

Evaluation of Jeff Pippenger's Response

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

1. The tone of Jeff Pippenger's response is surprising. He has obviously never participated in a scholarly debate where both sides point out the perceived weaknesses of the other person's views without getting personal. His *ad hominem* arguments are neither warranted nor helpful. Christians should be able to disagree without being disagreeable.
2. Clarity is not a hallmark of Pippenger's response. It is at times difficult to follow his arguments which leads to misunderstandings.
3. Pippenger rails repeatedly against the "educated group" in the Adventist Church, yet, a better grasp of Adventist and church history would have helped him to avoid some historical mistakes. To repeat over and over again, like a mantra, that the Adventist pioneers had the correct view is not enough. Particularly, since he himself picks and chooses which views among the pioneers he accepts and which not. Uriah Smith is referred to by name (p. 75), yet one of the mainstays of Smith's interpretation of Daniel 11 was his identification of the king of the North as Turkey; an identification that Pippenger rejects.
4. As I indicated in my book, I do not have a set interpretation of Daniel 11:40-45. I am open to any reasonable interpretation as long as it does not violate basic hermeneutical guidelines.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

Page 67 – "The history of verse forty: is the history of the papacy being attacked in 1798."

Comment:

I would agree with Pippenger if the text said "at the beginning of the time of the end . . ." The Hebrew expression *ube'et* "and at the time" appears 15 times in the OT. Depending on the context the preposition *be* can be translated with "in, at, on, into, with, from, when," etc. Hence, *ube'et* can also mean "and in the time of" in the sense of during a certain time period. For example:

2 Chronicles 28:22 "Now in the time of [*ube'et*] his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD."

Nehemiah 9:27 "Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their enemies, Who oppressed them; And in the time [*ube'et*] of their trouble, When they cried to You, You heard from heaven; And according to Your abundant mercies You gave them deliverers who saved them From the hand of their enemies."

Jeremiah 2:27 "Saying to a tree, 'You *are* my father,' And to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.' For they have turned *their* back to Me, and not *their* face. But in the time of [*ube'et*] their trouble They will say, 'Arise and save us.'"

Jeremiah 15:11 The LORD said: "Surely it will be well with your remnant; Surely I will cause the enemy to intercede with you In the time of [*ube'et*] adversity and in the time of affliction."

Jeremiah 33:15 "In those days [*ube'et*] and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth."

Jeremiah 50:4 " In those days [*ube'et*] and in that time," says the LORD, "The children of Israel shall come, They and the children of Judah together; With continual weeping they shall come, And seek the LORD their God."

Jeremiah 50:20 "In those days [*ube'et*] and in that time," says the LORD, "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but *there shall be* none; And the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; For I will pardon those whom I preserve."

Joel 3:1 "For behold, in those days [*ube'et*] and at that time, When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem."

While the interpretation of Pippenger is possible, it certainly is not demanded by the text as he thinks. Since the "time of the end" is a time period and not a point of time, it behooves us to be a bit more cautious. According to Daniel 11:40, at or in the time of the end the King of the South shall attack the King of the North and the King of the North shall retaliate against the King of the South "like a whirlwind."

Let me propose a possible scenario. Please note, when I say "let me propose" I am not saying that this is the correct interpretation, but it is another possibility. Since Ellen White is clearly indicating that after 1798 a new power appears on the scene which she identifies as atheism (GC 268-270) the following scenario is possible: Since the Communist Manifesto in 1848 communism (King of the South) has gained control over a number of nations in the world. After years of domination, several of these nations with the help of the papacy have freed themselves from communist control. However, communism still controls large parts of the world (China, North Korea, Cuba, etc.). Since the King of the North (papacy) joining forces with Protestantism and Spiritualism (GC 588) will yet influence the whole world, the fulfillment of this prophecy may at the present time take place, or it may still be in the future. This is just to show that other interpretations of 11:40 are possible.

Page 70—"The king of the South, that is, the Soviet Union, (the king of atheism) was spiritually conquered in 1989."

Comment: I agree with Pippenger that the papacy (a spiritual power) together with the US (a political power) brought about the break-up of the Soviet Union. I also agree that the Christian Coalition is attempting to conquer America spiritually, but to claim that the papacy has spiritually conquered the Soviet Union is simply contrary to the facts. The papacy has little, if any, spiritual influence in the countries of the former Soviet Union, in contrast to the spiritual influence of the Christian Coalition in the US.

