The Conflict over the Kings in Daniel 11

There has been a conflict in the Seventh-day Adventist church over the kings of the north and south in Daniel 11 since the early days of the church. This conflict entered a new stage with the publication of Pastor Tim Roosenberg’s *Islam and Christianity in Prophecy* by the Review and Herald. Pastor Roosenberg is now advocating a new interpretation of Daniel 11 that will radically change the way Seventh-day Adventists interpret prophecy. While I have tried to represent his views accurately in these lessons, I have only touched on the points that are clearly problematic. Therefore, it would do well for the reader to acquire a copy of his book to get the context of the statements I have cited.

Like Daniel 8, the prophecy in Daniel 11 begins with Medo-Persia: “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel . . .” (Daniel 10:1). Daniel said that he was then living in the days of Cyrus king of Persia. It is in this context that the prophetic part of the vision begins in Daniel 11:2:

> Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. (Daniel 11:2)

The angel began the description of the prophecy with the four Persian kings after Cyrus. The prophecy then moves chronologically forward until the end of time. The four kings after Cyrus are first mentioned and are identified in scripture and history:

- **Cambyses** (Ahasuerus, Ezra 4:6) came to power in 529 BC when Cyrus died.
- **False Smyrdus** (Artaxerxes, Ezra 4:7-24) usurped the Persian throne in July, 522 BC.
- **Darius Hystaspes** (Darius, Ezra 5:1-6:22) overthrew the False Smyrdus in September, 522 BC.
- **Xerxes** (Ahasuerus, Esther) reigned from 486-464 BC and invaded Greece in 480 BC.

The False Smyrdus was an impostor of Cambyses’s brother whose name was Smyrdus. He seized the throne while Cambyses was in Egypt. After Cambyses committed suicide, later the same year, Darius quickly had the impostor removed from power and took the throne. When his son Xerxes came to power, he invaded Greece but was repulsed. The prophecy then quickly transitions to Greece:

> And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those. (Daniel 11:3-4)

Alexander the Great was the might king. As in Daniel 7 and 8, Greece was divided “toward the four winds of heaven” after Alexander died. Alexander’s four generals who divided Greece after his death are listed below and should be familiar to most Seventh-day Adventists:
Alexander’s posterity (his son) never took the throne. He was actually murdered by Cassander. The prophecy then tells us that Greece would be further transformed, and 24 years after its original division, in 277 BC, the empire settled into three parts: “Frontiers might change, but the Antigonid, Seleucid, and Ptolemaic kingdoms remained until the coming of Rome.”¹ These three kingdoms warred with each other but lasted until Rome overthrew them. (Note: the Antigonids are rarely spoken of by interpreters of Daniel 11, but they are important to our study, as I will show later in this lesson.) Two of these three kingdoms become the focus of the prophecy in the following verses:

And the king of the south [Ptolemy] shall be strong, and one of his princes [Seleucus]; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion [in the north]; his dominion shall be a great dominion. (Daniel 11:5)

These two powers are called the kings of the north and south. They are not given these titles by the prophecy until after the division of Greece. Clearly understanding who they were and where they reigned is crucial to understanding the prophecy at the end. To this part of the prophecy, most commentators agree.

On this map, we can see the approximate territories of the kingdoms of the north and south. Seleucus held the territory north of Israel, Ptolemy held the territory south of Israel, and the Antigonids held Macedonia and Greece in the west. God placed his people between the kingdoms of the north and south. As they warred with each other, they had to go through the land of Israel.

Interestingly, after Rome overthrew Antiochus the Great, who was one of the kings of the northern division of Greece, it is never called the king of the north by the prophecy. Doctor Shea makes this point clear:

He [Rome] is not referred to either as the king of the south or the king of the north. . . . At this point [Daniel 11:16, which refers to Rome overthrowing Antiochus] we find the king of the north does not appear again in chapter 11 until verse 40.^2

Some of the different interpretations that see Rome as the king of the north throughout the rest of the prophecy develop principles to apply that phrase to pagan Rome, but the verses in Daniel 11:16 through
do not call pagan Rome, or any of its rulers, king of the north, anywhere. However, the kings of the north and south, as well as other powers, are clearly discussed in the last conflict in Daniel 11:

And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. (Daniel 11:40-41)

Identifying the kings of the north and south has been central to the discussions of Daniel 11:40-45. Because Rome is the final power in Daniel’s other prophecies, many Seventh-day Adventist Bible students believe that Rome became king of the north when it overthrew Antiochus, even though it is not called such in the Bible. Along with identifying the kings of the north and south at the end, the correct understanding of the glorious land and the other powers mentioned have also been debated.

At the beginning of the prophecy, Seleucus is the king of the north, Ptolemy is the king of the south, and national Israel is the glorious land. Who are the kings of the north and south, and where is the glorious land, at the end of the prophecy? And, how do we identify them? It is vital for us to have the correct biblical principles to interpret these powers. Therefore, the things that we will look at and try to answer in this first lesson are not so much who these powers are but how we identify them.

Geopolitics in Islam and Christianity in Prophecy

Before we look at Pastor Roosenberg’s interpretation, it would be best to look at how he uses a few terms. This will help our understanding of his interpretation. First, he uses the term “geopolitical” throughout his book and his videos. He tells us that this term has to do with the various nations and their political and “international relations, as influenced by geography.” Therefore, when he is talking about the kings of the north and south, he always speaks of them in the context of geopolitics: the kings of the north are powers “that come against Israel from the north,” and the kings of the south are those “that attack Israel from the south.”

