

A Consistent View of the Southern King in Daniel 11:23–45

Daniel 11 Symposium, October 19–21, 2018, Tim Hayden

Most Seventh-day Adventist interpretations of Daniel 11 apply verses 23 through 30 to the Middle East. Daniel 11:25 reveals the reason for the Middle East focus. When reading the phrase “the king of the south,” we immediately think of the land of Egypt located geographically south of Israel. Examining a few common interpretations will reveal a chronological problem.

Uriah Smith’s view is well-known among Seventh-day Adventists. He applied the events in Daniel 11:23–30 to the Middle East. Not having history that fulfilled the “league” of verse 23 between Christ’s crucifixion in AD 31 (Dan. 11:22) and the daily’s removal in AD 508 (Dan. 11:31), he jumped backward 191 years to a league between the Jews and pagan Rome in 161 BC. He then identified a conflict between Octavius and Mark Antony to fulfill Daniel 11:25–27.¹ In the rest of the prophecy, he follows a chronological flow using Middle East geography.

In the 1940s, Louis Were introduced his spiritual method to reveal the final events in Daniel 11, but he continued to follow Smith’s view in Daniel 11:23–30. When papal Rome entered the prophecy (Dan. 11:31), Were transitioned to a spiritual view.² He did not identify the king of the south as a spiritual power in Daniel 11:25–30; he did not apply his spiritual method there.

An alternative to Smith’s view has the Crusades in Daniel 11:23–30. After Christ’s crucifixion in verse 22, this view jumps forward more than 1000 years to the Crusades and a conflict in Egypt. It then jumps backward nearly 800 years and progresses chronologically to the prophecy’s end.³ The emphasis is on Middle East geography and typically includes a spiritual interpretation at the end. This alternative view has prepared Seventh-day Adventists for the modern interpretation of an Islamic, Middle East conflict in Daniel 11:40–45.

¹ Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 270–276, 1897

² Louis Were, *The King of the North at Jerusalem*, chaps. 10–11

³ As an example, see William Shea, *Daniel*, pp. 253–259

All these views focus on Middle East geography in Daniel 11:23–30, and they break Daniel’s chronology. Those embracing these geographical views argue that the deviation is intended, but this is unlikely. So I propose a spiritual approach to resolve Daniel’s chronology.

Hermeneutical Principles of the Spiritual Method

Although I have applied many prophetic principles to interpret Daniel 11,⁴ this paper relies heavily on spiritual principles adopted by Louis Were and Hans LaRondelle.⁵

In the spiritual method that I use, national and geographical terms refer to powers identified by spiritual characteristics. The events are still literal, but they transcend Middle East geography. (Literal and spiritual are not necessarily opposites. In Daniel 11:32–35, God’s church is a spiritual group of believers who literally suffered and died by the arms of papal Rome.)

Using this spiritual method, I show that Daniel 11:23–31a fits chronologically between verses 22 and 31b. This method also extends the atheism view of the southern king back to verse 23 and brings consistency throughout Daniel 11:23–45. Some important points follow.

Christ Centered: Christ and His church are central to apocalyptic prophecy. Jesus was baptized, ministered, and was “broken” during Tiberius’s reign (see Luke 3:1, 21–22; Dan. 11:21–22). He is our Prince (see Acts 3:14–15; 5:31; Dan. 9:25–27; 10:21), and He mediates His “better covenant” for us from the heavenly sanctuary (see Heb. 8; 12:24). Jesus is “the prince of the covenant” in Daniel 11:22 and His crucifixion divides Daniel 11 between the Jewish era and the Christian era. Understanding this division is necessary to unseal Daniel’s last prophecy.

Chronological Flow: Daniel 11 flows chronologically from beginning to end. At times the prophecy necessarily describes simultaneous events, as the events in Daniel 12:1 clarify Daniel

⁴ See William Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*; Ron du Preez, editor, *Prophetic Principles*; William Miller’s 14 Rules of Interpretation, *Miller’s Works*, vol. 1, pp. 20–23; etc.

⁵ See Louis Were, *The Moral Purpose of Prophecy* and *The King of the North at Jerusalem* and Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*

11:44b–45. The prophecy also uses prolepsis, as the conflicts in Daniel 11:41–45 expand the “whirlwind” in verse 40.⁶ These, however, do not break the prophecy’s chronological progression, but give fuller explanation. Daniel 11 does not have backward jumps.

One Israel: When Jacob sought forgiveness of sins and protection from Esau, he struggled with the Lord and received the name Israel, meaning “a prince of God” (Gen. 32:28, margin). His new name reflected his victorious experience.

When the Lord was about to deliver Jacob’s descendants “out of Egypt,” He said to Pharaoh, “Israel is my son, even my firstborn” (Hos. 11:1; Exod. 4:22–23). In another place, He referred to Israel as “Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend” (Isa. 41:8). The New Testament applies these terms to Jesus. He is the victorious “Prince,” the “son” called “out of Egypt,” the “firstborn of every creature,” and Abraham’s only “seed” (see Acts 3:15; Matt. 2:13–15; Col. 1:15; Gal. 3:16). Jesus is the victorious Prince of God, the One true Israelite.

The apostle Paul said later in Galatians 3 that Christ’s justified followers are “Abraham’s seed” (Gal. 3:26–29); they are Israelites through faith in Jesus. Faith alone makes one an Israelite (see Hab. 2:4; Rom. 2:28–29; 4:13–22; 9:6–9; 11:16–20). The Lord therefore includes believing Jews and Gentiles in His church, making up “all Israel” (Rom. 11:26).

The church, however, did not replace Israel: “The Church is the continuity of the Old Testament Israel of God.”⁷ God’s church continues and enlarges the Israelite “church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). As Dr. LaRondelle said, apocalyptic prophecy recognizes only one Israel: “The biblical focus of prophecy is never on Israel as a people or a nation, as such, but on Israel as the believing, worshiping, covenant people, as the messianic community.”⁸

⁶ For a fuller description of prolepsis in Daniel 11, see the scholarly paper prepared for this symposium by Frank W. Hardy, PhD, *The King of the South in Daniel 11:40–45*

⁷ Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*, p. 210

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Global Territory: Speaking to the woman of Samaria, Jesus indicated that earthly Jerusalem would lose its significance (see John 4:21–23). Before He ascended to heaven, He commissioned His disciples to begin witnessing in Jerusalem and to expand their mission until it encompassed “the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Christ enlarged Israel’s territory.

In AD 34, the seventy-week prophecy of Daniel 9 closed when Stephen died. The 490 years of probation “determined” for the Jewish nation and their “holy city” ended (Dan. 9:24). Jesus’s followers were then “scattered abroad” and they “went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:1, 4). They performed Jesus’s commission to extend their witness outward from Jerusalem.

