

## The King of the North

### Part 1 – A Look at the History of Adventism

The identity of the king of the north in Daniel 11:40-45 has been a subject of debate in Adventism for many years. Today it seems that the majority believe that he is the papacy. But there are some who differ in their opinion and apply the prophecy to the Ottoman Empire and modern Islam. But what is the correct view? Has it always been such a disagreement in the ranks of Adventism? This is an important question and deserves careful study, because the end of the king of the north signals the time of trouble and the most momentous events in the history of this world.

#### **The pioneers 1840-1870**

Today it is generally understood that James White, as well as the majority of the principle leaders in the Millerite movement, believed the king of the north to be the papacy. This is taken by many as solid evidence that the king of the north is to be identified with the papacy. But there seems to be no references to back this opinion up. The only pioneers who seem to believe this were James White and Hiram Edson. James White published several statements that indicate his belief that this is so and this view he held until his death. But for the rest of the pioneers the evidence is lacking at best. So, what did the leaders in the Millerite movement teach about the king of the north?

William Miller is often thought to have believed that the king of the north was the papacy, but I don't find this to be true. I think at this point we should stop to define our terms a little bit. In Daniel 11:36 it speaks of a king who would "do according to his will." This power is often referred to as the "willful king" because of this phrase. Then in verse 40 it says "the king of the south shall push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind." The "him" is obviously the willful king referred to earlier. But there are two ways of viewing the rest of this verse. The one side says that the king of the north and the willful king are two separate powers, the other side says that they are one and the same power. We must keep this difference of opinion in mind when we read the pioneers' statements on this prophecy.

William Miller did teach that the willful king of verses 36-39 was the papacy. But when he got to verse 40 he had this to say "We therefore begin at the 40<sup>th</sup> verse of the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel, 'and at the time of the end' of this papal civil power. Now, another person has obtained this civil power: this was Bonaparte, the ruler of the French nation... At this time, then, our prophecy begins, and Bonaparte is the person designated by the pronouns he and him in the prophecy." *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ About The Year 1843; Exhibited in a Course of Lectures by William Miller pages 104-105.* He goes on to show that the prophecy is perfectly fulfilled by Napoleon and that he came to his end with none to help him in 1815. To come to this conclusion he interprets the "glorious land" and "between the seas" to mean Italy. In view of this statement we cannot honestly claim that William Miller believed the king of the north to be the papacy.

Here is another statement from Miller where he paraphrases verse 40: "And at the time of the end (of Antichrist), shall the king of the south (Spain) push at France (Vendean war) and the king of the north (Great Britian) shall come against France, like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and the French (or Bonaparte the principle ruler;) shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ About*

*the Year A. D. 1843, and of His Personal Reign of 1000 Years. 1833.*

This makes it even clearer that William Miller did not believe the king of north to be the papacy. Joshua Himes paraphrases it the same way “If this is correct, then France is intended by he or him in this prophecy. In order then, to give my view, the reader will permit me to paraphrase these few remaining verses: And the time of the end (of Anti-christ,) shall the king of the south (Spain) push at France (Vendean war) and the king of the north (Great Britain) shall come against France, like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and the French (or Bonaparte the principal ruler;) shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.” *Signs of the Times and Expositor of Prophecy, vol 2, No. 7, July 1, 1841, History of Bonaparte, 1290 days*

Charles Fitch said it this way, after quoting Daniel 11:40-45, “Here we have a most striking epitome of the history of Bonaparte. All that was here foretold was true of him, as history abundantly shows. He did plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in Italy, which we know is between two seas, and which has ever been the glorious holy mountain of the Romans. On the 15th of May 1796, Bonaparte took possession of Milan in Italy—and at that place on the 26th of May, 1805, he was crowned king of Italy. Thus he planted the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain of the Romans. But he came to his end on a solitary Island, as we well know, and none helped him. All these predicted events therefore are now in the history of the past.” *Signs of the Times and Expositor of Prophecy, Vol 3, No. 8, May 25, 1842 Extract from Fitch’s Sermons, No. 6*

Josiah Litch handled the prophecy very differently. In regard to the willful king he says, after quoting Daniel 11:35-36, “Such a system as is here described was the French Revolution. It was founded in Atheism, and triumphed in the overthrow of everything which interposed a barrier to their object. The seed of this revolution were sown by Voltaire, the noted French infidel, who in early youth vowed to dedicate his life to the extermination of Christianity.” *Prophetic Expositions, vol 2; or A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Time of Its Establishment, 1842.*

We see from this that Litch did not agree that the willful king was the papacy. When he got to verse 40 he explains it this way, “ ‘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... Next came St. Jean D’ Acre, in Syria, ‘the king of the north,’ which was to come against him ‘like a whirlwind.’ ” *Prophetic Expositions, vol 2; or A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Time of Its Establishment, 1842.*

He goes on to show that the rest of the prophecy is fulfilled by Napoleon who came to his end in 1815. At this point I’ve only been able to locate statements on the king of the north by Miller, Himes, Fitch, and Litch. They all agree that the power that came to it’s end in verse 45 was Napoleon. It seems that most of the prominent Millerites believed that the willful king and the king of the north were two different powers and that the prophecy had been fulfilled by Napoleon.

