

The King of the South in Daniel 11:40-45

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Introduction

In this paper we look first at the text of Dan 11:40-45, then at a narrative technique used in the text, and then at the Spirit of Prophecy. Ellen White provides a guiding concept which can help us answer the question whether the text should be read literally or spiritually. I argue that it should be read spiritually.¹

Overview

Within the context of the Islam debate, all agree that in the last verses of Dan 11 the king of the North is the papacy, which at any one time will be a single individual. But saying that Islam is the king of the South does not give us anything tangible to point to. Islam exists only in the mind, as a religious philosophy. This raises the question what it means to speak of a king of the South. And yet it is a term that the angel uses in vs. 40a. This is one problem we will have to address.

Another is that, if the second coming is a global event, and if Dan 12:1 is a reference to it, then the events which lead up to that event (in vss. 40-45) must at some point become global. If we say that the places named in the passage are literal but the application surrounding them is global, those ideas do not fit well together.

South needs to be an everything else category. At the end of the chapter, North and South become one and the king that had formerly only commanded Northern forces, now commands both Northern and Southern forces. This is what John means when he says, “and the whole world marveled as they followed the beast” (Rev 13:3). It is not enough for North to be the papacy, for South to be Islam, and for the news of what these kings do in the Middle East to circulate everywhere. The categories themselves must be defined in such a way as to include the whole world. Doing this is incompatible with literalism. If North is highly specified and South is also highly specified, there is a question how to account for the many people who do not fall within either category.

Atheism is so small a part of what South includes that it would be misleading to say atheism is the king of the South. And if we did, that still would be only an idea. South is not easy to define, and in my view it is not a cohesive category. It is made up of a cauldron of ideas – all incompatible with each other. Ultimately the king of the North usurps his power from Christ, so Christ is the ultimate King of the North. (This is why

¹ Readers of this paper should also read Ángel Rodríguez, Biblical Research Institute Release 13, “Daniel 11 and the Islamic Interpretation” (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, May 2015).

Lucifer wanted to place his throne “in the far reaches of the north” in Isa 14:13.)² Similarly, the ultimate king of the South is Satan – the self-proclaimed god of this world. The reader will immediately recognize that one power motivates both. Here we see Satan’s divided kingdom (Matt 12:25-26), of which the two parts are North and South. But whereas we can find a penultimate king of the North, if I could use that term (i.e., the papacy), I don’t think anyone has identified a tangible entity that could be called a penultimate king of the South.

There is a reason for this. The king of the North is what he is because he does what he does. He does Northern things and is therefore the king of the North. The Northern things in question are to attack the law of God and eventually the people of God. Because it does these things, the papacy is the end time king of the North, corresponding to end time spiritual Babylon (see Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21). The king of the South also is what he is because he does what he does. He does Southern things and is therefore the king of the South. The Southern things in question are to attack the kingdom of God generally, in the person of the end time spiritual king of the North. As such the end time king of the South in Daniel corresponds to end time spiritual Egypt in Revelation (Rev 11:8). Saying this does not spiritual a passage away, but binds Daniel together with Revelation.

At this point there is a distinction we must make, because the end time king of the North continues to do Northern things (after the healing of his mortal wound) and therefore continues being the king of the North, but the end time king of the South does not continue doing Southern things. He did them once – in a moment of history in 1798 – and then stopped doing them. Given a functional definition of the terms, this would mean that in today’s world there is no king of the South. There was in 1798, but not now. The text says that in vs. 40 the king of the South would attack the king of the North. And it did (see GC 579). Later references to “Egypt” are not references to France. They are references to whatever made France a king of the South. Barring this, we have an end time king of the South that lacks Southern characteristics, and where is the significance in that?

The reality of the problem I’m pointing out is illustrated by the fact that we’re all here attending this symposium. And bear in mind: Our topic is not South in the abstract (how literal would that be?), but the *king* of the South. A king is not a tract of land; it is a person. So a literal application of the term king of the South will have to identify a person who could be said to occupy the above role. This will not be an easy thing to do.

With respect to the Spirit of Prophecy, Ellen White gives the initial impression of saying nothing substantive about Dan 11. There is an isolated statement, repeated four times in her corpus, to the effect that Dan 11 has almost reached its complete fulfillment,³ but she doesn’t tell us what the fulfillment is. In six of the last chapters of *Great Controversy*, however, she offers a flood of insight into how the final events unfold before

² See J. J. M. Roberts, “*ŠĀPŌN* in Job 26,7,” *Biblica* 56 (1975): 554-57.

³ *Review and Herald Articles*, 5:94 (November 24, 1904); *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1948), 9:14; *Welfare Ministry* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), p. 136; Letter 103, 1904, pp. 5-6; *Review and Herald*, July 8, 1976. Verse 1 is not Dan 11.

Christ's return, and it will be useful to map these onto the last six verses of Dan 11. In consulting her work, we're not asking Ellen White to do our exegesis for us, but rather to provide oversight and perhaps a corrective after we have done our own initial work as scholars. She offers a guiding concept that I believe is something we need.

To the degree that we strengthen the link between the six verses we are studying and the six chapters of *Great Controversy* mentioned above, we weaken the link between those verses and the Islam interpretation.

Verses 40b and 40c

Much has been said about the "like a whirlwind" metaphor in Dan 11:40b,⁴ but this is only one of three such metaphors used in the passage. To understand any of these figures well, we must understand all of them in a comparable manner. They come to us as a matched set.