The Lord then sent the converted apostle Paul “far hence unto the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21; see also Rom. 11:13). Paul further said that his ministry was to reach “unto the ends of the earth” and that Israel’s inheritance encompassed “the world” (Acts 13:47; Rom. 4:13; compare Matt. 5:5). Throughout his ministry, when Gentile believers joined the church from the various countries, they never moved to Israel; Israel’s territory expanded to include where they lived.

The prophecies focused on national Israel before Stephen’s death because spiritual Israel then lived in its territory. When Israel’s “twelve tribes” were “scattered abroad” (James 1:1), national Israel lost prophetic focus.⁹ Today, spiritual Israel continues as God’s “holy nation” (see Exod. 19:6; Matt. 21:43; 1 Pet. 2:9), and its holy territory extends to the world.

Local Terminology: The prophecy in Daniel 11 uses Middle East terms throughout. Glorious land, Mount Zion, north, south, Israel, Jerusalem, Egypt, Babylon, Libya, Ethiopia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon are some Middle East terms used or alluded to in Daniel 11. These terms are mingled with events in the Christian era and relate to Christ’s global church. They have spiritual meaning and the nations and territories they represent must be identified by spiritual characteristics. Below is an example of Ellen White’s use of end time, Middle East terms:

⁹ Compare Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy*, p. 210

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. “Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord.”¹⁰

Notice how Ellen White applied Judah and Jerusalem to “the followers of Christ.” She did not literalize end time prophecy; she used a spiritual method. Therefore, just as spiritual characteristics identify Israel after AD 34, spiritual characteristics must similarly identify the other nations and territories referred to in the prophecy.

Typologically Linked: Early Adventists’ knowledge of the types led them to correctly identify the heavenly sanctuary’s cleansing in Daniel 8:14. Typology is therefore fundamental to Seventh-day Adventist theology. Although Daniel 2 and 7 are mostly symbolic, Daniel 8 starts with symbols and later mentions antitypes, citing the Prince, host, and sanctuary. Daniel 11 describes local, Middle East powers and lands through verse 22, but after Christ’s crucifixion and Stephen’s death, Middle East terms refer to global, antitypical nations and territories.

Since Israel is a type of Christ’s church (see 1 Cor. 10:1–11), we must also understand that the kings of the north and south refer to antitypical powers after AD 34. North and south are initially geographical terms used to point to specific territories referenced from Jerusalem (see Ezek. 5:5), but they are no longer limited to Middle East geography. North and south reference antitypical, spiritual Babylon and Egypt mentioned in Revelation (see Rev. 11:7–8; 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18).¹¹ Yet, while recognizing these powers as antitypical, we must interpret the prophesied events according to the prophecy’s timeframe and link their fulfillment to historical facts.

The Kings of the North and South

Since Rome is the last power in Daniel’s prophecies, the kings of the north and south referred to after Daniel 11:22 are spiritual powers in Rome identified by spiritual characteristics.

¹⁰ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 425

¹¹ For an interesting spiritual and typological description of the conflict in Daniel 11:40–45, see Angel Manuel Rodriquez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*

Egypt: After the southern king attacked the northern power in Daniel 11:7, the prophecy says he returned “into Egypt” with the plunder (Dan. 11:8). The prophecy therefore identifies Egypt as the southern king’s territory. That the southern king reigned over Egypt should be noted carefully because the southern king is a prominent power in Daniel 11:25–30; 40–43.

The phrase “king of the south” in Daniel 11:25 refers to a power in the Roman Empire between AD 34 and AD 508 that has the spiritual characteristics of Egypt. Though the Egyptians had many gods (see Num. 33:4; Jer. 46:25), the denial of the true God is the spiritual characteristic of Egypt’s leadership. Ellen White described spiritual Egypt as an atheist power:

Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God and resisted His commands. . . . 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.* . . .

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. . . . This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France.¹²

Egypt represents a power that denies “the claims of the living God.” Ellen White was speaking of France during its revolution. France then displayed the atheistic spirit. But we must apply the same principle throughout the Christian era, after Daniel 11:22 (AD 34).

Pagan Rome had the same atheistic spirit that Pharaoh had. The pagans persecuted Christ’s followers and denied His divinity because the Christians “didn’t even seem to practice a recognizable form of religion. In the crucial first couple of centuries at least, they had no shrines or temples, no altars or images, and no sacrificial rites or priesthood.”¹³ By their words and actions the pagans denied the claims of the Lord Jesus, just as surely as Pharaoh did.

¹² Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 269, emphasis mine

¹³ Hurtado, *When Christians Were Atheists*, see <https://larryhurtado.wordpress.com/2016/12/13/when-christians-were-atheists/>

Since Rome is Daniel's last kingdom and pagan Rome ruled for many centuries after Jesus died and the pagans denied Christ's divinity, then pagan Rome is spiritual Egypt, the southern king's territory in Daniel 11:25–30. It is not the northern power as commonly taught.

Babylon: Though Daniel 11 does not directly mention the northern territory, the Bible says the northern king governed Babylon (see Jer. 25:9; Ezek. 26:7; Zech. 2:6–7), and history verifies the Seleucids ruled there: “Seleucus . . . seized this moment to dash across the desert to Babylon and reinstate himself in his old satrapy. The Seleucids dated their Era from this event.”¹⁴

Further confirming that the northern king reigned over Babylon, Daniel 11:11–12 calls Antiochus the Great “king of the north.” Most interpreters believe this passage refers to his disastrous battle at Raphia, in 217 BC. The Seleucids lost Asia Minor and their eastern territories before Antiochus's reign, and his dominion was then mostly limited to ancient Babylon. That the northern king reigned over Babylon, not Asia Minor, is therefore inescapable.

When Rome overthrew Antiochus the Great, it did not take Babylon and none of its leaders are called “king of the north” before Daniel 11:40. Furthermore, after Daniel 11:22, spiritual Babylon is the territory of the northern king. At the end, the pope is the king of the north because he then reigns over spiritual Babylon. I will give more details of this later.

Mingled Paganism and Christianity (Dan. 11:23–24)

The prophecy in verses 23 reveals that a “league” would happen in Rome. The Hebrew word translated “league” means “be joined together.”¹⁵ Since verse 22 ends with Jesus's crucifixion by pagan Rome and the powers after that are spiritual, verse 23 must then refer to a joining or uniting of Jesus's followers with pagans in Rome—a union between Christianity and paganism. Ellen White speaks of this union early in the Christian era: “Most of the Christians at last

¹⁴ Botsford and Robinson, *Hellenic History*, p. 375

¹⁵ *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 288

consented to lower their standard, and a union was formed between Christianity and paganism.”¹⁶

Pagan philosophers like Justin Martyr, Clement, and Origen converted to Christianity and mingled their Greek philosophy with Christian theology to form a new Roman religion.¹⁷ Justin Martyr was the first to teach Christian philosophy. Doctor Schaff says, “He is also the first Christian philosopher or the first philosophic theologian.”¹⁸ His teachings were “an approximation between Christianity and the Grecian, but especially the Platonic philosophy.”¹⁹

Daniel 11:23 then says, “And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully.” Although these philosophers embraced a form of Christianity, they rejected Christ’s transforming power. Justin and his students treated the Bible as a mystical toy and built the Roman Church using Greek philosophy. Starting with Justin Martyr, we see papal Rome rising.