This is important to understand because those who claim that the pioneers taught that the king of the north was the papacy always identify the willful king and the king of north as the same power. They look at what Miller and other pioneers said about the willful king and assume that they also considered these terms to refer to the same power. This is a misrepresentation of the facts. It appears that most of the pioneers who had something to say on the subject believed that these terms represented two separate powers. James White was the exception.

In 1847 he printed a booklet that included articles by him, Ellen White, and Joseph Bates. In the article by James White entitled *The Time of Trouble* he makes this statement. "But as I cannot harmonize either of these views (speaking of two views of when Michael stands up) with the Bible, I wish to humbly give my brethren and sisters my view of these events... Michael is to stand up at the time that the last power in chap. 11, comes to his end, and none to help him. This power is the last that treads down the true church of God: and as the true church is still trodden down, and cast out by all Christendom, it follows that the last oppressive power has not 'come to his end;' and Michael has not stood up. This last power that treads down the saints is brought to view in Rev. 13:11-18. His number is 666." *A Word to the "Little Flock" pages 8-9* This statement is taken by some to mean that James and Ellen White, and Joseph Bates agreed that the king of the north was the papacy. This seems to be stretching things a bit, when James White is presenting it as "my view." I have been unable to find anything by Joseph Bates on the subject and Ellen White says almost nothing about it. But it is thought because six pages of this book were written by sister White that she had to have agreed with her husband's view of things, but she published many articles in the Review and this is never taken to mean that she agreed with all the views of everyone else who published articles in the same Reviews. The same could be said of Joseph Bates, just the fact that he wrote part of the book does not mean he wholeheartedly agreed with James White's personal view. It doesn't mean he disagreed with it either.

In 1853 Otis Nichols published an article in the Review and Herald titled *Papacy and France*. In this article he presents the view that the king of the north is England and the king of the south is a coalition of the French and the papacy. Here again we see the idea that the king of the north and the willful king are two separate powers. He closely follows Miller's reasoning but says verse 45 is unfulfilled. I also found an article by Hiram Edson in 1856 titled *The Times of the Gentiles* in which he discusses the reasons why the United States is the "glorious land" of Daniel 11. It seems that James White agreed with Edson on this point because he brings it out 21 years later in his *Review* article in 1877. But Edson does not elaborate on the king of the north except to say this "Verses 36-39 contain a catalogue of the acts and doings of the Papal king; and verse 40 foretells an event which should mark the time of the end, where the indignation would cease; viz, 'And at the time of the end the king of the South shall push at him.' He also foretells that the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, and gives a prophetic history of his campaign, at which time Michael would stand up, and there or then should be a time of trouble such as never was." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, vol 7, January 10, 1856*. He obviously puts verses 40-45 in the future the same as James White does.

The following chart lists what I have found so far. I am in the process of reading all the Reviews from the 1840's to the 1870's but have not completed this project yet. I have included everyone who is generally considered to be a pioneer in the Advent movement or a principle leader in the Millerite movement. As you can see there are a number of people who I've been unable to locate statements from. If you have a statement from any of them that would indicate their position on this topic, I would love to include it.

	Willfull King	King of North	Comes to His End	Date of Statement
William Miller	papacy	Great Britain	Napoleon	1833
Joshua Himes	papacy	Great Britain	Napoleon	1841
Charles Fitch	papacy	Not Clear	Napoleon	1842
Josiah Litch	France	Syria(Ottoman Empire)	Napoleon	1842
James White	Not Clear	Not Clear	papacy	1847
Ottis Nichols	papacy	Great Britain	papacy	1853
Hiram Edson	papacy	Not Clear	papacy	1856
Uriah Smith	Not Clear before 1870 (France)	Not Clear before 1870 (Ottoman Empire)	Seems to favor papacy before 1870 (Ottoman Empire)	1862 (Clearly presented after 1870)
Joseph Bates	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
Ellen White	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear (Seems to favor Ottoman Empire)	1877
John Andrews	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
David Arnold	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
Goodloe Bell	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
Merritt Cornell	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
Roswell Cottrell	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
William Gage	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
Stephen Haskell	France	Ottoman Empire	Ottoman Empire	1901
George Holt	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
John Loughborough	France	Ottoman Empire	Ottoman Empire	1915
Samuel Rhodes	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found
Joseph Waggoner	Not Clear	Not Clear	Not Clear	No statements found

Of the twenty-one listed I have found statements on the king of the north by eleven. Of these, five are clear that the willful king is the papacy and four say it was France. James White doesn't say either way but I think we can safely say that he thought it was the papacy. Ellen White says nothing. Of the eleven, four are clear that the king of the north is the Ottoman Empire, three say it is Great Britain, three don't say definitely. Of these three, I think it is safe to say Charles Fitch agreed with Miller about it being Great Britain and Hiram Edson seems to imply that it is another power than the papacy. I suspect that James White may have agreed with Edson on this but neither one makes any definite statement on it. There is just as much disagreement on who comes to his end in verse 45. Four say it is the Ottoman Empire, four Napoleon, and three the papacy. Ellen White seems to imply that she favored the view of it being the Ottoman Empire but really says nothing definite on it.