In vs. 40a the king of the South attacks the king of the North as one animal would attack another, by butting and goring (*yitnaggah* < **ngh* "gore"). In vs. 40b the king of the North responds by rushing out at his opponent in the same way that a storm would overwhelm even the most victorious animal in the open field (*weyistā'ēr* < **ś'r* "whirl away"). Instead of a largely unequal contest between two animals, we now have an entirely unequal contest between the remaining animal and the forces of nature. In vs. 40c the metaphor is expanded further. The intensity of the storm in vs. 40b now grows to become a flood, which sweeps away everything in its path (*wešātap* < **štp* "overflow").

The word translated "whirlwind" has a variety of meanings. In some passages it means to "bristle" with horror (Ezek 32:10), "dread" (Deut 32:17; Job 18:20; Jer 2:12; Ezek 27:35); "whirl away" (Ps 58:10), "wreath" (Ps 50:3).⁵ In Ps 50:3; Isa 28:2, and Nah 1:3 we have the relate noun "tempest." Taking all this together, *śa'ar* is a bad storm, a dreadful storm. In Isa 28:2 there is an association with "hail" and also with "overflowing waters," to which the angel brings us in vs. 40c.

The progression is first goring (a contest between animals, in a manner similar to Dan 8:4), then a storm (where human actions are compared with wind), then a flood (where human actions are compared with water). Let us not dismiss the first figure too quickly. If the Northern king is gored (on the analogy of a wounded animal), that is a major injury, which has the potential of being fatal. If we take this figure seriously, the king will need time to heal before mounting a response. And second, once the Northern response begins, it intensifies over time such that we see it in two phases (wind, water). The third metaphor involving water is different from the second and more threatening. What I gather from this is that not all of what we read in vs. 40 occurs in vs. 40.

⁴ See Roy Gane, "Methodology for the Interpretation of Daniel 11," *JATS* 27/1-2 (2016), 329, 330.

⁵ D. J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. I–VIII (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press; Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1993–2011), s.v. *ś'r* I, *ś'r* II, *ś'r* IV. The entry *ś'r* III "be acquainted with" is unrelated to the present discussion.

The only way I know of to make sense of the above relationships is by invoking prolepsis, in which the narrative looks forward out of sequence before resuming from where it was. If vs. 40b offers a proleptic overview of vss. 41-43 and vs. 40c offers a proleptic overview of vss. 44-45, all specifications of the text can be accounted for. The fact that the flood of 40c is more forceful than the whirlwind of 40b would correspond to the fact that in 40b the king commands only Northern forces, while in 40c he commands both Northern and Southern forces. Verse 40 is not intended to provide a picture of what the Northern response would look like on day one. Instead it shows what proportions the response would rise to by the end of the section.

Another bit of evidence leading to the same result is that, of 47 verses in the chapter (11:2b-12:3), fully four of them (8.5%) are required to get the king of the North from his homeland into “Egypt” in full possession of its wealth and the allegiance of its former allies. The king’s campaign does not begin immediately and, when it does, it does not proceed quickly, at least not in vss 40b-43.

What I have said does not rule out the idea of a military application, but it offers no support for such an idea. I argue below that, although the angel’s words are military, the events he describes are not. The final conflict is certainly a war, but not a military campaign. If a literal application were required, then yes, it is a simple matter to apply military language militarily, but literalism is not a requirement thrust upon us by the angel’s words; it is a choice we make exegetically. It is usually the preferred choice. Ellen White states that, “The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed.”⁶ In the present case three figures are employed.

Verses 41-43

In vs. 40c the angel makes a general reference to “countries.” In vss. 41-43 we learn which countries these are. The first one mentioned is “the glorious land.”⁷

“The glorious land”

If “the glorious land” is glorious in vs. 41a, what does “glorious” mean? On an earthly level, we can say that Hawaii would be a glorious place to visit. Think of the wonderful weather, the beaches, and so on. Or we could think of a place like Switzerland, with its mountains and glorious opportunities for winter sports like skiing. But here, the

⁶ *Great Controversy*, p. 588.

⁷ Here and elsewhere, except where marked, from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers, 2001).

one using the word is Daniel's narrating angel. What would "glorious" mean to an angel, or to God, who sent him?

In Exod 33:18 Moses asks to see God's glory. Moses didn't realize it, but what he was asking for would have incinerated him, so instead God revealed His goodness.

"I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." (Exod 33:19-20)

Here God specifically distinguishes what is outer (Moses' concept of glory) from what is inner (God's concept of glory). Jesus makes the same distinction by saying that "what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15 NRS).⁸ The God we worship is glorious because of who and what He is, not because of what He looks like. And "the glorious land" is "glorious" not because of where it is, or who lives there (in this figure), but because, whoever it is, they obey God. Many people obey God in one way or another. But here I suggest the angel is referring to the end time remnant because of the remnant's association with Sabbath keeping. To exclude what God says, is to exclude Him; to include what God says, is to include the One who says it. When an angel uses the word "glorious," the reference is not going to be on a purely earthly level. "Here [in the 'glorious land'] are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev 12:17; see also 14:12).

"Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites"

If the first country on our list is best interpreted spiritually, consistency would indicate at least the possibility that the next group of countries should be interpreted spiritually as well.

