

The King of the North Part 2 – The Papacy or France?

The subject of who is represented by the king of the north in Daniel 11:40-45 is a subject of much debate among Adventists. But this has not always been the case. As we saw in the previous study, there was a time in Adventism when there was general agreement on the topic. Most people will be surprised to learn that this general agreement was that the king of the north represented Turkey, or the Ottoman Empire. But how could this be? The Ottoman Empire is a thing of the past and has little impact as far as our world today, right? Wrong. Many people are unaware of how the Ottoman Empire still affects our lives and the world we live in. The political history of the 19th century and the years leading up to World War I is fascinating and many are not familiar with it. It has been buried in the history books and only those interested enough to really search can find it. Just as Adventist history has been obscured so has the political history. It has been Satan's studied effort to make history so boring that people won't want to study it. Those who are not familiar with history are doomed to repeat it. But if we lay the prophecy beside the history, it is a most fascinating story.

“Satan is working that the history of the Jewish nation may be repeated in the experience of those who claim to believe present truth. The Jews had the Old Testament Scriptures, and supposed themselves conversant with them. But they made a woeful mistake. The prophecies that refer to the glorious second appearing of Christ in the clouds of heaven they regarded as referring to His first coming. Because He did not come according to their expectations, they turned away from Him. Satan knew just how to take these men in his net, and deceive and destroy them. . . .

“The very same Satan is at work to undermine the faith of the people of God at this time. There are persons ready to catch up every new idea. The prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation are misinterpreted. These persons do not consider that 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. These messages, received and acted upon, are doing their work to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God. If we search the Scriptures to confirm the truth God has given His servants for the world, we shall be found proclaiming 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. The messages of Revelation 14 are those by which the world is to be tested; they are the everlasting gospel, and are to be sounded everywhere. 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 page 111*

Let's re-examine what we, as Adventists, once taught on the king of the north. This prophecy is one of the most unusual prophecies in Daniel. In fact in the entire Bible. The vision actually starts in chapter 10 and closes at the end of chapter 12. The most striking feature of this prophecy is that it is given in plain language. Most Bible prophecy is given in symbols. Beasts represent nations or political powers. Women represent churches or religious powers. But in Daniel 11 these symbols are not used.

The angel simply tells Daniel “this is what will happen.” In fact at the very beginning of the vision, Gabriel tells Daniel that this time we aren’t dealing in symbols. “And now will I show thee the truth...” *Daniel 11:2.*

This doesn’t mean that Daniel’s other visions weren’t true. But this vision is laying out the actual events, without the use of symbols.

The Time of the End

There is little disagreement on the first portion of Daniel 11, so we won’t spend any time on it here, but will start with the portion that concerns us the most. Daniel 11:40 begins with the phrase “And at the time of the end.” There is controversy today about what date this is referring to. William Miller and the Advent preachers of 1844 thought it was 1798 and Uriah Smith holds to this date as well. He says “We have already produced some evidence that the time of the end commenced in 1798... The downfall of the papacy, which marked the termination of the 1260 years, and, according to verse 35, showed the commencement of the time of of the end, took place on the 10th of February, 1798, when Rome fell into the hands of Berthier, the general of the French.” *Uriah Smith, Thoughts on Daniel, 1873 edition, page 327-328.*

This was the generally held view of Adventists at this time and for many years afterward. It was M.C. Wilcox who introduced a new idea at the 1919 Bible Conference held in Washington D.C. The new idea was that the time of the end in the entire book of Daniel always refers to the time of the end of the 2300 days, or 1844, not 1798. This idea is held by many today as the true, Biblical, time of the end. But does it work in this prophecy? Let’s consider it.

The time of end must refer to the end of some time period. What time period has Daniel been discussing up to this point in the vision? The time period is found in verse 35. “And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” *Daniel 11:35*

This verse is obviously speaking about the 1260 years of Papal persecution and is connecting the time of the end to the end of this period of persecution. Should we then go to a different vision, in Daniel 8, to tell us that the time of the end is really the end of the 2300 days?

