

The Adventist Theological Society recognizes that Daniel 11 is a notoriously difficult passage to understand. With that in mind, please read this article as the personal view of the author and not that of ATS. It is hoped that the publication of this author's opinions will serve as a catalyst for further academic discussion.

Methodology for Interpretation of Daniel 11:2-12:3

Roy E. Gane
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

Introduction

Seventh-day Adventists are showing increasing interest in the apocalyptic prophecy of Dan 11:2-12:3, especially 11:40-45. This final section of chapter 11 predicts dramatic events during the “time of the end” (v. 40), just before “Michael” will arise and there will be a terrible “time of trouble, such as never has been,”¹ from which God’s true people will be delivered (12:1). If we are now living during the “time of the end,”² these verses are soon to be fulfilled.³

The prophecy, which is introduced in Daniel 10 and concluded in chapter 12, culminates the prophecies of the book of Daniel, providing far more detail than the others in plain language. Chapters 2, 7, and 8 employ symbolism accompanied by some interpretation of the symbols (2:36-45; 7:16-27; 8:17-26), and 9:24-27 provides supplementary explanation of the

¹ ESV here and in subsequent quotations unless otherwise specified.

² On the expression “time of the end,” see, e.g., Gerhard Pfandl, *Daniel: The Seer of Babylon* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004), 107.

³ Over a century ago, Ellen G. White observed: “The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place” (*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 9* [Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948; orig. 1909], 14).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

vision in chapter 8.⁴ The long prophecy in Dan 11:2-12:3 is different: Rather than presenting symbols followed by their interpretation, it predicts a succession of human powers with the kind of straightforward language that characterizes the interpretations in earlier chapters.⁵ “Here we can say with Jesus’ disciples, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly and not using figurative speech!” (John 16:29).

It could be supposed that the plain language of Dan 11:2-12:3 should make it easier to understand than the earlier prophecies in the book. It is true that explicit names of some countries provide clear historical anchor points, as in the early progression of powers from Persia to Greece (11:2) and then (Ptolemaic) Egypt (v. 8). However, the prophecy predicts actions of many rulers without naming them. Therefore, the challenge is to identify the actors and events on the basis of their profiles within the context of the historical flow.

Especially 11:40-45 have been subject to vigorous discussion among SDAs because these verses appear to contain unfulfilled prophecy regarding which we have no direct inspired commentary. As we continue to study and to observe “signs of the times” (cf. Matt 16:2-3), without speculatively reading current events into unfulfilled prophecy, it is wise to remain cautious and humble in stating conclusions.⁶

Constructive SDA dialogue and collaboration regarding Dan 11 have been in short supply, partly due to inadequacy of consistently applied methodological controls derived from the biblical text and mutual understanding regarding them. The resulting confusion has made explication of a difficult passage far harder than it could be otherwise. So it has become increasingly clear that we should step back and carefully examine our hermeneutical procedures.

The present article does not attempt to lay out a full interpretation of

⁴ In 9:23 Gabriel told Daniel to “understand the vision [*mar’eh*]” (brackets supplied). There is no vision in Dan 9, so this must refer to the vision of chap. 8, especially the dialogue concerning time in vv. 13-14 that Daniel didn’t understand (vv. 26-27; called in v. 26, “The vision [*mar’eh*] of the evenings and the mornings” [brackets supplied]).

⁵ Cf. William H. Shea, “Daniel: A Case in Intertextuality,” in “*The End From the Beginning*”: *Festschrift Honoring Merling Alomia* (ed. Benjamin Rojas, Teófilo Correa, Lael Caesar, and Joel Turpo; Lima, Peru: Fondo Editorial Universidad Peruana Unión, 2015), 183—“Daniel 8:3-12 employs symbols but Daniel 11 does not.”

⁶ Cf. Hans K. LaRondelle, “Interpretation of Prophetic and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974), 244.

Dan 11:2-12:3, which would require a book-length exposition. Rather, it suggests application of some methodological/hermeneutical guidelines relating to features of the text, with illustrative discussion to show how these guidelines can work, to hopefully facilitate constructive progress toward a greater degree of common understanding regarding this fascinating and increasingly relevant prophecy. The concern of the present author is to freely explore and follow indications of the biblical text itself, without regard for constraints of ideological “boxes” or political correctness that are foreign to the Bible.

Guidelines for Interpreting Daniel 11:2-12:3

As mentioned above, the challenge of Dan 11:2-12:3 is to identify the actors and events on the basis of their profiles within the context of the historical flow. Following are some factors to take into account in order to arrive at solid conclusions. It should be kept in mind that reliable exegesis is holistic, taking all relevant aspects into account from immediate and wider contexts. Obviously some elements are more important than others, and sensitivity to details through close reading is crucial. However, latching onto one feature of a text, whether it is semantic, morphological, syntactic, structural, or historical and making it override other factors tends to generate interpretive distortion and error.

1. Gain Perspective from the Narrative Framework of the Prophecy

In Daniel 10-12, Daniel places the prophecy of 11:2-12:3 within a narrative framework, as is characteristic of the genre “apocalypse.”⁷ He introduces the prophecy in 10:1-11:1, where he describes the circumstances under which he received the revelation. At the beginning of his introduction, he summarizes the prophecy as concerning “a great conflict” (v. 1).

In 10:14, a resplendent heavenly being informs Daniel that he has come

⁷ For other narrative framework elements in biblical apocalyptic literature, see, e.g., 7:1-2a, 15-16, 28; 9:1-23; Rev 1. John J. Collins has included a narrative framework as an essential element of the genre “apocalypse” (“Introduction: Towards the Morphology of a Genre,” in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*, ed. John J. Collins [Semeia 14; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979], 9). On the narrative element, see further Roy E. Gane, “Genre Awareness and Interpretation of the Book of Daniel,” in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea* (ed. David Merling; Berrien Springs, MI: Institute of Archaeology/Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum, 1997), 140-41.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

“to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.” So whatever else we get out of the prophecy, its overall thrust is to help Daniel and his readers comprehend a great war/controversy that affects the lives of his people, i.e., God’s special people, in time that is far future from Daniel’s perspective. This does not necessarily mean that Daniel’s (i.e., God’s) people are explicitly in the foreground throughout the prophecy. Indeed, the prophecy directly mentions them only a few times (11:14, 22, 30, 32-35; 12:1-3; cf. 11:44), but the events that are outlined here impact them and their ultimate destiny (see especially 12:1-3), as in chapters 7-9.⁸

The prophecy itself in 11:2-12:3 is in the form of speech from a heavenly being, as when Daniel had received interpretations of his earlier visions (7:15-16; 8:15-19; 9:20-23). The narrative conclusion in chapter 12 emphasizes the eschatological focus of the prophecy and the effect of the predicted events on God’s people. The prophecy is shut up and sealed “until the time of the end” (v. 4; cf. v. 9), when “knowledge shall increase” (v. 4). The “time of the end” would come after “a time, times, and half a time,” “when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end” (v. 7; cf. 7:25). During this period of persecution, God’s people would be refined and separated from the wicked: “Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand” (12:10). The language here reiterates that of 11:33, 35—“And the wise among the people shall make many understand. . . and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end”—showing that these verses refer to the “time, times, and half a time” period.

Daniel 12:11 singles out a wicked act as the beginning of a prophetic time period: “from the time when that which is regular [definite article + *tāmîd*] is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days” (brackets supplied).⁹ 12:12 adds: “Blessed is he

⁸ Cf. the fact that God’s people are mainly in the background in chs. 7-8, but in the foreground in 9:24-27.

⁹ Rendering “when that which is regular” instead of ESV’s “that the regular burnt offering” because “burnt offering” is not in the Hebrew text. In the Pentateuch, *tāmîd*, “regularity,” refers to performance of various worship rituals and priestly intercession on a daily (e.g., Exod 27:20; 28:29-30, 38; 30:8; Lev 6:13 [Engl. v. 20]; 24:3) or weekly (Lev 24:8) basis, including but not limited to the regular morning and evening burnt offering

who waits and arrives at the 1,335 days.” The words “waits and arrives at” indicate that the 1,335 days are an extension of the 1,290 days. By the end of the 1,335 days, God’s people would be blessed, suggesting that this would be after the “time, times, and half a time” of persecution in v. 7. Therefore, all three time periods in Dan 12—3½ times, 1290 days, and 1335 days—go through the period of persecution, and the removal of the “regular” and setting up of the “abomination that makes desolate” occur at the beginning of the 1290 and 1335 days, preceding the persecution. This correlates with the order in chapter 11, where v. 31 predicts replacement of the “regular” by the “abomination” and vv. 33-35 foretell persecution, all carried out under the “king of the north.”

The fact that Dan 11 is especially concerned with a “great conflict” (10:1) involving “what is to happen to your people in the latter days” (10:14) from 11:31 onward implies that the details in chapter 11 before v. 31 supply background to this conflict between the “king of the north” and God, with his true people. This parallels the way elements of the prophecy in chapter 8 referring to kingdoms before the rise of the “little horn” power provide background to the climactic conflict between God, with his people, and the “little horn,” which replaces the “regular” with “the transgression that makes desolate” and persecutes (vv. 10-13, 24-25). In chapters 8 and 11, the background facilitates identification of the historical referent of the “little horn” and “king of the north” when they appear. The fact that the profiles of their careers match indicates that they represent the same power (see further below).

2. Analyze Relationships in the Literary Structure

Analysis of literary structure to identify features such as repetition, flow of ideas, and strategic placement of key terms precedes an attempt to match the prophecy with historical events. Prematurely introducing specific historical aspects leads to distortion of interpretation by overlooking, dismissing, or de-emphasizing elements in the text. The first step in analyzing literary structure is to determine the boundaries of a literary unit. As mentioned above, the unit consisting of the prophecy itself is in 11:2-12:3, preceded and followed by narrative. The prophecy unit should be considered as a whole. An interpretation that does not consider the entire unit is susceptible to distortion.

