

Ellen White's Interpretative Roadmap for Daniel 11

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Abstract

A close study of Ellen White's most significant statement on Daniel 11 provides a roadmap of understanding for the closing verses of the chapter. In *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 13, p. 394, Ellen White quotes Daniel 11:30b-36 and says that "scenes similar to those described in these words will take place." A careful study of the pattern in Daniel 11:30b-36 reveals a striking parallel in Daniel 11:40b-45. There are four elements from verses 30b-36 that are repeated in a similar fashion in verses 40-45:

1. Military power by proxy
2. Abomination of Desolation/Union of Church and State
3. Persecution of God's people
4. Deadly wound in verse 40a; End of the King of the North in verse 45

This paper will explore the development of this parallel between verses 30b-36 and verses 40-45. It will also consider how this pattern fits within the overall purpose of the vision in which Daniel 10:14 says that the vision will help Daniel understand what will happen to his people. It will be seen that Daniel 10-12 provides a final piece to understanding the book of Daniel in totality.

Introduction

Daniel 11 is one of the most debated prophecies among current Adventist scholars. One helpful clue to the interpretation of the entire vision is that Daniel is told in Daniel 10:14 that this vision will shed light on what happens to "thy people in the latter days." The vision focuses on God's people who are caught between the King of the North and the King of the South. The other key clue for interpreting the vision is what Ellen White says about this passage.

Interpretative Roadmap in Daniel 11:30b-36

While Ellen White does not say much about the vision, one key statement provides a roadmap for interpretation to the last six verses of Daniel 11.

We have no time to lose. Troublous times are before us. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. The prophecy in the eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated. In the thirtieth verse a power is spoken of that "shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." [Verses 31-36, quoted.]

Scenes similar to those described in these words will take place. We see evidence that Satan is fast obtaining the control of human minds who have not the fear of God before them. Let all read and understand the prophecies of this book, for we are now entering upon the time of trouble spoken of: [Daniel 12:1-4, quoted.]¹

Ellen White describes that Daniel 11 has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. She then identifies a section of Daniel 11 that is in the past (verses 30b-36). Furthermore, she says that

¹ Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 13, p. 394

much of the history described in this section will be repeated. She also identifies a new power that appears in history starting in verse 30b. Several Adventist authors agree that this describes the rise of papal Rome as the King of the North.^{2 3 4}

After beginning the quote in verse 30b, she continues on through verse 36 and immediately follows these verses by saying “Scenes similar to those described in these words will take place.” She makes a few more comments and then quotes Daniel 12:1-4.

Verses 30b-36 are of great significance in the prophecy of Daniel 11 for a number of reasons so it is fascinating that this is the section that Ellen White quotes. First, the time prophecies of the 1290 and 1335 days of Daniel 12:11, 12 are identified as having their starting point in the events of Daniel 11:31 when the *tamid* (daily) is taken away and the abomination of desolation is set up. The historical events of Daniel 11:31 are generally accepted as beginning in 508 AD and thus the prophecies of the 1290 and 1335 days respectively take us to 1798 and 1843. The significance of 508 as a starting point helps us to understand that the events of Daniel 11:30b-36 are describing the medieval papacy as the King of the North during the era commonly known as the Dark Ages. Taking a step back, Ellen White is thus stating that the history that will be repeated will be very similar to the history of 508-1798 as seen in Daniel 11:30b-36. Notice this pattern in the table below:

Daniel 11:31	Arms Shall Stand on His Part	Daniel 11:40	KON comes like a whirlwind with chariots, horsemen, and many ships
Daniel 11:31	Abomination of Desolation; Union of Church and State	Daniel 11:41	KON enters into glorious land: National Sunday Law; Union of Church and State
Daniel 11:33-35	Persecution of the Saints	Daniel 11:43, 44	KON gains control of world finances and goes forth to destroy and utterly to make away many
Daniel 11:40	KOS pushes at KON = deadly wound in 1798	Daniel 11:45	KON comes to his end and none shall help him

² Uriah Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1911), 282-286

³ Tim Roosenberg, *Islam and Christianity in Bible Prophecy* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 2011), 208

⁴ Marc Swearingen, *Tidings Out of the Northeast* (Coldwater, MI: Remnant Publications, 2006), 153

How does the pattern of history in Daniel 11:30b-36 help interpret Daniel 11:40-45? It gives a clear picture of the identity of the King of the North for the last six verses. Interestingly, Ellen White introduces the papacy as the King of the North in the second half of verse 30 and continues with the quote all the way through verse 36. This is a subtle yet obvious departure from Uriah Smith's interpretation⁵ that is believed by others⁶ still today in which France becomes the King of the North in verse 36. That interpretation is a contradiction to Ellen White's statement in which she keeps the power of the King of the North the same through at least verse 36. However, verses 37-39 are a direct continuation of thought from verse 36, so if the papacy is the King of the North in verse 36, it must also be in verses 37-39.