From the terms that he defines at the beginning of his book, it can be seen that geography is very important to Pastor Roosenberg’s interpretation. Everything is centered in Jerusalem throughout the prophecy. As with the Evangelical churches, geography is the most prominent feature of Pastor Roosenberg’s view of Daniel 11. This will become more apparent. Using geopolitics allows him to interpret Daniel 11 as having three conflicts in the Middle East between Islam and Christianity:

- Crusades – AD 1095 to AD 1291 (Daniel 11:25-28)
- Ottoman Empire – AD 1449 to AD 1840 (Daniel 11:29-30)
- Future Conflict – it “could begin at any time.” (Daniel 11:40-45)

While Pastor Roosenberg claims to have both a geopolitical and spiritual interpretation of Daniel 11:23-45, his whole interpretation requires geography and revolves around modern Israel as can be seen in his interpretation of Daniel 11:40-41:
At the time of the end [AD 1844] the king of the South [Islamic nations south of Israel] shall attack him [papal Rome north of Israel]; and the king of the North [the papacy and it allies] shall come against him [Islamic nations] like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land [national Israel], and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon [western Jordan and Muslims who accept Jesus Christ]. (Daniel 11:40-41, NKJV)

Speaking of Daniel 11 in general, Pastor Roosenberg informs us that “the geographical depicts real events” in the Middle East. In wars between the kings of the north and south, he says, “Israel is always the country in the middle”; and the onslaught of the king of the north in Daniel 11:41 refers to the northern king “advancing into Israel.” The “glorious holy mountain” in Daniel 11:45 “is talking about Israel and/or Jerusalem”; and in identifying the “glorious land” in Daniel 11:41, Pastor Roosenberg says something will “compromise the sovereignty of the geopolitical nation of Israel.” These few statements from his book are typical of Pastor Roosenberg’s view of the events throughout Daniel 11.

**Is Pastor Roosenberg’s Geopolitical Method Correct**

After identifying the true Israel as the people of faith in chapter 6 of his book, Pastor Roosenberg says that the events of the prophecy still happen in “Jerusalem or the land of Israel.” He then uses a Bible passage to support his concept that Daniel 11 continues its geopolitical focus on the Middle East after Daniel 11:22. He refers to Jesus’s parable of the husbandmen and the vineyard in Matthew 21:33-46. He concludes, “... the vineyard is the same but the people have changed.” He is saying that the vineyard in the parable is Palestine, or national Israel, but the true Israel now includes Gentile believers; the territory has remained the same but Israel has expanded to include everyone who believes in Jesus.

Speaking of the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21, Ellen White is in complete contrast to Pastor Roosenberg. She quotes Isaiah and begins by identifying the house of Israel as the vineyard:

> So God had chosen a people from the world to be trained and educated by Christ. The prophet says, “The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant.” Isaiah 5:7.

Ellen White began her description of the vineyard with the Jewish people. When the Jewish leaders rejected Christ, God rejected them and began to call Gentiles into His church through His chosen messengers. After that, the parable of the vineyard applies to the church: “The parable of the vineyard applies not alone to the Jewish nation. It has a lesson for us.” Ellen White then takes the final step. Listen again as she speaks of the vineyard today:

> God claims the whole earth as His vineyard. Though now in the hands of the usurper, it belongs to God. By redemption no less than by creation it is His.

Ellen White obviously saw the vineyard in Jesus’s parable differently than Pastor Roosenberg does. She started with the Jews in the Middle East as he does, but then expanded the territory to the entire world when the Gentiles came into the church; as the church expands, the territory expands. This territorial
expansion is rejected by Pastor Roosenberg, but is needed to properly understand Daniel 11. The Middle East focus lost its significance after the Cross. The globe becomes the territory, the vineyard, at the end of time because God’s people are everywhere on earth. Listen to Dr. LaRondelle on this concept:

Christ is definitely not spiritualizing away Israel’s territorial promise when He includes His universal Church. On the contrary, He widened the scope of the territory until it extended to the whole world. 15

Doctor LaRondelle was a Seventh-day Adventist scholar who recognized this principle of territorial expansion. But we do not have to rely on Ellen White or Dr. LaRondelle; the concept of an expansion from a restricted geographical location to a global scope is taught in the New Testament. Speaking to the woman of Samaria, Jesus’s dialogue about where people are to worship indicates the removal of these territorial limitations:

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. (John 4:21, 23)

Jesus was indicating here that the time would come when the territory would lose its significance. True worship needs no specific location. Jesus was crucified a few years after His conversation with the woman of Samaria. Three and one half years after that, Stephen was stoned and the 490 years appointed for the Jewish nation ended. The focus of the prophecies then began to expand outward from Palestine to include the entire world, and those “true worshippers,” whom the Father was gathering, were the nucleus of His global church, the Israel of God. Consider again Jesus’s words to His disciples when He was about to ascend to heaven:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Notice the territorial expansion as Jesus described the disciples’ mission. Since AD 34, the Jewish nation has not been the geographical focus of the prophecies. With the death and resurrection of Christ, the establishment of His church, and the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles, the prophecies transition from countries located around national Israel to spiritual powers in relation to God’s global church scattered throughout the earth. Understanding this transition is essential to unfolding Daniel’s last prophecy. The final prophetic events climax in a global conflict of the nations against God’s church (Daniel 10:14). Notice the territorial expansion that began after the death of Stephen:

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. (Acts 8:1, 4)
After Stephen’s death in AD 34, the believers “were scattered abroad” and preached Bible truth throughout God’s expanding vineyard. The Apostle Peter wrote his first epistle “to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Peter 1:1). He declared to these scattered believers, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). Peter tells us that this new, holy nation is a group of believers dispersed around the globe. There is nothing special about Palestine since God’s people left there.