(Exod 29:38, 42; Num 28:3, 6).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

Literary structure is evident from patterns of language flow and repetition. A given passage can show more than one valid structure, depending on which patterns an interpreter emphasizes, but here we are concerned with the most prominent structure that naturally arises from the most obvious elements in the text. Following is a structural outline of 11:2-12:3 with some key words highlighted:¹⁰

- 11:2-4 historical introduction: Persia > “mighty king” > breakup of his empire
- 11:5-19 kings of N. versus S. (from breakup of mighty king’s empire; includes king of N. entering “**glorious** land”)
- 11:20 transition of king of N.: “*Then shall arise in his place. . .*”
- 11:21-45 transition of king of N.: “*Then shall arise in his place. . .*”
 - 11:21-22 “contemptible person” in place of king of N. (usurps in the midst of peace; military dominance; prince of *covenant* broken)
 - 11:23-24 “contemptible person” changed by alliance (deceitful; strong with few people; in the midst of peace; distributing plunder)
 - 11:25-30 wars with king of S. (ultimately unsuccessful; opposes holy *covenant*)
 - 11:31 religious actions (profanes temple/**fortress**; removes that which is regular; sets up abomination)

¹⁰ Examples of outlines by some other scholars are as follows. (Preterist) Carol A. Newsom with Brennan W. Breed, *Daniel: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 337, 360: Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (11:2b-4), The failed alliance between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies (11:5-6), Reciprocal invasions (11:7-9), The career of Antiochus III (11:10-19), Seleucus IV and the early career of Antiochus IV (11:20-24), Antiochus IV’s first invasion of Egypt (11:25-28), The second invasion and attack on the “holy covenant” (11:29-35), The impiety and injustice of Antiochus IV (11:36-39), The final battle and death of Antiochus IV (11:40-45), Prediction of deliverance and resurrection (12:1-3). (SDA) William H. Shea, *Daniel: A Reader’s Guide* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 240-71: Persia (11:2), Greece (11:3-4), Historical kings of north and south (11:5-15), Imperial Rome (11:16-22), Papal Rome (11:23-39, including The Crusades in 11:23-30), The end-time struggle (11:40-45), The end of time (12:1-4). (SDA) Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise: Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007), 396, 434: Conflicts between east and west (11:2-4), Conflicts between north and south (11:5-20), Political activities of the contemptible person (11:21-30), Religious activities of the contemptible person (11:31-39), Conflicts at the time of the end (11:40-45), The rise of Michael (12:1-4).

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

	11:32-35	religious actions regarding people (seduces <i>covenant</i> violators; persecutes wise ones)
	11:36-39	religious actions (blasphemous self- exaltation; honors god of <i>fortresses</i>)
	11:40-43	war with king of S. in end-time (includes entering “ glorious land”; successful)
	11:44-45	end of king of N. (news from E. and N.; persecutes; goes toward glorious holy mountain; comes to end)
12:1-3		end of present age (Michael arises; time of trouble; Daniel’s people delivered; resurrection)

Notice the following features:

1. Daniel 11:5-19 is a continuous section predicting details of interaction between members of two dynasties from northern and southern divisions of the empire of the “mighty king” who follows Persia (cf. vv. 2-4).

2. The words *we ‘amad ‘al kannô*, “Then shall stand in his place” (my translation) at the beginnings of vv. 20 and 21 appear to mark major transitions. The term *kên* (lexical form of the noun in *kannô*, to which the 3ms pron. suffix is attached) refers to a functional place/position, status, or office. A person can be returned to the same place after having been removed from it (Gen 40:13; 41:13). Alternatively, one can “stand (up)” or arise (*qal* of the root ‘*m-d*) in the place of another, thereby replacing the latter, as in Dan 11:7: “And from a branch from her roots one shall arise [*we ‘amad = qal* perfect consecutive of ‘*m-d*] in his place [*kannô*].”

In Dan 11:7 the prepositional phrase “from a branch from [or ‘of] her roots” indicates that the successor comes from the same dynasty as his predecessor. This was fulfilled when Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-221), the brother of Berenice, replaced his father, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246), as the ruler of Egypt.¹¹ However, vv. 20 and 21 commence with the

¹¹ Ptolemy II had sealed an alliance with the Seleucid Syrian king Antiochus II Theos (261-246) by giving his daughter Berenice in marriage to Antiochus, who divorced his wife Laodice in order to marry her. When Ptolemy II died, Antiochus restored Laodice as his wife, but this queen took revenge by having Antiochus, Berenice, and Berenice’s baby and attendants killed. Thus Dan 11:6 was fulfilled. Then Ptolemy III avenged the murder of his sister by successfully invading Syria, fulfilling vv. 7-8.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

expression *we'amad 'al kannô*, “Then shall stand in his place,”¹² without any indication of dynastic continuity. One simply occupies the place formerly held by another. Indeed, v. 21 could not refer to dynastic succession because the “contemptible person” takes over without even receiving “royal majesty.” So it seems clear that *we'amad 'al kannô* in v. 20 also refers to a significant change of rule. If so, following the end of the prediction regarding the northern kingdom in v. 19, v. 20 transfers the designation “king of the north” to another power, and v. 21 transfers this descriptor to yet another dynasty, which originates with a usurper. This “king of the north” dynasty continues to the end of chapter 11 (v. 45), although its nature changes in v. 23 (see below).

3. In v. 21, the usurper shall come in the midst of peace (preposition *b* + *šalwāh*)¹³ “and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.” Then he (or his dynasty) will possess overwhelming military might (v. 22). Verses 23-24 continue the career of this power, but it changes due to an alliance with another power: “And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people without warning...”¹⁴ Just as the “contemptible person” initially had taken over without a fight, here this power changes without a fight and becomes strong again and/or in a different way with only a few people. Then he exercises powerful control and again possesses military might (vv. 24-25).

4. Daniel 11:25-43 is structured as an introversion (ABCB'A'), framed by wars of the king of the north against the king of the south, which are ultimately unsuccessful in vv. 25-30 but successful in vv. 40-43. Within that military framework is an inner arch structure (ABA') that is unique in Dan 11 up to this point because it concerns religious actions (vv. 31-39), which are carried out by the king of the north. Verses 31 and 36-39 predict actions regarding worship, including profanation of the temple, which is also

¹² The phrase *'al kannô* also appears in v. 38, but in a different kind of context concerning gods rather than rulers.

¹³ ESV—“Without warning. . .”; NASB 1995—“while they are at ease.” The noun *šalwāh* denotes ease/peace and security. Cf. *šalwāh* paralleling *šālôm* in Ps 122:7. HALOT, 2:1505 interprets *b + šalwāh*: “literally in the midst of peace.” In Daniel, this expression appears to indicate that action is stealthy (cf. v. 24; Dan 8:25).

¹⁴ The prepositional phrase *b + šalwāh*, “in the midst of peace,” at the beginning of v. 24 is followed by the conjunction *waw*, so syntactically it belongs to the previous verse, in agreement with several interpreters cited by James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 452.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

described as a “fortress” (v. 31; *mā’ôz*),¹⁵ and honoring a god of fortresses (v. 38; pl. of *mā’ôz*). These religious uses of the word *mā’ôz* are unique in the prophecy (elsewhere of military fortresses in vv. 7, 10, 19, 39).¹⁶

At the center of the arch (B in ABA’), vv. 32-35 predict religious actions of the king of the north regarding people, including polluting (ESV “seduce”) those who act wickedly against the covenant and persecuting the wise people who know God. The fact that the center of the arch concerns God’s true people corresponds with the overall purpose of the prophecy: to reveal to Daniel “what is to happen to your people in the latter days” (10:14), which is reinforced by the fact that in chapter 12 the “time, times, and half a time” lasts until “the shattering of the power of the holy people” (v. 7).

Immediately before the center of the arch in 11:32-35, v. 31 predicts the event that in 12:11 begins the “1,290 days”: “And from the time when that which is regular is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up. . .” (v. 11).¹⁷ So there is a chiasmic relationship between 11:31, 32-35 and 12:7, 11:



The significance of 11:31 in predicting the onset of false worship, which results in persecution, is highlighted by the fact that this verse is framed on either side by references to support by the king of the north for people who forsake/violate the “covenant” (vv. 30, 32). This covenant is identified earlier in the chapter by the reference to “the prince of the covenant,” who is broken (v. 22).

While there is no question that the wars in vv. 25-30 occur before the war in vv. 40-43, which explicitly takes place during “the time of the end” (v. 40), the unique arrangement of the long section on the king of the north in vv. 25-43 as a literary introversion raises the possibility that at least some of the order in this section may be thematic rather than chronological.

¹⁵ In apposition to *miqdāš*, “temple”: “the temple, the fortress” (NJPS), against ESV “the temple and fortress.”

¹⁶ Cf. in v. 1, where the heavenly being strengthens (is a fortress to) Darius the Mede.

¹⁷ ESV, except reading “when that which is regular” instead of ESV’s “that the regular burnt offering”; see above.

5. There are three occurrences of the word *šēbi*, “glorious,” in Dan 11. The first two of these are in the expression “glorious land” (vv. 16, 41), which refers to the land of Israel (cf. Ezek 20:6, 15).¹⁸ These references to the land occur before and after the predictions regarding religious elements such as the “covenant” (vv. 22, 30, 32) and actions against the “temple” (v. 31) and God’s people (vv. 32-35). In the earlier part of the chapter, land is the concern of empires bent on expansion of their territory through military force (vv. 2-19), and the “glorious land” is just one more area for the king of the north to dominate (v. 16). In v. 41, the king of the north again enters the “glorious land” during a military campaign, but the fact that he is a religious power (vv. 36-39) raises the possibility that he regards the “glorious land” as more than just another land. This idea is strengthened in v. 45, where the last action of the king of the north is to “pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain,” apparently with the intent to enter the “glorious holy mountain.” Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the holy mountain is Mt. Zion, the temple mount located at Jerusalem in the land of Israel (cf. Ps 48; Isa 27:13; 66:20; Ezek 43:12; Joel 2:1; 4:17 [Engl. 3:17]; Zech 8:3).

3. Take the Context of a Text Profile into Account

It is not enough to match an isolated element, such as, “He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power” (11:16b), with a historical event that seems to fit that description. The incident must occur within the context of the flow of events profiled by the text.¹⁹

The prophecy of Dan 11 begins with explicit mention of “Persia” in v. 2 (cf. 8:20). The subsequent “mighty king” (11:3), whose kingdom is “broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven” (v. 4), must be Alexander the Great (cf. 8:21—“king of Greece”), whose empire was

¹⁸ Cf. *HALOT*, 2:998.

¹⁹ The procedure of matching text profiles to events is somewhat analogous to matching rings belonging to two trees for the purpose of establishing a sequence that can be used for dating. Rings may look as though they represent growth during years of identical rainfall and other conditions, but whether or not they grew in the same year depends on their respective places in the complex patterns within which they occur. Such logic applies to a historical description, for example: a modern ruler who had already conquered much of Europe and then attacked Russia, but whose armies were driven back by the Russian winter. This could be either Napoleon or Hitler, depending on the surrounding circumstances. Similarly, the description of persecution in Dan 11:33-35 could apply to various times and places. It is the surrounding context that identifies it with a particular instance of religious oppression.

divided into four kingdoms (cf. 8:8, 22): Antigonid Macedonia, Attalid Pergamum, Seleucid Syria, and Ptolemaic Egypt. This explains the expressions “king of the south” and “king of the north” in 11:5-19. Verse 8 identifies the king of the south as a ruler of Egypt, to the south of the land of Israel, which engaged in a series of wars with Syria to the north. So in this portion of Dan 11, the kings of the south and north are successive members of the Hellenistic dynasties of Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria, respectively. It is the king of the north who “shall stand in the Glorious Land,” i.e., the land of Israel (11:16). The Seleucid king who did this was Antiochus III the Great (ruled 222-187 B.C.). Before this during the Hellenistic period, the land of Israel was controlled by Ptolemaic Egypt.