We are left with the question, did the denomination ever have a position on this prophecy that was generally agreed on? Was there ever an official position? Surprisingly the answer is yes. But this agreement did not come till after 1870 and James White never agreed with what became the official

church position for 80 years

### **A Time of General Agreement 1870-1950**

Today it is generally understood that the pioneers of the Advent movement were in agreement that the king of the north was the papacy. From a careful reading of what they wrote however, I find this conclusion impossible to verify. Even James White who is always referenced as believing that the king of the north is the papacy is ambiguous on this point. The only thing we know for certain from his statements is that he believed that the king who comes to his end in Daniel 11:45 is the papacy. He never says that this power is the same as the king of the north. It seems that a number of the pioneers did not think that the power who comes to end is the same power as the king of the north. They also did not identify the willful king as the same power as the king of north.

There seems to have been no agreement among Adventists on the identity of the king of the north until around 1873. In that year Uriah Smith published his book *Thoughts on Daniel*. In this book he brings out the idea that the willful king of verse 36 was the French revolution and the king of the north of verse 40 was the Ottoman Turks, who would come to their end just prior to the close of probation and the second coming. It has been asserted by some that this was an entirely new view brought in by Uriah Smith without the approval of his brethren and that he was alone in publishing it. Was it really a new view, when Josiah Litch had already preached something similar before 1844? I have not been able to find any published statements confirming the idea that Uriah Smith was alone in his views. Rather it seems that most of the brethren agreed with him. The only published opposition came from James White. In the same article in 1877 where he mentions the “glorious land” he cautions against definite predictions based on unfulfilled prophecy and then says “It may be said there is a general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and Russia as the fulfillment of the portion of the prophecy which will give confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message. But what will be the result of this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected, is an anxious question.” *The Review and Herald, Nov. 29, 1877, “Unfulfilled Prophecy.”*

What does he mean by a “general agreement”? Doesn’t this mean that most Adventists thought that the king of the north was Turkey? Why would he call it a “general agreement” if only Uriah Smith presented this view of the king of the north?

James White, in his article, then goes over the four lines of prophecy in Daniel and why he thinks the king of the north is the papacy. This view he still held in 1880 when he mentions it again briefly in the Signs of the Times. After James White’s death there seems to have been little or no opposition to the position taken by Uriah Smith. In fact his view became the keynote of almost every Adventist prophecy presentation. It was used to show that current world events indicated Christ’s coming to be very soon. The Advent message gained widespread interest and many heard the truth and were converted by this presentation on the king of the north. The majority of official Adventist publications from 1873 till somewhere around 1950 took this view of the king of the north. I even have advertisements for the Signs of the Times and the Watchman from 1913 inviting people to subscribe to these magazines to read articles on the Eastern Question and Daniel 11:45. It appears that the concept that the pioneers viewed the papacy as the king of the north is unfounded. But why has this idea been propounded so much? Does the Spirit of Prophecy have anything to say on the topic?

Ellen White has very little to say about Daniel 11. She only says “The prophecies of the eleventh of Daniel have almost reached their final fulfilment.” *Review and Herald, November 24, 1904*. She never mentions the king of the north and says only this about the eastern question “Sunday morning boats and trains poured their living freight upon the ground in thousands. Elder Smith spoke in the morning upon the Eastern question. The subject was of special interest, and the people listened with the most earnest attention.” *Life Sketches, page 225*. This same statement is repeated in *Testimonies, Volume 4, page 279* and *Review and Herald September 6, 1877*. There is, however, an incident of interest related by Arthur White in his biography.

“One of the testimonies to individuals, delivered most likely only in oral form, was addressed to James White—a reproof for his course of action just before the combined camp meeting and General Conference session. He and Uriah Smith held conflicting views on the prophecy of the ‘king of the North’ pictured in Daniel 11, and the power presented in verse 45 that would come to his end with none to help him. White, in his Sabbath morning address September 28 in the newly pitched camp-meeting tent, countered Smith’s interpretations. He felt that Smith’s approach, indicating that the world was on the verge of Armageddon, would threaten the strong financial support needed for the rapidly expanding work of the church.

“Ellen White’s message to her husband was a reproof for taking a course that would lead the people to observe differences of opinion among leaders and to lower their confidence in them. For the church leaders to stand in a divided position before the people was hazardous. James White accepted the reproof, but it was one of the most difficult experiences he was called to cope with, for he felt he was doing the right thing. At no time did Ellen White reveal which man was right in the position he held. That was not the issue. The crux of the matter was the importance of leaders presenting a united front before the people.” *Ellen G. White Biography, Volume 3, The Lonely Years, 1876-1891, pages 96-97*.

The incident is handled differently by Raymond Cottrell. “The following evening he repeated the same line of reasoning at the close of an address by Uriah Smith in which reference was made to the Eastern question, before delegates assembled at the seventeenth session of the General Conference.