In Jesus’s parable of the vineyard, He warned the Jews, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matthew 21:43). The Jewish nation rejected Jesus and no longer has part in the prophecies. The true Israel is a nation of believers who were scattered initially throughout the Roman Empire, but ultimately to the entire world. They are not limited to the Middle East today. Consider how the Lord promised Abraham all the land he could see for his inheritance:

And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, . . . all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. (Genesis 13:14-15)

The land Abraham saw was certainly a vast territory, but it is a fact that it was physically impossible for him to see the entire world from where he was, no matter how high the ground he may have been standing on. Yet, the Apostle Paul said the promise to Abraham included the entire world: “For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world . . .” (Romans 4:13). Paul understood the spiritual concepts involved. Through faith, every person on earth can embrace that promise. Therefore, the territory must enlarge to include all believers on earth. Again, Dr. LaRondelle commented on this:

Paul interprets God’s promises to Abraham concerning land and offspring “in the sight of God” as being fulfilled through Christ. . . . The land becomes the world; the nations become the believers who trust in God and who are justified by faith, as was Abraham.16

We cannot always use Palestinian terms literally. We have to remember that the New Testament interprets the Old. New Testament principles of prophetic interpretation must be applied in Daniel 11 when it is speaking of events in New Testament times, after the cross is introduced in verse 22. Louis Were was a Seventh-day Adventist scholar who understood the principle of applying Middle East terminology in connection with the church:

Failure to understand the New Testament principle that Old Testament terminology is now employed in a spiritual, world-wide sense in connection with the church is responsible for much theological confusion.17

Our failure to understand and use Middle East terminology correctly in Daniel 11 has resulted in “much theological confusion” over the kings of the north and south. This is indeed becoming more apparent. We must look at the terminology on a spiritual, global scale. As we have seen, Ellen White used the concept of territorial expansion. She also understood that Middle East terminology of end time events must be applied in relation to the church. Consider some of her statements:
Especially in the closing work for the church . . . will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God’s professed people. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet’s illustration of the last work, . . .

“And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem . . .” [Ezekiel 9:4]18

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. “Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord . . .” [Malachi 3:4]19

Through His servant Isaiah God is calling His church to appreciate her exalted privilege in having the wisdom of the infinite at her demand: “O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength . . .” [Isaiah 40:9]20

By men and women . . . whose names are on the church record, there are . . . all kinds of wickedness. At such a time as this the Lord has commanded, ‘Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble . . .” [Joel 2:1]21

In these few references, Ellen White applies the words city, Jerusalem, Judah, Zion, the holy mountain, and the land in connection to Christ’s global church, not in relation to national Israel. She always applies a spiritual interpretation to Old Testament, end time, territorial prophecies. She never applies them to national Israel. This is in obvious conflict with Pastor Roosenberg who relates Middle East terminology of end time events in Daniel 11 to national Israel wherever he can make it fit his view.

In her last quote above, Ellen White cited Joel who, speaking for the Lord later in the same chapter, said of the power attacking the church in the last days, “But I will remove far off from you the northern army” (Joel 2:20). Ellen White, having identified Zion, God’s holy mountain, and the land in connection with the church in Joel 2:1 must logically interpret “the northern army” in verse 20 spiritually in relation to God’s church. Thus we have an Old Testament passage referring to the northern army that attacks God’s church at the end of time, and it must be understood as a global, spiritual power.

We can now summarize how Pastor Roosenberg and Ellen White and some Seventh-day Adventists scholars use geographical terminology of end time events:

- Whenever he can make it fit his view, Pastor Roosenberg applies Middle East terminology of end time events in Daniel 11 to national Israel. He then links the spiritual events in Seventh-day Adventist eschatology to those Middle East events.
- Ellen White and some Seventh-day Adventist scholars apply Middle East terminology of end time events spiritually to the global church and a worldwide conflict.

Louis Were was a Seventh-day Adventist scholar who actually applied the spiritual principle to Daniel 11. His understanding of Daniel 11 is well known and should not be quickly discarded:
The purpose for which the last, long prophecy of Daniel was written was not to point to a supposed gathering of the nations to Palestine for an “Armageddon.” . . . Actually this prophecy says absolutely nothing regarding a supposed conflict of nations in Palestine.22

Most of Louis Were’s material can be downloaded from the internet and is well worth reading. Those Bible students who understand correct principles of interpretation are not quick to apply geographical terminology in Daniel’s final conflict to events in the Middle East.

Is Rome Geographically the King of the North?

In this section, we will look at the only Bible passage that Pastor Roosenberg uses as proof of his interpretation that Rome is the king of the north because it is situated geographically to the north of Israel. He tells us that after Antiochus the Great died in Daniel 11:19 “the king of the north now switches to Rome” in Daniel 11:20.23 It is imperative for Pastor Roosenberg to prove that Rome is the king of the north throughout the rest of the prophecy; otherwise, he cannot have Islam and Christianity in conflict in Daniel 11:25-30, 40-43.