Some SDAs have attempted to identify the northern ruler who enters Israel in v. 16 as the Roman general Pompey, who came to Jerusalem and took over the land of Israel for Rome in 63 B.C.²⁰ However, aside from the fact that there is no textual indication in Dan 11 of a dynastic change before v. 20, the takeover of Israel in v. 16 is in the context of the “king of the north” having just won a military victory over the “forces of the south,” that is, of Egypt (v. 15). The Romans did not take Israel under such circumstances.²¹ Moreover, v. 17 adds that the “king of the north” would give his daughter to the “king of the south.” Antiochus III carried out such a political strategy (see further below), but no Roman leader did this. These contextual factors confirm that the one who stands “in the Glorious Land” in v. 16 is Antiochus III and rule out any Roman.²²

²⁰ Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (rev. ed.; Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1944; orig. publ. as *Thoughts, Critical and Practical on the Book of Daniel and the Revelation: Being an Exposition, Text By Text, of These Important Portions of the Holy Scriptures*; Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1882), 246; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1953-1957), 4:869; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares, Vol. 1: The Message of Daniel For You and Your Family* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1981), 293; Frank W. Hardy, “An Historicist Perspective on Daniel 11” [MA thesis, Andrews University, 1983], 133-4; Shea, *Daniel*, 246.

²¹ While Smith identified the power that stands in the Holy Land (v. 16) as Rome, the takeover by the Romans occurred more than a century after a victory achieved by another power, Seleucid Syria, over Ptolemaic Egypt, which he interpreted as fulfillment of v. 15 (245-6).

²² Therefore, vv. 14b-15 do not concern Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus III, as Shea has suggested (*Daniel*, 244-5).

4. Take All Internal Features of a Text Profile into Account

It is crucial to take into account all features of the profiles of people and their actions in the text of Dan 11 before attempting to match them with historical individuals or groups and the events that they cause. Overlooking or ignoring some features results in mistakes.

For example, some SDAs have taken “He shall give him the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom” (v. 17b) as referring to queen Cleopatra VII, daughter of Ptolemy XII Auletes (69-30 B.C.).²³ However, just because she is the most famous of the Hellenistic royal women, due to her dramatic life that included affairs with the Romans Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, does not mean that she is the “daughter of women” in Dan 11:17. In context, this verse predicts that the Seleucid “king of the north”²⁴ would give his daughter in a political marriage to the Ptolemaic “king of the south” in order to undermine the latter. This immediately rules out Cleopatra VII because she was a Ptolemy, not the daughter of the “king of the north,” and her father never gave her in a political marriage to the ruler of another kingdom to weaken it. However, the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III the Great (ruled 222-187 B.C.) did give his daughter Cleopatra I to Ptolemy V of Egypt, a strategy that did not harm Egypt because Cleopatra turned out to be loyal to her husband and to Egypt, fulfilling the last part of v. 17: “but it shall not stand or be to his advantage.”²⁵ Therefore, at v. 17 the historical

²³ Smith, 251; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1953-1957), 4:869-70; Maxwell, 293; Shea, *Daniel*, 247.

²⁴ See v. 15, beginning a series of actions of the “king of the north” that continue into v. 17. Cf. Stefanovic, 402 on “And he will give him” in 11:17—“it is assumed that the king of the North is the subject and the king of the South the object.” However, Stefanovic (418) misses the significance of this for historical identification by accepting the view that “the daughter of women” here is the Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, i.e., from the South, who had an affair with Julius Caesar, i.e., Cleopatra VII.

²⁵ With André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (trans. David Pellauer; Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1979), 225; John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (WBC 30; Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 298; John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 381; Newsom, 345; Tremper Longman III, *Daniel* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 277. Whatever the expression “daughter of women” may be intended to mean here in v. 17, it does not affect identification of this woman. Collins refers to a textual variant “of men” (4QDan from Qumran; cf. “of man” in Old Greek, Syriac) rather than “of women” (365 n. 59) and suggests: “Whether Cleopatra is called ‘daughter of men’ or ‘daughter of women,’ the expression is a superlative and reflects the author’s admiration for this queen, probably because of her loyalty to the Ptolemaic house” (381).

flow is still in the Seleucid era before the Roman conquests of Julius Caesar (lived 100-44 B.C.) in the first century B.C.

Another example is v. 21, which predicts a usurper (see above): “In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given. He shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.” Preterists identify this individual as Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 B.C.), the villain of the books of Maccabees,²⁶ but their attempts to make him fit here by portraying him as a usurper have been unconvincing.²⁷ A number of SDAs have interpreted the person in v. 21 as the Roman emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37) by emphasizing negative aspects of his character to show that he was “contemptible,” while overlooking other aspects of the description.²⁸ It is easy to dig up plenty of dirt on Tiberius or other Roman emperors, but Tiberius was not a usurper; he was given “royal majesty” through legitimate succession from Augustus, his step-father, who adopted him and chose him as his successor.

5. Correlate with Earlier Prophecies in Daniel to Establish the Historical Framework

There are several clear points of contact between Dan 11 and the earlier prophecy in chapters 8-9 (with 9:24-27 as supplementary interpretation of

²⁶ Certainly Antiochus IV was oppressive and precipitated a major crisis. However, Steven Weitzman argues that the books of Maccabees served as Hasmonean (Maccabean) propaganda. In light of ancient near eastern literary tradition, elements in Maccabees such as Antiochus IV setting up the “abomination of desolation” (1 Macc 1:54; using language from Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11) describe events in a way that radically contrasts with actions of the Maccabees in order to depict them as saviors of the Jewish religion, giving them more credit than they deserved (“Plotting Antiochus’s Persecution,” *JBL* 123 [2004]: 219-34).

²⁷ For example, Collins confidently asserts on Dan 11:21: “Antiochus usurped the throne, to which the sons of Seleucus were the rightful heirs,” but then he acknowledges: “The precise circumstances of his accession are obscure” (382; cf. Goldingay, 299). After the assassination of Seleucus IV in 175 B.C., the throne should have gone to Demetrius, his eldest son. But Demetrius was a hostage in Rome. So his younger brother, a young child also named Antiochus, became king, with his mother Laodice as regent. Antiochus IV married Laodice and ruled as guardian to and co-regent with the boy Antiochus, his nephew and stepson. But after five years (170 B.C.), the boy was murdered, leaving Antiochus IV as sole ruler (Newsom, 346-7). Newsom implies that Antiochus IV was behind his murder (347; cf. Collins, 382). Even if that were proven, Antiochus IV was already co-ruler when that happened, and Goldingay interprets his taking that position as “a safeguard against usurpers from outside the dynasty,” especially Heliiodorus (299).

²⁸ Smith, 255-256; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870; Shea, *Daniel*, 248-9.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

chap. 8), including use of identical Hebrew terms (in bold below), as shown in the following table.²⁹ Footnotes indicate ESV in selected places where I have given my own translation.

Daniel 8-9	Daniel 11
8:20 As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia .	11:2 Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia ...
8:8 Then the goat became exceedingly great... 8:21 And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.	11:3 Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills.
8:8 ...but when he was strong, the great horn was broken , and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven . 8:22 As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power.	11:4 And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven , but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.

²⁹ On such “Relations Between Daniel 11 and Daniel 7, 8, and 9,” see William H. Shea, “Unity of Daniel,” in *Symposium on Daniel: Introductory and Exegetical Studies*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 245-7; cf. idem, *Daniel*, 239, 252-3; Maxwell, 295; Stefanovic, 396, 423.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<p>9:25 ...from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks...</p> <p>9:26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.</p> <p>9:27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week...</p>	<p>11:22 Armies shall be utterly swept away before him and broken, even the prince of the covenant.</p>
<p>8:25 By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great and in the midst of peace he shall destroy many.</p>	<p>11:23 And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people</p> <p>11:24 in the midst of peace.³⁰ He shall come into the richest parts of the province, and he shall do what neither his fathers nor his fathers' fathers have done, scattering among them plunder, spoil, and goods. He shall devise plans against strongholds, but only for a time.</p>

³⁰ Reading *b + šalwāh* with the end of v. 23 (see above).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

<p>8:11 It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And that which is regular³¹ was taken away from him, and the place of his temple³² was overthrown.</p> <p>8:12 And a host will be given rebelliously against that which is regular,³³ and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper.</p> <p>8:13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, “For how long is the vision concerning that which is regular,³⁴ the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?”</p>	<p>11:31 Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple, the fortress,³⁵ and shall take away that which is regular.³⁶ And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.</p>
<p>8:24 ...and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints.</p>	<p>v. 33 And the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder.</p>

³¹ ESV—“the regular burnt offering.” “Burnt offering” is not in the Hebrew (see above).

³² ESV—“sanctuary.”

³³ ESV—“And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression.”

³⁴ ESV—“the regular burnt offering.”

³⁵ With NJPS because the two nouns are in apposition without the conjunction supplied by ESV—“the temple and fortress.”

³⁶ ESV—“the regular burnt offering.”

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

<p>8:19 “Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end. 8:24 His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does... 8:25 ...and in his own mind he shall become great...And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes...</p>	<p>v. 36 And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done.</p>
<p>8:19 “Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end.</p>	<p>v. 40 At the time of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind...</p>
<p>8:25 ...and he shall be broken—but by no human hand.</p>	<p>v. 45 Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.</p>

Explicit mention of “Persia” in 11:2 begins the prophecy of chapter 11 in the same period as “the kings of Media and Persia” in 8:20. The “mighty king” in 11:3 whose kingdom is “broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven” (v. 4) is the first king of a Greek empire (cf. 8:21—“king of Greece”) that is divided into four lesser kingdoms (v. 22). Scholars of all kinds agree that this must be Alexander the Great, whose Greek/Macedonian empire was divided into Antigonid Macedonia, Attalid Pergamum, Seleucid Syria, and Ptolemaic Egypt. So the dynasties in 11:5-19 are Hellenistic, and the transition to the next major power that supersedes them comes between vv. 19 and 20. Most SDA interpreters have prematurely introduced historical factors to transition from the Hellenistic

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

kingdoms to Rome at various points before v. 19,³⁷ but these views are off target if the literary structure presented above is correct at this point.

In 11:22, “the prince of the covenant” is “broken” when a king of the north is exceedingly powerful, so that armies are “utterly swept away before him.” This correlates with 9:25-27, where “an anointed one, a prince” who “shall make a strong covenant with many for one week” is “cut off” after “seven weeks” plus “sixty-two weeks” following “the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem.” The Hebrew word for “weeks” (pl. of *šābūa*) here can refer to a weeks of days or a weeks of year, and weeks of years fits this context³⁸ because the events predicted here clearly take much longer than $7 + 62 = 69$ weeks of days (= 483 days). The going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem, which refers to restoring the city to control by the Jews after the Babylonian exile so that they could rebuild it,³⁹ occurred in 457 B.C. when the decree of Artaxerxes I went into effect in the seventh year (458-457 B.C.) of his reign (Ezra 7).⁴⁰ Sixty-nine weeks of

³⁷ Smith, 243-52; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:869-70; Shea, *Daniel*, 245-8; Maxwell, 291-3; Stefanovic, 418-19. The radical interpretation of Jacques B. Doukhan entirely skips the Hellenistic kingdoms of the Ptolemies and Seleucids and jumps to imperial Rome in v. 4b (*Daniel: The Vision of the End* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987], 78-9; idem, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000], 168).