Page 70 – Pippenger maintains that using two different symbols in one verse for one and the same entity is acceptable. He tries to prove it by stating that in Revelation 13 the beast and the head of the beast both represent the papacy. “Two symbols – identifying the same power, and they are both within two verses of each other” (p. 71)

Comment: Pippenger fails to recognize that what we have in Revelation 13 is a literary device called synecdoche. A synecdoche is a figure of speech in which the whole can be put for a part or a part for the whole. For example, in Psalm 26:10 “In whose hands is a sinister scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes.” The right hand as part of the body stand for the whole person. Revelation 13, therefore does not support his contention that there are two different symbols for the same power.

Page 78 – “. . . let it her be stated that one of the basic approaches that I believe needs to be included in correct Bible study is an approach to the study of God’s word [sic] that includes referencing the message of the end, with the foundational truths that were established at the beginning of Adventism, by the men that were commonly called ‘the pioneers’ within the culture of Adventism.”

Comment: This is a basic problem in Pippenger’s response. He believes that the pioneers had the correct view (at least where they agree with him) and anyone who differs with him must surely be one of those mentioned in Isaiah 29:11-12.

While I am sure Pippenger and I agree on the foundational truths, a study of SDA history shows that in regard to the interpretation of prophetic symbols different interpretations were hotly debated, as they are today. For example, James White and Uriah Smith differed in their interpretation of Armageddon and the king of the North. At the ministerial conference prior to the 1888 General conference one of the issues debated among ministers was the question of the tenth horn in Daniel 7, did it symbolize the Huns or the Alemanni? And until the end of the first world war Uriah Smith’s view of the king of the North misled the church to focus on Turkey.

A proper hermeneutic is essential in the interpretation of Scripture. In 1986 the Annual Council of the General Conference voted to accept a statement outlining guidelines for the interpretation of Scripture (the document can be found on our website: biblicalresearch.gc.adventist.org). It is this hermeneutic which is used in the Biblical Research Institute and by most Adventist scholars today.

Page 83 – In my evaluation of Pippenger’s manuscript I wrote: “Pippenger, like Uriah Smith¹, sees the events of 11:30-36, fulfilled in the rise of the papacy and the papal persecution during the Middle Ages (p.13-14), but in contrast to Smith he believes that these verses will find a further spiritual fulfillment "within the time frame from 1798 to the close of probation" (p. 11). Therefore, he identifies 11:40 as a "description of a spiritual war between the papacy and atheism which began in 1798" (p. 14) with the deadly wound. He bases this idea on a statement in the Spirit of Prophecy where Ellen White says:

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

Scenes similar to those described in these words will take place. We see evidence that Satan is fast obtaining the control of human minds who have not the fear of God before them. Let all read and understand the prophecies of this book, for we are now entering upon the time of trouble spoken of: [Dan. 12:1-4, quoted.]. – Letter 103, 1904. (13MR 394).

I then added the following comment: “Since Ellen White says, ‘Scenes similar to those described in these words *will* take place’ she was thinking of the future, not of 1798 which was more than one hundred years in the past. Most likely she was comparing the persecutions of the past (11:30-36) with the persecutions in the future in connection with Revelation 13:15. Hence any application to the deadly wound in 1798 is a misapplication.” Pippenger in his *Response* says, “This is the very heart of elder Pfandl’s erroneous ideas For Ellen White to refer to the history of verses thirty through thirty-six of Daniel eleven in order to identify persecution is simply misdirection. Persecution is certainly part of the history identified in those verses, but the persecution does not start until verse thirty-two.

Comment: This is quite astonishing. How anyone can read the text and Ellen White’s comments and come to the conclusion that the persecution starts only in verse 32 must

1 Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1944), 267.

have a particular agenda. What this agenda is will become clear when we discuss the daily in verse 31. The text of Daniel 11:30-32 reads as follows:

³⁰ "For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do *damage*. So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant.

³¹ "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation.

³² "Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*.

The language in verses 30 and 31, "rage against the holy covenant," "defile the sanctuary," etc., is clearly the language of persecution directed against God's people. Ellen White made no distinction between verses 30 and 32 when she wrote, "Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated. In the thirtieth verse a power is spoken of that "shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." [Verses 31-36, quoted.]

If a break is understood between verses 31 and 32 it has to be read into the text. This called eisegesis rather than exegesis.