Also consider the end of the vision in Daniel 11: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” *Daniel 12:4*

If the time of the end does not come till 1844 then we should not see a rapid increase in knowledge and understanding until after that time. Is this what we find? Not at all. The industrial revolution began in the 1700’s and the understanding of prophecy rapidly increased after 1798. If the time of the end did not come till 1844, the prophecies would not have been understood till after that time and the first and second Angel’s messages could not have been preached.

It would make sense that the time of the end in Daniel 8 would refer to the end of the 2300 days, as that is the time period mentioned in that vision. But the time period Daniel 11 is concerned with is the 1260 days.

The date 1798 as the “time of the end” is one of the most well established prophetic dates in Adventism. The pope was captured by Berthier that year and died in exile, thus ending the 1260 years of papal supremacy and receiving a “deadly wound” from which the papacy has been recovering ever since. At this time, “Shall the king of the south push at him.” Who is the king of the south? To answer this question we must refer to the beginning of the vision.

The King of the South

In verse 2, we read, “And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those. And the king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.” *Daniel 11:2-5*

There is no disagreement among Bible scholars that here the king of the south refers to the southern division of Alexander’s empire. The fulfillment is too exact to be controverted. From here to the end of the prophecy the king of the south is often involved in conflict. All the way to verse 40 it is unmistakably identified with Egypt. There is no indication that this identity is to change in verse 40. Nor is there any indication that the application is to shift from literal world powers to spiritual powers in this verse.

The Willful King

At the time of the end, which began in 1798, Egypt was to push at “him.” Who is “him”? The antecedent for this pronoun is found in the preceding verses. Starting with verse 36, “And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.” *Daniel 11:36*

This is where major disagreement occurs. Who is this willful king? Uriah Smith says, regarding this verse. “The king here introduced cannot denote the same power which was last noticed, namely, the papal power; for the specifications will not hold good, if applied to that power...The only difficulty in applying it to a new power lies in the definite article ‘the;’ for, it is urged, the expression ‘*the* king’ would identify this as the one last spoken of. If it could be properly translated *a* king, there would be no difficulty; and it is said that some of the best Biblical critics give it this rendering, Mede, Wintle, Boothroyd, and others, translating the passage, ‘A certain king shall do according to his will,’ thus clearly introducing a new power upon the stage of action.” *Thoughts on Daniel, 1883 edition, page 338.*

This statement of Smith is very strongly contested by Bible scholars of today who believe this power to be the papacy. They claim that the original Hebrew cannot read any other way than with the definite article “the.” I have no knowledge of Hebrew so cannot say one way or the other on this argument. But I would like to point out a couple of things. “The king” would refer to a king who has been mentioned

in the previous verses. But the preceding verses do not talk about the papacy as a king. In fact the last king mentioned directly is Constantine in verse 29, “At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.” *Daniel 11:29*. This was when Constantine moved the capitol from Rome to Constantinople. It then goes on to say that he shall “return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.” *Daniel 11:30*. Those who forsake the holy covenant would be the Catholic church. It then goes on to tell how “they,” the Catholic Church shall take away the “daily” and set up the “abomination of desolation.” But it never refers to the papacy as a king. In this prophecy all the kings, up to this point, have represented nations. The king of verse 30-32 would be the nation that set up the papacy and placed it in power to rule. It would make sense then, that the king in verse 36 would be the nation that was the staunchest supporter of the papacy during its dominion of 1260 years. The foremost nation involved in the persecution of God’s people. Which nation was this? France.

“As we approach the year A.D. 508, we behold a mighty crisis ripening between Catholicism and the pagan influences still existing in the empire. Up to the time of the conversion of Clovis, king of France, in A.D. 496, the French and other nations of Western Rome were pagan; but following that event, the efforts to convert isolators to Romanism were crowned with great success. The conversion of Clovis is said to have been the occasion of bestowing upon the French monarch the titles of ‘Most Christian Majesty’ and ‘Eldest Son of the Church.’ Between that time and A.D. 508, by alliances, capitulations, and conquests, the Aborici, the Roman garrisons in the West, Brittany, the Burgundians, and the Visigoths, were brought into subjection.” *Daniel and the Revelation, 1944 edition, page 271*.