We are not told who "Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites" (vs. 41b) are, but we know from the passage that they are distinct from those living in "the glorious land." The two groups are different, but not entirely removed from each other. If command keepers are the remnant, these are people who have opposed us because they see some things differently, but many of them exhibit the same welcoming and accepting attitude toward Scripture to which we aspire. An entry level, lowest common denominator, attitude toward Scripture common to many in both groups is that we should obey what God says because He says it. This attitude is not unique to us.

We might expect that, as the king of the North sweeps down toward "Egypt," those in "the glorious land" would resist him and "Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites" would succumb. But this is not the case. Some in "the glorious land" allow the king to exert an influence over them; some in "Edom and Moab and the main part of

⁸ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989).

the Ammonites” resist his influence and escape. While some are shaken out (of “the glorious land”), others are shaken in (from “Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites”). As a church we should not be afraid of this passage. Individual members make individual choices. The church is not apostate because someone in it loses his or her faith, and in the same way, the Protestant churches are not the remnant because some in those communions show that they are willing to step out and obey God at all costs. The angel is setting up a contrast between two groups. We need to understand the groups in relation to each other.

We should also notice that the word “Ammonites” is not a toponym. This is a reference to a people group,⁹ and as such, “Edom” and “Moab” should also be understood as references to people groups – not to geographical territories. Thus “Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites” is not a reference to western Jordan; it is a reference to people who once lived in what we would now call western Jordan. Bottom line, “Ammonites” is an ethnonym and the other two members of the same phrase should be understood as ethnonyms.

“Egypt”

We can speak loosely about Medo-Persia, Greece, and pagan Rome being kings of the North, but strictly speaking, the king of the North always has some connection with Babylon. In Daniel we have literal Babylon in chaps. 1-5, 7, and 11:2b-15. The king of the North has a literal connection with literal Babylon in vss. 6-8, 11, 13, and 15, because the territory of literal Babylon was ruled by the Seleucids. In vs. 25 only the king of the South is mentioned.¹⁰ In vs. 40 we have spiritual “Babylon” (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21; see also 1 Pet 5:13) as the king of the North (the papacy is not literal Babylon). To this the opposite counterpart is spiritual “Egypt” (Rev 11:3). Why are we urged to study Daniel and Revelation together if we can’t draw the connections that present themselves when we do?¹¹

“The Libyans and the Cushites”

In antiquity the Libyans and the Cushites were Egypt’s neighbors to the west and the south respectively. In the prophecy we are told little about them, but one of the things

⁹ This is not “men of Ammon” (2 Chr 20:10, 22, 23), or “people of Ammon” (Deut 2:19; Judg 11:27), or “sons of Ammon” (Deut 2:37; Jer 9:26; 27:3). In any of these cases (see also Neh 13:23; Jer 25:21 [parallel with “Philistia”]; Ezek 25:5) “Ammon” could be understood topographically. But here it is “Ammonites” (Gen 19:38; Num 21:24; Deut 2:20-21; 3:11, 16; Josh 12:2; 13:10, 25; Judg 3:13; 10:6-7, 9, 11, 17-18; 11:4-6, 8-9, 12-15, 28-33, 36; 12:1-3; 1 Sam 11:11; 12:12; 14:47; 2 Sam 8:12; 10:1-3, 6, 8, 10-11, 14, 19; 11:1; 12:9, 26, 31; 17:27; 1 Kgs 11:5, 7, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13; 24:2; 1 Chr 18:11; 19:1-3, 6-7, 9, 11-12, 15, 19; 20:1, 3; 2 Chr 20:1; 26:8; 27:5; Ezra 9:1; Neh 4:7; Isa 11:14; Jer 40:11, 14; 41:10, 15; 49:1-2, 6; Ezek 21:20, 28; 25:2-3, 10; Dan 11:41; Amos 1:13; Zeph 2:8-9), which is an unambiguous ethnonym.

¹⁰ In my view vs. 25 is still pre-Christian, despite the fact that it occurs after vs. 22. This is part of a recapitulation model in which vss. 16-22 and 23-28 overlap, as Smith proposed many years ago.

¹¹ “The study of the Revelation directs the mind to the prophecies of Daniel, and both present most important instruction, given of God to men, concerning events to take place at the close of this world’s history” (GC 341).

we know is that they are overtaken by the king of the North and “shall follow in his train” (vs. 43b). When “Egypt” falls, its allies fall with it. This is the next part of our profile of different attitudes and responses to the king of the North. Some weaken (in “the glorious land”), some resist (in “Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites”), and some give way entirely (“the Libyans and the Cushites”). Around what issue? We’ll come to that.

The Narrative Technique of Prolepsis

Prolepsis is well attested in Dan 11 (vss. 3, 5, 16-17, 23-24, 29, 36) and I believe we can see two examples of it in vs. 40, as discussed above. Not everything mentioned in vs. 40 happens in vs. 40. Instead some of the events offer a forward out of sequence look at what would happen in the rest of the section. This is something we should be ready to expect in vs. 40 based on earlier precedent within the chapter.

Prolepsis in earlier verses

In vs. 3 “a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills.” But in the next verse we read, “And as soon as he has arisen,” After vs. 3 has shown us the heights to which the king would rise later, vs. 4 resumes from the beginning of his career. This is prolepsis. Prolepsis is useful because it helps keep things in perspective. It gives us an idea where we’re going before we get there, and then as the story unfolds each part of it fits within the context established by the earlier forward look.

