier of using the original language, the context, and the historical setting of a passage to determine its meaning. It is the new, Catholic method used by the *Commentary*.

Cottrell discovered that he could not prove the Sanctuary doctrine using this method of research. He wrote to 27 Adventist Bible teachers across North America asking them about this doctrine and if it could be proved. All 27 replied that it could not be done! From this time until his death in 2003, Raymond Cottrell believed and taught that the Sanctuary doctrine was a liability to the SDA church and should be left behind in its history. He was also a good friend of Desmond Ford and Walter Rae and at one time wrote “six pages of comment where Ellen White uses the Bible in error.”

Luis F. Were is the man responsible for the current Adventist interpretation of the king of the north. Almost no information is available about the man. All we know is that he was an Australian evangelist who was disfellowshipped in the 1940’s. We do know from his writing that he was closely connected to the top officials of the General Conference, because he quotes from documents that were only available to them at that time. He wrote 16 or 17 books on prophetic subjects whose copyrights were held by Hans La Rondell. Most of his books are still available.

In 1949 Louis F. Were wrote a book entitled *The King of the North at Jerusalem, God’s People Delivered*. In this book he takes the stand that the king of the north is the papacy and that Daniel 11:45 denotes the final conflict between God’s people and Babylon. He seems to have gotten some, at least, of his ideas from M. C. Wilcox because he quotes a little bit of an article written by Wilcox in 1910. But instead of the literal interpretation used by Wilcox, he introduces the idea that these verses are all spiritual. Wilcox, you will remember, was the foremost advocate of the new view at the 1919 Bible Conference. Along with it, Wilcox presented the idea that verses 14-29 of Daniel 11 referred to Antiochus Epiphanes and not to the Roman Empire, thus leaving the crucifixion entirely out of the prophecy and jumping 700 years from the end of Antiochus to the founding of the papacy. It is interesting that Wilcox also mentioned during that conference that the little horn of Daniel 8 could refer to Antiochus Epiphanes as well as to Rome and that the 2300 days fits Antichus Epiphanes just as well

as it does the investigative Judgment. Thus, he laid the foundation for Raymond Cottrell's rejection of the sanctuary doctrine. A.G. Daniels immediately said to Wilcox, "I hope you never mention these ideas in your Bible classes." Wilcox said "Oh, I don't, but others have." This is the very concept that Ford and Cottrell base their ideas about Daniel 8:14 on. Others at the conference pointed out that this interpretation was developed by the Jews in order to avoid the obvious reference to Jesus Christ in Daniel 11. If they don't interpret these verses as applying to Antiochus they must accept Jesus as the Messiah.

Louis Were quotes from Cottrell to prove that the pioneers believed that the king of the north was the papacy. In a pamphlet entitled *The Truth Concerning Mrs. E.G. White, Uriah Smith, and The King of the North*, he discusses at length the rebukes given Smith by Ellen White about the message of 1888. His conclusion is that "the opposition to the message of righteousness by faith to be proclaimed in the Loud Cry, will come from those who will refuse to accept the truth concerning the final conflict... They will stubbornly follow Uriah Smith's teaching concerning Turkey being the king of the north and Armageddon a battle between the nations, and 'will brace themselves to resist' the spread of the true light, and 'will oppose the work', as declared by the Spirit of Prophecy." *The Truth Concerning Mrs. E.G. White, Uriah Smith, and The King of the North* page 12.

This statement is extraordinary when you consider that both Jones and Waggoner held to and preached Uriah Smith's view that the king of the north was Turkey!

He also claims, based on Cottrell, that James White said that the king of the north being the papacy was a landmark in Adventism. The statement he is referring to is the same one we quoted earlier and says this, "Positions taken upon the Eastern Question are based upon prophecies which have not yet reached their fulfillment. Here we should tread lightly, and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement." *Review and Herald* "Unfulfilled Prophecy," November 29, 1877.

This is the only statement we can find in this article that even comes close to implying a general agreement on the king of the north being the papacy and the very next sentence completely contradicts the idea. "It may be said that there is a general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and Russia as the fulfillment of that portion of prophecy which will give great confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message."