“But of those who resisted the encroachments of the papal power, the Waldenses stood foremost. In the very land where popery had fixed its seat, there its falsehood and corruption were most steadfastly resisted. For centuries the churches of Piedmont maintained their independence; but the time came at last when Rome insisted upon their submission. After ineffectual struggles against her tyranny, the leaders of these churches reluctantly acknowledged the supremacy of the power to which the whole world seemed to pay homage. There were some, however, who refused to yield to the authority of pope or prelate. They were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith. A separation took place. Those who adhered to the ancient faith now withdrew; some, forsaking their native Alps, raised the banner of truth in foreign lands; others retreated to the secluded glens and rocky fastnesses of the mountains, and there preserved their freedom to worship God.” *Great Controversy, page 64*.

If the Waldenses were the foremost in resisting the papacy, who was the foremost in persecuting them? The French. When the papacy tried a person for heresy and condemned them, they always handed them over to the civil authority for punishment. They held sway over the civil powers of Europe but were not themselves a civil power, except in Italy, and for at least part of the great tribulation Italy was ruled over by Charlamagne, a French king.

“This title *Rex Christianissimus*, or *Roi Très-chrétien* owed its origins to the long, and distinctive, relationship between the Catholic Church and the Franks. France was the first modern state recognized by the Church, and was known as the ‘Eldest Daughter of the Church;’ Clovis, the King of the Franks, had been recognized by the papacy as a protector of Rome’s interests. Accordingly, this title was frequently accorded to the French Kings (although on a number of occasions Kings of other realms would be addressed as such by the Church), and came into frequent use during the reign of Charles VI.

Under his son, Charles VII, it became recognized as a hereditary and exclusive title of the Kings of France. Pope Julius II, allied between 1510 and 1513 with Henry VIII of England against Louis XII of France, considered transferring the title from the French monarch to the English monarch, drafting a Papal brief to this effect; however, it was never issued. The French Kings thus continued to use the title, in particular on diplomatic documents, less frequently in France itself or in everyday parlance.”
Wikipedia article “Style of the French Sovereign”

There is one other thing I would like to point out about this willful king. It says he “shall do according to his will.” *Daniel 11:36*. This phrase has been used twice before in this prophecy. The first time it is used in referring to Alexander “And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.” *Daniel 11:3*. The second time it refers to Julius Cesar. “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.” *Daniel 11:16*. Both times it is talking about a conquering power that changes the political landscape. It is a transition from one dominating power to another. Wouldn’t it make sense that when we encounter this phrase again, it would signify the same thing? Was there a new political, national, conquering power, which came on the scene right at this time? Yes, it was France.

There is certainly enough evidence at this point to support Smith in the idea that the willful king could be the French nation. But do the rest of the specifications fit? “And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.” *Daniel 11:36*. These very things are talked about by Paul in regards to the Man of sin, which we know for sure is the papacy. “Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” *2 Thessalonians 2:3-4*. It also seems to fit the other descriptions of the papacy that we find in Daniel. “I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” *Daniel 7:8*

The Desire of Women

If Daniel 11 stopped with verse 36, I could not say with any certainty that the willful king is not the papacy. But it doesn’t stop there. It continues and the rest of it doesn’t fit the papacy so well. “Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.” *Daniel 11:37* Here we find a very interesting coupling of ideas. First, this king disregards the God of his fathers. France, in 1793, did exactly this. It abolished the worship of God, the God his fathers had claimed to worship through the papacy. Second, he disregards the desire of women and disregards all gods.

This desire of women could be referring to the celibacy of the priests, but do the priests truly disregard the desire of women? While they claimed celibacy, the monasteries and convents were often connected by underground tunnels. During the reformation and after, mass infant burial grounds were discovered under the convents. I have heard testimony that even today, many nuns have babies who are never permitted to live. These babies are fathered by monks and priests. It doesn’t sound very

much like they disregard the desire of women.

This phrase could be referring to the reducing of the marriage to a merely civil contract under the French revolution, but even this doesn't seem to adequately fulfill the specification. In connection with this, we find an interesting comment by Paul. "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." *Romans 1:27*. Now this would truly be a disregard of the desire of women. But was homosexuality part of France at this time? Yes it was.