There is also direct biblical evidence to support this interpretation as the King speaks "marvellous things against the God of gods" in verse 36 and "shall magnify himself above all" in verse 37. This is very similar to the four times in Daniel 7 that the little horn speaks "great words against the Most High" (Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 25). It seems evident that the little horn of Daniel 7 and the King of the North in Daniel 11:30b-39 are the same power.

This shows how the papacy rose to power in 508, how it operated while it was in power, and what led to its demise in 1798. This pattern will be repeated.

In 508, Clovis of the Franks lent his military power to assist the papacy in establishing itself as the pre-eminent power in Western Europe after the fall of pagan Rome⁷. Daniel 11:31 shows that a proxy military power standing on the part of the papacy was necessary in order for it to ascend to power. This is the first key event in the sequence of history that will be repeated.

Next, a union of church and state described as the abomination of desolation is described in verse 31. Clovis represented a state power that united with the church to give it power to ultimately enforce its doctrine on the state by working closely with the bishops of the church.

Following the union of church and state, the persecution of the saints is seen in Daniel 11:33-35. This persecution continues until the time of the end, which mirrors Daniel 7:25 and Daniel 12:7-9 in which the little horn would wear out the saints of the Most High for 1260 years. This period of persecution ends in 1798 and coincides with the beginning of the period known as the time of the end.

After a description of the persecution of the saints in verses 33-35, further attention is given to the power of the papacy as the King of the North in verses 36-39. This power is abruptly halted in verse 40 when the passage states "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him," which denotes the end of the papal power after 1260 years. The historical flow of the reign of the papacy as the King of the North as described from verse 30b through verse 39 of Daniel 11 sets the table for the attack of the King of the South in verse 40.

⁵ Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, 292-294

⁶ John Witcombe, *Jerusalem Caliphate and the Third Jihad* (Grants Pass, OR: Prophecy Waymarks Publications, 2013), 112

⁷ Smith, *Daniel and the Revelation*, 283

Notice that this attack takes place “at the time of the end.” The 1260 years ended in 1798 so the time of the end begins in 1798. The word for “push” is the Hebrew word *nagach*, which can be translated as “to wage war” or “to gore” so it is with the intent to kill. This verse fits perfectly with the deadly wound of Revelation 13:3 in which the papacy lost its power over the state. This loss of power occurred when atheistic France, under the leadership of Napoleon sent General Berthier to the Vatican and took Pius VI captive.

It is this sequence of history that Ellen White says will be repeated in a similar fashion. The papacy ascended to power in 508 by receiving assistance from a military power by proxy in the territory of modern-day France. It was France that delivered the deadly wound.

It is well-understood that Ptolemaic Egypt represented the King of the South in the first portion of Daniel 11. Revelation 11:8 identifies France spiritually as Sodom and Egypt. This is described as a beast that ascends from the bottomless pit at the time of the French Revolution in the 1790s. Thus, atheistic France, which symbolizes the atheism of ancient Egypt, delivers the deadly wound to the King of the North in 1798. The spirit of atheism continued on in France after the French Revolution. Karl Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto from Paris in 1844. This manifesto gave rise to the Russian Revolution in 1917 and to the rise of the atheistic Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the Cold War era.

History Repeats in Daniel 11:40-45

Does history repeat in the last verses of Daniel 11 as Ellen White predicted? In the second half of verse 40, the King of the North makes a comeback by coming against the King of the South with “chariots, horsemen, and many ships.” As history repeats itself in similar fashion, the King of the North uses a military power by proxy to ascend back to power as it seeks for the deadly wound to be healed. Historically, the United States of America has employed its status as a military and political superpower especially since the early 1980s to lead to a resurgence of the papacy. The alliance of President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II that began with a meeting on July 7, 1982 as described in *Time Magazine* allowed the United States to serve as the military and political force to the designs of the papacy in Europe⁸. This military power by proxy from the United States in verse 40b mirrors verse 31 in which Clovis of the Franks empowered the papacy.

Next, a union of church and state takes place in verse 41 when the King of the North enters into the glorious land. The glorious land in verse 16 represented the territory of God’s people as Judea. The entire prophecy is about what happens to God’s people in the latter days. Thus the glorious land in verse 41 is the territory of God’s people at the end of the world and likely represents God’s faithful people in the Protestant Christian churches (see Galatians 3:29). When the King of the North enters into the glorious land it is for the purpose of conquering God’s people. This conquest is attempted by a union of church and state in which civil legislation enforces Sunday worship. This is the abomination of desolation. Again, history repeats as Ellen White forecasted that it would.