³⁸ HALOT, 2:1383-4, which places the instances in Dan 9:24-27 under the meaning “a week of years, a period of seven years.”

³⁹ “The Hebrew of Daniel 9:25 has the Hiphil (causative) of *shub* = ‘to bring back, restore,’ combined with *banah*, ‘build.’ These two verbs are also used together with a city as their direct object in 2 Kings 14:22: ‘He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers’ (compare 2 Chronicles 26:2). Here restoration of a city means *restoration of its ownership to a political entity*. This idea also appears in 1 Kings 20:34, ‘And Ben-hadad said to him, The cities which my father took from your father I will restore, and you shall make streets for yourself in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria.’ This last verse is a particularly interesting parallel to Daniel 9:25 because restoration of ownership by a king precedes a public works project by the party to whom the city is restored (compare Daniel 9:25—‘it will be built again, with plaza and moat’). It was the decree of Artaxerxes I, recorded in Ezra 7, that handed Jerusalem back to the Jews in the sense of giving them autonomous civil control of the city (under the Persian empire, of course)” (Roy E. Gane, *Who’s Afraid of the Judgment? The Good News About Christ’s Work in the Heavenly Sanctuary* [Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2006], 74).

⁴⁰ Shea, *Daniel*, 157-9; cf. Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1953, 1970), esp. 115, 127; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 3:100-109; Brempong Owusu-Antwi, *The Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27* (Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series 2; Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 1995), 295-9. From the perspective of a historian, see Amelie

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

years = 483 years after that, Christ was baptized and anointed by the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22; cf. 4:18; Acts 10:37-38) in “the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar” (Luke 3:1), i.e., in about A.D. 27.⁴¹

During his ministry on earth, followed by initiation of his priestly ministry in God’s heavenly temple (Heb 7-10), Christ established the “new covenant” (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 8:6-13; 9:15; 12:24; cf. Jer 31:31-34). So he fits the profile of “the prince of the covenant” in Dan 11:22, who was “broken,” i.e., died, during the time of domination by imperial Rome, before which armies were “utterly swept away.”⁴² This parallels 9:26-27, where the “anointed one” (*māšīaḥ*) = Messiah, i.e., Christ, makes a covenant to be strong for many and is “cut off,” and Jerusalem and its temple are destroyed. Therefore, following the Hellenistic kingdoms in 11:5-19, vv. 20-22 transition to the period of imperial Rome.⁴³

Preterists miss the indicators of Christ, interpreting the “anointed one” in 9:26 and the “prince of the covenant” in 11:22 as the Jewish high priest Onias III, who was removed from office and then murdered in about 171 B.C. during the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as recorded in 2 Macc 4.⁴⁴ However, this event was not after 69 weeks of years following the word/decreed to restore and build Jerusalem, and Onias did not

Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 671-2.

⁴¹ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* 5:714; Shea, Daniel, 159-60.

⁴² For Christ as the “prince of the covenant” in Dan 11:22, see Smith, 257-8; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870; Shea, Daniel, 249; idem, “Daniel: A Case in Intertextuality,” 184-5; Stefanovic, 406, 419. Maxwell omits commenting on v. 22 because he already begins the medieval papacy in v. 21 (293), which his outline of Dan 11 on 295 contradicts because here he places “prince of the covenant” in v. 22 under “Pagan Rome.” Identification of Christ in 11:22, the consistency of genre in vv. 2-22, and the close match between text details and identifiable historical events in these verses rule out the interpretation of Doukhan, who jumps from Alexander the Great in vv. 3-4a to imperial Rome in v. 4b (entirely skipping the Ptolemies vs. Seleucids!) to allegorical/symbolic interpretation of spiritual north-south conflict in vv. 5-39 that involves the power represented by the “little horn” in Dan 8 (*The Vision of the End*, 77-89; *Secrets of Daniel*, 167-75), i.e., the Church of Rome.

⁴³ “Since Daniel 9:26, 27 and 11:22 obviously refer to the crucifixion of Christ under the Romans, the Roman Empire must enter the stage of history sometime prior to Daniel 11:22” (Pfandl, 107).

⁴⁴ E.g., Lacocque, 196, 226; Goldingay, 263, 299; Collins, 356, 382; Newsom, 306-7, 347.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

make a strong covenant with many.⁴⁵ Having misidentified the person in Dan 11:22, the preterists are off-target in their interpretation of the remainder of this chapter, which they see as mainly fulfilled in the period of Antiochus IV.⁴⁶

Daniel 11:31 predicts that forces from the king of the north would profane “the temple, the fortress” (NJPS) remove the *tāmîd*, “that which is regular,” i.e., regular worship of God by his people, and set up the abomination that makes desolate. The same unusual usage of *tāmîd* by itself with the definite article occurs in 8:11, where a power symbolized by a “little horn” magnifies itself up to “the Prince of the host” and takes the *tāmîd* away from him (the Prince),⁴⁷ “and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown.” This is clearly the same event as in 11:31, so the king of the north and the “little horn” power are the same. A further correlation is the fact that in 11:31, forces from the king of the north “shall set up the abomination that makes desolate” and in 8:13, the “little horn” power is responsible for “the transgression that makes desolate.”

In chapter 8, the “little horn” power arises at the “latter end” of the rule (v. 23) of four Greek kingdoms (vv. 21-22) and supersedes them. Historically, it was imperial Rome that took over the divisions of Alexander’s Hellenistic empire. In 8:9, the “little horn” “grew exceedingly great toward” three horizontal directions: south, east, and “toward the

⁴⁵ Newsom admits that even in the flow of events in the time Antiochus IV, the reference in Dan 11:22 to the “prince of the covenant” being swept away “is somewhat intrusive and chronologically out of place” (347; cf. Collins, 382).

⁴⁶ The interpretation of Dan 11 by evangelical scholar Tremper Longman III is mainly preterist, but in vv. 36-45 he sees “references to Antiochus Epiphanes taking on larger than life characteristics, which we, living in the light of the New Testament, might describe as anticipatory of a figure called the Antichrist” (282; cf. 280-81, 283).

⁴⁷ “The Prince of the host” (8:11) is over the heavenly host (v. 10) and therefore must be divine (cf. Josh 5:13-15). In Rev 19:11-16, the commander of the heavenly army “is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God” (v. 13). This is clearly Christ (cf. John 1:1, 14). So if “the Prince of the host” is Christ, then removing regular worship from him (Dan 8:11) perpetrates rebellion against him. Therefore, removal of the regular worship in 11:31 and 12:11 and setting up “the abomination that makes desolate” (cf. 8:13—“the transgression that makes desolate”), i.e., false worship, is a pivotal act of rebellion against Christ by an arrogant, blasphemous human power that is represented by a “little horn” in Daniel 8 and the “king of the north” in Dan 11. In 8:14, the problems caused by the “little horn” (cf. v. 13) are resolved after “2,300 evenings (and mornings)” (cf. v. 26). So the end of this time period would appear to coincide with the time of blessing at the end of the 1,335 days in 12:12.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

glorious (land),” i.e., the land of Israel (see above), just as earlier empires moved horizontally (Dan 8:4-5). This accords with the expansion of imperial Rome, which came from the northwest in relation to the land of Israel.⁴⁸ However, in v. 10, the “little horn” “grew great, even to the host of heaven.” This vertical thrust against “the host of heaven” and “the Prince of the host” (v. 11) is unprecedented among the empires outlined in Dan 8 and indicates a transition to a religious phase of Roman power.⁴⁹ During this phase, “His power shall be great—but not by his own power” (v. 24), accurately predicting the church of Rome, which has derived its power from civil states in “Christendom.” This cannot be the imperial phase of Rome, which was great by its own military might.

The religious phase of the “little horn” in Dan 8 correlates with the “little horn” in Dan 7, which “made war with the saints and prevailed over them” (v. 21) and “shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time” (v. 25). This persecution of God’s faithful people by the religious “little horn” appears in 8:24—“and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints” and in the parallel prediction of persecution under the king of the north in 11:33—“the wise among the people shall make many understand, though for some days they shall stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder” (cf. v. 35). The same king of the north “shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods” (v. 36), just as the “little horn” in 7:21 “shall speak words against the Most High.” There can be no serious question that the “little horn” of Dan 7 and the religious phase of the “little horn” in Dan 8 (vv. 10-12; cf. v. 13) is the “king of the north” in Dan 11 at least from v. 31 on and that this king is the leader of the church of Rome. He cannot represent merely a single individual, but an office of leadership occupied by a succession of individuals over a long period of time, continuing through v. 39 and into the “time of the end” (vv. 40-45), when “he shall come to his end, with none to help him” (v. 45), just as the religious “little horn” finally “shall be broken—but by no human hand” (8:25; cf. 2 Thess 2:8).

⁴⁸ Cf. Shea, *Daniel*, 178.

⁴⁹ William H. Shea, “Spatial Dimensions in the Vision of Daniel 8,” in *Symposium on Daniel* (Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2; ed. Frank H. Holbrook; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 507-26.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

Now we can understand the significance of the parallel between 8:25 and 11:24, both of which employ the expression *b + šalwāh*, “in the midst of peace,” in parallel contexts where the religious “little horn” (8:25) and the “king of the north” (11:24) are destructive.⁵⁰ Since we have found that the religious “little horn” represents the church of Rome, it appears that Dan 11 is already describing activities of this organization in v. 24. In fact, *b + šalwāh* in this verse syntactically belongs with v. 23 (see above):²³“And from the time that an alliance is made with him he shall act deceitfully, and he shall become strong with a small people ²⁴in the midst of peace.” The church of Rome gained its power through “an alliance” with imperial Rome, and subsequently the church acted “deceitfully.” The church “grows to strength from an early position of smallness (verse 23),”⁵¹ which could not be said of imperial Rome after the death of Christ (v. 22).

Therefore, the transition to the church of Rome occurs in v. 23.⁵² It cannot come earlier than this because v. 22 predicts the death of Christ during the period of imperial Rome (see above).

On the basis of correlations with earlier prophecies of Daniel, we can summarize the chronological framework in Dan 11 thus far:

Reference	Power
v. 2	kings of (Medo-)Persia
v. 3	Greek (Macedonian) empire of Alexander the Great
v. 4	four Greek kingdoms
vv. 5-19	kings of Seleucid Syria (king of the north) versus Ptolemaic Egypt (king of the south)
vv. 20-21	transition
v. 22	Imperial Rome
vv. 23-45	Church of Rome (king of the north)

6. Observe Features of the Historical Framework

The chronological framework shown by the table above reveals several aspects of the relationship between the text of Dan 11 and the history that

⁵⁰ Cf. the same expression in 11:21 with regard to the rise of imperial Rome.