In vs. 5 “the king of the south shall be strong, but one of his princes shall be stronger than he and shall rule, and his authority shall be a great authority.” This prediction is implemented over the course of the rest of the section. First North is attacked by South and loses (vss. 7-9), then North attacks South and loses (vss. 10-12), and finally North attacks South and wins (vs. 13-15). It is true that North would become greater than South, as the angel says in vs. 5, but not until the end of the section. For this reason, within its section vs. 5 is proleptic.

In vss. 16-17 “he who comes against him” eventually destroys the kingdom, and in vs. 22 we have the death of “the prince of the covenant.” If the kingdom destroyed in vs. 17 is Judea and the Prince of the covenant in vs. 22 is Christ, then historically vs. 17 follows vs. 22. Viewed from the end looking back, we would call this recapitulation; viewed from the beginning looking forward, we would call it prolepsis.

In vss. 23-24 the king of the North “shall become strong with a small people.” Whatever the historical application might be, the sequence of narration is different from the sequence of events, since starting with “a small people” would necessarily precede any strength that comes later.

In vs. 29 the king “shall return and come into the south, but it shall not be this time as it was before.” So ESV. In KJV the Hebrew phrase *kārī`šōnâ w^ekā`ah^arōnâ* is translated

more accurately, “but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter,” i.e., it shall not be now as it was previously, or as it will be after this. In Hebrew the comparison has three parts (KJV), not two (ESV, NET, NIV, NJB, NRS, RSV). A two-way comparison looks to the past, while a three-way comparison looks to the past and the future. My point is that the future part of this is out of sequence with what follows in the next verse and is therefore proleptic.

We have prolepsis also in vs. 36, “He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done.” In vs. 36 the indignation is not yet come to an end, and will not until the end of the section, but the angel tells us that the king will prosper until then. It’s not just that the angel points forward. All prophecy looks forward. But the point is that after looking forward he comes back and resumes where he had left off. The forward look is out of sequence with what immediately follows, and is therefore proleptic.

Notice that each example mentioned above is introductory in some way, standing at the beginning of a verse group or section. Since vs. 40 is the first verse in a major section, we should at least be open to the possibility that it will follow a pattern similar to what we have consistently seen at the beginning of earlier sections. And it does.

Prolepsis in vs. 40

In vs. 40c the angel makes a general reference to “countries.” This fact is important, because in speaking generally he includes all of them. Then in vss. 41-43 he tells us which specific countries he had in mind in speaking as he did.

The reason I emphasize this is to support a point made earlier with respect to the timing and pace of the king’s response to the Southern attack. When the attack comes in vs. 40a, the king is already in a weakened condition (that’s why an attack was possible in the first place), and now on top of that he is gored. This sort of wound is potentially fatal and under such circumstances mounting an energetic response is unlikely.

There is a sequel. In Rev 13:3 John tells us, “One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.” I suggest the above passages are parallel. If they are, that fact will provide insight, not only into the nature and identity of the king of the North (we now see that he represents one of the heads of the sea beast), but also the nature of the conflict in which he is engaged. Rev 13:3 does not describe the process, but the result of what happens there is that “the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast.” If this is the result, it was achieved either fortuitously or by design. If by design, this is what the conflict is about in Dan 11:40b-45. The king’s purpose is to get the whole earth to marvel at and follow him. You don’t achieve this type of result by attacking militarily those who might otherwise follow you.

A useful analogy would be with a political campaign (an interesting term in this context). In a political campaign one gains followers by establishing trust. For the papacy

gaining trust and winning people over is an all-out effort. Because the papacy's purpose is to be disarming, people don't think of this as a war, and for this reason they have no defense. They have no defense because in their minds there is nothing to defend against. That's the reason for the prophecy. God wants us to know what we're dealing with so we can defend against it.

Verses 44-45

There are a number of contrasts between vss. 40-43 and 44-45. In vss. 40-43 the king marches out of the North; in vss. 44-45 he marches out of the South. If North and South were merely directions in the prophecy, this fact would have only geographical significance, but in fact, as the angel uses the terms, such a change is highly significant.

Another difference is that in vss. 40-43 the king is focused and purposeful, while in vss. 44-45 he is in a rage. His change of direction corresponds to a change of mood. In vss. 40-43 when the king of the North finally arrives in "Egypt" there is no record of a blood bath. The king merely makes himself at home, expropriating "the treasures of gold and of silver, and all the precious things of Egypt" (vs. 43). Satan's house has always been divided against itself (Matt 12:25-26; Mark 3:24-25; Luke 11:17-18), and in the long term this situation is unsustainable. Such a house cannot stand (Mal 3:2). But in vss. 44-45 the angel shows that, however divided it might be, for a moment of time just before Christ returns, it is one house.

In vs. 40b the comparison with a whirlwind pertains especially to vss. 40-43, and the king's opponent is the king of the South. He rushes out "upon him" (vs. 40b). By contrast, in vs. 40c the comparison with a flood pertains especially to vss. 44-45, and what he attacks are "countries" in general. Then his focus narrows and just before Christ returns he concentrates all his resources on the people of God. The one opponent is referred to in the singular ("him"), the other in the plural ("countries"). These are different entities. The reader will notice that the last clause of vs. 40 seems to offer a contradiction. I have applied "countries" to vss. 41-43, and now apply the "overflow" metaphor to vss. 44-45. It would seem that these terms belong together in the same clause, so how can they be divided in this way? It is to make the clauses correspond to the Hebrew accents.¹² I didn't introduce this level of detail earlier because there is was unnecessary. But in fact there are four clauses in vs. 40. Clause 3 looks forward proleptically to vss. 41-43, and clause 4 (with the third metaphor) looks forward proleptically to vss. 44-45. See table 1. The three metaphors discussed above are bolded.

