

Evaluation of the Manuscript

***The Time of the End* by Jeff Pippenger**

Jeff Pippenger was, until a few years ago, editor of Ron Spear's *Firm Foundation* magazine. Differences of opinion led to a separation, though it seems that there is still some connection between *Hope International* and Mr. Pippenger.¹

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF *THE TIME OF THE END*

In the manuscript *The Time of the End* Pippenger seeks to interpret Daniel 11:40-45. He identifies The King of the North with the papacy, the King of the South with atheistic communism, particularly in Russia, and the "glorious land" with the United States. He interprets the passage in Daniel 11:40-45 as follows:

- 11:40 The king of the North (papacy) defeats the king of the South (Russia). This happened in 1989.
- 11:41 The "glorious land" (USA) comes under the spiritual control of the papacy. This will happen, when America passes a national Sunday law. Edom Moab and Ammon are symbolic of those who leave Babylon and join God's remnant during the Loud Cry.
- 11:42 The king of the North (papacy) conquers Egypt (the world).
- 11:43 Libya represents the Third World, Ethiopia the most affluent countries. Thus, rich and poor will follow the papacy.
- 11:44 The news from the east which shall trouble the King of the North (papacy) is the second advent of Christ.
- 11:45 The church is the "glorious holy mountain" and the "seas" are the people of the world. The papacy in between prevents the people of the world from hearing the last warning message.

EVALUATION

Seventh-day Adventists, on the basis of biblical prophecies, believe that since 1798 we are living in the time of the end. This means that the prophecy in Daniel 11:40-45 should find a fulfillment in the time period between 1798 and the second coming of Christ. On the basis of Revelation 13, we have for the last 150 years taught that the papacy (first beast) and Protestant America (second beast) will play an important part in

¹ His recent material appears on the Hope International website.

world history just prior to the Second Advent, and that their working together in opposing God's people is part of the biblical end time scenario.

While Uriah Smith identified the King of the North in Daniel 11:40-45 with Turkey, most Adventist authors, since then, see the King of the North in verses 40- 45 as a symbol for the papacy². The reason for this is primarily the parallelism between the prophecies in Daniel 2, 7, 8 and 11. The King of the South is viewed as a philosophical force like atheism or materialism.³

Pippinger and SDA Eschatology

Pippinger's interpretation of Daniel 11:40-45 introduces some elements of Seventh-day Adventist eschatology into the text, but his explanation of the passage lacks an exegetical foundation, and his spiritual applications of some historical events are highly speculative. For example:

- a. The two rivers Ulai (Dan 8) and Hiddekel (Dan 10) are symbolic for the river of life and the river Euphrates in Revelation (p. 5).

Comment: There is clearly no exegetical foundation for such a view. It is an arbitrary identification without scriptural support.

- b. Because three powers were removed in connection with the rise of the papal power (Dan 7:8), the King of the North in Dan 11 will also subdue *spiritually* three entities before he takes *political* control of the world. The three entities are:

- a. The King of the South – Russia
- b. The glorious land – America
- c. Egypt - the world, (pp. 13, 19, 41)

Comment: While the papacy has certainly contributed to the fall of communism in Russia, to claim that in 1989 the papal power subdued Russia goes far beyond the historical evidence. The papacy has conquered Russia neither spiritually nor politically. In the year 2000, Russia had a population of about 147, 000 000, 51%

² George McCready Price, *The Greatest of the Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1955), 313; C.Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, 2 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1981), 286-287; William H. Shea, *Daniel 7-12*, The Abundant Life Amplifier Series, (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), 208; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 169.

³ Price, 316; Shea, 209; Doukhan, 175.

belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church, only 1 % (1.5 million) were Roman Catholics.⁴

- c. The attack of the King of the South against the King of the North at the beginning of 11:40 is interpreted as the deadly wound. He says, "the king of the north was **grieved** in its ability to prevail against the southern kingdom. In fact, the war begins with the king of the north receiving a deadly wound" (p. 14).

Comment: There is nothing in the text to indicate that in verse 40 the King of the North was grieved or that he received a deadly wound. In 11:30 the King of the North is grieved. Pippinger himself interprets this as a reference to pagan Rome's waning in power in the fifth century (p. 13). In order to apply verse 30 to the deadly wound, he reinterprets verse 30 by applying it in a spiritual sense to the battle between atheism and the papacy culminating in the deadly wound of 1798. However, such a reapplication is exegetically not acceptable; it is reminiscent of the hermeneutical quadriga during the Middle Ages where each text could have up to four different meanings.

- d. Pippinger claims, "As the United States will form an alliance with Catholicism in Daniel 11:40, it will cease to uphold the definition and the principles of Protestantism" (p. 33).