Page 87 – In defending the glorious land of verse 41 as the United States Pippenger appeals to Hiram Edson and J. N. Andrews for support. He claims that this was an established pioneer position and says, "Identifying the glorious land in verse forty-one as God's remnant church [which I suggested only as a possibility] is denying the distinction that Daniel included within the passage when he identifies the land in verse forty-one and the holy mountain in verse forty-five. A land and a mountain are two different entities. This is Andrew's conclusion as well. There are several other ways to defend this truth from Scripture, but enough is here suggested to at least refute the idea that there is no inspired evidence to support the glorious land as the United States, in verse forty-one. There is much inspired evidence."

Comment: What does Pippenger mean by "inspired." Is he saying that Edson and Andrews were inspired? The text itself does not identify the glorious land as the United States. Ellen White does not identify the glorious land as the United States. So where is the inspired evidence? This is one of these places where it is difficult to follow his logic.

Pippenger is correct in stating that Hiram Edson identified the "glorious land" with America (*Review and Herald*, February, 28, 1856), but he is the only one who did so. J. N. Andrews did not support this view. The reference from Andrews to which Pippenger refers reads as follows:

We have found that the earth is not the sanctuary, but simply the territory where it will finally be located; that the church is not the sanctuary, but simply the worshipers connected with the sanctuary; and that the land of Canaan is not the sanctuary, but that it is the place where the typical sanctuary was located. Now we inquire for the sanctuary itself. . . The sanctuary of the Bible is the habitation of God. (*The Sanctuary and the Twenty-three Hundred Days*, p. 45).

There is nothing in the writing of Andrews that would support the idea that the glorious land is the United States. Neither was it an accepted idea among our pioneers.

With the help of the *Words of the Pioneers* CD I was able to check the writings of sixteen Seventh-day Adventist and Millerite pioneers from J. N. Andrews to E. J. Waggoner. Only Hiram Edson identified the glorious land in Daniel 11 with the United States. William Miller identified the glorious land with Italy.

"And he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow, and pass over," was literally accomplished. "He shall enter also into the glorious land," (or land of delight, as it might have been translated.) This, I have no doubt, means **Italy**. Bonaparte fought some of his most brilliant battles in this delightful country. (*Miller's Works*, vol. 2 , Lecture 7, p. 105).

Otis Nichol and probably a number of other Adventist pioneers followed Miller.

"And he [Napoleon] shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." Verse 40. "He shall enter into the glorious land, (or land of delight, margin, which applies to **Italy**,) and many countries shall be overthrown." Verse 41. This was literally accomplished by the armies of Napoleon, who, in a short period, made all the continental governments of Europe subject to the influence and control of the French nation. (*Review and Herald*, January 20, 1853).

Uriah Smith in his book *Daniel and Revelation* Identified the glorious land with Palestine.

VERSE 41. "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."

Abandoning a campaign in which one third of the army had fallen victims to war and the plague, the French retired from St. Jean d'Acre, and after a fatiguing march of twenty-six days re-entered Cairo in Egypt. They thus abandoned all the conquests they had made in Judea; and the "glorious land," **Palestine**, with all its provinces, here called "countries," fell back again under the oppressive rule of the Turk. (p. 295; the emphasis in each case is mine).

This became the standard position among Adventists until the twentieth century. Thus, to claim that the position the glorious land refers to the United States was an accepted position among Adventist pioneers is an exaggeration, to say the least.

Pippenger emphasizes the distinction between the land and the mountain in verses 40-45. In geography this distinction is certainly true, but is it also true in prophetic

language? Couldn't this be another case of a synecdoche where a part stand for the whole? In the Old Testament "Zion" often refers to Jerusalem, but is not confined to it. For example, in Isa 51:3 it says:

The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

Here "Zion" has not only "ruins," but also "deserts" and "wastelands." This passage clearly refers to the whole length and breadth of Judea.

Or take Isa 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

The implication is that God would offer similar hope to all of the cities in Judea which were destroyed by the Babylonians. He is not saying that if a survivor came from city A he could claim the promise, but that if a person came from city B he could not. Since the promise was not limited to one city, the term "Zion" cannot be limited to one city. Here also "Zion" is a poetic reference to Judea. Hence, we need to be careful not to impose our understanding of mountain and land on the text.

Page 91 – "Verse 30: For the Vandals shall come against pagan Rome and pagan Rome shall be restrained in its ability to rule the world supremely, and to place the papacy on the throne of the earth."