⁵¹ Maxwell, 293.

⁵² With Shea, *Daniel*, 254; against Smith, 258-70 and *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870-73, which interpret the events of 11:23-30 as concerning imperial Rome and see the section on the church of Rome beginning in v. 31.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

it predicts. First, the text outlines a chronological sequence of historical powers.⁵³ This does not preclude the possibility of some topical rather than chronological arrangement within any of the major sections (see further below), but once the text enters a new section, there is no evidence that it backtracks into further prediction concerning a preceding power.⁵⁴

Second, the outline in Dan 11 contains historical gaps. After the fourth Persian king (following Darius the Mede; v. 1) attacks Greece (v. 2), the text skips over all remaining Persian kings and jumps directly to Alexander the Great (v. 3), who led the Greek retaliation against Persia.⁵⁵ There is another gap at the end of Seleucid rule. As stated above, it was Antiochus III the Great who entered “the glorious land” (Israel) in v. 16 and gave to the Ptolemaic ruler of Egypt “the daughter of women to destroy the kingdom” (v. 17). Events predicted in vv. 18-19 continue the reign of Antiochus III. Emboldened by his military success against Egypt (cf. v. 16—he “shall do as he wills, and none shall stand before him”),⁵⁶ he

⁵³ Supported by the fact that key transitions to subsequent powers are introduced by *waw* consecutive verb forms (vv. 3, 20, 21).

⁵⁴ After Uriah Smith identifies the “prince of the covenant” in v. 22 as Christ, who died in A.D. 31 during the reign of Tiberius, which ended in A.D. 37, he backtracks in history to interpret the alliance in v. 23 as the league between the Roman Republic and the Jews in 161 B.C. (Smith, 256-9). Smith claims: “At this time the Romans were a small people...But from this time they rose steadily and rapidly to the height of power” (259). It is true that the Roman empire greatly expanded after 161 B.C., but Smith’s attempt fails because it is factually incorrect to say that the Romans were a “small people” at that time. Rome was already a major power in the Mediterranean region after prevailing over Carthage by the end of the brutal Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.). Rome’s victory over Antigonid Macedon at the Battle of Pydna in 168 B.C. broke the power of that Hellenistic nation, which had arisen as one of four divisions of the empire of Alexander the Great. Smith views v. 25 as the war between Rome under Octavian (later known as Augustus) and Egypt, represented as “the king of the south,” under Cleopatra VII allied with Mark Antony, which climaxed with Octavian’s victory at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C. (Smith, 260-62; followed by Hardy, 217, 225-6). Smith goes on to identify v. 29 (“At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter”; NKJV) as the transfer of the capital of the Roman empire to Constantinople and the negative effects of this move (266-7). But this event was not a “return,” nor did it involve Rome coming into “the south.” Smith’s attempt to match history with the prophecy here is blatantly forced.

⁵⁵ Noted by Shea, *Daniel*, 240, 254.

⁵⁶ Similar language appears in 8:4 of Medo-Persia (cf. v. 20) under Cyrus; in 11:3 (cf. 8:7) of Alexander the Great (cf. 8:21); and in 11:36 of a powerful and blasphemous “king of the north” who expands the power (rather than introducing a new power) of his organization during the “Christian era.” Antiochus III the Great certainly was not as successful as these other rulers. However, during part of his reign he did achieve an

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

attempted to expand his empire to the northwest along the “coastlands” of Asia Minor and Greece and was successful until he was defeated by Roman armies at Thermopylae in Greece in 191 BC and decisively at Magnesia in Asia Minor, with the Romans at Magnesia commanded by the consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio (subsequently called “Asiaticus”) in 190 BC. This appears to have fulfilled the words, “but a commander shall put an end to his insolence” (v. 18). Forced to withdraw from Asia Minor to his home territory (“he shall turn his face back toward the fortresses of his own land”; v. 19a), Antiochus III was killed in 187 B.C. at Elymaïs, a Persian city, while attempting to plunder a temple of the god Bel as a reprisal for a rebellion and probably also to pay the tribute imposed on him by Rome. Thus, “he shall stumble and fall, and shall not be found” (v. 19b).⁵⁷

Only two verses—vv. 20-21—intervene between the death of Antiochus III in v. 19 and the death of “the prince of the covenant,” i.e., Christ, in v. 22 during the imperial Roman period in the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14-37). Therefore, the text skips over all or at least most of the remaining Seleucid kings after Antiochus III and makes a transition to dominance by Rome, which defeated him, just as v. 2 skips the Persian rulers after defeat by Greece and moves directly to Greek power.

As pointed out above, each of the transitional verses—vv. 20-21—begins with the notice that a new protagonist arises “in his place,” which indicates in this context that someone takes over the functional position, status, or office of another through a transition that is not dynastic succession. The same power under whom Christ dies in v. 22 is introduced

impressive level of dominance in his region, including military conquest of Israel, which Cyrus and Alexander had accomplished and the later “king of the north” would accomplish in the future (11:41). This factor makes Antiochus III stand out from the other Seleucid rulers. As with Medo-Persia, Alexander, and the later “king of the north,” the apparent invincibility of Antiochus was a prelude to his fall. Cf. Collins of the language in 11:3, 16, 36: “In each case, pride goes before a fall” (380).

⁵⁷ With Lacocque, 225; Goldingay, 298; Collins, 381; Newsom, 346. Against Smith, 252; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870; Maxwell, 293; Shea, *Daniel*, 248; and Stefanovic, 419, who are off target when they interpret “stumble and fall” in 11:19 as the assassination of Julius Caesar in Rome in 44 B.C.

in v. 21,⁵⁸ which indicates that v. 21 concerns the rise of imperial Rome.⁵⁹ The key player in this development was Julius Caesar (100-44 B.C.), who did not receive “royal majesty,” but usurped the power of the Roman republic, which had been ruled by the senate. Imperial Rome maintained continuity in the sense that it was also Roman, but it was a very different system of rule. So the transition from the republic to the empire certainly was not equivalent to a dynastic succession.

Preterists identify the “contemptible person” in vv. 21ff as Antiochus IV Epiphanes.⁶⁰ However, he was not really a usurper, but a son of Antiochus III who succeeded to the throne in a dynastic succession amid difficult circumstances for his royal family after the murder of his brother Seleucus IV (cf. above). Furthermore, this interpretation is way off target because Antiochus IV was a Seleucid Greek rather than a Roman.

If v. 21 predicts the rise of imperial Rome, v. 20 could refer to dispatch of an “exactor of tribute” by the pre-imperial Roman senate, the power that had defeated Antiochus III (v. 18). In 66 B.C. the senate appointed the general and statesman Pompey to bring the whole area at the east of the Roman empire under Roman organizational control, which he did within the next few years. During this process, he made Judaea, which Antiochus III had taken (v. 16) but Antiochus IV Epiphanes had lost to the Jews (books of Maccabees),⁶¹ a dependent tributary of Rome.⁶² After Pompey was defeated in battle by Julius Caesar, he fled to Egypt, but was treacherously murdered there in 48 B.C. on orders from members of the court of Ptolemy XIII, who had made the cold-blooded calculation to seek the goodwill of the victorious Caesar. Pompey was the last major obstacle to Caesar’s takeover

⁵⁸ They are grammatically linked: The antecedent of the pronoun “him” in “swept away before him” in v. 22 is the power in v. 21.

⁵⁹ Maxwell recognizes “a major paragraph break between verses 20 and 21” (293), without referring to the expression “in his place” at the beginnings of both of these verses. He sees Caesar Augustus in v. 20 and regards him as representing the position of Roman emperor that he founded, and then he interprets the “contemptible person” in v. 21, who arises in place of Augustus/the emperors as the medieval papacy (293). However, he thereby misses identification of the “prince of the covenant” in v. 22 as Christ, who died during the reign of Tiberius.

⁶⁰ E.g., Lacocque, 226; Goldingay, 299; Collins, 382; Newsom, 346-7; cf. Longman, 278.

⁶¹ This loss is another factor that rules him out as the mighty “little horn” power in Dan 7 and 8.

⁶² Pompey entered Palestine in 63 B.C.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

of the republic. So it could be said that “within a few days [i.e., within a short time after Ptolemy’s mission to the east] he [the republic and/or Ptolemy] shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle” (Dan 11:20; brackets supplied).⁶³

Third, the term “king” can refer to an individual person, as in 11:2-3: “three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. . . . Then a mighty king shall arise.” However, later in the chapter, “king” can cover members of ruling dynasties or offices over long periods of time, as in 11:36 of the leaders of the church of Rome: “And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished.”

Fourth, in the early part of Dan 11, the “king of the south” represents the monarchs of the Hellenistic Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled Egypt before imperial Rome absorbed it. Imperial Rome also took the territory of the Seleucid “king of the north,” so there were no distinct kings of the north or south during this Roman period. However, the kings of the north and south reappear, beginning in v. 25. Here the king of the north is the head of the Roman church, introduced in vv. 23-24 and continuing through v. 45. So whoever the “king of the south” may be in vv. 25-30 and 40-43, he represents a major enemy of the church of Rome who functions during the same long period.

7. Recognize Geographic Succession

The Greek empire (v. 3) superseded that of Persia (v. 2) because Alexander the Great conquered the territory of Persia. Similarly, imperial Rome took over the territories of the Hellenistic dynasties of the north (Seleucid Syria) and south (Ptolemaic Egypt). The church of Rome

⁶³ Preterists identify the ruler in v. 20 as Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 B.C.), the son and successor of Antiochus III. Seleucus inherited an enormous financial burden of tribute from his father’s defeat at the hands of the Romans. Therefore, he was forced to devote a lot of energy to fund-raising, especially through his finance minister Heliodorus, who attempted to confiscate funds from the temple treasury in Jerusalem (Goldingay, 298-9; Collins, 381-2; Newsom, 346; cf. 2 Macc 3). SDA interpreters generally identify the one who sends an “exactor of tribute” (v. 20) as Caesar Augustus (cf. Luke 2:1—decree that all the world should be taxed); Smith, 252-3; *Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870; Maxwell, 293; Shea, *Daniel*, 248; Stefanovic, 419. However, Augustus had a long reign (27 B.C. to A.D. 14) and died a natural death, unlike the description in v. 20—“within a few days he shall be broken.”

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

continued the power of Rome in the northern part of what had been the Roman Empire, so its leaders could be regarded as kings of the north. This indicates that the kings of the south in vv. 25-30 must be rulers of the southern part of the territory that earlier was ruled by imperial Rome, including Egypt (southeast of Rome), which had been the home territory of the Ptolemaic kings of the south (v. 8).

Verses 25-30 predict a series of wars between the kings of the north and south during the period when the kings of the north are heads of the Roman church. The events in vv. 25-30 match the Crusades,⁶⁴ and no other series of conflicts comes close to fulfilling these verses within the Christian era. The Crusades, initiated and sanctioned by the church of Rome (initially called by Pope Urban II in A. D. 1095) were fought by “Christendom” against Middle Eastern power to the south (and also to the east).