As the papal little horn “came up” and looked “more stout than” the European nations (Dan. 7:8, 20), Daniel 11:23 says the Roman Church would “come up” and “become strong with a small people.” Verse 24 then says these religious teachers would “enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province”; they would subtly work and advance their cause in Rome’s populous cities. As they taught and worked from Rome and Alexandria, the Roman Church became strong and rose to prominence.

Daniel 11:24 next says that papal Rome’s traditions and ceremonies did not come from the apostles: “He shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers’ fathers.” Their entire system came from papal Rome’s conquest of paganism: “He shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches.” These spoils became papal Rome’s doctrines. Having rejected biblical

¹⁶ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 43

¹⁷ See also *Ibid.*, p. 50

¹⁸ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 2, chap. XIII, sec. 173, par. 1

¹⁹ Augustus Neander, translated from the German by Henry John Rose, *The History of the Christian Religion and Church During the First Three Centuries*, vol. II, p. 336, London, 1841

teachings and having trained people in pagan philosophy, many unconverted took Christ's name. Even kings and princes embraced this corrupt, philosophical, religious system.²⁰

Daniel 11:24 ends by saying that papal Rome would “forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.” Paganism was the religio-political stronghold of Rome. This passage says there would be a 360-year struggle against paganism by papal Rome. A “time” is a prophetic year of 360 prophetic days (see Gen. 7:11; 8:3–4; Dan. 11:13, margin). Using the principle that each prophetic day equals a literal year (see Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6), we have 360 literal years mentioned here. Since Justin Martyr was the first philosophic theologian, the 360 years began when he entered Rome and started his school of Christian philosophy:

Justin came to Rome around AD 150 or slightly earlier—a date fixed by the date of the first Apology—where he founded his school of philosophical instruction and engaged in active controversy with other philosophers and “Christian” teachers.²¹

I could not find the exact date when Justin Martyr entered Rome, but notice that he must have been in Rome slightly before AD 150. Another author says, “By the year 150 Justin Martyr is living in Rome and actually has his own philosophical school in the city of Rome.”²² Since the prophecy calls for a 360-year struggle between pagan and papal Rome, we should expect the struggle to end shortly before AD 510. Daniel 11:25–31b further describes some events during the 360 years papal Rome had “forecast his devices” against paganism.

Constantine's Army Attacks the South (Dan. 11:25–26)

The prophecy next says that a leader supporting the Roman Church would “stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army” (Dan. 11:25). As papal Rome grew, it became bolder and its struggle against paganism became militant in the fourth century. It

²⁰ Compare with Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 39–50, on paganism and the rise of the Roman Church

²¹ Barnard, *Justin Martyr*, p. 13

²² L. Michael White, Professor of Classics and Director of the Religious Studies Program, University of Texas at Austin, “Kingdoms in Conflict,” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/kingdoms.html>

then attacked paganism, which is spiritual Egypt, the southern king's territory, as previously identified. This conflict began when Constantine, who converted to the Roman Church, attacked the pagans in Italy with his "great army."

Jones describes the intrigue by some Italian bishops and leaders that resulted in this military conflict. In AD 312, an embassy from Italy, from the pagan Maxentius's dominion, visited Constantine in Gaul and "requested him to deliver the city from the despotism of the tyrant."²³ Constantine embraced the opportunity and "quickly set out toward Rome."²⁴

In the following conflict, Constantine attacked Maxentius, "the king of the south," who also was "stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army." During his conquest, Constantine first fought and won battles in northern Italy. The final battle happened near Rome at Milvian Bridge on October 28, AD 312. Historians recognize this battle's significance to papal Rome's rise: "The chroniclers were right to see the battle in retrospect as one of the decisive clashes between Christianity and paganism."²⁵ This armed conflict was the first military engagement between the Roman Church and the pagans.

History testifies that Maxentius did "not stand" (Dan. 11:25). The Christians in his realm had "forecast devices against him" and worked to guarantee Constantine's victory. The prophecy then says of Maxentius that those who "feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him" (Dan. 11:26). Maxentius's officers should have told him of the division of Constantine's army before the battle, but history says he was unprepared for the engagement: "Maxentius's intelligence officers failed him. He apparently did not know that Constantine commanded not only the Via Flaminia, but also the Via Cassia."²⁶

²³ Jones, *The Two Republics*, p. 180

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180

²⁵ John Holland Smith, *Constantine the Great*, p. 110

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 113

When half Constantine's army came down the "Via Flaminia," Maxentius's army went out to engage him. The rest of Constantine's army then came down the "Via Cassia" and attacked Maxentius's left flank. In the confusion, Maxentius's men tried to retreat over Milvian Bridge and other prepared bridges, but the other bridges prematurely separated. Whether the separation happened accidentally or purposely by Constantine's sympathizers is unknown, but many of Maxentius's men fell into the Tiber River and drowned. The prophecy correctly foretold that his army would "overflow [drown]: and many shall fall down slain." Maxentius was also killed.

Two Kings Speak Lies at One Table (Daniel 11:27–28a)

After Maxentius's death, the prophecy shifts to Licinius, another pagan ruler of Rome, as the next king of the south. Daniel 11:27 then begins, "And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table." In AD 313, Constantine and Licinius sat in negotiations in Milan, Italy, and created the Edict of Milan, which gave Christians throughout Rome freedom of worship. During their meeting, they lied about their intentions. Licinius plotted to murder Constantine, who was also planning to overthrow Licinius. Yet, their lies did "not prosper." Constantine detected Licinius's plot and two battles took place in AD 316 (Cibalae and Mardia). On March 1, AD 317, they negotiated peace at Serdica, in Thrace.

At the specific "time appointed" the prophecy calls for an "end" between Constantine and Licinius. Daniel 11:29–30 details that event, but before then, the prophecy identifies other events in Constantine's life. It next says that he would "return into his land with great riches" (Dan. 11:28). The word "riches" can also be translated as "property, goods, [or] supplies."²⁷ With the wealth and resources he gained by his campaigns, Constantine gained much territory.

Constantine's First Attack on God's Sabbath (Dan. 11:28b)

²⁷ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. II, p. 848

After Constantine's victory over Licinius, he meddled in religious affairs and set "his heart . . . against the holy covenant" by legislating a national rest day. In harmony with church leaders, on March 7, AD 321, Constantine made a law requiring people to rest from labor on Sunday:

On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits.²⁸

This decree requiring people to rest on Sunday was a direct attack on God's "holy covenant." As a response to His love, God's believing children willingly obey His law that He writes in their hearts. This heartfelt obedience is the foundation of His covenant with humanity (see Heb. 8:10). When men legislate and force disobedience to God, they are attacking His covenant.

