

## Daniel 11 – The Basic Adventist Interpretations

**The Turkey and Egypt position:** The first view holds fairly closely to what Uriah Smith wrote in *Daniel and Revelation* and defends a strong literal interpretation of the whole chapter. The King of the North in verses 40-45 is interpreted as being Turkey, either as the Ottoman Empire in its conflict in 1798AD with Napoleonic France and the breakaway rulers of Egypt (verses 40-44) or as a last-days reincarnation of the Caliphate, while the King of the South in verses 40-45 represents Egypt. The Uriah Smith interpretation argues that all the verses up to and including verse 44 have been fulfilled. The modern exponents of this position argue that verse 45 is to be interpreted as Turkey, leading a re-established Caliphate, which will establish a newly-restored Caliphate in Jerusalem, after which this power meets its end, leading to the final time of trouble of Daniel 12.1. This view appears to have the strongest support from Ellen G. White, although recent commentators cast doubt on the extent of her support for this interpretation.

**The Papacy and Atheism position:** The second view takes the latter half of the chapter symbolically, arguing that the Papacy is represented in its persecuting phase during the 1,260 years of Papal supremacy. Verses 36-39 represent the full flowering of the blasphemous and persecuting Papal power prior to 1798AD. In verses 40-45, the Papacy remains as the King of the North and Atheism as the King of the South. This position coheres with the identification of the atheist French Revolution in Revelation 11, and Revolutionary France being the power that overthrew the Papacy in 1798AD. This view came into vogue from the 1940s onwards after the writings of Louis Were, and is driven by two main factors: 1) literary parallels between the little-horn Papal power of Daniel 7 and 8 with the King of the North from verse 36 onwards; and 2) seeking to correlate the eschatology of Revelation 12-14 and 2 Thessalonians with the actors mentioned in Daniel 11. This view is probably the most common view in the Adventist church today.

**The Papacy and Islam Interpretation:** The third view also defends a literal hermeneutic for the whole chapter, but identifies the Papacy as the King of the North and Islam as King of the South in verses 40-45. Whereas the Uriah Smith view focusses on the literal rulers of Egypt in 11.40, this position focusses on the religion of the rulers of Egypt in 11.40 (1798AD), who were Muslim. This view argues that from 11.23 onwards, after the death of the Messiah, the King of the North is the Papacy, and the King of the South is Islam. The Saracen and Ottoman conflicts are portrayed from 23-39, paralleling the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Trumpets of Revelation 9. This view also anticipates a significant power struggle for Jerusalem, with the Muslim world on one side against the Western world, led by the Papacy. This interpretation is the most recent in SDA history, and focusses on an exegesis of the text itself, without significant correlation with Daniel 7-8 or with Revelation 12-14.