¹² The clause final accents are respectively Zaqep Qatan (D5 = the fifth disjunct), Atnah (D2), Tipha (D8), Silluq (D1). The lower the number, the stronger the accent. While Tipha is only a moderately strong disjunctive accent, in its context (following Mer^eka [C21 = the twenty-first conjunct]) it is quite strong. The sequence of accents in the last two clauses is therefore *ûbâ' + Mer^eka (C21) bā'arāšôt + Tipha (D8), w^ešāṭap + Mer^eka (C21) w^eābar + Silluq (D1).*

Table 1
The Hebrew of Dan 11:40

a	ub ^e ēt qēṣ yitnaggah ‘immô melek hannegeb	w^eyištā’ēr ‘ālāyw melek haṣṣāpôn b ^e rekeb ûb ^e pārāšîm ûbo’ ^o niyyôt rabbôt	b
c	ûbā’ bā’ ^a rāšôt	w^ešāṭap w ^e ābar	d

In vss. 44-45 the king of the North undergoes a change of role. By marching out of the South at the head of Southern, as well as Northern, forces, he adopts the posture of a king of the South. If my hypothesis concerning the goring of the king of the North and the relationship of that to the “mortal wound” of the sea beast in Rev 13:3 is accepted, one could suggest that the king corresponds to one horn (#6) in vss. 40b-43 and to another (#7) in vss. 44-45 – #6 because in both chapters (Dan 11:40a; Rev 13:3; also 17:8-11) there is a wound, and #7 because it immediately precedes the second coming. A dramatic change distinguishes the two verse groups from each other at the end of Dan 11 and I suggest we can trace this same change in all the resources available to us that describe the same events.

If my statement here that the king of the North assumes the posture of a king of the South in vss. 44-45 is correct, my earlier statement that today we don’t have a king of the South will soon be proven wrong. This time has not come yet. When it does we will know. The way to tell is to ask how angry the king is. If he is not angry yet, we are not in vss. 44-45 yet. When that time comes we will again have a king of the South, but only because the king of the North and the king of the South will have become one entity. The only way to describe such developments coherently when they occur will be by using functional definitions of our key terms. North is as North does; South is as South does.

Spirit of Prophecy

It would seem that Ellen White writes nothing substantive about Dan 11, bearing in mind that vs. 1 is not Dan 11.¹³ But this is a misapprehension. There is ample material that can help us if we know where to look for it. The place we need to look is in the last eight chapters of *Great Controversy*, and of these, the first six, i.e., chaps. 35-40.¹⁴ I suggest these chapters can be insightfully mapped onto the verses and clauses of Dan 11:40b-45.

Chapters 38-40

The above six chapters come in two groups of three, corresponding to vss. 40b-43 and 44-45 respectively. The last three chapters (38-40) have a clear association with

¹³ See Trustees of the Ellen G. White Estate, *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1962), 1:83.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1911),

Dan 11:44-45. We take these first, because the connections are straightforward and easy to follow.

In vs. 44a the angel talks about “news from the north and the east” that would make the king angry and chap. 38 of *Great Controversy* is titled, “The Final Warning.” What the angel calls “news” and Ellen White calls “The Final Warning” are both forms of verbal activity that have enough of a bearing on the king to make him angry. The warning concerns the king in some way. If we don’t see a connection, he does.

In vs. 44b the angel says, “and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction,” and the title of chap. 39 is “The Time of Trouble.” The “news” brings the king’s wrath, and the king’s wrath brings the time of trouble. We know these things from the text, and can also know that God’s people are the ones bringing the “news,” because they are the ones to whom the king directs his anger.

In vs. 45 the angel says, “he shall come to his end, with none to help him,” and the last chapter in the sequence is “God’s People Delivered” (chap. 40). The king comes to his end because Michael brings him to his end when He comes in person to rescue His saints (2 Thess 2:8).

In vs. 44a two versions have “tidings” (KJV, RSV) instead of “news” (ESV, NLT). Others have “reports” (NET, NIV, NJB, NRS). In the New Testament we call them messages. In Rev 14 there are three of these, associated with three angels flying in midair. In Rev 18 only two of them are repeated, because the first (about the judgment) is tied to time. The second angel’s message is given with greater force in vss. 2-3.

"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. ³ For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living." (Rev 18:2-3)

The third angel’s message occupies the rest of the chapter (18:5-24). Here we cite only vss. 4-5.

Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; ⁵ for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities." (Rev 18:4-5)

In this context it is easy to see why the king would be angry with anyone who would bring such “news” (ESV, NLT), or “tidings” (KJV, RSV), or “reports” (NET, NIV, NJB, NRS), or messages (Rev 14:6-11; 18:2-24), or warnings (GC chap. 38). By now he is not merely angry; he is livid with rage. And then Christ comes (Dan 12:1).

Chapters 35-37

In Dan 11, vss. 40-43 are in one sequence with 44-45 (40-45); in *Great Controversy* chaps. 35-37 are in one sequence with 38-40 (35-40); and we have seen that vss. 44-45 closely correspond to chaps. 38-40. This creates a strong presumption that a similar relationship exists between vss. 40b-43 and chaps. 38-40. But while the connections in the second set were obvious at first glance, those in the first set are not. We have to look for them.