Following the union of church and state, the King of the North gains control of the remaining atheistic nations of the world in verse 42 and then the persecution of God’s people takes place. The persecution is seen in verse 43 when the King of the North gains financial control by having

⁸ Carl Bernstein, “Holy Alliance,” *Time Magazine*. February 24, 1992.

“power over the treasures of gold and silver.” This likely parallels Revelation 13:17 in which no man can buy or sell if they do not have the mark of the beast.

The persecution escalates in response to the loud cry message (tidings out of the east and out of the north) in verse 44. The King of the North is infuriated by this message and “he shall go forth to destroy, and utterly to make away many.” This language is very similar to Revelation 12:17 in which the dragon “is enraged or wroth with the woman” and makes war with the remnant of her seed. Daniel 11:44 and Revelation 12:17 describe the final attack of Satan against God’s people. Satan is the one who has given his power, seat, and authority to the beast (papacy - see Revelation 13:2) who is also the King of the North in Daniel 11:30b-45.

The final attack against God’s people is dramatic and seemingly overwhelming. Verse 45 says, “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him.”⁹ The tabernacles (place of worship) of the palace (center of government) represent the final push for a total union of church and state and likely represents the death decree for all those who refuse to receive the mark of the beast.

The glorious holy mountain in verse 45 is described as Jerusalem in Daniel 9:16. In Psalm 48:1, 2 the holy mountain is described as Mt. Zion which is on the north side of Jerusalem. Joel 2:32 shows a symbolic parallel between Mt. Zion, Jerusalem, and the remnant just before Jesus returns. These entities are synonymously described in Joel 2:32 as the place where deliverance is found. Thus, the glorious holy mountain likely represents the remnant people who have given the loud cry message that has infuriated Satan and the King of the North.

Interestingly, in the very next verse after this final attack is described in Daniel 11:45, we see in Daniel 12:1 that Michael stands up to deliver His people. When Michael stands up, He is standing up to deliver the remnant who are found in spiritual Mt. Zion and they are being surrounded by the King of the North. They are also surrounded by the “seas” which is symbolic of all the people of the world (Revelation 17:15) who have wondered after the beast.

Thankfully, just as the King of the North received a deadly wound in the beginning of verse 40 to put an end to its reign of persecution, similarly at the end of verse 45 it states that “he shall come to his end and none shall help him.” Just when it seems that God’s people will be wiped off the map, Christ delivers His people and none shall help the King of the North. This again mirrors the pattern shown in Daniel 11:30b.

It was the territory of modern France through Clovis that gave military strength to the papacy in Daniel 11:31 as it ascended in power as the King of the North. Ellen White also makes it clear in *The Great Controversy* in the chapter on the French Revolution that it was France that was most supportive of the papacy during the 1260 years of papal supremacy. However, it was France that then delivered the deadly wound to the King of the North in Daniel 11:40a.

It is the United States of America in Daniel 11:40b that mirrors France in 508 when it uses its military and political power to lead to a resurgence of the papacy as the deadly wound begins to heal. Revelation 13:11, 12 identifies the United States as a beast coming up out of the earth and who exercises all of the power of the first beast (papacy) before him and causes the earth and

⁹ Dan. 11:45 (NKJV)

them which dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. The support of Protestant America (also described as the False Prophet in Revelation 16 and 19) for the King of the North empowers it to persecute God's people again as it seems to gain total global control. It is the False Prophet of Protestant America, as described in Revelation 13, 16, and 19 that works miracles to deceive the earth that will lead most of the world to receive the mark of the beast.

However, as it becomes apparent that the King of the North is fighting a losing battle, it will ultimately lose the support of the people who have been on its side. Revelation 17:16 describes the ten horns (nations of the earth on the side of the papacy) as turning against the papacy at the end. They "shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Just as the papacy received a deadly wound in Daniel 11:40a from its best source of support throughout the Dark Ages (France), so the papacy at the end of the world will be turned on by those who had been its source of support (Protestant America and the nations of the world).

Review of Historical Repetition

To summarize this pattern of repetition, Ellen White says in *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 13, p. 394 that much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 11 will be repeated. She quotes Daniel 11:30b-36 and says "scenes similar to those described in these words will take place."

A strikingly similar pattern is seen in Daniel 11:31-40a and Daniel 11:40b-45.