The territory of the “king of the north” during this period was comprised of the area over which the religious-political “church of Rome” exercised dominant influence, including far to the west of its headquarters in Rome. This explains why armies from as far west as Britain fought in the Crusades. Correspondingly, the territory of the “king of the south” in the southern part of the former Roman empire consisted of much more than Egypt. In fact, it included some lands to the north of Israel, including Syria, the homeland of the original Seleucid “king of the north” in Dan 11:6-19, where “north” and “south” are defined in relation to the land of Israel. Thus, through the historical succession of powers, the geographical-political center of gravity and north-south lines of conflict shift in Dan 11.

Compare movement of the geographical reference points in Dan 8. Hellenistic power under Alexander the Great “came from the west” (v. 5; cf. v. 21) to conquer Medo-Persia (vv. 6-7, 20). Here “west” is in relation to the Near East, with the reference point east of Greece. However, the “little horn,” representing the next great empire, i.e., Rome, “grew

⁶⁴ As recognized by Maxwell, 293-5 and Shea, who also includes vv. 23-24 in the Crusades (*Daniel*, 253-9), but this does not fit the text because the king of the north does not attack the king of the south until v. 25. Ángel M. Rodríguez supports his dismissal of the Crusades here by citing the undisputed fact that SDA scholars “are still debating the matter” (pamphlet *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation* [Biblical Research Institute Release 13; Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015], 30; note that an earlier version of this pamphlet was published as “Daniel 11:40-45, the Exodus from Egypt, and the Book of Revelation: Intertextual Explorations,” in *The End From the Beginning*,” 231-48), which is a non-argument. Rodríguez basically leaves vv. 25-30 out of consideration in developing his interpretation of the end of Dan 11.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land [i.e., Israel]" (v. 9). Now the reference point is Italy, to the northwest of the Near East and west of Greece.

If the "king of the south" in vv. 25-30 represents Middle Eastern power, it is not surprising that vv. 40-43 explicitly refer to territory of the king of the south as "Egypt" and its peoples as including "Libyans" and "Cushites," referring to areas that were in the southern part of the Roman empire. Just as the king of the north can continue to represent the enduring church of Rome during the "time of the end" in vv. 40-45, the pattern of geographic continuity in the chapter indicates that the king of the south during the "time of the end" in vv. 40-43 represents either the same power as in vv. 25-30 or its successor as controller of Egypt and surrounding southern territories. Just as the king of the north from v. 25 on is a religious-political power, the king of the south during the same period could be a competing religious-political power dominating the region that was once the southern part of the Roman empire.

8. Recognize Some Topical Arrangement

Within the long chiasmic prediction of the career of the church of Rome phase of the king of the north in vv. 25-43 (see above), Dan 11 focuses on military activities in vv. 25-30. We have found that these wars can be identified as the Crusades, which began in the year 1095 A.D. There is a transition in v. 30 from military conflict with an outside power, the king of the south, to religious activities within the king's own northern domain, i.e., Christendom: "For ships of Kittim shall come against him, and he shall be afraid and withdraw, and shall turn back and be enraged and take action against the holy covenant. He shall turn back and pay attention to those who forsake the holy covenant." Here the church of Rome loses to the king of the south and gives up, a scenario that was fulfilled when the Crusaders ultimately failed to maintain control of the "Holy Land."⁶⁵ Then the Roman

⁶⁵ The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was established in 1099 after the First Crusade. Saladin conquered almost all of it, including Jerusalem, in 1187. Following the Third Crusade, the kingdom was partially revived in 1192 with its new capital in Acre, which was destroyed by the Mamluks (from the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt) in 1291.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Church turns its frustrated rage against the “holy covenant,” i.e., the relationship between God and his faithful people.⁶⁶

From v. 31 through v. 39, the chapter prophesies religious activities of the Roman church, including profanation of the temple, removal of legitimate worship and establishment of false worship (v. 31), deception and persecution to undermine and attack God’s cause and faithful people (vv. 32-35), and blasphemous self-exaltation (vv. 36-39), paralleling predictions of the “little horn” power in chapters 7 and 8. Historically, the church of Rome already had begun to do these things before the Crusades, from the time when its period of political domination began in the sixth century A.D., but they continued after the Crusades. So although the sections identifying the various rulers in Dan 11 are in chronological sequence (see above), there is some topical arrangement within this longest section on one particular “king” = leadership office.⁶⁷

This topical arrangement makes sense because the earlier parts of the chapter deal with conflicts between political-military powers, so the chapter continues this focus into the section on the Roman church (vv. 25-30) before shifting attention to its unique religious activity against God (vv. 31-39). Notice that v. 31 begins with disjunctive syntax in that the first clause, rendered “Forces from him shall appear,” does not begin with a *waw* consecutive verb (of which there are several in v. 30), which would usually require interpretation as continuation of a sequence of events.

If it appears strange that Dan 11 would depart from strict chronological sequence in a subsection dealing with one historical power, 8:24-25 similarly predicts activities of the “little horn” in a topical rather than chronological order:

His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause

⁶⁶ Not long after the Crusaders lost Jerusalem in 1187, Pope Innocent III initiated the Albigensian/Cathar Crusade (1209-1229), a military campaign to eliminate heretics of the Cathar sect, which began as a Christian reform movement, in the south of France. Shortly thereafter, Pope Gregory IX appointed papal inquisitors for various parts of Europe in 1231, thereby institutionalizing the inquisition. The Waldensian reform movement was another major target of persecution by the Roman church during the thirteenth century after the Waldensians were excommunicated in 1184 at the Synod of Verona under Pope Lucius III and officially declared heretics in 1215 by Pope Innocent III at the Fourth Lateran Council.

⁶⁷ Recognized by Shea, *Daniel*: “Verses 23-39 do not necessarily present the activities of the papal power in chronologically consecutive order. Rather, in this case, they are apparently arranged in topical order” (252).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints. By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand (vv. 24-25).

Here the religious affront of the “little horn” to the “Prince of princes” appears in v. 25b at the end of the prediction regarding his career, after description of his military power, which he employs for persecution.⁶⁸ His rise against the “Prince of princes” refers to what Daniel saw in vv. 11-12:

It became great, even as great as the Prince of the host. And that which is regular was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. And a host will be given over to it together with that which is regular because of transgression, and it will throw truth to the ground, and it will act and prosper.⁶⁹

These are the events referred to in 12:11, which take place at the beginning of the period of supremacy of the church of Rome: “And from the time when that which is regular is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.”⁷⁰ So the interpretation in Dan 8:24-25 does not predict events in strict chronological sequence, just as 11:25-39 does not.

Focus on warfare between the kings of the north and south in 11:25-30 followed by religious activities by the king of the north in vv. 31-39 provides background to the somewhat parallel culminating events in vv. 40-45. These events begin with warfare between the same kings in vv. 40-43, followed by activities by the king of the north in vv. 44-45 that include initiation of destruction (apparently persecution) within his domain (cf. vv. 33-35) and movement near (toward and against?) the temple of God (v. 45—“the glorious holy mountain”; cf. v. 31—“Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple”). However, whereas the Roman church and

⁶⁸ Notice that the clause in 8:25 that is translated, “And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes,” does not begin with a verb, so it is disjunctive.

⁶⁹ ESV, except reading “that which is regular” instead of ESV’s “regular burnt offering.”

⁷⁰ ESV, except reading “when that which is regular” instead of ESV’s “that the regular burnt offering.”

its allies ultimately failed in their conflict with the southern power in vv. 25-30 (the Crusades), they gain overwhelming victory during the end time in vv. 40-43, completing the unfinished business of achieving domination over their longstanding nemesis. The transition to persecution in v. 44 parallels the transition to religious activities, which result in persecution, in v. 30. However, different factors cause the rage of the king of the north in these two verses. In v. 30, the church of Rome is frustrated by losing the Crusades to the king of the south, but in v. 44, it is alarmed by news of another power “from the east and the north.”

9. Consider Some Non-Literal Language

Daniel 11:2-21 is straightforward prophetic narrative that is basically literal.⁷¹ In v. 2, “Persia” means Persia, “Greece” means Greece, and “kings” mean kings. In v. 8, “Egypt” means Egypt, and in vv. 5-9, 11, 13, 14-15, “south” and/or “north” refer to literal directions of the compass. The same kind of language is found in the literal explanation of the symbolic vision in chapter 8: “As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. And the goat is the king of Greece” (vv. 20-21).

Although the earlier portion of Dan 11 refers to literal unnamed kings, nations, and geographic relationships, it employs some idioms and metaphors, such as “the four winds of heaven” (v. 4; cf. 8:8), i.e., the four directions of the compass (cf. Zech 2:10 [Engl. v. 6]; 6:5-6) and “plucked up” (Dan 11:4), “a branch from her roots” (v. 7), and “overflow and pass through” (v. 10). Such language characterizes kingdoms, rulers, and their actions (especially military) that are otherwise referred to in literal terms.⁷² This is apocalyptic prophecy, but it is not symbolic.

Daniel 11 enters the Christian era at v. 22, where “the prince of the covenant” is Christ, who died under the rule of imperial Rome (see above).

⁷¹ Against Doukhan, who without real justification asserts that “starting with verse 5, the two kingdoms are no longer explicated, as had been the case up to now (Persia, Greece). The allusions to the north and south become abstract and metaphorical” (*Secrets of Daniel*, 171-2).

⁷² The expression “toward the four winds of heaven” in 11:4 refers to the vision description in 8:8, indicating that chap. 11 provides further explanation of the same vision. In 11:10, “overflow and pass through” (with “overflow” rendering the verb *š-t-p*) metaphorically describes military invasion, as in 9:26, “with a flood” (noun from root *š-t-p*).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

This point in the chapter should be crucial for Hans K. LaRondelle, who states:

It is important for the gospel interpretation of the OT apocalyptic to determine, when the data permits, where each prophetic outline series passes the time of the cross of Christ, for OT terminology and imagery from that point on would receive a Christological interpretation.⁷³

...the theological meaning of such terms as Israel, Judah, holy land, Mount Zion, sanctuary, saints, little horn, king of the north, and king of the south would be applied Christologically and ecclesiologically from the point at which an outline series moves into the new era.⁷⁴

Against futurist dispensationalism, LaRondelle has shown that biblical references to the Israel of God that are fulfilled during the Christian era apply to the worldwide Christian church, which constitutes a spiritual nation (1 Pet 2:9).