At the beginning of Pastor Roosenberg’s interpretation, he uses Jeremiah 1:15 to make his case that all four of Daniel’s kingdoms come against Jerusalem from the north, and they must all therefore be understood as kings of the north. In referring to that passage, he says that it tells him “to expect one kingdom to replace another” as king of the north.24 So we will look at the verse, show his reasoning, and then analyze the passage:

For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. (Jeremiah 1:15)

Pastor Roosenberg focuses on a few phrases in this verse to build his case that the “kingdoms” mentioned are Daniel’s four kingdoms, and that they must all be understood as kings of the north. There are five points that I drew from his comments on page 26 and his maps on page 96 of his book:

1. There are multiple “kingdoms” mentioned, which must be successive; one after the other.
2. Jeremiah speaks of Babylon in the north and Medo-Persia attacking Babylon from the north.
3. The kingdoms from Babylon onward are the four kingdoms mentioned by Daniel.
4. All of the kingdoms mentioned “attack Jerusalem from the north” and therefore must be understood as kings of the north in Daniel 11.
5. When Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem he set his throne in the gate of Jerusalem, and the others likewise set up their thrones when they conquered Jerusalem.

The map on the following page shows Pastor Roosenberg’s concept that all four kingdoms use a geographical route that comes down from the north into Jerusalem. (Note: he also adds the names of the capital cities of those four kingdoms where he starts his arrows: Babylon, Persepolis, Athens, and Rome.)
After I realized the importance of Jeremiah 1:15 to Pastor Roosenberg’s interpretation, I then decided to read the book of Jeremiah. As I read, I found many things opposing his view. First, the word “kingdoms” does not necessarily mean successive:

The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of [under, NKJV] his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof . . . (Jeremiah 34:1-2)

Here we have clear evidence that the “kingdoms” that came with Nebuchadnezzar were then included “under his dominion” (NKJV). They were clearly not successive kingdoms; they all came against Jerusalem in Jeremiah’s day.

Similar terminology is used in 1 Kings: “And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:21). This shows that the plural doesn’t necessarily mean that the kingdoms were successive.

Another passage in Jeremiah uses similar terminology to Jeremiah 1:15 when speaking of “the families of the kingdoms of the north”:

Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about. . . . And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (Jeremiah 25:9-11)

This passage shows that all of the “families of the north” actually invaded Jerusalem together and before the seventy year captivity, and they obviously didn’t include the later kingdoms: Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. I could find no evidence that the kingdoms mentioned by Jeremiah were successive.

Furthermore, I could not find a passage that says Nebuchadnezzar “had his throne placed at the gate of Jerusalem.” Jeremiah does, however, tell us who placed their thrones in one of the gates of Jerusalem:

And all the princes of the king of Babylon came in, and sat in the middle gate, even Nergalsharezer, Samgarnebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, Nergalsharezer, Rabmag, with all the residue of the princes of the king of Babylon. (Jeremiah 39:3)

This passage clearly shows that those who sat in the gate of Jerusalem were not from Medo-Persia, Greece, or Rome, but were all of the princes of the various kingdoms who were then under Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion. Jeremiah interprets itself. Interestingly, Nebuchadnezzar was not included with them, and Jeremiah does not say anywhere that he placed his throne in “the gate of Jerusalem.”
That Jeremiah 1:15 is not talking about Medo-Persia, Greece, or Rome is further verified by the immediate context. Jeremiah 1:16 gives the reason why God called all the kingdoms of the north to come against Jerusalem in verse 15:

And I will utter my judgments against them [the Jews] touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands. (Jeremiah 1:16)

Here we can see that God’s main purpose was to punish the Jews for worshipping graven images. The Jews were committing idolatry like the nations around them, so God brought down “all the families of the kingdoms of the north” to overthrow them and lead them into captivity. As I continued reading Jeremiah, I found that this is a recurring theme throughout the book. The following is a list of verses that speak of the Jews and their idolatry, which I compiled as I read Jeremiah: 2:5, 11, 26-28; 3:9; 5:7, 19; 7:30-31; 8:1-2, 19; 11:11-13, 17; 13:9-10; 16:10-11, 15-18; 18:15; 19:3-5, 13; 22:8-9; 23:12-13, 26-27; 32:28-29, 34-35; 35:15; 44:2-3, 8, 15-30. The Jews had become so depraved that they were actually sacrificing their children to idols, as noted by the bold references.

Ellen White adds an important point about the Jews and their idolatry to be considered as we study: “By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images.”26 Because the people were worshipping idols, God called Nebuchadnezzar and all the families and kingdoms within the territories north of Jerusalem, which were then under his control, to punish the Jews. It makes no sense that God would bring Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome against Jerusalem because of idolatry after they were “effectually cured of the worship of graven images.” We don’t find the Jews worshipping idols anywhere in the Bible after their captivity in Babylon.

So we can clearly see the meaning of Jeremiah 1:15. It has nothing to do with Medo-Persia, Greece, or Rome. It is speaking solely of those territories under the control of Nebuchadnezzar coming to overthrow and punish the Jews because of their idolatry.

As additional proof of his view, Pastor Roosenberg next quotes Jeremiah 50:9 and says it proves that Medo-Persia is “the second king of the north.”27 So let’s look at that passage: “For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her . . .” (Jeremiah 50:9). Notice that Jeremiah clearly said there would
be nations that come against Babylon from the north, but that doesn’t prove Medo-Persia can be termed king of the north in Daniel 11.