Comment: Most of the rest of the paper (pp. 90-104) is spent in the interpretation of verses 30-36, according to Pippenger's understanding of church history. A prominent part in this interpretation is played by "the daily" which he understands as paganism. At the end (pp 103-104) he repeats the end time scenario as he sees it in Daniel 11:40-45.

It is interesting to note that on page 90 Pippenger states that "First pagan Rome established the Sunday laws in 321, then in 330, the time for pagan Rome to rule the world supremely came to an end and the seven trumpets begin to sound." Yet in the following pages (91-94) he has pagan Rome doing all kinds of things after 330:

p. 91 "The Vandals come against pagan Rome" [in 455]

p. 92 "The armies of pagan Rome shall stand up for the papacy"
"The armies of Rome shall take away the daily" [in 508]

p.93 "the armies of pagan Rome shall stand up for the papacy from the year 496 through 508"

p. 94 "Pagan Rome shall have intelligence' – communications with the Roman church culminating with Justinian's decree in 533."

It seems that Pippenger is using the phrase "pagan Rome" in a different sense from what the term generally means. Exactly what he means is not clear. The historical facts are as follows:

- 312 Constantine faces his last opponent at the Milvian Bridge. Just before the battle Constantine is supposed to have had a vision in which he sees a flaming sword and the words *In Hoc Signo Vincas* ("in this sign conquer"). He fights the battle in the name of the Christian God and defeats his rival Maxentius. Constantine becomes the first Roman Emperor to profess Christianity.
- 313 Edict of Milan. Christians are granted full religious freedom.
- 314 Silvester is named Bishop of Rome. He is crowned (clad in imperial raiment) as an earthly prince. Things have indeed changed! For centuries persecuted by the Empire, the Christian Church has now become allied with it! Christianity assumes an intimate relationship with the secular power. It quickly grows to a position of great influence over the affairs of the Empire.
- 321 Constantine issues an edict forbidding work on "the venerable day of the sun" (Sunday), the day that had come to be substituted for the seventh-day Sabbath.
- 324 The Emperor formally establishes Christianity as the official religion of the Empire. The previous year, Constantine had defeated the Eastern Emperor (Licinius) and had become the sole Emperor of East and West. Thus Christianity is now the established religion throughout the civilized Western world!
- 330 Removal of the capital to Constantinople. The Bishop of Rome takes the place of the emperor in Rome.
- 337 Constantine the Great dies on May 22, 337. Water is poured on his forehead and he is declared "baptized" on his death bed.
- 394 Under Emperor Theodosius (378-395), the ancient gods are formally outlawed in the Empire. Conversion to Christianity becomes compulsory.
- 395 Theodosius is the last ruler of a united Roman Empire. At his death the Empire is divided between his two sons Honorius (in the West) and Arcadius (in the East). Though in theory only a division for administrative purposes, the separation proves to be permanent. The two sections grow steadily apart, and are never again truly united. Each goes its own way towards a separate destiny. For decades many tribes have been coming across the Roman frontiers peaceably, as settlers. Many Germans are now serving in the Roman army, and some in the imperial palace itself. When Emperor Theodosius dies, one of these Germans is even named as guardian of his young son Honorius. He is Stilicho, a "barbarian" of the Vandal nation. A brilliant general, Stilicho repeatedly beats back attempted invasions of Italy by various barbarian tribes. Most troublesome of all is Alaric the Visigoth. Stilicho repels numerous assaults by Alaric into the peninsula.
- 410 After the death of Stilicho (408) Alaric takes the "Eternal City," and for six days Rome is given up to murder and pillage. For the first time in nearly 800 years, Rome is captured by a foreign enemy!
- 452 Attila the Hun appears in northern Italy with a great army. The road to Rome lies open before Attila. Its citizens expect the worst. But Rome is spared. Attila withdraws when success lies just within his grasp. The threatened march on Rome does not take place! What has happened? The bishop of Rome at this time is a man named Leo (440-461). He has travelled northward to the Po to meet the mighty Attila. There is no record of the conversation between the two.

But one fact is clear. A fearless diplomat, Leo has confronted the "Scourge of God" and won. He has somehow persuaded Attila to abandon his quest for the Eternal City. Attila dies shortly afterward. The Huns trouble Europe no more. The prestige of the papacy is greatly enhanced by Leo's intervention on behalf of Rome. As the civil government grows increasingly incapable of keeping order, the Church begins to take its place, assuming many secular responsibilities. History will record that it was Leo the Great who laid the foundations of the temporal power of the popes. Leo has become the leading figure in Italy! In the religious sphere, Leo strongly asserts the primacy of Rome's bishop over all other bishops. Earlier in the century, the illustrious Augustine, bishop of Hippo in North Africa, had uttered the now-famous words, "Rome has spoken; the case is closed." At the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the assembled bishops responded to Leo's pronouncements with the words: "Peter has spoken by Leo; let him be anathema who believes otherwise." The doctrine that papal power had been granted by Christ to Peter, and that power was passed on by Peter to his successors in Rome, begins to take firm root.