Constantine's purpose in legislating Sunday was "to unite the conflicting interests of heathenism and Christianity."²⁹ His law was a political endeavor to unite the empire, and the corrupt bishops approved and supported the legislation "against the holy covenant."

The last part of Daniel 11:28 is talking about Constantine's attack on the Donatists, which took place a few months after making his Sunday law. In the spring of AD 321, the Roman bishops persuaded Constantine to send his armies to "do exploits" against them because they refused to have a Catholic bishop over them. Three months later, he accepted an appeal from them and "return[ed] to his own land," while the Donatists returned to their homes.

Constantine's Navy Attacks the South (Dan. 11:29–30a)

Daniel 11:29 begins, "At the time appointed . . ." This refers to the final conflict between Constantine and Licinius (see Dan. 11:27). Constantine would then "return, and come toward the south" against Licinius. The conflict between them was not "as the former" preaching and political attacks of Christian philosophers like Justin Martyr, neither was it "as the later" military

²⁸ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, chap. VII, sec. 75, par. 5, note 1

²⁹ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 53

attacks that Constantine made against Maxentius. In this final conflict, Constantine assembled “the ships of Chittim” to “come against” and overthrow the navy of Licinius (Dan. 11:30a).

Consider Dr. Shea’s comment on the phrase “shall come against him”:

When the Hebrew wants to say that one army is going *against* another, it uses the preposition ‘*al*. However, the text here uses *be* or *beth*, which means, “by,” “in,” “at,” “with.” Thus the ships of the Chittim, or western coastlands, did not come *against* the king of the north; they came “with” him, they were *his* ships.³⁰

Although Dr. Shea incorrectly calls the attacking power “the king of the north,” he shows that the ships had to come against the southern power. He also has Chittim defined as “western coastlands,” which accords with the meaning given by the Strong’s Concordance: “An islander in general, i.e. the Greeks or Romans on the shores opposite Palestine.”³¹ Constantine’s ships, gathered from western ports, harbored at Thessalonica in preparation for the naval engagement:

Already [in AD 322] Constantine was deepening and enlarging the harbor at Thessalonika, in preparation to receive the fleet which was to sail from there to force the Hellespont *in the final confrontation with Licinius*. . . . His agents scoured *every harbor in the West* for bottoms capable of transporting troops and supplies.³²

Here are “the ships of Chittim,” of the “western coastlands,” the shores of Greece and Rome “opposite Palestine.” In AD 323, Constantine used this fleet to defeat Licinius: “Then his fleet under Crispus [Constantine’s son] defeated Licinius’ under Abantus (Amandus) not far from the entrance to the Hellespont, and a storm then destroyed Licinius’ fleet utterly.”³³ Licinius’s fleet was not entirely destroyed by Constantine’s navy. History tells us that a large storm destroyed what remained after the naval engagement. Constantine then captured and later killed Licinius.

Constantine’s Second Attack on God’s Sabbath (Dan. 11:30b)

As the sole ruler of the Roman Empire, Constantine then turned his attention back to religion.

³⁰ Shea, *Daniel*, p. 257, emphasis his

³¹ *Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary*, # 3794

³² John Holland Smith, *Constantine the Great*, pp. 168–169, emphasis mine

³³ Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, p. 281

Daniel 11:30 next says that he would “be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant.” In AD 325, Constantine showed his “indignation against the holy covenant” when he presided over the first ecumenical council of the Roman Church, the Council of Nicaea.

Constantine’s relationship with Christianity was for political gain. He sought to bring pagans and Christians into harmony by having “intelligence with” the bishops who were “forsak[ing] the holy covenant.” Having hatred of God’s covenant, which brings obedience to His law, men conspired and exalted their traditions over His commandments through human councils.

According to Dr. Schaff, the Roman bishops gave Constantine “the honorary presidency of the highest assembly of the church” and exalted him “as an angel of God from heaven.”³⁴ In a letter that Constantine wrote to the bishops absent from the council, he said, “We have also gratifying intelligence to communicate to you . . .”³⁵ Interestingly, he used the same word the King James Bible uses to describe his communication with the Roman bishops. He had “intelligence” with those bishops who were exalting Sunday.

The part of Constantine’s letter quoted above refers to the Feast of Easter. Papal Rome’s subtlest work to undermine the Sabbath commandment, God’s “perpetual covenant” (Exod. 31:16), was to establish Easter on Sunday because Jesus rose that day. Jones mentions the connection between Sunday sacredness and the decision to celebrate the feast on Sunday:

The Council of Nice in A. D. 325 gave another impetus to the Sunday movement. It decided that the Roman custom of celebrating Easter on Sunday only should be followed throughout the whole empire. . . . This was followed up by a letter from “Constantine Augustus to the Churches,” in which upon this point he said: “. . . *it seemed very unsuitable in the celebration of this sacred feast, that we should follow the custom of the Jews, a people who, having imbrued their hands in a most heinous outrage, and thus polluted their souls, are deservedly blind. . . . Let us then have nothing in common with that most hostile people the Jews.*”³⁶

³⁴ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, chap. IX, sec. 120, par. 6

³⁵ Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, book I, chap. IX

³⁶ Jones, *The Two Republics*, p. 319, emphasis his

Some kept Easter on the Jewish Passover, while others observed it yearly on Sunday. Constantine's words referred to this Easter controversy, but notice that he goes further by saying, "Let us then have nothing in common with that most hostile people the Jews." Hating Jews and Jewish institutions, Constantine and the bishops advised Christians to distance themselves. Though not a Jewish institution, they targeted the Sabbath.

About the time of the Nicaean Council, Pope Sylvester I officially renamed the first day of the week: "In the year 325, Sylvester, Bishop of Rome (AD 314–337), changed the title of the first day, calling it the Lord's day."³⁷ This timing was no coincidence. Constantine, Sylvester, and other civil and religious leaders were coordinating their efforts to exalt Sunday, and they linked their promotion of Sunday to Jesus's resurrection:

But he [Pope Sylvester I] commanded [them] to call the Sabbath by the ancient term of the law, and [to call] the first feria 'Lord's day,' because that on it the Lord rose.³⁸

Not satisfied with the yearly Easter celebration on Sunday, they justified renaming the first day of the week because Christ rose on that day. People were also taught to keep Sunday as a weekly "festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ" to gain their acceptance.³⁹

The name change of the first day to the Lord's Day continues today in Christian literature. *Dominica* (Lord's Day) and *Sabbatum* (Sabbath Day) are the first and last weekday names in Ecclesiastical Latin, the official language of the Roman Church. These weekday names, established by Pope Sylvester I, remain unchanged nearly 1700 years later. Catholic leaders today know the Sabbath is Saturday, but they exalt Sunday as a sign, or mark, of their power.