The map on the previous page shows Pastor Roosenberg’s view, which has Medo-Persia coming down against Jerusalem from the north, but that is not what the prophecy in Jeremiah says. It says that an assembly of nations would come “against Babylon . . . from the north.” Jeremiah identifies those nations as Ararat, Minni, Ashkenaz, and the Medes (Jeremiah 51:11, 27-29, also on the map). Historically, the Medes were the primary power that came against Babylon, and Jeremiah never mentioned Persia. Consider the following points in relation to Jeremiah 50:9:

- The Jews were captives and were living in Babylon when God spoke to Jeremiah
  - Jeremiah 39:9; 2 Kings 25:1-21; 2 Chronicles 36:15-21
- Cyrus led the Medes and their Allies against Babylon
  - Jeremiah 51:11, 27-29; Isaiah 45:1-4; Daniel 5:30-31; 8:3
- The Jews were then freed and returned to rebuild Jerusalem
  - Ezra 1, 6-7; Isaiah 44:24-28; Nehemiah 2:1-10; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23
- The land of Israel and Jerusalem are not mentioned in Jeremiah 50:9
  - Medo-Persia did not come “against Israel from the north,” nor did any of their kings set their thrones in any of the gates of Jerusalem

Jeremiah 50:9 and other passages do prove that the Medes and their allies were the powers that came against Babylon from the north, but what we also find is that most of God’s people were then in captivity in Babylon. So the reference is from Babylon, not Jerusalem. Medo-Persia never came against Jerusalem from the north; neither did any of its rulers ever set up their thrones in its gates. But the Medes and their allies did come against Babylon from the north.

On his map of the Greek empire, Pastor Roosenberg has an arrow starting from Athens, Greece in the west, turning south, and then descending on Israel from the north. He says that Alexander the Great, in using that route, marched “from the west and attacked Jerusalem from the north.” In his view, Alexander must be considered the next king of the north. He then has the Seleucids as continuing Alexander’s position as king of the north but says that Ptolemy’s kingdom was introduced after the division of Greece as “a new power from the south.”

On page 23 of his book, Pastor Roosenberg also shows a map of Greece with two arrows on it. One points downward toward Israel from the north and the other points upward toward Israel from the south. The implication is that everything above Israel is the territory of the king of the north, and everything below Israel is the territory of the king of the south. On the map he shows in his ten part video series, he has the northern king’s arrow coming from Greece in the west,
as in the map above. Pastor Roosenberg ignores the fact that the Greek Empire then had three divisions. The Antigonids were in the west, the Seleucids were in the north, and the Ptolemies were in the south. The capital of the Seleucid Empire was Seleucia on the Tigris River in the land of ancient Babylon, but Pastor Roosenberg’s arrow wrongly comes from the Antigonid territory in the west.

The Bible is clear that Alexander and the Greeks would come from the west before Greece was divided: “. . . an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth. . . . And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king” (Daniel 8:5, 21). Clearly, Daniel tells us that Greece would come from the west before its division into four, and then three, smaller kingdoms. This certainly doesn’t fit Pastor Roosenberg’s concept of Jeremiah 1:15 that all of Daniel’s kingdoms come from the north, as he shows on his maps. Neither did Alexander attack Jerusalem as Pastor Roosenberg said:

Jerusalem opened its gates in surrender, and according to Josephus, Alexander was shown the Book of Daniel’s prophecy, presumably chapter 8, which described a mighty Greek king who would conquer the Persian Empire. He spared Jerusalem and pushed south into Egypt.

Clearly, Alexander did not attack Jerusalem. Neither did he set his throne at the entrance of the gate of Jerusalem. He was invited into Jerusalem by the high priest and the people, and Josephus said that he even offered sacrifice at the temple. So Pastor Roosenberg is making up history to support his view.

Since the Greeks came from the west, then shouldn’t we also consider the Romans as coming from the west, not north? It matters not whether they come by land, sea, or air, the Bible never identifies pagan Rome as the territory of the king of the north in Daniel 11, nor in any other passage. It really makes no sense that Rome comes from the north while Greece comes from the west. Consider Pastor Stephen Bohr’s clear statement on this: “The papacy is certainly not literally north of literal Israel (it is actually west). We must therefore interpret the king of the north and the king of the south symbolically.” In the table below, consider the facts about Daniel’s four kingdoms that we have already examined:

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<th>Called King[s] of the North</th>
<th>Attack/Oppose Israel/Jerusalem</th>
<th>Set Throne[s] in Gate[s] of Jerusalem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babylon (Neb.) Princes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medo-Persia</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (Alex.) Seleucids</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan Rome</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of Daniel’s four kingdoms, only Babylon matches the specifications given by Pastor Roosenberg. He has given us no biblical or historical evidence to support his geopolitical view. The only verse he used to prove that the four kingdoms of Daniel must be considered kings of the north, Jeremiah 1:15, does not support his claim. He must prove that Rome is geopolitically the king of the north, but he has failed to
do so. The burden is also on him to prove that Nebuchadnezzar and the leaders of the other kingdoms set up their thrones in Jerusalem, or one of its gates, but again he has given no evidence to support his view. The biblical and historical foundation of his interpretation does not exist. Without this proof, everything in his interpretation is suspect.