1. Military power by proxy (France in v. 31 and United States in v. 40b) allows papacy to gain ascendancy and then resurrection of power respectively as King of the North
2. Union of Church and State/Abomination of Desolation (Union of Clovis of the Franks with the papacy in verse 31 and Union of Protestant America with the Papacy in verse 40b empowers the King of the North to enter into the glorious land/Christian church in verse 41 as National Sunday Law begins)
3. Persecution of the saints (verses 33-35 - the saints fall by sword, flame, captivity and spoil for many days until the time of the end; verses 43, 44; the King of the North gains control of the world's finances so that no man can buy or sell in verse 43, and he goes "forth with fury to destroy and utterly to make away many" in verse 44 in response to the loud cry.
4. The deadly wound occurs in verse 40a which brings to a definitive end the persecution of the saints of the Dark Ages; in verse 45 the King of the North comes to his end and none shall help him as the world comes to a close and God's people are delivered from the persecution of the papacy.

A few further remarks are worth mentioning. Daniel 12:1-4 is a direct continuation of the prophecy of Daniel 11. It should be remembered that Daniel 10:14 says that the vision would be about what would happen to Daniel's people in the latter days. When Michael stands up to deliver "the children of thy people" it is clear that Michael is standing up to deliver God's faithful people at the end of the world. A strictly literal interpretation would suggest that this deliverance would be only for the Jews, but it is for "every one that shall be found written in the book."

This deliverance is "at that time." In other words, the deliverance from Michael is in response to the siege that God's faithful people are under by the King of the North as described in verses 44

and 45. It makes it difficult to say that verses 40-45 are describing a geopolitical Middle East regional conflict about the Jews when in Daniel 12:1 Michael is standing up to deliver His remnant people as probation closes. The connection between God's people in verses 44 and 45 of Daniel 11 and their deliverance in Daniel 12:1 is unmistakable.

Connection of Daniel 11 with other Visions in Daniel

One further piece of information that is helpful in understanding the end of Daniel 11 is looking at the big picture of Daniel. Notice how the four major visions fit together:

Daniel 2	Daniel 7	Daniel 8	Daniel 10-12
Babylon	Babylon	—	—
Medo-Persia	Medo-Persia	Medo-Persia	Medo-Persia
Greece	Greece	Greece	KON vs. KOS; KON starts as Seleucus from Greece
Pagan Rome	Pagan Rome	Little Horn as Pagan Rome	KON as Pagan Rome
Divided Kingdom	Papal Rome	Little Horn as Papal Rome	KON as Papal Rome
Second Coming	Judgment	Cleansing of Sanctuary	Probation Closes; Second Coming soon after

Consider the pattern in this table. There is a major apocalyptic event after the sequence of kingdoms in all four visions. Daniel 2 shows us that after the kingdoms of this world, Jesus will come back the second time. Daniel 7 reveals that after the kingdoms of this world, there is a judgment in heaven. Daniel 8 announces that after the kingdoms of this world the sanctuary in heaven will be cleansed. Daniel 10-12 demonstrates that after the kingdoms of this world, probation will close and Jesus will return soon after that.

Another way to see this pattern is that Daniel 2 tells us that Jesus is coming back after the kingdoms of this world. However, Daniel 7 makes it clear that in order for Jesus to come back, there must be a judgment in Heaven first. Daniel 8 then tells us that in order for the judgment in Heaven to be finished, the sanctuary in Heaven must first be cleansed. Finally, Daniel 10-12 reveals that when the sanctuary in Heaven is cleansed, probation closes and Michael stands up to deliver His people.

This understanding supports the thought that the last verses of Daniel 11 reveal the fitness of God's people to stand through the close of probation without a mediator. The response of the remnant to the attack of the King of the North as it enters into the glorious land and then surrounds the glorious holy mountain demonstrates a character that is ready for the final crisis

in which Jacob's Time of Trouble takes place as seen in Daniel 12:1. This character demonstration parallels the cleansing of the sanctuary in Heaven from sin.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Daniel 10:14 points out that the vision of Daniel 10-12 is about what will happen to God's people in the latter days, first as the Jews in the first 30 verses, then as the church in the wilderness in verses 30b-39, and finally as the remnant. Ellen White provides a roadmap to the sequence of the unfulfilled portion of the prophecy by pointing out that Daniel 11:30b-36 will be repeated in a similar fashion. Daniel 11:40-45 follows a remarkably similar pattern to the verses that Ellen White said would be repeated. Her statement helps Seventh-day Adventists to have greater clarity on the meaning of the last verses of Daniel 11. This interpretation leads to a clear connection between Daniel 11:40-45 and Daniel 12:1-4 and the deliverance of God's people, and it provides a final piece to the puzzle of understanding the book of Daniel in totality.