These two weekday names also remain in the languages of the predominantly Roman Catholic nations. The French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish languages still call the

³⁷ M. Ludovicum Lucium, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 739–740, ed. Basilea, 1624

³⁸ Rabanus Maurus, *De Clericorum Institutione*, bk. 2, chap. 46, translated by Robert Leo Odom, *Sunday in Roman Paganism*, p. 197

³⁹ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 52

first and last weekdays the Lord's Day and the Sabbath Day respectively.

Renaming the first weekday to the Lord's Day was not the only thing Pope Sylvester did. He also decreed that Sabbath duties must be kept on Sundays. Rabanus continues speaking of Pope Sylvester in the next sentence:

Moreover, the same pope decreed that the Sabbath rest should be transferred to the Lord's day, in order that on that day we should rest from earthly works to the praising of God.⁴⁰

Many Christians deny this rest day change by papal Rome, but Ellen White testified to their change of the rest day: "The pope has changed the day of rest from the seventh to the first day."⁴¹ When she made this statement, she gave no historical proof and did not say which pope made the change. She only repeated what the Lord told her. Today we have historical evidence we can point to.

Not only did Pope Sylvester I decree that people rest on Sunday, he ordered them to fast on the Bible Sabbath:

Rome had introduced the practice of fasting on the Sabbath to undo Sabbath-keeping. Pope Sylvester (314–335) was the first to order the Churches to fast on the Sabbath, and Pope Innocent (402–417) made it a binding law in the Churches that obeyed him.⁴²

Church and state leaders made a coordinated effort to make Sunday holy. Eusebius, Constantine's friend and a religious historian, commented on their work:

All things whatsoever that were prescribed for the Sabbath, we have transferred them to the Lord's day, as being more authoritative and more highly regarded and first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath.⁴³

Eusebius's confession to conspiracy is clear for everyone to see. The list below summarizes their transfer of Sabbath rest and its sacredness to Sunday, as prophesied in Daniel 11:30:

⁴⁰ Rabanus Maurus, *De Clericorum Institutione*, bk. 2, chap. 46, translated by Robert Leo Odom, *Sunday in Roman Paganism*, p. 197

⁴¹ Ellen White, *Early Writings*, p. 65

⁴² Peter Heylyn, *History of the Sabbath*, part 2, chap. 2, p. 44, London, 1636

⁴³ Eusebius, *Commentary on the Psalms*, Psalm XCII; quoted in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. XXIII, col. 1171

- The Council of Nicaea established the Easter celebration to be on Sundays (AD 325)
- Constantine urged Christians to have nothing in common with the Jews (AD 325)
- Pope Sylvester I ordered the first day be renamed to “the Lord’s day” to highlight Christ’s resurrection (AD 325) and decreed that Christians rest on that day and fast on the Sabbath
- Eusebius boasted that they transferred Sabbath duties (rest, sacredness, and so forth) to the Lord’s day (his comment was published between AD 326 and AD 332)

By state laws, church councils, and papal decrees, Constantine and the leaders of the Roman Church thought to change the weekly rest day to Sunday.⁴⁴ Their actions were a clear attack on God’s covenant, and Daniel 11 pinpoints the attempted change. The prophecy calls these actions, “indignation against the holy covenant.” Without biblical evidence, and despite acknowledgment of papal Rome’s involvement, nearly every Christian today disobeys the Bible Sabbath.

Constantine Profanes the South’s Sanctuary (Dan. 11:31a)

The last event in Daniel 11 referring to Constantine’s attack on the southern, pagan power is mentioned next. The first part of verse 31 says, “And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength.” The word translated “strength” means a “place or means of safety, protection, stronghold, [or] fortress.”⁴⁵ Jay P. Green translates this part of the verse, “And arms from him shall stand, and they will profane the sanctuary, the fortress.”⁴⁶ Daniel 11 similarly uses and translates the same word many times:

- V. 1: “to strengthen”; the angel fortified Daniel
- Vv. 7, 10: “fortress”; fortified cities of the Seleucid Empire
- V. 19: “fort”; the fortified city of Rome where Julius Caesar died
- V. 38: “forces” (margin: “Or munitions. Heb. Mauzzim, or, Gods protectors”); the patron or protecting saints of the various cities and territories of the empire
- V. 39: “most strongholds” (margin: “Heb. fortresses of munitions”); the fortified cities of the empire where people honored patron saints

In Daniel 11:31, the prophecy identifies a fortified place having sacred significance to the pagans that Constantine would profane. The next important event in his life was the removal of

⁴⁴ See also Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 574-578

⁴⁵ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. II, p. 652

⁴⁶ Jay P. Green, *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, Daniel 11:31

the Roman capital to Constantinople in AD 330. This event logically fits the prophecy. It is speaking of Constantine's desecration of Rome and his profaning of its pagan temples. Below are things he did to undermine Rome as the nation's capital and to change its religion to Christianity⁴⁷:

- He moved the government and set up a "new senate" in Constantinople.
- He incited the "systematic striping of pagan shrines and the melting-down of their gold, silver, and bronze treasures."
- He "damaged the superstition of the pagans, for he brought their images into the common light of day to adorn the city of Constantinople."
- He made an "exhibition of the temple treasures in the streets and public buildings."

Having "arms" on his side, the pagans were powerless to stop Constantine from moving the capital to Constantinople. Constantine wanted worldly power, and he used the church and his army to advance his desire to seat himself on the throne of the Roman Empire.

The Southern King is Taken Away (Daniel 11:31b)

The next phrase of Daniel 11:31 ends paganism's reign, temporarily removing the southern power from the prophecy. The passage says that papal Rome would "take away the daily" (Dan. 11:31b). Paganism's end was not a single event, as some think the prophecy requires, but papal Rome carried out a series of events—religious, political, and military—throughout a 360-year period that ended in AD 508. Ellen White testified, "In the sixth century . . . paganism had given place to the papacy."⁴⁸ Paganism's end in AD 508 made way for papal Rome's civil reign as "the abomination that maketh desolate" to begin in AD 538 (Dan. 11:31c; 12:11).

Clovis's acceptance of papal Christianity ended the struggle between papal Rome and paganism: "By his [Clovis's] conversion he had led the way to the triumph of Catholicism; he had saved the Roman Church from the Scylla and Charybdis of heresy and paganism."⁴⁹ Clovis,

⁴⁷ The events cited in the list come from John Holland Smith, *Constantine the Great*, pp. 221, 232

⁴⁸ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 54

⁴⁹ *Historians' History of the World*, vol. VII, p. 477

who converted to papal Christianity, was baptized in AD 508. He was also proclaimed consul of Rome and put Catholic bishops in control of all religion in France.⁵⁰

That year fulfilled the “time” of Daniel 11:24, which started slightly before AD 150, as mentioned before.⁵¹ Subtracting 360 years from AD 508 extends back to AD 148. Did Justin Martyr enter Rome that year? Historians may one-day answer this question.

It follows logically that paganism must be taken away before papal Rome’s civil reign could begin, as referred to next in the prophecy. The southern king’s absence in Daniel 11:32–39 indicates that the daily’s removal was paganism’s end. And the southern king’s appearance in Daniel 11:40 suggests the return of a pagan, atheistic power “at the time of the end.”