**Identifying the Territories of the North and South**

In these last two sections, I will show how to prove that papal Rome is the king of the north at the end of the prophecy without using Pastor Roosenberg’s geopolitical method. In harmony with his method of interpreting Daniel 11, Pastor Roosenberg said the following in the last video of his four part Daniel 11 Seminar:

> But, in Daniel, every place-name means what it says. Persia means Persia, Greece means Greece, Egypt means Egypt, right on down the line. Daniel always means the place he says. Revelation, between the beginning and the end, all the way through in the middle, never means exactly what it says. It’s always a symbol for something else. So do not apply the same rules of interpretation to Daniel and Revelation. . . . Daniel is literal; Revelation is symbolic.36

In this statement, Pastor Roosenberg clearly shows that he *doesn’t use consistent principles* for interpreting Daniel and Revelation. He has to interpret them differently to maintain his view. Such methods are common to Evangelicals, not Seventh-day Adventists. Look at the following list of terms used in the prophecies of Daniel, and ask yourself how they should be understood:

- **Daniel 2**: The Image of Gold, Silver, Brass, Iron, Mingled Iron and Clay, and the Toes
- **Daniel 7**: The Lion, Bear, Leopard, Ten-Horned Beast, and Little Horn
- **Daniel 8-9**: The Two-Horned Ram, Male Goat, Little Horn, Prince, Host, and Sanctuary
- **Daniel 11**: North, South, Glorious Land, Egypt, Mountain, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Libya, Etc.

Daniel 2 and 7 are clearly symbolic prophecies, and Daniel 8 starts out as symbolic but then changes focus. What Pastor Roosenberg doesn’t tell us in his statement above is that there is an alternative to literal and symbolic, and that alternative is called typology. The change in Daniel 8 introduces some type-antitype relationships. It is Jesus’s antitypical sanctuary that is trampled and cleansed in Daniel 8:13-14. This type-antitype relationship is actually much more prominent in Daniel 11, as it is in Revelation, but will not be obvious to most church members who have not studies. The following list contrasts symbols and types as they are used in Daniel and Revelation:

- **Symbols**: Image, Gold, Silver, Brass, Iron, Clay, Stone, Mountain, Beasts, Lion, Bear, Leopard, Wings, Heads, Ribs, Horns, Ram, Goat, Water, Earth, Woman, Crown, Sun, Moon, Stars, etc.
- **Types**: Israel, 144,000, 12 Tribes, Jews, Mount Zion, Glorious Land, Mystical Babylon, Spiritual Egypt, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Libya, Ethiopia, Sanctuary, Candlesticks, Altar of Incense, Ark of His Testament, Censer, North, South, etc.

Interestingly, some symbols, such as a mountain, etc., can also be understood typologically, but usually the distinction is clear. While Daniel and Revelation both use many symbols, they both also use types. In
Daniel 8:13-14, the prophecy is clearly speaking about the antitypical sanctuary in heaven. Note also, although Daniel and Revelation both use symbols and types, Daniel 11 almost completely uses type-antitype relationships. Unfortunately, Pastor Roosenberg doesn’t discuss typology; he views typical language as literal Middle East places, powers, and events.

As I have already shown, two of the divisions of Greece were called the kings of the north and south because they held the territory north and south of Israel. I will now use the Bible and history to identify the exact territories of the kings of the north and south. This will help us identify the powers in conflict at the end of the prophecy. The territory of the king of the south is easily identified:

And [the king of the south] shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue more years than the king of the north. (Daniel 11:8)

After Ptolemy attacked and plundered the kingdom of the north, this passage tells us that he returned to Egypt with the treasures and some captives. Egypt is clearly identified here as the territory of the king of the south. That Ptolemy reigned in Egypt should be noted carefully because Egypt is one of the prominent powers at the end of the prophecy.

We already saw that Jeremiah identified Babylon as a kingdom from the north and that Babylon is the only one of Daniel’s four kingdoms that can clearly be identified in the Bible as residing in the north. In harmony with Jeremiah, other Bible prophets also identify Babylon as being in the north:

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north . . . (Ezekiel 26:7)

Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD. . . . Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. (Zechariah 2:6-7)

Here Ezekiel and Zechariah identify Babylon as the territory of the king of the north. Interestingly, Jeremiah wrote before Daniel, Ezekiel prophesied while Daniel was captive in Babylon, and Zechariah lived and wrote just after the Babylonian captivity. They all identified Babylon as the territory of the king of the north. History also proves that Seleucus, who was the first king of the north in Daniel 11, established his kingdom when he took Babylon:

Seleucus, however, seized this moment to dash across the desert to Babylon and reinstate himself in his old satrapy. The Seleucids dated their Era from this event (October, 312 B.C.).

This was the beginning of the Seleucid Empire. The historian George Rawlinson also gave a similar thought when speaking of the founding of the capital of the Seleucid Empire:

He [Seleucus] founded, and built with great rapidity, the city of Seleucia upon the Tigris, at a distance of about forty miles from Babylon.

So we clearly have the territories of the north and south as Babylon and Egypt respectively. Ironically, Pastor Roosenberg recognized that Seleucus governed “Babylonia,” but he ignores its significance as
his maps show. Although Babylon is not directly mentioned in Daniel 11, we can still apply this to the prophecy because the Bible and history support it; however, *we can also prove that Babylon is the territory of the king of the north from Daniel 11*. Consider the conflict mentioned in Daniel 11:11-12:

> And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it. (Daniel 11:11-12)

No one disputes the fact that the Seleucid king Antiochus the Great is the king of the north in Daniel 11:10-16. The reason for so much attention on Antiochus in the prophecy is because during much of his reign he was limited to the territory of ancient Babylon. The prophecy even calls him king of the north in verse 11, which is understood by most all interpreters as referring to his disastrous battle at Raphia, in 217 BC. As shown on the map above, Antiochus’s territory was limited to the land of Babylon at that time. (While the map may not be exact, it depicts the approximate territory that Antiochus then controlled.) Louis Were was the first to express this important point for interpreting Daniel 11:

> Thus the Lord has made doubly sure that by the term, “the king of the north,” He means the power possessing territory centered in the region of Babylon and the Euphrates. That the term “king of the north” applied to the Selucidae because it held territory in the region of Babylonia and Syria will be seen when noticing that the territory of the first king referred to in Dan. 11 as “the king of the north,” Antiochus Theos (Dan. 11:6), was practically limited to that region. From Antiochus I to Antiochus III none of the Seleucid kings ruled over Thrace, Macedonia, and most if not all of the provinces of Asia Minor, yet each one is alluded to as “the king of the north.”