Verse 40b. Verse 40b says, “but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships.” Ellen White begins chap. 35 (“Liberty of Conscience Threatened”) by saying, “Romanism is now regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years” (p. 563). She ends by saying, “God's word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare” (p. 581). What Rome sets out to do in vs. 40b is to “be regarded by Protestants with far greater favor than in former years. If this is his objective and we think it is not, such a misunderstanding will not help us meet the challenge when it comes.

In vs. 40b the king passes through “countries.” How does he do this? He does it not by acts of violence, but by gaining people’s good will. What he is conducting is a charm offensive. His weapons are smiles and pleasing words. He gains power and influence by causing people to like and support him. Did two hundred years of popes just watch these things happen, or did they make every effort to bring them about? If there was concerted effort, how should we describe it? If the Vatican is exerting itself in every possible way to assert its influence on an international level, would military language provide an appropriate metaphor?

Verse 40c. Verse 40c says, “he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through.” Ellen White begins chap. 36 (“The Impending Crisis”) by saying, “From the very beginning of the great controversy in heaven it has been Satan's purpose to overthrow the law of God.” Here she addresses the important question what it might mean for a king of the North to enter a country, or to overflow and pass through it. If his weapons are smiles and pleasing words, how would anyone ever know that a conflict was swirling around them? But it surely is. For the papacy this is verily war. If such things were intuitively obvious to us, we would not need Scripture to tell us about them. From the fact that Scripture does tell us about them, I conclude that the issues are not entirely intuitive and also that they are important. We need the Holy Spirit to reveal such things to us and, once revealed, we need His guidance to discern their import. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned (see 1 Cor 2:14). The spiritual thing we need most to discern here, the main point to be contested, is the Sabbath.

Verses 41-43. In vs. 41 the king enters “the glorious land.” If this is the remnant, we are defined by our Sabbath keeping. The fact that we are already committed to the Sabbath does not place us outside the scope of the conflict, as though we had already made our choices, but rather places us at the center of it. Ellen White, in chap. 37 (“The Scriptures a Safeguard”) says, “To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I obey God rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the

rock of God's immutable word? Are we prepared to stand firm in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?" That includes every soul among the remnant as well as other souls around the circle of the globe. Of course we believe God. We believe He created all things. That's what Sabbath keeping is about. Do we believe He did all this in seven days? There is an important distinction here. The question is whether we believe a Scriptural version of creation because it is Scriptural, or an intuitive version of creation because it is intuitive. On an individual level theistic evolution has become widespread among educated Seventh-day Adventists. This is the legacy of the king of the North. It is his calling card – the evidence that he has been among us.

At the same time, there will be some in other communions who strongly resist the king's influence and who, when they see the issues more clearly, will accept the Sabbath and support it in the face of opposition. Just as it is an individual matter to be shaken out (of "the glorious land"), it is an individual matter to be shaken in (from "Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites"). When the angel says, "the main part of," that means not all in those other communions resist the king, just as not all in "the glorious land" succumb to him. "Egypt" and her close allies "the Libyans and the Cushites" (vs. 43), on the other hand, are completely overtaken.

Uniting the two groups of chapters

Now we return to vs. 44a, which speaks of "news from the east and the north." News about what? News about the king, yes, because this is what angers him. But news about the Sabbath, which the king opposes. Making this a widespread object of attention also angers him. The giving of this "news" eventually swells to a loud cry. We know this because it eventually reaches a point where the king can no longer ignore what is being said. His response is to attack those responsible for giving it, and when he tries to annihilate them (vs. 44b) Christ interposes (12:1). A parallel passage is in Rev 19:11-16, where Christ mounts a white horse and leads all the angel armies out of heaven to the earth. If the question is, "who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?" (Mal 3:2), one answer is, not the king of the North (vs. 45).

The great issue in all of this is not Islam. If the whole world "wondered after the beast" (Rev 13:2 KJV),¹⁵ Muslims are a large part of the world. This fact needs to be appreciated. By 2020 every fourth person on planet Earth will be a Muslim.¹⁶ We are close to that now. So it is not just that a few Muslims might be among those who follow the beast in Rev 13:2; they will be prominent among those who follow him. If I have understood this passage correctly, the Islam interpretation of Dan 11:40-45 is fundamentally misconceived.

¹⁵ "[A]nd the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast" (Rev 13:3 ESV, also NJB); "And the whole world followed the beast in amazement" (NET, also NRS); "The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast" (NIV, also RSV). The whole world.

¹⁶ According to the Pew Research Center (<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/the-future-of-the-global-muslim-population/>), there were 1.1B Muslims v. 4.2B non-Muslims (19.9%) in 1990, 1.3B v. 4.8B (21.6%) in 2000, 1.6B v. 5.3B (23.4%) in 2010, and are projected to be 1.9B v. 5.8 (24.9%) in 2020, and 2.2B v. 6.1B (26.4%) in 2030.

The King of the South

Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Shintoists, animists, tribal people, secular people, and yes, atheists, all follow the king of the North in vss. 44-45. This is a very mixed bag, and needs to be. If the king of the North means anything specific, and if the final conflict approaches being global in any meaningful degree, we will need an everything else category to account for what the text is telling us. In vss. 40b-43 the two categories need to be North and everything other than North. Then, in vss. 44-45 the two sides unite and the distinctions we have maintained become meaningless. Everyone who is not part of the remnant (after the shaking out and shaking in described in vs. 41) will follow the king of the North. Some of these people will have started out as Northern subjects; the rest as Southern subjects, but in the end, all will follow the king of the North.