"Before the French Revolution, sodomy had been a capital crime under royal legislation. The penalty was burning at the stake. Very few men, however, were ever actually prosecuted and executed for consensual sodomy (no more than five in the entire eighteenth century). Sodomites arrested by the police were more usually released with a warning or held in prison for (at most) a few weeks or months. The National Constituent Assembly abolished the law against sodomy when it revised French criminal law in 1791 and got rid of a variety of offenses inspired by religion, including blasphemy; since there was no public debate, we do not know its motives (a similar state of affairs occurred during the early years of the Russian Revolution)... 'the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period was a time of relative freedom' and opened the modern era of legal toleration for homosexuality in Europe. Napoleonic conquests imposed the principles of Napoleon's Penal Code (including the decriminalization of homosexuality) on many other parts of Europe, including Belgium, the Dutch Netherlands, the Rhineland, and Italy. Other states freely followed the French example (for example, Bavaria in 1813 or Spain in 1822)." *Wikipedia article, "Jean Jacques Régis de Cambacérès"*

"It is perhaps not surprising, then, that this liberal democratic revolution also initiated the disestablishment of sexual orthodoxy, permitting greater individual freedom, and extracting the state from the regulation of homosexuality. With the advent of the Napoleonic legal code, sodomy disappeared from criminal law, and as Napoleon swept through Europe evicting the mainstays of the old order, he left new nation-builders in his wake who founded legal systems without the category of sodomy. The modern world of most of western and southern Europe, as well as its territories (principally in Latin America), broke the medieval link between homosexuality and criminality in the early nineteenth century." *Homosexuality and Crime – Modernity*
<http://law.jrank.org/page/1336/homosexuality-Crime-Modernity.html>

The Rise of Atheism

"Nor regard any god." Here we see atheism and licentiousness coupled together. Revelation puts these two together in exactly the same way in speaking of the French Revolution. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." *Revelation 11:8*

" 'The great city' in whose streets the witnesses are slain, and where their dead bodies lie, is 'spiritually' Egypt. Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God and resisted His commands. No monarch ever ventured upon more open and highhanded rebellion against the authority of Heaven than did the king of Egypt. When the message was brought him by Moses, in the name of the Lord, Pharaoh proudly answered: 'Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.'

Exodus 5:2, A.R.V. This is atheism, and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance. 'The great city' is also compared, 'spiritually,' to Sodom. The corruption of Sodom in breaking the law of God was especially manifested in licentiousness. And this sin was also to be a preeminent characteristic of the nation that should fulfill the specifications of this scripture.

"According to the words of the prophet, then, a little before the year 1798 some power of satanic origin and character would rise to make war upon the Bible. And in the land where the testimony of God's two witnesses should thus be silenced, there would be manifest the atheism of the Pharaoh and the licentiousness of Sodom.

"This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France. During the Revolution, in 1793, 'the world for the first time heard an assembly of men, born and educated in civilization, and assuming the right to govern one of the finest of the European nations, uplift their united voice to deny the most solemn truth which man's soul receives, and renounce unanimously the belief and worship of a Deity.'—Sir Walter Scott, *Life of Napoleon*, vol. 1, ch. 17. 'France is the only nation in the world concerning which the authentic record survives, that as a nation she lifted her hand in open rebellion against the Author of the universe. Plenty of blasphemers, plenty of infidels, there have been, and still continue to be, in England, Germany, Spain, and elsewhere; but France stands apart in the world's history as the single state which, by the decree of her Legislative Assembly, pronounced that there was no God, and of which the entire population of the capital, and a vast majority elsewhere, women as well as men, danced and sang with joy in accepting the announcement.'—Blackwood's Magazine, November, 1870." *Great Controversy*, page 269.

Even today homosexuality is called sodomy, the exact description that Revelation gives to this period and a perfect fulfillment of Daniel, that the willful king would disregard "the desire of women." So we see in both Daniel 11 and Revelation 11 a coupling of atheism, homosexuality and licentiousness. This cannot be speaking of the papacy for they have always claimed to worship God and have claimed purity and chastity. They even put homosexuals to death, considering sodomy a base crime. But France, the defender of the church, abolished God entirely and legalized sodomy, just as this verse says the willful king would. But the Great Controversy also mentions the French Revolution as the natural result of the repression of the scriptures by the papacy in France. "It was popery that had begun the work which atheism was completing. The policy of Rome had wrought out those conditions, social, political, and religious, that were hurrying France on to ruin. Writers, in referring to the horrors of the Revolution, say that these excesses are to be charged upon the throne and the church. In strict justice they are to be charged upon the church. Popery had poisoned the minds of kings against the Reformation, as an enemy to the crown, an element of discord that would be fatal to the peace and harmony of the nation. It was the genius of Rome that by this means inspired the direst cruelty and the most galling oppression which proceeded from the throne." *Great Controversy*, page 276.