The Southern King Revives

In the previous sections, we called the pagans in Rome atheists because they denied Christ’s divinity like Pharaoh. With the end of paganism in AD 508, in the days of Clovis king of the Franks, the southern king disappeared from the prophecy for 1,290 years (see Dan. 12:11). To understand the return of Daniel’s southern king, consider how history reveals the resurgence of paganism during the Renaissance:

The Renaissance (meaning ‘rebirth’) has been so named for the very reason that the submerged pre-Christian culture of Greece and Rome was revived in this period.⁵²

Greece and Rome had pagan cultures before Christianity arrived. When evolutionary thought surfaced in the Renaissance, it was revived ancient paganism in a modern form. At its origin, recovery and presentation of ancient pagan literature fueled the revival:

At all events the Renaissance was heralded through the recovery by Italian scholars of Greek and Roman classical literature. . . . The people began to feel a returning consciousness

⁵⁰ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, article “European History and Culture,” 2003 ed., vol. 18, p. 610; see also the historical information in Heidi Heiks, *AD 508 Source Book*

⁵¹ See pages 8 and 9 for a description of the events at the beginning of the 360 years

⁵² Morris, *The Long War Against God*, p. 200

of their ancient culture, and a desire to reproduce it.⁵³

This reviving of pagan culture during the Renaissance laid the spiritual foundation for the future return of the southern king in Daniel 11:40. Morris reveals the revival's progression from evolutionary thought to its final form:

Evolutionism then came to the surface again in the humanistic emphases of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods, first in the revival of pantheism, then in deism, and finally in full-fledged atheism.⁵⁴

The pagan beliefs that reemerged in the Renaissance continued developing in the Enlightenment and climaxed in the French Revolution as “full-fledged atheism.” Revelation further describes atheism's revival as a beast rising from “the bottomless pit” (see Rev. 11:7). The “bottomless pit,” being a place of emptiness and desolation, describes the social and political condition in France during its revolution. Spiritual “Egypt” in verse 8 also characterized France at that time; history proves it was then an atheist nation.

As we saw before, Ellen White said that “the nation represented by Egypt,” which would exist near the end of papal Rome's 1260-year reign, refers to atheist France. Paganism, with its evolutionary and atheistic ideas, is the direct link between the southern king identified in Daniel 11:25–31 (pagan Rome) and the revived southern king mentioned in Daniel 11:40 (atheist France). Atheism was completely subdued when Clovis of France converted to Christianity and fully revived in France before its revolution began in AD 1789.⁵⁵

The Southern King Attacks Papal Rome (Dan. 11:40a)

Papal Rome exercised civil power over Europe and persecuted the church from AD 538 to AD 1798, as detailed in Daniel 11:32–39. The close of the 1260 years of papal persecution in 1798 began the final conflict period of Daniel 11. When atheism arose in France, it opposed

⁵³ *Beginning And Progress Of The Renaissance*, Edited by R. A. Guiseppi, (<http://history-world.org/renaissance.htm>)

⁵⁴ Morris, *The Long War Against God*, p. 206

⁵⁵ For more details on the French Revolution, see Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, chap. 15

anything associated with Christianity. Catholics and Protestants suffered together.

Daniel 11:40 next tells us what happened when the final conflict period began: “And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him.” The word rendered “push at” is interpreted “attack” in the New King James Bible and is translated “gore” in Exodus 21:28. This prophecy says the king over spiritual Egypt, which must be an atheist power, would attack papal Rome and inflict a serious wound in AD 1798 (compare Rev. 13:3).

During the revolution in the 1790s, the French government renounced all religion. France’s spiritual characteristics were then atheistic, like Pharaoh’s. Toward the end of its atheistic reign, the French general Berthier attacked the papacy and inflicted the deadly wound by capturing the pope and removing papal Rome’s civil power:

The object of the French Directory was the destruction of the pontifical government, as the irreconcilable enemy of the republic. . . . And finally, after declaring the temporal power abolished, the victors carried the pope prisoner into Tuscany, whence he never returned (1798).⁵⁶

Some have claimed that atheism in France ended before it attacked the Papacy, but history testifies that France was an atheist power until AD 1801:

With Napoleon now in ascendancy in France [August 1799], year-long negotiations between government officials and the new Pope Pius VII led to the Concordat of 1801, formally ending the dechristianization period.⁵⁷

One reason for France’s dechristianization and attack on papal Rome was Rome’s long oppression of the French. The church controlled much of the country’s wealth and land: “As the largest landowner in the country, the Catholic Church controlled properties which provided massive revenues from its tenants.”⁵⁸ Interestingly, Daniel 11:39 ends by saying papal Rome would “divide the land for gain.” The French Revolution was the result of greed, and people

⁵⁶ Trevor, *Rome: From the Fall of the Western Empire*, pp. 439–440

⁵⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dechristianization_of_France_during_the_French_Revolution

⁵⁸ Ibid.

would no longer tolerate the power loving clergy. Thus, atheist France fulfilled the spiritual characteristics of the southern power and its attack on papal Rome identified in Daniel 11:40.

The Northern King Reappears (Dan. 11:40b)

After atheist France attacked the Papacy, Daniel 11:40 next speaks of the northern king's return: "And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind." The northern king has been missing since verse 16. Rome is *not* called "the king of the north" before Daniel 11:40. A short description of how the northern king reappears follows.

As ancient Babylon was the northern king's territory in the days of the Seleucids, spiritual Babylon is the northern king's territory in the final conflict. Revelation speaks much of this mystical power. Notice that spiritual Babylon has three divisions: "And the great city was divided into three parts . . . and great Babylon came in remembrance before God" (Rev. 16:19).

The sixth plague names Babylon's "three parts":

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of *the dragon*, and out of the mouth of *the beast*, and out of the mouth of *the false prophet*. (Rev. 16:12–13, emphasis mine)

The three powers comprising spiritual Babylon are well-known. The Dragon is Satan as he works through earthly powers to destroy God's church. The sea beast represents papal Rome united with the nations of Europe. And the False Prophet power is the second beast of Revelation 13 that rises from the earth. This beast's image symbolizes the Protestant churches united with the United States government. (See Rev. 12:1–9; 13:1–17; 17; 19:20.) Whoever reigns over this threefold power is the northern king. Although Lucifer, the Dragon, is the invisible commander of spiritual Babylon (see Isa. 14:4, 12), the pope is his vicar in his absence.

When speaking of mystical Babylon, John calls the woman riding the beast, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS" (Rev. 17:1–7). By uniting with the European

nations, papal Rome became a harlot (compare Ezek. 16:2, 15, 26–28). Those Protestant churches that also sacrifice their connection with God by uniting with the world are her harlot daughters. Prophecy calls them defiling “women” (Rev. 14:4). Thus, Babylon includes more than the Roman Church; it includes mother and daughters.