“That James White should thus differ publicly with Uriah Smith at the close of a sermon whose main emphasis had been the nearness of Christ’s coming indicated an imminent crisis which might have resulted in schism within the church. Bitter feelings were apparently taking the place of brotherly love and something was urgently needed to save a dangerous situation from further deterioration. It seems that Sister White counseled her husband after that evening meeting to the effect that his taking public issue with Elder Smith was a mistake. Regardless of the respective merits of the views presented his course was clearly in error and it was wise to let the matter drop, at least for the time being. Of this experience Sister White later wrote:

““My husband had some ideas on some points differing from the views taken by his brethren. I was shown that however true his views were God did not call for him to put them in front before the brethren and create differences of ideas...” (E. G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 76, 77, which is considered by trustees of the Ellen G. White estate to refer to this incident).” (Raymond F. Cottrell, in his *Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon*) Quoted in *The Truth Concerning Mrs. E.G. White, Uriah Smith, and the King of The North page 14-15*. (The parenthetical information about the Ellen G. White trustees was supplied by Louis Were.)

It is interesting to note that she rebukes James White for differing from his brethren but does not rebuke Smith. If Smith was the only one holding these views of the king of north, as it has been claimed, why did she not rebuke him for bringing in a difference of opinion? If his position was in opposition to the unanimous opinion of the pioneers, why wasn't he rebuked for causing confusion? It seems from the evidence that there was no unanimous opinion held by the pioneers until Uriah Smith's book appeared. It does not look like he was alone in his views.

Mrs. White was never afraid to rebuke Uriah Smith and did so on many occasions, in particular about the rejection of the 1888 message. Smith confessed and appeared to repent but later events seem to indicate that his repentance was not sincere. Only heaven knows for sure. But all of this was after he published his book on Daniel and Revelation.

She does have this to say about *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* by Uriah Smith "I know that Brother Smith feels as I do in this matter. We will stand together, Brother Smith. Of all the books that have come forth from the press, those mentioned are of the greatest consequence in the past and at the present time. I know that 'Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation' has done a great work in this country. I know also that the light given me by God in the books I have published has done a good work, and I praise the Lord for this. Other books have stood in their lot and place." *Pamphlet 79 Special Instruction Regarding Royalties (1899)*

In 1902 she says "The Lord calls for workers to enter the canvassing field, that the books containing the light of present truth may be circulated. The people in the world need to know that the signs of the times are fulfilling. Take to them the books that will enlighten them. 'Daniel and the Revelation,' 'Great Controversy,' 'Patriarchs and Prophets,' and 'Desire of Ages,' should now go to the world. The grand instruction contained in 'Daniel and the Revelation' has been eagerly read in many lands by those who were hungering for truth. This book has been the means of bringing many precious souls from darkness to light. It should everywhere be given a wide circulation." *Pacific Union Recorder, November 6, 1902.*

In 1905 she said this, "Instruction has been given me that the important books containing the light that God has given regarding Satan's apostasy in heaven should be given a wide circulation just now; for through them the truth will reach many minds. 'Patriarchs and Prophets,' 'Daniel and the Revelation,' and 'Great Controversy' are needed now as never before. They should be widely circulated because the truths they emphasize will open many blind eyes." *Review and Herald, February 16, 1905.*

I also found this statement, "Those who are preparing to enter the ministry, who desire to become successful students of the prophecies, will find 'Daniel and the Revelation' an invaluable help. They need to understand this book. It speaks of past, present, and future, laying out the path so plainly that none need err therein. Those who will diligently study this book will have no relish for the cheap sentiments presented by those who have a burning desire to get out something new and strange to present to the flock of God. The rebuke of God is upon all such teachers. They need that one teach them what is meant by godliness and truth. The great, essential questions which God would have presented to the people are found in 'Daniel and the Revelation.' There is found solid, eternal truth for this time. Everyone needs the light and information it contains." *Manuscript Releases, Volume 1, page 61.*

Of course these statements are not referring to the "Eastern Question" but to the entire book. But

didn't Uriah Smith's book contain major errors that Sister White said needed correcting? The only statement I can find in proof of this is referring to the controversy regarding the daily. "Then in this connection, obviously speaking of Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation, which she held in high esteem, she wrote: 'In some of our important books that have been in print for years, and which have brought many to a knowledge of the truth, there may be found matters of minor importance that call for careful study and correction. Let such matters be considered by those regularly appointed to have the oversight of our publications. Let not these brethren, nor our canvassers, nor our ministers magnify these matters in such a way as to lessen the influence of these good soul-saving books.'—Ibid. (see also 1SM, p. 165)." *Ellen G. White Biography, Volume 6, The Later Elmshaven Years, 1905-1915, page 258.*

I find it interesting that the book was edited at least twice after this but the teaching on the king of the north being Turkey was not changed. The denominational view was that the king of the north was the Ottoman Empire. In fact A. G. Daniels, the general conference president, published an entire book on the subject in 1917 titled *The Great War*.

I also found this interesting statement in a letter by John Loughborough. "As to where you can get information on 'the king of the North,' I think you will find it in Bro. Daniel's book on *The World War*. Brother Uriah Smith laid no claims to "inspiration," but his view on the king of the North is well established by Sister White in speaking of one occasion when he spoke on the 'Eastern Question.' This you can read in *Volume 4 of the Testimonies*, page 278-279, where she called the discourse 'a subject of special interest,' etc. It would bother those holding another view, than what he advocated, to find a word from her favoring their views.