It was actually right after Antiochus Theos’s death when the Seleucid Empire was reduced to the territory of Babylon; so Louis Were’s concept is correct. It wasn’t until late in Antiochus the Great’s reign, after Raphia, that he restored the Seleucid Empire and earned the title of being great.

Since the territories of the kings of the north and south in Daniel 11 are Babylon and Egypt respectively, then what we have is truly interesting; the conflict in Daniel 11:40-45 compliments the final conflict in Revelation. Both end time prophecies speak of Egypt, Israel, and Babylon (see the table below). This is a divinely inspired correlation, which Pastor Roosenberg ignores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daniel</th>
<th>Revelation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt (King of South): Daniel 11:40-43</td>
<td>Egypt (Spiritual): Revelation 11:7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel (Glorious Land): Daniel 11:41</td>
<td>Israel (Remnant, 144k): Revelation 7, 12, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon (King of North): Daniel 11:40-45</td>
<td>Babylon (Mystical): Revelation 13-18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although Pastor Roosenberg is silent on this interrelationship between Daniel and Revelation, it cannot be ignored. God often gave multiple prophecies to reveal the same events, such as Pharaoh’s two dreams about the cows and the ears of corn in Genesis 41. He does this to clarify and establish the events of the prophecies as they are joined. Unfortunately, few Seventh-day Adventist Bible students know that this interrelationship exists.

**Antitypical Israel, Egypt, and Babylon in the Final Conflict**

When God’s people were scattered throughout the earth in AD 34, Palestinian terminology could no longer be limited to the Middle East. We must use the spiritual characteristics of the nations mentioned after Daniel 11:22 to determine the powers that are being referred to since AD 34. Israel is a spiritual, antitypical nation of believers; therefore, Babylon and Egypt must also be powers identified by spiritual, antitypical characteristics. Israel becomes spiritual Israel, Egypt becomes spiritual Egypt, and Babylon becomes spiritual Babylon. This type-antitype relationship is well known among experienced Bible students. Consider Egypt in the book of Revelation:

> And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11:8)

Here Sodom and Egypt are mentioned together and are referred to as being a spiritual (antitypical) power. Ellen White comments on Revelation’s use of the term Egypt in the Great Controversy:

> Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God and resisted His commands. . . . When the message was brought him by Moses, in the name of the Lord, Pharaoh proudly answered: “Who is Jehovah, that I should hearken unto His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, and moreover I will not let Israel go.” Exodus 5:2, A.R.V. This is atheism, and the nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance. . . . According to the words of the prophet, then, a little before the year 1798 some power of satanic origin and character would rise to make war upon the Bible. . . . This prophecy has received a most exact and striking fulfillment in the history of France.41

Ellen White clearly used the spiritual method to identify France as spiritual Egypt. She related Egypt to France because of Pharaoh’s atheistic statement in Exodus 5:2. Egypt is then the term used in end time prophecies to refer to nations with atheist characteristics. This has been commonly understood by Seventh-day Adventist scholars. Ellen White clearly told us that France was spiritual Egypt during its revolution of the 1790s. I apply this principle below; it was atheistic France, as king of the south, that attacked the Papacy in Daniel 11:40.

Spiritual Babylon is also spoken of in Revelation. In the description of the seventh plague, we have great, mystical Babylon shown as having three parts: “And the great city was divided into three parts, . . . and great Babylon came in remembrance before God” (Revelation 16:19). Spiritual, antitypical Babylon has three parts that are easily identified in the Bible.
It is interesting to note that ancient Babylon was situated on the Euphrates River. It was the Euphrates that Cyrus diverted so his men could overthrow that ancient city. The sixth plague in Revelation speaks of the Euphrates River in a symbolic, antitypical sense. The prophecy is there speaking of the drying up of that symbolic river as it supports mystical Babylon at the end of time, and we are told of the future dissolution of that evil power:

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. (Revelation 16:12-13)

Revelation tells us that there are three divisions of mystical Babylon: the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These divisions have been understood by Seventh-day Adventist scholars as in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divisions of Spiritual Babylon</th>
<th>The Powers they Represents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dragon</td>
<td>Satan as he worked and continues to work through the nations of earth to destroy God’s church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beast from the Sea</td>
<td>The union of the nations of Europe with the churches, especially the Roman Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Prophet, Beast from the Earth</td>
<td>The United States, which will unite with the churches in America, creating the Image and Mark of the Beast.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When commenting on Daniel 11 in an article published in *Adventist World*, Pastor Rodriguez was clear that these three powers constitute Babylon and must be understood in connection to the king of the north in Daniel 11:

In Revelation the unholy trinity formed by the dragon, the beast from the sea, and the beast from the land constitute Babylon and attempt to usurp the role of God on earth (Rev. 12-14). Babylon, like the king of the north, unifies the kings of the earth in order to try to exterminate God’s people. . . . The prophecy of Daniel 11:40-45 is further developed in Revelation under the symbol of Babylon.42