The second angel’s message says in part, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” (Rev. 14:8). In the summer of 1843, Charles Fitch, a preacher in the Great Second Advent Movement, was the first to identify Babylon in this passage. Although many taught that papal Rome was Babylon, he classified those Christian churches opposing the first angel’s message as part of Babylon. Ellen White likewise identified the Protestant churches as part of spiritual Babylon:

Babylon is said to be “the mother of harlots.” By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. The message of Revelation 14, announcing the fall of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore *it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone*, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. . . .

*Many of the Protestant churches are following Rome’s example of iniquitous connection with “the kings of the earth”—the state churches, by their relation to secular governments; and other denominations, by seeking the favor of the world. And the term “Babylon”—confusion—may be appropriately applied to these bodies, all professing to derive their doctrines from the Bible, yet divided into almost innumerable sects, with widely conflicting creeds and theories.*⁵⁹

The Protestant churches sympathizing with papal Rome are part of that corrupt system of religion called Babylon. Her “wine” intoxicates them (Rev. 17:2). They have ignored Rome’s role in the prophecies and are now supporting the system they once despised, and they will finally legislate and enforce one of her traditions in opposition to Bible truth.

Revelation declares of the United States, “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Rev. 13:16). Sunday worship is the mark of the beast, which is closely associated with worship of the beast

⁵⁹ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 382–383, emphasis mine

and its image (see Rev. 14:9). The Roman Church admits, “Sunday is our mark of authority.”⁶⁰

The United States will renounce the First Amendment of its Constitution and make a law “respecting an establishment of religion” by legislating Sunday in opposition to God’s Sabbath. It will exalt a religious institution of the Papacy causing the world “to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed” (Rev. 13:12). Protestant America, speaking for the Dragon, will pressure people to disobey God’s law and worship the papal church-state system.

In legislating Sunday, men will usurp the Lord’s place. But James says, “There is one lawgiver” (James 4:12), and Isaiah declares, “The LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king” (Isa. 33:22). In a monarchy, the king makes the laws and renders judgment according to those laws. For the Christian, Jesus is the universal king, lawgiver, and judge. When the United States enforces Sunday, papal Rome’s mark of authority, church leaders and legislators will reject the Lord and declare Lucifer, through his vicar (compare Rev. 12:9; 13:2), their king, lawgiver, and judge.

Consider what Ellen White said about the enforcement of Sunday in the United States and its relation to the Papacy: “When our nation shall so abjure the principles of its government as to enact a Sunday law, Protestantism will in this act join hands with popery.”⁶¹ In legislating Sunday, Protestant America will “join hands with popery” and exalt it. Europe and the United States will make a corrupt alliance against heaven, which will unite spiritual Babylon. The pope will then be Babylon’s visible leader, “the king of the north,” as Daniel 11:40 foretells. So *the northern king reappears when America legislates Sunday*, not before.

The Southern King’s Final Defeat (Dan. 11:40c–43)

Once the United States enforces Sunday observance, making the pope king of the north, the

⁶⁰ Catholic Record, London, Ontario, September 1, 1923

⁶¹ Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 712

conflict mentioned in Daniel 11:40c will happen. The northern king will then “come against” an atheist power and its allies “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” (Dan. 11:40c).

Because France rejected atheism soon after its revolution, the southern power cannot now be France. Atheism has spread through evolution and humanist philosophies to other countries, especially the communist and socialist nations. Accepting this fact, many scholars have taught that communism’s collapse in Russia fulfilled Daniel 11:40, but this teaching is wrong.

First, the pope did not reign over spiritual Babylon when communism collapsed in Russia; he was not then king of the north. And second, the military conflict in Daniel 11:40 must be literal, as are the other spiritual conflicts in Daniel 11: Constantine’s wars in Daniel 11:25–30 were real engagements with real armies and navies, and the French general Berthier led a real army to Rome, took Pope Pius VI captive, and set up a republic in Italy. Therefore, the northern king will literally attack the southern, atheist alliance, as Daniel 11:40 requires.

Despite its collapse in Russia, communism still rules much of humanity. Communist China has over one billion people and there are smaller communist countries such as North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba. Daniel’s future fulfillment will be a war where apostate Christianity in Europe and North America attack the atheist alliance, whoever those powers may be.

Satan’s purpose for war, as the Sunday crisis approaches, is to divert people’s attention: “It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another, for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God.”⁶² It appears from Daniel 11:40, however, that soon *after* the Sunday law is enacted a major war will begin. Ellen White also indicates that war will happen as Daniel 11 foretells:

The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel

⁶² Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 589

has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place.⁶³

The war in Daniel 11:40–43 is a diversion. Satan intends to drown out the loud cry and hinder people from hearing its proclamation. He will also persecute the Remnant and attempt their overthrow. The prophecy reveals this attack on God’s church: “He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown” (Dan. 11:41).

The “glorious land” in verse 16 is a geographical reference to national Israel, but in verse 41 it refers to spiritual Israel. The conflict centers on Christ and His church; Daniel’s faithful people are in the middle of the conflict (see Dan. 10:14; Heb. 11). The translators supplied the word “countries” in the King James Bible, but “people” would be better. The passage says many professed Christians will “be overthrown” and shaken from God’s church in the coming crisis.

The prophecy also reveals people who reject Sunday worship: “But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon” (Daniel 11:41). Edom was Esau, the brother of Jacob, and Moab and Ammon were Lot’s descendants (see Genesis 12:5; 19:30–38; 25:24–34; 36:1, 19). Although antagonistic toward Israel, they were relatives. At the end, spiritual Israel’s relatives are those who do the Father’s will (see Matt. 12:48–50). They are walking by faith, but are outside God’s Remnant.

Thus, Edom, Moab, and Ammon represent Bible-believing Christians from various churches who have heard the three angels messages but have not yet accepted the full truth. They will leave their churches and join the Remnant when the crisis begins. Though now scattered among the fallen churches, they will respond to Jesus’s call and leave those churches (see John 10:16). The Remnant will then be free of unbelievers and strengthened with new converts.

After describing the sifting, the prophecy finishes the war between the north and south.

⁶³ Ellen White, *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 14

Despite the communist threat, the northern king will overthrow the southern alliance: “He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape” (Dan. 11:42). As ancient Babylon overthrew Egypt (see Ezek. 30; Jer. 46), so mystical Babylon will overthrow spiritual Egypt. The prophecy then reveals the extent of the northern king’s victory:

But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps” (Dan. 11:43).

Anciently, the Libyans and the Ethiopians were Egypt’s allies and fought against Babylon (see Ezek. 30:5; Jer. 46:9). In the final conflict, these powers will be allies of spiritual Egypt. The phrase “and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps” means they are allied to and follow the southern king (see Exod. 11:8, margin; Judg. 4:10; 8:5; 1 Kings 20:10, margin; 2 Kings 3:9, margin). The king of mystical Babylon will overthrow them and will then control the world’s wealth (compare Rev. 18:9–19), and the southern alliance will not recover.