"One Brother who had intimated in his writing on the subject that the king of the North might be the pope, told me that Sister White told him he 'never should have intimated any such thing, and that his idea would only create confusion.' This was not put in print, but it was what he told me in Autumn, 1878." *J. N. Loughborough to Wilfrid Belleau, Sanitarium, California. March 25, 1915 College Place, Washington, (Box 3).*

But there was a man named Milton Charles Wilcox who began to agitate a different view. Milton Wilcox was the dean of theology at the College of Medical Evangelists (later Loma Linda University) and a book editor for the Pacific Press. He was also editor of the Signs of the Times. He is easily confused with Francis Wilcox, the editor of the review. Milton Wilcox printed a couple of articles in the *Review* about his views around 1910. In the month long 1919 Bible conference he presented his views at length. This conference was called by A.G. Daniels to discuss matters of difficulty in Adventist theology. There were several subjects covered but the most prominent are the nature and mediatorial work of Christ, the king of the north, and the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy. "These issues were not settled in 1919, but became a topic of debate through the rest of the twentieth century. What did catch most Adventists by surprise, after the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts were discovered in 1974 in the newly organized General Conference Archives, was the candor and extent of such discussions." *Adventist review : Sifting Through the Past.*

After reading through the transcripts for this meeting it seems that nearly half the discussion was about the king of the north. This discussion clearly reveals that the official denominational position for the previous 50 years had been Smith's view. Some even claimed that the church had been preaching it for 70 years. Near the end of the conference H.C. Lacey made this comment, "What shall we do when



we are face to face with different views on Daniel and Revelation?... I think we should tell them the present denominational position. Daniel 11 is the biggest thing among us at the present time, and I should say, teach them the old view, which is the one the majority of our people believe; but if you feel that there is a sufficient demand for the new view, I would give them that in a private way.”  
*Manuscripts of the 1919 Bible Conference, page 1176.*

What was the old view? The denominational position? The view held by the majority of the people? It was Uriah Smith’s view of the Ottoman Empire. The “new view” was that it was the papacy. Throughout the conference the old view, the then current denominational position, referred to Turkey and C.M. Sorensen, after presenting the old view, had this to say “The preaching of this subject in the fear of God, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, has done a great deal of good in days past. It has brought a great many men and women to a conscious realization that God lives and moves, and that human affairs are subject to God’s overruling providence. Those values are still in that mode of presentation... There is both chronological and geographical unity in this prophecy.” *Report of Bible Conference Held in Tacoma Park, D.C. July 1-19, 1919, page 250.*

Wilcox presented his new view extensively. The assertion was never made during this conference that there was any majority view among early Adventists on this point. According to the people presenting the new view, there had been no consensus of opinion on the king of the north until Uriah Smith “foisted” the idea of Turkey onto the Adventist church.

At one point it was mentioned that the brethren in the early days would stop and pray over a matter of difficulty such as this and it was urged that they stop the meeting and pray. But those holding the new view continued talking and there is no indication that the praying was ever done. The meetings ended without any agreement being reached.

These meetings in 1919 remind me of this statement “So it will be in these last days. The cause of Christ will be betrayed. Those who have had the light of truth, and have enjoyed its blessings, but who have turned away from it, will fight down the Spirit of God. Inspired with a spirit from beneath, they will tear down that which they once built up, and show to all reasonable, God-fearing souls that they can not be trusted. They may lay claim to truth and righteousness, but their spirit and works will testify that they are betrayers of their Lord. The attributes of Satan they call the movings of the Holy Spirit.” *Review and Herald, May 24, 1898.* Many of those who embraced the new view said they had been teaching the old view until doubts overcame them and they couldn’t teach it anymore.

During these meetings it was also stressed repeatedly that changing the church’s position on Daniel 11 would not in any way affect the presentation of the Eastern Question, as it could be found in the Trumpets and the battle of Armageddon.

From 1870 to 1950 the Adventist church’s official position was that published by Uriah Smith in *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*. This is even acknowledged in it’s publications after 1950. But the general Adventist does not know it. Even among Historic Adventists there is little knowledge about what the church used to teach on this prophecy. Why is this history not better known? Why do we today think that the pioneers taught that the king of the north was the papacy when their writings don’t indicate this? Why are we not told that there was an official Adventist position on this prophecy for 80 years? Could it be that the history has been rewritten?

## Rewriting Adventist History and Doctrines, 1950 to the Present

Before 1870 there was no general agreement among the pioneers about the identity of the king of the north. It is even impossible to pinpoint a majority viewpoint or identify precisely how James White interpreted the prophecy of Daniel 11. But after the publication of Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* the church quickly became united on identifying the Ottoman Empire as the king of north. Even Ellen White seemed to side with Smith on this interpretation but she never said definitely one way or the other.

In 1922 the Ottoman Empire ended but the world continued. The church still preached and published that the king of the north was Turkey but there was a quandary about verse 45. It had to be still future, didn't it? Had Uriah Smith and virtually the entire denomination been wrong for 50 years? In spite of these questions the church continued to teach this view for the next 30 years. I have the study from *Bible Readings for the Home* 1888 edition on the the Eastern Question. Immediately preceding it is the study on the Seven Trumpets. I also have the same study from the 1915 edition. It is much smaller but saying basically the same thing. The one published in 1949 is almost the same. But something changed in the 1950's. The 1963 edition left out both the study on the Eastern Question and the study on the Seven Trumpets.