The pattern by which the king of the North fights first against the South, and then in vss. 44-45 against God's people, can be seen earlier in vss. 25-28 (South [vss. 25-28a], holy covenant [vss. 28bc]) and vss. 29-30 (South [vss. 29-30a], holy covenant [vs. 30b-35]). It is a familiar pattern. The kings of the North and South (whatever the latter might mean) are no longer enemies. Their differences were comparatively superficial after all. Both, in different ways, had opposed God – one in a way specifically associated with Christianity (2 Thess 2:4), the other in every conceivable other way. Now all unite (in Rev 16:16 [*sunēgagen*]; 19:9 [*sunēgmena*] the word is “assembled” [ESV, NRS], or “called together” [NJB], or “gathered” [KJV, NIV]). If the kings had opposed God in different ways before, it would be petty to let such differences separate them now. There is a world to rule, and to enjoy. But this still doesn't tell us who the king of the South is.

We agree that the king of the North is the papacy, but to be a king of the South, one would have to be a king, and to be a king, one would have to be a person. No scholar I know of has proposed that the king of the South is a person. At the time of the end in vs. 40a the king of the South attacks the king of the North, and many of us identify this attack as the expulsion of Pius VI (1775-1799) from Rome in 1798, but it is hard to draw definitions from this fact. Berthier was the one who actually escorted Pius VI out of Rome, but behind Berthier was Napoleon. And behind Napoleon? Ultimately Satan. Just as Christ works through people, Satan also works through people. And just as Christ confronts us with spiritual issues, Satan also, although he does not tell the truth, also confronts us with spiritual issues. The timing of his attack on the papacy is of the greatest prophetic significance.¹⁷

How can we know that a spiritual interpretation of the direction terms North and South is required at the end of the chapter? Because the verses in question occur at the end of the chapter. The end time is many long years after the Greek period. Literal North and literal South were Greek categories. Greece was a divided kingdom. The distinction was not just north of Judea and south of Judea. That was North and South. But the point

¹⁷ Cedric Ward, "Napoleon and the Pope--What Really Happened in 1798?" *Ministry*, June 1979, pp. 4-7.

is it was Seleucid Greeks ruling north of Judea (in a territory that included literal Babylon), Ptolemaic Greeks ruling south of Judea. Greece was a divided kingdom, but Rome was not. The *pax Romana* brought the entire Mediterranean world under one universal government. The popes also make universal claims. That is what “Catholic” means. Insisting on a literal interpretation of North and South without the Greekness that divided North from South is anachronistic. The terms were literal at one time, but not now. We are no longer living in the Greek period.

We can speak loosely of a king of the North throughout the chapter and book, but strictly speaking, I think Tim Hayden has argued his point well, that the term “king of the north” always pertains to Babylon, whether in a literal sense (Dan 11:6-8, 11, 13, 15) or a spiritual sense (Dan 11:40; 1 Pet 5:13; Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21).¹⁸ If the end time “Babylon” of Revelation is spiritual, the parallel term king of the North is spiritual, and as such, any end time use of the term “king of the North” is inimical to a literal interpretation. If this is so, the king of the South, which can only be defined as an opposite counterpart to the king of the North, is also spiritual. On the one hand we have a pairing of the king of the North with “Babylon” (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21), and on the other, a pairing of the king of the South with “Egypt” (Rev 11:8).

Discussion

It is important to clarify what the issues in the final conflict are and what they are not. Below we consider the latter first, i.e., what the issues are not. Then in a later section we consider what the issues are, which turn out to be only one main issue. That one main issue is the Sabbath.

What the issues are not: wars
and rumors of wars

In Matt 24:6 and Mark 13:7 Jesus says, “you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.” If a cataclysmic war against Islam is a war, it falls within the scope of this warning. And notice the last clause, “but the end is not yet.” This tells us that the last thing leading up to the second coming will not be military in nature. There might be confusion everywhere, and there will probably be an assortment of wars, but a massive human war is not what leads to the second coming. If we feel that this compromises our teaching on Armageddon, we have not understood Armageddon. Armageddon is the second coming of Christ as seen from the perspective of those who have no reason to welcome it. The two sides in that war are the whole earth v. all of heaven. It is significant that the only verse of Scripture which uses the word “Armageddon” does not contain the word “fight”; its main predicate is “gather” (Rev 16:16; also 19:19). This gathering is the process by which the whole world

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http://www.sealedremnant.com/uploads/2/3/7/6/23763183/daniel_11_roosenberg_review_handouts_part1.pdf

comes onto one side, united against heaven, just as we have seen in Dan 11:44-45. Armageddon is what happens when Jesus actually comes (Dan 12:1); I'm talking about what happens just before that.

The Islam interpretation requires that vss. 40-45 be yet another human war – a really big human war – but a big human war is still a war and what Christ says about human wars is, “the end is not yet.” God has not commissioned us to focus people’s attention on wars and rumors of wars.

What the issue is: the Sabbath

The issue Ellen White focuses on is the Sabbath. This speaks to the matter of faith in God and loyalty to His government, which could be misunderstood. It’s not the Sabbath as an article of doctrine. It’s the Sabbath as a token of the personal animosity and rivalry that Satan feels toward Christ.

