

## Is the Papacy the King of the North?

The king of the north in Daniel 11:40-45 just has to be the papacy! This was the view of Martin Luther back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1798 the time of the end began and the book of Daniel was unsealed. Now men began to study this book in earnest and knowledge of the prophecies was increased just as God said would happen. Now that God was opening up men's understanding, what did some of the prominent Millerites teach on this topic?

Josiah Litch, in 1838, 1841 and 1842, clearly spelled out in publications just who the kings of the north and south were:

"The king of the south shall push at him." At whom? The answer is, at the subject of prophecy in the preceding verses—the revolutionary government of France. That power is clearly antecedent to "him," in this verse. "The king of the south." And who is the king of the south? The answer is given in the exposition of the first six verses of the chapter, which the reader can examine. It is clearly the government of Egypt. I do not know that there is a dissenting voice to the application of this term to Egypt in the former part of this chapter; nor can I see any good reason why there should be in the latter part, as long as it was literally fulfilled in Egypt. That a collision did actually take place between the French and Egypt is notorious. In the winter of 1798, after Bonaparte's return from his Italian campaign, he was appointed by the directory, commander-in-chief of the foreign armies of the French nation; and in that character he left France, on the morning of May 20th, 1798, with a fleet "of thirteen ships of the line, and fourteen frigates, and four hundred transports. They carried 40,000 picked soldiers and officers." On the 1st of July they reached the coast of Egypt, and landed the army about a mile and a half from Alexandria. "Shall push." The weakness of this term signifies only a feeble and ineffectual resistance. The contrast is the more remarkable when compared with the strength of the next clause—"The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind;"—shall come with an overwhelming power. . . . "Like a whirlwind." *The king of the north, it is universally acknowledged*, signifies in this chapter, Syria, as being the northern division of the empire of Alexander the Great. Josiah Litch, *Prophetic Expositions*, vol. 2, pp.99-102 [1842] (emphasis supplied).

Why did Josiah Litch not believe that the papacy was the king of the north? Now that Daniel was an unsealed book and knowledge on the prophecies was rapidly increasing, it was found that such a conclusion was untenable when using Miller's prophetic rules of interpretation. His position on the king of the north was "universally acknowledged".

The Seventh-day Adventist church, between the years 1862 and 1872, conducted a thorough investigation of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. They too came to the same conclusion on the identity of the kings of the north and south and their findings were recorded in Uriah Smith's book, *Daniel and the Revelation*. (See (4T 592)

Then why do most Seventh-day Adventists today reject the findings of these pioneers? Many have not done the careful investigation that our pioneers conducted and yet they conclude that Martin Luther had it right even though he never showed how it was that he arrived at his conclusions on the king of the north. No one is able to show from the text of Daniel 11 itself where it is actually stated that civil Rome was ever the king of the north, and yet it is believed that civil Rome just had to be the king of the north. It is believed that if civil Rome was a king of the north then it would naturally follow that papal Rome would also have to be a king of the north. Important hermeneutical rules of prophetic interpretation are violated by this approach to the prophecies thus leading to inaccurate conclusions. We treat no other prophecy with such disregard of the prophetic interpretive rules.

Typically, the following presuppositions are brought to Daniel 11:

1. The last power brought to view in Dan. 7 and 8 is papal Rome; thus the last power must be the same in Dan. 11
2. Jesus is the true King of the North—a position Satan wants thus Dan. 11:40-45 is a spiritual battle—not literal
3. Babylon was the king of the north—any power that attacked Israel from the north became the king of the north
4. Civil Rome was the king of the north even though she conquered and occupied both the north and south territories

There are no scriptural references that directly state any of these four points and yet many surmise that they must be true. If we would adopt the same rules of prophetic interpretation that William Miller identified—rules endorsed by the Spirit of Prophecy—that, by the way, dictate a literal interpretation of these verses, I believe that we too would come to the same conclusions on Daniel 11:40-45 as those of our early pioneers.