Whether gold, silver, land, oil, or people, everything will then be under spiritual Babylon’s control. Once it controls global finances, the northern king will enact a decree to stop God’s people from buying and selling (see Rev. 13:17). Although this decree may happen earlier in Europe and America, overthrow of the southern alliance will make it global.

The Northern King’s Final Stand (Daniel 11:44–45)

Despite the laws against God’s people, they will proclaim the final warning to the world: “But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him” (Dan. 11:44a). These “tidings” come from God’s throne (see Ps. 48:2; Ezek. 43:1–3). They call people from Babylon to receive God’s seal (see Ezek. 9:2–4; Rev. 7:2–3; 14:6–12; 18:1–5). God’s work in humanity will then be finished and human probation will close.

Satan will then have “great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev. 12:12). At his instigation, the northern king will next enact a decree for the Remnant’s

destruction: “Therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many” (Dan. 11:44b; see also Rev. 13:15).⁶⁴ Those refusing to obey Sunday will be greatly tried.

The final verse in Daniel 11 will then happen: “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain” (Dan. 11:45a). Many think Daniel here identifies Jerusalem, which sits in a mountainous area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. Jerusalem and Mount Zion, however, logically refer to New Jerusalem where the saints have their citizenship (see Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1; Isa. 4:5; 37:32; Joel 2:1).

Jesus is seen during the final conflict standing on Mount Zion with His sealed people (see Rev. 14:1). Wherever the saints are on earth, the Bible and its prophecies often call them to heaven or picture them as already there (compare Eph. 2:6; Heb. 10:19; Rev. 14:4; 15:2).

Although New Jerusalem is in heaven, the northern king attempts its overthrow by assailing its citizens on earth. He will try to deceive them by usurping the place of Christ over His church.

We must remember that Lucifer is the hidden commander behind Babylon’s beast and false prophet powers (see Isa. 14:4; Rev. 12:9; 13:3, 11; 16:12–13; 19:20). After the death decree is passed, Lucifer will appear as Christ and command worship from everyone on earth, and the deceived multitudes will bow to him.⁶⁵ His purpose, however, is to deceive the saints, and Isaiah says Satan plans to enthrone himself “above the stars of God, . . . upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north” (Isa. 14:13, see also Ps 48:2; Joel 2:1; Rev. 1:20; 14:1).

The word tabernacle is used much in the Bible, but is mostly used of the temple where Moses spoke “face to face” with the Lord (Exod. 33:7–11). Jesus also tabernacled with His people at His first advent and He will tabernacle with them again when He returns (see John 1:14; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 20:4; 21:3). However, when the northern king plants “the tabernacles of his palace

⁶⁴ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 615–616

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 624–625

between the seas in the glorious holy mountain,” it refers to Satan and the fallen angels counterfeiting Christ’s coming. Demons will place their palatial tents among the human sea and try to deceive and overcome the saints who are symbolically standing with Jesus on Mount Zion. In this last attempt to overcome the saints, he will compel their worship.⁶⁶

Satan will be desperate to force the saints to sin, but he will fail: “yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Dan. 11:45b). Although Satan’s destruction is not instant, the saints’ refusal to sin will guarantee that he and his followers are finished.

Daniel 12:1 repeats the events in Daniel 11:44b–45 from another angle. When Jesus’s ministration ends, probation will then close, “Michael” will stand, and Satan will instigate a death decree to destroy Sabbath keepers (Dan. 12:1a; 11:44b).⁶⁷ This decree will bring the world to a “time of trouble,” and Satan will try to deceive the saints by personating Christ (Dan. 11:45a; 12:1b).⁶⁸ The plagues will then fall on the wicked, exposing Satan’s deceptions and destroying spiritual Babylon, while the saints are “delivered” (Dan. 11:45b; 12:1c).⁶⁹ The prophecy then finishes with the resurrections and the saints receiving their eternal reward (see Dan. 12:2–3).⁷⁰

Conclusion

When interpreted spiritually, the events in Daniel 11:23–31a fit in the prophecy’s expected timeframe, between AD 31 and AD 508. Using this method, I have shown that the events in these verses are in chronological order. These historical events are also harmonious with the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the great controversy and the writings of Ellen White.

Many of the important events are summarized in the list below:

⁶⁶ See Ellen White, *Last Day Events*, pp. 164–165

⁶⁷ Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 613–616

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 616–626

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 627–640

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 640–652

- V. 22b: Jesus, “the prince of the covenant,” was crucified for humanity (AD 31, spring)
- V. 23: Some pagans and Christians united to form the Roman Church (2nd century)
- V. 24: Roman Catholic traditions developed from pagan philosophy (2nd and 3rd centuries)
- Vv. 25–26: Constantine defeated the pagan Maxentius at Milvian Bridge (AD 312)
- V. 27: Constantine and Licinius met in Milan and plotted against each other (AD 313–314)
- V. 27: Constantine detected Licinius’s plot resulting in two battles (AD 316–317)
- V. 28: Constantine made the first recorded Christian Sunday law (AD 321, March 7)
- V. 28: Constantine’s armies did exploits against the Donatists (AD 321, spring)
- Vv. 29–30a: Constantine won the final victory over Licinius using ships (AD 323)
- V. 30b: Constantine and church leaders conspired to make Sunday holy (AD 325)
- V. 31a: Constantine moved the capital to Constantinople, profaning pagan Rome (AD 330)
- V. 31b: Clovis’s rise ended paganism, removing the southern king until verse 40 (AD 508)

Daniel 11:23–31b reveals a long conflict between pagan and papal Rome. This passage sets the context for the identification of the southern power in Daniel 11:40–43. The main spiritual characteristic identifying the southern power is atheism. Atheism as it existed in pagan Rome, then in France, and finally in communism and socialism harmonizes Daniel 11:23–45.

Daniel 11:25–31a covers the major events in Constantine’s life. His military conflicts against the southern power in these verses mingle with religious events in chronological order. The Lord gave these historical events so we can follow the prophecy and understand the attack on His “holy covenant” in verses 28 and 30. Identifying this attack as the attempted change to God’s rest day is important to our understanding of the prophecies (compare Dan. 7:25; 8:13; 2 Thess. 2:3, 7–8). God is pointing to men’s institution of Sunday as a vicious assault on His covenant.

The attack on God’s law and His church is the central theme of Daniel’s prophecy. Ellen White highlights this when she quotes Daniel 11:30–36 and comments, “Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated.”⁷¹ The exaltation of Sunday and associated events will be repeated in fulfillment of Daniel’s final events, as I have shown.

The literalistic, Middle East interpretations hide the Sabbath-Sunday conflicts in Daniel 11 and are in tension with the spiritual method that reveals them. This tension will soon resolve.

⁷¹ Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 13, p. 394; see also *The Great Controversy*, p. 578