In Isa 14:13-14 Lucifer wanted to ascend “above the stars of God,” to put his throne “on high,” to “sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north,” and to ascend “above the heights of the clouds” (vss. 13-14a), but nowhere does it say he aspired to be greater than God. When the comparison is with God Himself, he merely wants to be “like the Most High” (vs. 14b). Even in his demented state, Satan realizes no one can be greater than God. So if God created all things, Satan could grant that much. The problem, and the thing Satan cannot accept, is that God created all things through His Son (John 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2).

The Greek expression *tous aiōnas* (“the world”) in Heb 1:2 is actually not a Greek expression. It is a translation into Greek of the Hebrew expression *hā ‘ōlam*, which could also be translated “the universe” (NIV, NLT).¹⁹ Satan will do anything to destroy this idea – not the creatorship of God, but the association between God’s creatorship and His Son. In this context theistic evolution can be seen as a compromise solution which preserves the Father’s role in creation (theistic evolution is, after all, theistic), but removes that of the Son. Creation in response to the speaking of words, e.g., “Let there be light” (Gen 1:1), unavoidably raises the question who pronounced those words. It was not the Father, but the Son. God created all things “through him” (John 1:3; Col 1:16). This calls to mind the fact that the One who pronounced the words which called all things into existence is Himself the Word (John 1:1), expressing with perfect fidelity the will of the Father, both in His person and by what He says.

Another factor is that the Sabbath tacitly asserts a six-day timeframe for creation, after which God rested the seventh day. The reason why this timeframe is so onerous to Satan is that the rest in question was to be a time of fellowship, and the holy Being offering that fellowship was the Son. As the Sabbath draws us into relationship with Christ, it draws us out relationship with the enemy of Christ. Here is the meaning of Exod 31:13, which says, “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my

¹⁹ *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, s.v. *‘ōlam* I, §4.

Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.” As such, the Sabbath is the antithesis of everything Satan hoped to achieve by tempting our first parents to sin.

At his trial Peter tried to be Jesus’ disciple in such a way that he was simultaneously not Jesus’ disciple. Those two ideas were in tension and it was inevitable that the crisis which lay before him would resolve the tension one way or the other, as each of the four gospels testifies (see Matt 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-72; John 18:25-27). In the same way, the two ideas inherent in theistic evolution are in tension. The theistic part of theistic evolution is not finished until it gets God in; the evolution part of theistic evolution is not finished until – in some manner or degree – it gets God out. In is not the same as out and the tension between them will inevitably be resolved one way or the other. Divided thinking such as this is like a thumbprint verifying the identity of its source (Matt 12:25-26; Mark 3:24-25; Luke 11:17-18). As the individual choices of our church’s educated membership gradually accumulate to become a bell shaped curve during the last moments of time, I fear it will be heavily skewed in the wrong direction. This part is not inevitable. We are free to choose what we will, but there will be pressures to face and Peter’s experience facing similar pressures is not encouraging.

When I say that the Sabbath is the main thing in the final conflict, I do not mean that in any superficial sense. The issues run deep – all the way back to the beginning of the great controversy. If this is the issue, anything else is a diversion. This is where we should be directing people’s attention in our exegesis.

Conclusion

Above I point out that *Great Controversy*, chaps. 38-40 can be related systematically to Dan 11:44-45. This connection is far too plain to miss. The question is whether chaps. 35-37 can be related systematically to vs. 40b-43. I have argued that they can be. In saying this, I exclude vs. 40a, because the Southern attack and all that leads to it, when mapped onto *Great Controversy*, would take us as far back as chap. 15. What I wish to focus on is not the Southern attack, but the Northern response.

This does not mean that my focus in the paper has shifted to the king of the North. My purpose is to lay bare the nature and identity of the king of the South, but there are some things we can’t do by just doing them. For example, all or most of us here today will have a car in the parking lot, but when you get up to leave, you will not go directly to your car. Before that you will go to an exit. It is impossible to go to your car by simply going there, because a wall blocks your way. Similarly, I think it will be very difficult to understand the king of the South by simply studying the king of the South. South in Dan 11:40-45 is an opposite counterpart to North. Our definition of the one must be relative to our definition of the other, even if the two are not directly comparable.

If the king of the North’s agenda can be shown to be primarily spiritual, it follows that it is not primarily military. And if the half of the conflict associated with the one party

is not primarily military, the half of the conflict associated with the other party will not be. It would be possible to debate endlessly the meaning of the angel's use of military language, with one side saying the events themselves are military and the other side saying they are not. To get past this impasse we need a guiding concept from a source outside the text, which the Spirit of Prophecy can supply if we will allow it to do so.

The spiritual application given by Ellen White competes for the same space with the Islam application recently proposed by Seventh-day Adventist scholars, and I believe precludes it. It is not just that she fails to mention Islam in her remarks, but that she places so much emphasis on things other than Islam, and especially the Sabbath. If the Spirit of Prophecy takes the discussion in one direction and others take it in a materially different direction, I feel uncomfortable with that. If there is a topic on which Ellen White has nothing to say (Islam in the end time), it could be because the Holy Spirit had nothing to tell her on that topic.²⁰ If an excluded topic is where we insist on bringing our focus as we reach out to the masses of people who need what we can share with them, the stronger our arguments become, the greater their potential to distract from what the Holy Spirit wants to say. There is no safety in such a course.

²⁰ At least not here. I think much of what Islamist interpreters say about Dan 11, where it is out of place, could be profitably said in Rev 9 – not excluding 11:14.