So what happened in the 1950's? Why do we today believe that the pioneers taught that the king of the north was the papacy? The 1950's saw many changes in the church publications. It was the decade of the Martin/Barnhouse affair and the publication of the book *Questions on Doctrine*. It was also the decade of the publication of the *SDA Bible Commentary*. This work was significant. "It is difficult for Adventists living 50 years later to grasp the revolutionary approach to Bible study in Adventism represented by the *Commentary*. For the first time in its history the denomination produced a document that dealt with the entire Bible in a systematic and expository manner... More important however, is the fact that the *Commentary* moved away from the central tradition of Bible study in Adventism with its apologetic purpose and proof-text method. In the place of a defensive approach to the Bible, the *Commentary* editors sought to let the Bible speak for itself. The historical, contextual, and linguistic approach to the Bible that the *Commentary* utilized sought to get the Bible before the church not as an "answer book" for the concerns of the Adventist Church but as God's word to His people across the centuries. The *Commentary* took the humble position of seeking to hear the Bible rather than setting forth the only possible interpretation of it. Thus the *Commentary* recognized alternate interpretations of various passages so that the readers could come to their own understanding." *A Search for Identity, The development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs*, by George Knight, pg 163.

Did you understand what he just said there? "The *Commentary* moved away from the central tradition of Bible study in Adventism with its apologetic purpose and proof-text method." The proof-text method is the method of comparing scripture with scripture, which the Bible itself teaches. The *Commentary* used, instead, the method of studying the context, original language, and time period when the passage was written to ascertain it's meaning.

Another significant statement here is this, that it "sought to get the Bible before the church not as an 'answer book' for the concerns of the Adventist Church but as God's word to His people across the centuries." On the surface this appears good. After all, the Bible is God's word in all ages. But combined with the previous statement, it's really saying that the Bible doesn't really apply to us today.

It was written more for the people and society living at the time of it's writing. It doesn't apply as specifically to us because we live in a different society today.

Compare the statement with this one from Pope John Paul II "The Bible, in effect, does not present itself as a direct revelation of timeless truths but as the written testimony to a series of interventions in which God reveals himself in human history. In a way that differs from tenets of other religions (such as Islam, for instance), the message of the Bible is solidly grounded in history." *Presented by the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1993-04-23). "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" Quoted in Wikipedia article "Biblical Hermeneutics" subsection "Roman Catholic Principles of Hermeneutics.*

Are not these two statements strikingly similar? Not only did the *Commentary* move away from the Biblically approved method of interpretation but it adopted the Catholic method!

The final comment I would like to note here is "Thus the *Commentary* recognized alternate interpretations of various passages so that the readers could come to their own understanding." This reminds me of a statement in the Spirit of Prophecy "The fact that the people were more interested in Christ's teaching than they were in the dry, tedious arguments of the Jewish teachers, maddened the scribes and Pharisees. These teachers spoke with uncertainty, interpreting the Scriptures to mean one thing, and then another. This left the people in great confusion. But as they listened to Jesus, their hearts were warmed and comforted." *Review and Herald, March 5, 1901.*

The *Bible Commentary* presented the Bible differently than it had been presented before in Adventism. It changed the way the king of the north was handled too. After presenting both views of the willful king it refers readers to the 1954 article in *Ministry Magazine* for a historical view of verses 36-39. Verses 40-45 are passed over with a few comments about some who view it as Turkey and a quote from James White's 1877 *Review* article on unfulfilled prophecy.

The *Ministry Magazine* article referred to was published in 1954 by a committee appointed by the General Conference to study Daniel 11:36-39. The manuscripts they studied to reach their conclusions were almost entirely by contemporary authors. There were two editorials from the *Review*, one by Uriah Smith and one by James White, that they studied along with these contemporary authors. Interestingly enough the "editorial" by Smith consisted of a one paragraph quote from a contemporary newspaper followed by a one sentence comment by Smith. Their conclusions were that the willful king was considered to be the papacy unanimously by the pioneers for 25 years after 1844. They quote William Miller and James White to support this. If we are to include William Miller as an Adventist pioneer, I think it only right to include Josiah Litch as well. After all, he introduced the date of August 11, 1840. for the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and it came to pass. This event is mentioned in the *Great Controversy* (see *Great Controversy* page 334-335). We have already seen that Litch taught that the willful king was France, so the claim of unanimity among the pioneers is destroyed right there.

Then the single sentence by Uriah Smith in 1862, following a quote about the papacy, is taken as support for the idea that the pioneers were unanimous in their opinion that the papacy is the willful king and the king of the north. While this quote does indicate that Uriah Smith, in 1862, thought that the papacy was the king who comes to his end, it doesn't in any way confirm a unanimity of opinion on the subject among Adventists. The *Ministry Magazine* article goes on to speculate that Uriah Smith changed his views to the king of the north being the Ottoman Empire because he believed that the

papacy would not regain its power.

The article then states, “Not until the events so confidently predicted did not materialize, and the papacy, instead of having ‘fallen to rise no more,’ again became a decisive influence in international affairs with the resumption of temporal power in 1929, did our Bible students undertake a re-examination of these prophecies.” *Ministry Magazine, 1954, page 24*. They are admitting here that the denominational position had been that the willful king was the French Revolution.