The Christological qualification of the name Israel has superseded all former religious-national boundaries and ethnic limitations (Eph 2:14-16). This has inevitable repercussions on the traditional territorial promises regarding the Middle East. Rather than being made void, however, these territorial covenant promises are extended world-wide (Mt 5:5; Rom 4:13) so that the old limited boundaries and restrictions are eliminated, in harmony with the Christological meaning of the terms embracing Israel and Judah. From this point of view, since the cross of Christ and Pentecost, there is theologically no longer a holy land, city, or mountain on earth (Jn 4:21; Mt 23:38).⁷⁵

In Rev 7:4, for example, John “heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.” This speaks of faithful Christians in symbolic terms as belonging to the tribes of Israel. By using

⁷³ LaRondelle, “Interpretation of Prophetic and Apocalyptic Eschatology,” 231; cf. 242-3. “All those OT prophecies that apply to the time after the cross of Christ—that is, to eschatological time—will find their fulfillment solely in and through Christ and His covenant people as the true Israel of God and in their avowed enemies” (236).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 229; cf. *idem*, *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion 13; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983).

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Old Testament terminology, the verse emphasizes continuity between God's faithful people during different eras of salvation history.⁷⁶ In Dan 12:1, Michael is identified as "the great prince who has charge of your [Daniel's] people" and "your [Daniel's] people shall be delivered from the end-time "time of trouble" (v. 1; brackets supplied). The events in this verse occur during the Christian era, so the people are Christians whom Daniel would identify as his because they are loyal followers of God. Similarly, God's faithful and persecuted people in 11:32-35 are Christians, although they are not symbolically called people of "Israel" or "Jews" (cf. 12:3).

LaRondelle misidentifies v. 31 as the pivotal point that passes into the era that follows the cross of Christ.⁷⁷ However, he aptly characterizes Daniel 11 as presenting "a complicated and detailed outline of all those political conflicts that have a bearing on the true covenant people of God from Daniel's time onward until the close of probation and the day of resurrection (chaps. 11-12:2)."⁷⁸

The primary concern for "spiritual Israel" as the Christian church in apocalyptic prophecy referring to events after the cross does not mean that we should overreact against futurist dispensationalism by holding that such events must always be symbolic and cannot in any context involve the literal land of Israel. Context is king in exegesis of any text, biblical or otherwise, so a strong pattern observed in many passages does not rule out the possibility of exceptions in some other contexts.

Going back to 11:22, the correct pivotal point where the prophecy enters the Christian era, there is no indication that the non-symbolic genre (or sub-genre of the genre "apocalypse") changes. In the next verse, "a small people" (v. 23) means a small group of people and in the following verse, "the province" refers to literal territory, and "plunder, spoil, and goods" and "strongholds" (v. 24) are most naturally literal. If they were symbolic, to what would they refer?

Compare the fact that the non-symbolic speech of Gabriel in 9:26 predicts the literal destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple *after* the

⁷⁶ Cf. Rev 21:12—"on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed." This can mean that the city belongs to the saved of all ages, including literal Israelites as well as Christians. In 2:9, "those who say that they are Jews and are not" refers to false Christians.

⁷⁷ LaRondelle, "Interpretation of Prophetic and Apocalyptic Eschatology," 243, perhaps influenced by Smith, 258-70 and *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:870-73.

⁷⁸ LaRondelle, "Interpretation of Prophetic and Apocalyptic Eschatology," 242.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

death of Christ. Therefore, the fact that an event predicted in an apocalyptic prophecy comes after Christ's death does not preclude the possibility that it can be literal and take place in the literal land of Israel.

In 11:25, the expressions "the king of the south" (cf. vv. 5ff.) and "army" (cf. vv. 7, 13) reappear in a new conflict between rulers of the north (continuing Rome, but now in the church phase)⁷⁹ and south (broken off from Roman territory) that rages back and forth through the first part of v. 30. As pointed out above, the profile of this conflict in the context of Dan 11 matches the Crusades. The Crusades were a literal series of wars in the Middle East that were fought over control of the literal land of Israel, not the spiritual Israel of God = the church. In this context, "ships of Kittim" in v. 30 are literal seagoing vessels. The fact that "Kittim" is an archaic reference to a place that was called "Kittim" in biblical times (probably Cyprus) does not make it symbolic for something other than a real geographical location.⁸⁰

If there is literal military conflict in vv. 25-30, after Christ has come, what justification can there be for symbolic interpretation of vv. 31-45? What new hermeneutical principle would indicate such a change?

Verse 31 says that forces from the king of the north = church of Rome will profane "the temple, the fortress," remove "that which is regular," and "set up the abomination that makes desolate." These actions obviously concern religion, but the language is not symbolic. The "abomination" is literally an abomination (cf. 9:27). Neither is "the temple" symbolic. As pointed out earlier, this verse parallels 8:11, where the "little horn" power, symbolizing the Roman church, takes away "that which is regular," i.e., literal regular worship, from the Prince of the host = Christ "and the place of his temple was overthrown." This is the same temple that is justified after 2,300 "evening-morning" in 8:14. It cannot be the temple in Jerusalem, which the Romans destroyed in A.D. 70, centuries before the rise of the Roman church to religious domination. So it must be the heavenly temple, where Christ ministers during the Christian era (cf. Heb 7-10), and "that

⁷⁹ This continuity explains why the expression "king of the north" does not explicitly appear in vv. 25-30.

⁸⁰ The expression "ships of Kittim" may refer to a kind of ship that is capable of a long voyage at sea, rather than ships that necessarily originate from Kittim.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

which is regular” is worship connected with it.⁸¹ It is doubtful that Daniel understood this (or in Dan 8:11), so he likely thought of the earthly temple, which was the type of the heavenly antitype. But within the context of the prophetic narrative in Dan 11, the temple (*miqdāš*) in v. 31 is the heavenly temple itself, not something else that represents it,⁸² so it is not really symbolic.⁸³ Just because a term refers to something in heaven does not make it symbolic.⁸⁴

Daniel 11:31 says that forces from the earthly king of the north would profane the (heavenly) temple and remove regular worship connected with it. How could they do that? Regular worship is carried out by people on earth, so it can be disrupted by an earthly power.⁸⁵ God’s temple can be negatively affected from a distance (cf. 8:11), just as the ancient Israelite sanctuary, where God placed his name (e.g., Deut 12:5), involving his reputation on earth (e.g., Ezek 20:9, 14, 22, 39, 44), could be polluted from a distance by idolatry: “to make my sanctuary unclean and to profane my holy name” (Lev 20:3).⁸⁶

In Dan 11:33, the wise shall “stumble by sword and flame, by captivity and plunder” (cf. v. 34), which are literal physical causes within the vast

⁸¹ Also, the “abomination [*šiqqûš*] that makes desolate” (11:31; brackets supplied), which the Roman church sets up in place of regular worship of God, characterizes (not symbolizes) an idolatrous substitute mode of worship (cf., e.g., Deut 29:16 [Engl. v. 17]; 2 Kgs 23:24, referring to “idols” [pl. of *šiqqûš*] in non-symbolic genres).

⁸² Cf. Elias Brasil de Souza on the *miqdāš* in 8:11: “...the ‘sanctuary’ (מִקְדָּשׁ) referred to in the passage must be other than the Jerusalem temple, since the actions of the little horn are depicted as moving in a vertical direction. The presence of words such as ‘heaven,’ ‘stars,’ and ‘host of heaven’ in the context indicates that the ‘sanctuary’ (מִקְדָּשׁ) must be located in heaven” (*The Heavenly Sanctuary/Temple Motif in the Hebrew Bible: Function and Relationship to the Earthly Counterparts* [Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series 7; Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 2005], 453).

⁸³ Against Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 33.

⁸⁴ Compare the fact that New Testament references to “Christ” after he ascended to heaven to minister in the heavenly temple (e.g., Heb 8-9) are literal, although he can be depicted symbolically (Rev 5:6—as a lamb).

⁸⁵ Cf. Rev 11:1-2, where the court of the (heavenly) temple of God is clearly on earth, so that it can be trampled by the nations.

⁸⁶ Cf. Ezek 20:39: “...but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols.” On defilement of the Israelite sanctuary from a distance, see Roy E. Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 144-62.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

domain of the king of the north.⁸⁷ “Stumble” is an idiom for defeat or demise (cf. v. 19 of the end of Antiochus III). However, the fact that it is an idiom does not make it refer here to a spiritual fall, although spiritual pressures certainly could accompany the physical aspects of persecution. The language of v. 35, “so that they may be refined, purified, and made white,” is a metaphorical description of character refinement and purification that involves spiritual growth in response to difficulties.

The following verses (vv. 36-39) predict the blasphemous self-exaltation and power of the king of the north in non-symbolic terms, although there are some cryptic descriptors or epithets, such as “the one beloved by women” (v. 37), and “the god of fortresses” (v. 38). These appear to be literal, but even if they could be regarded as symbolic in some sense, they do not make the overall genre symbolic.⁸⁸

Verse 40 introduces events that occur during the “time of the end,” i.e., the climactic final period before the end of the present age:⁸⁹ “At [or “during”] the time [‘*ē*l] of the end, the king of the south shall attack him, but the king of the north shall rush upon him like a whirlwind, with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships. And he shall come into countries and shall overflow and pass through” (brackets supplied).⁹⁰ Some terminology here is identical to what is found earlier in the chapter: “king of the south” and “king of the north” (cf. vv. 5-15) and the idiom “overflow and pass through” for successful military action (cf. v. 10). The words “with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships” (v. 40) are not symbolic; they are

⁸⁷ Rodriguez alleges that to be consistent, a literal geographic approach to Dan 11 would need to identify these people as Jews residing in the Middle East (*Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 34). But v. 32 identifies them as “the people who know their God,” not specified as Jews, and the literal context is the domain of the king of the north, which is not limited to the Middle East. Even if the people were said to be Jews or Israelites, such a non-literal usage could be embedded in an overall literal context.

⁸⁸ Against Rodriguez, who attempts to use such language as evidence against the basically literal prophetic narrative continuing in Dan 11 (*Ibid.*, 33). Compare non-literal language in classical prophecy, e.g., “For Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD...” (Isa 3:8). This stumbling certainly involves a spiritual component, but the context is literal, including literal Jerusalem, Judah, speech, and deeds. See also 1:18-20, which employs several evocative non-literal elements, but the overall genre is not symbolic, and the “good of the land” and “the sword” are clearly literal.

⁸⁹ For this expression, cf. Dan 8:17, 19; 11:35; 12:4, 9.

⁹⁰ For the preposition *b* meaning “during” with an expression of time, see, e.g., 1 Kgs 11:29 (*b* + ‘*ē*l, as in Dan 11:40); 1 Kgs 16:15 (see NJPS).

simply archaic expressions for rapidly conveyed ground troops and naval forces (cf. v. 30—“ships of Kittim”). Thus, the expression rendered “like a whirlwind” (*hithpael* of *ś-‘r*; v. 40) is descriptive of a military force storming/rushing out against the enemy. The predicted events clearly involve literal warfare, not merely some kind of ideological conflict, although ideology often drives physical warfare.