455 In June, 455, Geiseric --the Vandal king of North Africa--occupies Rome. Again Leo saves the day. Leo induces Geiseric to have mercy on the city. Geiseric consents to spare the lives of Rome's citizens, demanding only their wealth. Leo's successful intervention further increases the prestige and authority of the papacy, within the Empire as well as the Church.

476 A boy-monarch sits on the throne in Rome. His name is Romulus Augustus (472-476) but he is satirically dubbed "Augustulus," meaning "little Augustus." By curious coincidence, he bears the names of the founder of Rome (Romulus) and of the Empire (Augustus)--both of which are about to fall. The German warrior Odoacer--a Heruli chieftain ruling over a coalition of Germanic tribes--sees no reason for carrying on the sham of the puppet emperors any longer. On September 4, 476, he deposes Romulus Augustus. The long and gradual process of the fall of Rome is now complete. Every portion of the Western Empire is occupied and governed by kings of Germanic race. Many of these barbarian kings are, like Odoacer, converts to Arian Christianity of Rome, yet in the end Catholic Christianity prevails (adapted from K. W. Stump, *The History of Europe and the Church*, 9-12).

How anyone can speak of pagan Rome after 324 when Christianity becomes the official religion of the Empire is difficult to understand. Now, it is true that many Romans continued to worship pagan gods until Emperor Theodosius (378-395) formally outlawed the ancient gods in the Empire in 394 and conversion to Christianity became compulsory. Nevertheless, it is historically incorrect to speak of pagan Rome after Constantine, and particularly after Theodosius.

Page 92 – The armies of pagan Rome, shall remove paganism as the legal religion in each of their kingdoms and replace paganism as the legal religion with Catholicism by 508.

Comment: Why pagan Rome would destroy itself by taking away paganism is a puzzle. Again it is not clear what Pippenger means by pagan Rome. Because of this logical anomaly John Peters in his manuscript “The Mystery of ‘The Daily’” has replaced paganism with the self-exalting character of paganism.

Page 98 – “Daniel represents paganism with the Hebrew word **continual** [*tamid*] that is translated as ‘daily’ in the book of Daniel . . . Therefore when we identify 508, as the time period when the first dispensation of Satan known as paganism was being set aside, in order that the second dispensation of Satan known as Catholicism would fulfill its role, then we see that 508, is a time when there is a change of dispensations occurring.”

Comment: Seventh-day Adventists generally teach that the little horn (papacy) took the *tamid* (intercessory ministry) away from the Prince of the host (Christ). Pippenger, however, believes that “the daily” represents paganism which was taken away from pagan Rome and replaced with Catholicism. According to this interpretation of Daniel 12:9-12, the issue in these verses is not the great controversy between Christ/God’s people and Satan/little horn, but a battle between two phases of the little horn – pagan and papal Rome. Christ is only mentioned as an aside in verse 11. This is contrary to the thrust of the whole book of Daniel, which illustrates the great controversy in every chapter. See my response to this view in the evaluation of Peter’s manuscript “The Mystery of ‘The Daily’” below.

Page 98 – When we identify 508, as a time period when the first dispensation of Satan known as paganism was being set aside, in order that the second dispensation of Satan, known as Catholicism would fulfill its role, then we see that 508, is a time when there is a change of dispensations occurring.

Comment: Here we see the reason why Pippenger must keep pagan Rome (whatever it represents) alive long after it has disappeared in history. 508 is for him the date when the daily (paganism) was taken away. However, the historical facts simply do not support this interpretation. Emperor Julian the Apostate (356-358) tried to restore paganism in the Roman Empire, but after reigning less than two years he was slain in battle with the Persians. When he died it can be said that paganism was “taken away,” but this is much too early for Pippenger’s interpretation.

Page 100 – Pippenger believes that the current view of “the daily” originated with L. R. Conradi.

Comment: See my response to this view in the evaluation of Peter’s manuscript below.

Many other points could be taken up, but by now the reader should be able to see that Pippenger’s interpretation has a number of problems.

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