Comment: As we have just seen, Pippinger believes that the first phrase in 11:40 refers to the deadly wound in 1798. Then he has a gap of at least 200 years, and beginning with the phrase "and the king of the north shall come against him . . ." he sees future events. The United States, he believes, is found in the phrase "chariots, horsemen, and with many ships" (p. 24), because America and its Western allies through their military might helped the papacy to bring down the Soviet Union. Thus, within two adjoining sentences he finds two different symbols for one and the same political power. In verse 40 America is symbolized by "chariots, horsemen, and ships," in the next verse he identifies America as the "glorious land." (p.30). Because Pippinger does not abide to basic hermeneutical rules he is able to twist and turn the text as he sees fit. Following this method, anyone can read into the text what he wants to find in it..

⁴ David B. Barrett, et al., World Christian Encyclopedia, 2 vols. (Oxford: University Press, 2001), 1:624.

It seems that Pippenger is looking at recent history and then tries to make prophecy fit the facts. Interpreting prophecy with the newspaper was done by Hebert W. Armstrong for many years, but in the end it came to naught. We need to be careful not to make the same mistake.

- e. The three tribes Edom, Moab, and Ammon are for Pippenger "those 'refugees' who leave Babylon during the loud cry message, thus reflecting the threefold division of modern Babylon" (p. 36).

Comment: This is an interesting idea, though not new. McCready Price in his commentary on Daniel interpreted these tribes as modern groups or organizations with similar characteristics to the ancient tribes and wrote, "The text would probably mean that some of these modern peoples will become truly converted or join God's remnant people, thus being **delivered** from the bondage of error." There is nothing in Scripture or in the Spirit of Prophecy to support this identification.

Pippenger and Ellen White

Pippenger relies heavily on the writings of Ellen White, drawing many inferences from her writings. As with Scripture he misuses her writings and comes to conclusions which are at times questionable or simply incorrect. For example:

- a. In connection with his interpretation of 11:40 as the deadly wound he writes, "When writing on Daniel 11:30, Sister White pointed us to a time when Rome was unable to prevail against its enemy. Revelation thirteen describes the Papacy as the head which received the deadly wound. The war and the grieving of the Papacy is described when the king of the south would "push" at the king of the north in Daniel 11:40" (pp. 14, 19).

Comment: Pippenger, like Uriah Smith⁵, 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:

⁵ Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Assoc., 1944), 267.

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.]

The Spirit of the Lord is being withdrawn from the world. It is no time now for men to exalt themselves. It is no time for the people of God to be erecting costly buildings, or to be using the Lord's entrusted talent of means in glorifying themselves. Whatever we do we should do economically. The buildings we erect should be plain, without useless display. Let us beware of selfish greed.--Letter 103, 1904. (13MR 394).

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.

In this case, as in some others, Pippenger blends together Bible texts and Spirit of Prophecy thoughts to prove a point which neither the text nor the Spirit of Prophecy support.

- b. He uses the same principle of "repeated events" to support his idea that "as a parallel to the Millerite movement we should expect to see repeated some of the events which transpired under the pioneer movement" (p. 21). He refers specifically to Josiah Litch's prophecy of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and says, "The recent fall of the Soviet Empire was the modern counterpart to the fall of the Ottoman Empire" (Ibid.).

Comment: This is again an interpretation which lacks any exegetical or Spirit of Prophecy support. As indicated above, when Ellen White was speaking about "Scenes similar to those described in these words will take place" she was thinking

of a repeat of the persecution during the Middle Ages in connection with the events of Revelation 13:15, as her reference to Daniel 12:1-4 seems to indicate indicates.

- c. "Verse forty-four speaks of the latter rain and the persecution of God's people" (p. 15).

Comment: He fails to give any biblical or Spirit of Prophecy support for this statement. While the latter rain is certainly part of the Adventist end time scenario, there is no evidence that this verse refers to it.

- d. "In Daniel 11:41, we see papal Rome spiritually conquering the glorious land of the United States" (pp. 28, 30).

Comment: Pippenger's identification of the glorious land with America is based on inferences drawn from various Ellen White statements where she speaks about America as "the land which the Lord provided as an asylum for His people" (ST, June 12, 1893) and similar expressions (see Mar, 193; 7BC 975, etc). However, she herself never made that connection.

Similar inferences from her writings could be made for the identification of the "glorious land" with the church:

He encouraged the believers to look forward to the time when Christ, who "loved the church, and gave Himself for it," would "present it to Himself a **glorious church**, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" --a church "holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25, 27. (AA 470).

It is interesting to note that George McCreedy Price in his commentary lists various views and says, "Others think that 'the glorious land' probably means the Protestant world as a whole; and they point to the fact that millions of Protestants are now ready to apologize to Rome for their former distrust."⁶

Conclusion

The manuscript *The Time of the End* is an attempt to interpret *in detail* Daniel 11:40-45. While we agree with Pippenger that these verses refer to the end time, his detailed explanations and identifications lack a sound exegetical foundation and are, in a number of instances, conjectures or speculative inferences drawn from some passages in the writings of Ellen White.

⁶ Price, 315.

In the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy the counsel of James White, given in 1877, is still valid today: "In exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, where history is not written, the student should put forth his propositions with not too much positiveness, lest he finds himself straying into the field of fancy."⁷

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⁷ F. D. Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 12 vols. (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1955, 1977), 4:877.