Also, it is not those who taught that the king of the north was the Ottoman Empire, who we find moving the old landmarks of Adventism. It is those who brought in the new view of the papacy in this prophecy who have worked to tear down the biggest landmark of Adventism.

Louis Were and Raymond Cottrell tried their hardest to prove that the pioneers believed the king of the north to be the papacy. Their work was successful in convincing most Adventists that this is the truth, but the evidence contradicts them. According to Were the one sentence "editorial" written in 1862 by Smith is the "best possible evidence that the leaders of that time held unanimously to the original denominational position." *The King of the North at Jerusalem, God's People Delivered* page 5.

If this is the best possible evidence, then it is flimsy to say the least.

Why the Deception?

The current idea, based primarily on the work of Luis Were and Raymond Conttrel, that we are returning to the pioneer position by teaching a spiritual view of Daniel 11:40-45, with two players in verse 40, is a complete deception. The pioneers interpreted this prophecy literally, not spiritually, and they all saw three players in verse 40, not two. We are not believing on “their word” at all by taking this view.

Wilcox said he started questioning the church’s view of Daniel 11 when he heard James White disagree publicly with Smith in the 1870’s. Is it possible that he heard the very disagreement that caused Sister White to rebuke her husband? Is this not the very thing Ellen White warned would happen? “While he might hold these views subordinate himself, once they are made public, minds would seize upon them, and just because others believe differently would make these differences the whole burden of the message, and get up contention and variance.” *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 76.

History reveals that it has not been those following Smith’s views who have brought dissension and controversy into the church. The counsel of Sister White to her husband is always brought in to silence those who would defend Smith. But it was not Smith who was rebuked for bringing in a difference of opinion.

Wilcox agitated his “new views” extensively after 1912 and when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1922 his views gained widespread approval until most Adventist Bible students agreed with him. Then in the 1950’s the history of the church was rewritten by the leaders to make it appear that they were still holding to the principles of historic Adventism. While in one area they returned to what they claimed was the pioneer view of prophecy they began undermining the very foundational doctrines of the church. While they supposedly revered James White’s opinion on the king of north, they completely disregarded it on the investigative judgment. They claimed that the king of the north was a pillar of Adventism but demolished a true pillar of the sanctuary at the same time. Could it be that the king of the north is being used as a smoke screen to hide what is really being done? Is this truly the work of Godly leaders, in whom we can place perfect confidence?

Even today, those who call themselves “Historic Adventists” do not know what the pioneers originally taught about the king of the north. They do not know that the church taught for eighty years, in nearly all of its publications, that the king of the north was the Ottoman Empire. But does it really matter? Is not the king of the north a matter of minor consequence? Wasn’t Uriah Smith wrong in his predictions about the Ottoman Empire?

But, maybe, what we should be asking is, why the deception? If it is a topic of minor importance, why is it being turned into an Adventist landmark? If the truth is that the king of north is the papacy, why do we need to resort to lies to substantiate it? The truth should stand on its own merits, not on an invented tradition. By creating this tradition, based on falsehood, the Adventist church has followed in the very footsteps of Rome, who even went so far as to forge documents, supposed to be from heaven, to prove their supremacy. We are reminded of Colossians 2:8. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

But let’s return to our original question. What was “their word” on the king of north? Clearly, the

king of the north was the Ottoman Empire, or what was known as Turkey in the days of Uriah Smith.

It is Satan who tries to deceive and turn the truth into a lie. We are told that “Satan is working that the history of the Jewish nation may be repeated in the experience of those who claim to believe present truth.” *Selected Messages Vol. 2, page 111.*

“The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ, have been presented before me again and again to illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ—how the enemy sought every occasion to take control of the minds of the Jews, and today he is seeking to blind the minds of God’s servants, that they may not be able to discern the precious truth.” *Selected Messages Vol. 1, page 406.*

The truth is that the king of the north is a landmark of prophecy and history. It tells us where we stand in relation to the close of probation, the time of trouble, the loud cry, the latter rain, and the end of the world. This is why Satan has focused so hard on this particular prophecy. The very fact that we have been the victims of a grand deception on this subject should be enough to make us take careful notice of this prophecy. It is not a matter of minor importance at all. Let us consider the matter carefully, lest we too be caught unprepared, as the Jews were.