Again, the fact that a lot of the description of the willful king fits the papacy, does not in any way negate the perfect fit of the prophecy with the French Revolution. The two were united and it was the papacy that was the primary cause of the French Revolution. The one melted into the other seamlessly, just as these verses seem to indicate. The nation that was the strongest defender of the papacy would go to the greatest lengths in blasphemy and wickedness of any nation before it.

The God of Forces

But there is still more. “But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.” *Daniel 11:38*. It has been attempted to prove that the god of forces are really the “protectors” of God, or the saints of catholicism. This seems to fit, but could just as easily mean the god of armed forces, the protectors of the nation. The directory of France during this time certainly honored their armed forces and tried to spread the revolution throughout the world by the force of arms. They put Napoleon at the head of their army. Someone talking in Napoleon’s presence said, “We’ll win because God is on our side.” Napoleon’s retort was, “God is on the side of the big battalions.” This quote from Napoleon has become famous and also illustrates the French honor to the god of forces.

The papacy has never had a standing army of it’s own, but has always used the arms of the state to support it.

A God Whom His Fathers Knew Not

The second phrase is “a god whom his fathers knew not.” This does not fit either the saints of the catholic church, nor their images that they worship. Because when you study into their history you find that the saints are really the Greek and Roman gods renamed and the images are the actual images of these same gods with new names. These are not gods that their fathers knew not. But in the French Revolution they definitely honored a god that had never before been heard of. It was the goddess of reason. This was a god that even the pagans did not know. If you would like to see a statue of this god, just look to the New York harbor and you will see the Statue of Liberty. This statue was give to the United States by France. It is called liberty but is really a representation of the goddess of reason and millions worship her to this day.

France Fits the Prophecy Best

“Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.” *Daniel 11:39*

While this could easily apply to the pope’s division of the new world between Spain and Portugal, it also fits what the directory did with the lands confiscated from the nobles. This land included most of the land of France. The right thing would have been to divide it equally among the common people, but this was not done. Instead it was broken up into small pieces and sold to the highest bidders, thus enriching the directory.

Willful King	France	papacy
A conquering power	Yes	No
Comes on the scene at the end of the great tribulation	Yes	No
Exalts himself	Yes	Yes

Speaks great things against God	Yes	Yes
Atheistic and Sodomizing	Yes	No
Introducing a god his fathers did not know	Yes	No
Honors the god of forces	Yes	No
Divides the land for gain	Yes	Yes

As you can see from the chart, while the papacy possibly fits four of the eight specifications, the French nation, in the 1790's, fits all eight perfectly.

So, in 1798, Egypt would push at France. Did this happen? Yes it did. In the very year specified, 1798, Egypt gave France a reason to send Napoleon to invade it. Egypt offered only slight resistance, only "pushed" at him, and Napoleon, or France, conquered the country and shot off the nose of the Sphinx.

Was there any kind of battle between the papacy and Egypt at the time of the end? No there wasn't. The papacy lost all its power in this year and this wound wasn't healed till 1929.

If the papacy is the willful king, then verse 40 has not happened yet and there is a gap of more than 200 years between the end of verse 39 and verse 40. This gap is continuing to widen as time passes and we don't see the fulfillment of verse 40. Does it make sense to insert this gap of years between these verses, when this period has been the most momentous in history? During the last 200 hundred years we have seen the worst, most destructive, wars in the history of the world, as well as unprecedented calamities, both natural and man made. When you consider that wars of less consequence and less destruction are mentioned in Daniel 11, it does not make any sense to insert a gap here that leaves out World Wars I and II. I cannot accept the idea that God forgot to tell us about these things. The willful king has to be France and there cannot be any gap between verse 39 and verse 40.

The ultimate proof, however, lies in the fulfillment of the rest of the chapter.