Pastor Rodriguez’s view shows a deeper understanding of Daniel 11 than most Seventh-day Adventist Bible students do today. This understanding did not come in a moment of time. It shows that he has studied and is familiar with the prophecy. This concept requires that the pope rule spiritual Babylon before he can be called the king of the north, as I will show in lesson 3. So let’s apply these spiritual concepts to the first couple of verses in Daniel’s final conflict:

And at the time of the end [AD 1798] shall the king of the south [spiritual Egypt, atheist France] push at him [the papal power]: and the king of the north [the pope ruling in spiritual Babylon] shall come against him [an atheist power] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land [the Israel of God, the church], and many countries shall be overthrown [people shaken from the church]: but these shall escape out of
Using the Middle East terminology of the prophecy in a spiritual, typological sense, we can identify the powers in Daniel 11:40-41. I believe the prophecy transitions from past to future in the second phrase of verse 40 for two reasons: first, the pope does not yet reign over spiritual Babylon; and second, the passage is speaking of a real conflict that must yet be waged. These two points will become clearer in lesson 3 where I develop the final conflict in more detail.

Note also that the word “countries” in Daniel 11:41 is supplied by the translators and should probably be “people” instead. This prophecy is talking about a time of shaking for God’s church. Remember that the prophecy focuses on God’s people: “Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days” (Daniel 10:14). So the passage is speaking about God’s global church and its members, not countries. (See also Isaiah 11:11-16; Jeremiah 40:11-12.)

Concluding Thoughts on Lesson 1

While conversing through email with a friend about the role of Islam and Christianity at the end of time, Pastor Roosenberg tells us that he all of a sudden had the thought that Islam and Christianity were “like polar north and south.” That thought was an awakening to him, a moment of enlightenment where he claims he first learned the correct understanding of Daniel 11. He says that Daniel 11 all of a sudden “made sense for the first time in my life.”

Pastor Roosenberg speaks favorably about his “ah-ha moment,” but this should cause us much alarm. All of his efforts in Daniel 11 after that moment were to verify that flash of light. That event must lead us to be extra careful of accepting his interpretation. Daniel’s attending angel was clear that understanding of the prophecy would not come in an instant, nor would it come from a single person:

But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Daniel 12:4)

The prophetic part of Daniel’s vision actually ends in Daniel 12:3. In the next verse, the angel told him that many would run to and fro, which has nothing to do with flying in airplanes or riding in cars. It’s speaking about many people running back and forth through the scriptures and historical works to uncover the meaning of the prophecy. This requires work, prayer, and reliance on the Spirit of God, not some great flash of light. Unfortunately, Pastor Roosenberg has thrown away much good scholarship to make his moment of enlightenment fit into Daniel 11.

Jesus was also clear that there would be a process to understanding truth: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit was given to guide us into all truth, not to give us a sudden illumination where we instantly learn what we need to know about the prophecy. If we stand back and fail to put our hearts into study of the Word of God, we will be swept away by the deceptions now flooding into the church.
Pastor Roosenberg’s interpretation is very similar to the teachings of many Evangelicals. They recognize this better than we do. Consider the following statement that can be found on the Internet, and which was made by an Evangelical Bible student about Pastor Roosenberg’s teachings:

When God was supposedly enlightening Timmy, we, Islamic paradigm scholars, were writing books fifty years ago!!! . . . What [a] shock for Timmy when he [finds] out that his ‘new’ revelation [had been] published for over fifty years OUTSIDE the Adventists church!!! . . . Timmy is a low life liar that realized Islam fits the prophetic pieces and now he wants to take credit for our work of over fifty years!!! We [were] screaming Islam when he was in diapers!!!

I disagree with this author’s treatment of Pastor Roosenberg, but he is nevertheless correct that the Evangelicals have been publishing for 50 years that Daniel 11 teaches there will be a conflict in the Middle East with the Muslims. Of course there are differences between the Evangelicals’ and Pastor Roosenberg’s teachings: he attaches Seventh-day Adventist trimmings to his geopolitical, Islamic centered view, which the Evangelicals obviously do not do. However, accepting his interpretation will subtly unite us to the Evangelicals. His view could not deceive us if it completely rejected Seventh-day Adventist theology; its inclusion may deceive many. We must be diligent students of the Bible and not accept an interpretation because it seems right; we must know that the interpretation is right because we have carefully examined it.

2 Shea, *Daniel*, p. 245.
4 Ibid., p. 12.
6 Ibid., p. 91.
7 Ibid., p. 73.
8 Ibid., p. 73.
9 Ibid., p. 95.
10 Ibid., p. 91.
11 Ibid., p. 91, see also pp. 86-87.
13 Ibid., p. 296.
14 Ibid., p. 301.
16 Ibid., p. 139.
18 *The Review and Herald*, June 8, 1886.
19 *The Southern Watchman*, January 24, 1905.
20 *The Paulson Collection*, p. 278.
21 *The Review and Herald*, June 5, 1894.
26 *The Desire of Ages*, p. 28.
28 See Ibid., p. 96.
29 Ibid., p. 9.
30 See Ibid., p. 96.
31 Ibid., p. 23.
34 Wikipedia, article: Alexander the Great
36 Roosenberg, Daniel 11 Seminar, video 4, 6 min., 21 sec.
38 George Rawlinson, *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy*, ch. 3, p. 35.
41 *The Great Controversy*, p. 269.
44 Ibid., p. 7.
45 http://www.topix.com/forum/religion/seventh-day-adventist/TN8J0DU96HLVEF7A6/p84