The article goes on to list the reasons why the willful king is the papacy and then declares verses 40 to 45 to be still future and refrains from making any predictions about the fulfillment of those verses.

The article’s presentation of the pioneers’ views on Daniel 11 seems to be taken almost entirely from a paper written by Raymond Cottrell entitled *Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon* that we quoted from earlier. Who was Raymond Cottrell? He was a Seventh-day Adventist missionary, teacher, editor, and writer who worked extensively on many major Adventist publications. He was born in 1911 in California but grew up in China. His knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin caused him to be hired by the Conference for various research projects. He was the associate editor for the *Bible Commentary Series*, and the *Review*. He served as editor of the magazine *Adventist Today* and as consulting editor of *Spectrum Magazine*. He was the founding secretary of the Bible Research Fellowship which was the precursor to the Bible Research Institute. He served as secretary from its founding in 1943 till it disbanded in 1954 over disagreements with the Conference president over the king of north. In 1948 he wrote the paper *Pioneer Views on Daniel 11 and Armageddon*. He says in reference to this paper “It was popularly believed that Uriah Smith’s book *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* presented the pioneer view that Daniel 11:45 refers to Turkey as the king of the north and the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16: 12 to a literal battle on the plain of Megiddo. Aware that the pioneers thought the papacy to be the king of the north and Armageddon a spiritual battle between the forces of good and evil, I made an exhaustive study of early Adventist literature on the subject, which formed the basis of this paper.” *Papers of Raymond F. Cottrell Collection 238, page 13*.

In 1951 he put together all his notes on the topic and submitted them to the committee who published their report in the 1954 *Ministry Magazine* article. Notice that he did his “exhaustive study” with the purpose of proving that the pioneers believed the king of the north to be the papacy, but the committee’s research was on the willful king. Raymond Cottrell is the only person I have found who claims to have made an exhaustive study on the topic. This must mean that he read every Adventist publication available to him from the time period of 1844 to at least 1873. Every person who has commented on the Adventist pioneer views of the king of north since the 1950’s have ultimately referenced his study on the topic. It is Raymond Cottrell who shaped modern Adventist understanding of the pioneers views on the king of the north.

In the paper he submitted to the research committee, he references six documents from 1842 to 1877. Two of these documents deal exclusively with Armageddon and cannot be used to prove anything about the king of the north. Of the remaining four, two are by James White, one is a paragraph in *A Word to the Little Flock* and the other is the 1877 article in the *Review* that we talked about earlier. Of the remaining two documents, one is the one sentence “editorial note” by Uriah Smith in 1862, and the other is a paragraph by William Miller about the willful king of verse 36. The quote from William Miller he takes completely out of context and claims that Miller is speaking of verses 36-45 when applying the prophecy to the papacy, but we know from Miller that he applied verses 36-39 to the

papacy and verses 40-45 to Napoleon. Cottrell leaves this fact out completely. His conclusion is that “The view making Rome the power of the last verses of Daniel 11 and the battle of Armageddon the last conflict of the great controversy between Christ and Satan was held unanimously by the pioneers of the Advent Message to the year 1863, and may therefore be designated appropriately the ‘Pioneer View.’ More than a third of a century after 1844 it was spoken of in the *Review* as one of the ‘landmarks’ of the Advent Message... The pioneer view was an integral part of the study and teaching of William Miller on the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, and thus of the Advent Message itself from its very inception.” *Raymond F. Cottrell, Pioneer Views on Daniel Eleven and Armageddon, Revised Edition, 1951, page 21.* It is very surprising that an “exhaustive” study of the topic would reveal so little evidence that what there is must be twisted to support the position. Either he is misrepresenting the history for a reason, or he does not understand the meaning of the words “exhaustive” or “unanimous.” There is something very wrong when we must twist the evidence and ignore parts of it to make it fit our preconceived opinions. But this is what Cottrell does repeatedly throughout his papers on the topic.

In 1958 he was given the task of revising *Bible Readings for Home* to bring it more in line with the teaching of the newly published *Bible Commentary* “so that we wouldn’t be saying something out of one corner of our mouth and something else out of the other corner.” *Raymond Cottrell, A Notable SDA Scholar Gives His Taped Recollections on the Investigative Judgment.* Could it be that he is the one responsible for removing both the *Seven Trumpets* and the *Eastern Question* studies from the *Bible Readings*? In the course of his work on the book he tried to prove the Adventist sanctuary doctrine from Daniel 8:14 using Biblical exegesis and hermeneutic principles.

What does this mean? The word hermeneutics means to interpret a text and is derived from the name of the Pagan god Hermes. He was the god of travelers, shepherds, thieves, and literature. One of his exceptional traits was deception and falsehood. Biblical exegesis uses the methods of higher criticism condemned in the Spirit of Prophecy. It is the method we discussed earlier of using the original language, the context, and the historical setting of a passage to determine its meaning. It is the new, Catholic method used by the *Commentary*.

Cottrell discovered that he could not prove the Sanctuary doctrine using this method of research. He wrote to 27 Adventist Bible teachers across North America asking them about this doctrine and if it could be proved. All 27 replied that it could not be done! From this time until his death in 2003, Raymond Cottrell believed and taught that the Sanctuary doctrine was a liability to the SDA church and should be left behind in its history. He was also a good friend of Desmond Ford and Walter Rae and at one time wrote “six pages of comment where Ellen White uses the Bible in error.”

In 1949 Louis F. Were wrote a book entitled *The King of the North at Jerusalem, God’s People Delivered*. In this book he takes the stand that the king of the north is the papacy and that Daniel 11:45 denotes the final conflict between God’s people and Babylon. He seems to have gotten some, at least, of his ideas from M.C. Wilcox because he quotes a little bit of the article written by Wilcox in 1910. Wilcox, you will remember, was the foremost advocate of the new view at the 1919 Bible Conference. Along with it he presented the idea that verses 14-29 of Daniel 11 referred to Antiochus Epiphanes and not to the Roman Empire, thus leaving the crucifixion entirely out of the prophecy and jumping 700 years from the end of Antiochus to the founding of the papacy. It is interesting that Wilcox also mentioned during that conference that the little horn of Daniel 8 could refer to Antiochus Epiphanes as well as to Rome and that the 2300 days fits Antichus Epiphanes just as well as it does the investigative

Judgment. A.G. Daniels immediately said “I hope you never mention these ideas in your Bible classes.” Wilcox said “Oh, I don’t, but others have.” This is the very concept that Ford and Cottrell base their ideas about Daniel 8:14 on. Others at the conference pointed out that this interpretation was developed by the Jews in order to avoid the obvious reference to Jesus Christ in Daniel 11. If they don’t interpret these verses as applying to Antiochus they must accept Jesus as the Messiah.

Louis Were quotes from Cottrell to prove that the pioneers believed that the king of the north was the papacy. In a pamphlet entitled *The Truth Concerning Mrs. E.G. White, Uriah Smith, and The King of the North*, he discusses at length the rebukes given Smith by Ellen White about the message of 1888. His conclusion is that “the opposition to the message of righteousness by faith to be proclaimed in the Loud Cry, will come from those who will refuse to accept the truth concerning the final conflict... They will stubbornly follow Uriah Smith’s teaching concerning Turkey being the king of the north and Armageddon a battle between the nations, and ‘will brace themselves to resist’ the spread of the true light, and ‘will oppose the work’, as declared by the Spirit of Prophecy.” *The Truth Concerning Mrs. E.G. White, Uriah Smith, and The King of the North page 12*. This statement is extraordinary when you consider that both Jones and Waggoner held to and preached Uriah Smith’s view that the king of the north was Turkey!

He also claims, based on Cottrell, that James White said that the king of the north being the papacy was a landmark in Adventism. The statement he is referring to comes from the same 1877 Review article we discussed earlier and says this, “Positions taken upon the Eastern Question are based upon prophecies which have not yet reached their fulfillment. Here we should tread lightly, and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement.” *Review and Herald “Unfulfilled Prophecy,” November 29, 1877*. This is the only statement I can find in this article that even comes close to implying a general agreement on the king of the north being the papacy and the very next sentence completely contradicts the idea. “It may be said that there is a general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and Russia as the fulfillment of that portion of prophecy which will give great confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message.”

Louis Were and Raymond Cottrell tried their hardest to prove that the pioneers believed the king of the north to be the papacy. Their work has convinced most Adventists that this is the truth, but the evidence contradicts them. According to Were the one sentence “editorial” written in 1862 by Smith is the “best possible evidence that the leaders of that time held unanimously to the original denominational position.” *The King of the North at Jerusalem, God’s People Delivered page 5*. If this is the best possible evidence, then it is flimsy to say the least!

Wilcox said he started questioning the church’s view of Daniel 11 when he heard James White disagree publicly with Smith in the 1870’s. Is it possible that he heard the very disagreement that caused Sister White to rebuke her husband? Wilcox agitated his “new views” extensively after 1910 and when the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1922 his views gained widespread approval until most Adventist Bible students agreed with him. Then in the 1950’s the history of the church was rewritten by the leaders to make it appear that they were still holding to the principles of historic Adventism. While in one area they returned to what they taught was the pioneer view of prophecy they began undermining the very foundational doctrines of the church. While they revered James White’s opinion on the king of north, they completely disregarded it on the investigative judgment. They claimed that the king of the north was a pillar of Adventism but demolished a true pillar at the same time. Could it

be that the king of the north is being used as a smoke screen to hide what is really being done?

Even today, those who call themselves “Historic Adventists” do not know what the pioneers originally taught about the king of the north. They do not know that the church taught for 80 years, in nearly all of its publications, that the king of the north was Turkey. But does it really matter? Is not the king of the north a matter of minor consequence? Wasn’t Uriah Smith wrong in his predictions about the Ottoman Empire?

The fact is that the end of the king of the north is a guidepost of prophecy and history. It tells us where we stand in relation to the close of probation, the time of trouble, the loud cry, the latter rain, and the end of the world. This is why it was such a keynote in Adventism 100 years ago. There is an important reason why the true history has been hidden. Maybe it’s time to take a closer look at history and what the Adventists used to teach on this topic.