In “the king of the south shall attack him” (v. 40), the Hebrew verb rendered “attack” is the *hithpael* of *n-g-ḥ*. In the *qal*, this verb refers to an ox goring with its horns (Exod 21:28, 31-32), and in the *piel* it is metaphorical for aggressive human action (including military action) against other people through the image of thrusting with horns (Deut 33:17; 1 Kgs 22:11; Ezek 34:21; Ps 44:6 [Engl. v. 5]; Dan 8:4; 2 Chron 18:10). In this light, the unique *hithpael* with the preposition ‘*im*, “with,” in Dan 11:40 carries the reciprocal idea of locking horns with another power, i.e., “to join in combat with. . . , to wage war.”⁹¹ It is a metaphorical usage in a context that is basically literal, unlike the symbolic context of the *piel* in 8:4. Perhaps provocation by the king of the south could include an ideological component, but usage of *n-g-ḥ* elsewhere and the military nature of the response from the king of the north indicate that physical aggression is primary.

The verb *n-g-ḥ* refers to a dangerous action with deadly intent, but in Dan 11:40 it does not mean that the king of the south mortally wounds the king of the north at this point so that it needs a long recovery before it retaliates.⁹² Aside from the fact that the verb in this verse is *hithpael* (reciprocal) rather than *piel* (as in 8:4), compare 1 Kgs 22:11 and 2 Chron 18:10: “With these [horns] you shall push [*piel* of *n-g-ḥ*] the Syrians until they are destroyed.” If the verb *n-g-ḥ* alone necessarily indicated a knockout blow, the additional words “until they are destroyed” would be superfluous.

⁹¹ HALOT, 1:667.

⁹² So this does not imply the defeat described in Rev 13:3 as a “mortal wound” (against Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 20 n. 53, 22, 27, 31). Rodriguez is off target concerning Dan 11:40: “History has made clear that in 1798 the enemy of the papacy, which intended to exterminate the papacy, was not Islam but a different power. By the way, it was a literal power, with literal soldiers involved in a literal war against the papacy” (30-31). Interestingly, although he misidentifies the event, he interprets the conflict as literal and military.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

During his military campaign against the king of the south, the king of the north “shall come into the glorious land” (v. 41). Earlier in the chapter, “he shall stand in the glorious land” (v. 16) referred to the military presence of Antiochus III in the literal land of Israel. It is true that v. 41 is after Christ, but we have found that the non-symbolic genre has continued up to this point, with no textual reason to see a sudden switch here to the worldwide “territory” of spiritual “Israel” = the church. Literal military forces (v. 40) operate in particular literal geographic locations, so “the glorious land” in v. 41 is the literal land of Israel.

Recognition of a literal geographic referent of the expression “the glorious land” in an apocalyptic prophecy does not mean that this interpretation is futurist dispensationalism.⁹³ Here the land of Israel is obviously important to the end-time “king of the north,” as it was to the Roman church and its allies during the Crusades. However, from the divine perspective of Dan 11, it plays no theological role as a geographic center where God’s promises to his people are fulfilled. So it has lost its glory in that sense, but it is still designated as “the glorious land” to identify its location and to maintain continuity with the earlier part of the chapter.

Some have attempted to support a symbolic, spiritual interpretation of the elements in vv. 40-45 (including “the glorious land” in v. 41), by pointing out that the words “Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites” (v. 41) refer to nations that did not survive past ancient times.⁹⁴ However, this does not mean that these terms are symbolic.⁹⁵ Like “Kittim” in v. 30 and “with chariots and horsemen, and with many ships” in v. 40, they are simply archaic (to us) references to later equivalents. In this case, they are the peoples who inhabit the region where the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites once lived, corresponding to part of what is now the

⁹³ Cf. the literal geographic referent in the eschatological prophecy of Zech 14:4: “On that day his [the Lord’s] feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward” (brackets supplied).

⁹⁴ E.g., Doukhan, *The Vision of the End*, 89; Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 10-11 (esp. n. 27), 20, 33.

⁹⁵ Doukhan inaccurately and without support claims: “In its symbolic language, the prophecy suggests a southern resistance pushing from Edom, Moab, and Ammon. This means that the various atheistic and humanistic movements will resist and for a moment prevail over religious forces” (*Secrets of Daniel*, 176). In Dan 11:41, these peoples are simply survivors from the onslaught of the king of the north.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

modern country of Jordan, which was unknown to Daniel. Nowhere in the Bible do we find modern geographic or gentile designations (e.g., a country of “Jordan” or “Jordanians”) that differ from those known in biblical times. Thus, while we immediately recognize “Egypt” (vv. 42-43; cf. v. 8) and “Libyans” (v. 43) because they have kept their names since ancient times, “Cushites” (v. 43) is an ancient term for inhabitants of Nubia, in modern Sudan.⁹⁶

In light of this discussion, Dan 11:40-43 predicts a literal military invasion of a number of countries in the Middle East (including part of northern Africa) by the end-time king of the north in response to provocation by the king of the south. This is an end-time military crusade, which is similar to the medieval Crusades in that (1) the antagonists are basically the same: the Roman church and its allies versus the power that controls Egypt and other countries in what was the southern part of the Roman empire, (2) the crusade is provoked by the king of the south (v. 40), just as history shows that the medieval Crusades were provoked by actions of Middle Eastern power against Christians, (3) and the crusade involves entrance of the king of the north into the literal land of Israel.⁹⁷ The difference is the outcome: This time the king of the north succeeds in definitively defeating the king of the south.

Obviously the kings of the north and south have developed over time. However, these religious-political superpowers, which exert influence through militarily powerful nations, are direct continuations of the opponents in the medieval Crusades. Both of them have profoundly affected the lives of God’s faithful people through many centuries (cf. vv. 33-35 of persecution by the king of the north).

In Dan 11:44, “news from the east and the north shall alarm him, and he shall go out with great fury to destroy and devote many to destruction.” The Hebrew word translated “devote. . . to destruction” is a *hip ‘il* infinitive of the root *h-r-m*, which refers to sacrificial devotion to destruction (cf. Lev 27:28-29) in “holy war” (e.g., Num 21:2-3; Deut 7:2; 13:15; 20:27; Josh 6:21). This is military action in the name of religion. The fact that the king of the north launches his initiative just after he hears threatening “news

⁹⁶ Cf. Anson F. Rainey and R. Steven Notley, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta’s Atlas of the Biblical World* (2nd ed; Jerusalem: Carta, 2014), 27.

⁹⁷ Cf. v. 16, where Antiochus III stands in “the glorious land,” the land of Israel (see above).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

from the east and the north” implies that the intended holy war is in response to the threat. However, the text does not say that he goes out toward the east and the north with the goal of fighting a foreign enemy coming from the northeast. So his plan, following his military victory over the king of the south, appears to be a purge/persecution of God’s faithful people who live within his domain, whom he regards as disloyal to him, paralleling the earlier persecutions in vv. 33-35, which occurred after he failed in his Crusades against the king of the south (vv. 25-30).⁹⁸

LaRondelle is right that at the end of Daniel 11 and in 12:1, as elsewhere in Scripture, the final war between God and “the last assailants of the Messianic remnant people” is not “a secular political struggle between nations.”⁹⁹ However, the fact that the king of the north sets out to wage holy war does not mean that his action is symbolic of a merely ideological struggle any more than the description of physical sufferings inflicted by the Roman church in vv. 33-35 are symbolic.

In the expression “news from the east and the north” (v. 44), the word for “news” (pl. of *šēmû’āh*) is clearly literal. But what about “from the east and the north”? Thus far in Dan 11, terms for specific directions of the compass have been literal. The kings of the north and south are from these directions in relation to each other, so “into the south” in v. 29 refers to a southward military incursion by the king of the north. But who/what threatens the end-time king of the north “from the east and the north” in v. 44?¹⁰⁰ This power is not identified, and neither is the agent of the demise of the king of the north in the next verse: “he shall come to his end, with none to help him” (v. 45).

This mysterious fate of the king of the north parallels that of the “little horn,” representing the same power (the Roman church; see above) in 8:25:

⁹⁸ Cf. 12:1, where “Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people,” arises when the king of the north comes to his end. Michael is a superhuman being from God (cf. 10:13, 21; cf. Jude 9), so this implies that God has been watching over Daniel’s people, i.e., faithful Christians (see above), during this difficult period until they are delivered (Dan 12:1b).

⁹⁹ Hans K. LaRondelle, *Chariots of Salvation: The Biblical Drama of Armageddon* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1987), 61, citing Ps 2; Joel 2:32 (Heb. 3:5); Dan 11:45; 12:1; Ezek 38-39; Zech 12:8-9; 13:9; 14:1-3.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Jer 10:22: “A voice, a rumor [*šēmû’āh*]! Behold, it comes!—a great commotion out of the north country to make the cities of Judah a desolation, a lair of jackals” (brackets supplied).

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

“he shall be broken—but by no human hand,”¹⁰¹ implying divine agency.¹⁰² After the end-time king of the north achieves religious-political domination by defeating the king of the south (11:40-43), the only power capable of threatening him is God himself. Accordingly, the “news from the east and the north” that alarms the king of the north (v. 44) could concern a divine threat from those directions, possibly communicated by proclamation of a divine warning message (e.g., Rev 14:6-12; chaps. 18-19).

Just because God is involved with directions does not mean that they are necessarily symbolic. The cloud containing God’s glorious presence that appeared to Ezekiel in Babylon literally came from the north (Ezek 1:4). The Lord was on his way to Jerusalem to judge the Israelites (chs. 8-10). Subsequently, his presence departed from the temple to its (literal) east gate (10:19) and then “stood on the mountain that is on the east side of the city” (11:23), i.e., the Mt. of Olives. When Ezekiel saw the Lord returning into a restored ideal temple, he came from the east (Ezek 43:1-4). When Jesus predicted that his Second Coming will be like lightning that “comes from the east and shines as far as the west” (Matt 24:27), perhaps he meant that he will actually come from the east.

Immediately after Dan 11:45 predicts the demise of the king of the north, 12:1 promises: “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people.” Michael is a mighty divine being (cf. 10:13, 21; Jude 9; Rev 12:7), so the implication is that God delivers his faithful ones from their enemy, the king of the north, by ending his rule.¹⁰³ This parallels the deliverance of the Jewish people from ancient Babylon, which had invaded the land of Israel from the north (cf. Jer 25:9). Cyrus came from Persia in the east via the north (Opis and Sippar) to conquer Babylon (cf. Isa 41:2, 25; 45:1-3)¹⁰⁴ and then he released the Jews so that they could return

¹⁰¹ “Human” in “human hand” is supplied by the context.

¹⁰² The *niphal* imperfect of *š-b-r* here (“he shall be broken”) is an instance of the “divine passive.”

¹⁰³ Compare deliverance of God’s people from enemies coming from the north in Ezek 38-39. Interestingly, “Cush” from the south is with them, correlating with subjection of the Cushites to the king of the north in Dan 11:43 (Stefanovic, 414).

¹⁰⁴ See “The Babylonian Chronicle,” trans. Alan Millard (*COS* 1.137:468, Chronicle 7 iii 12-18).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

to their homeland and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (44:28; 45:13; Ezra 1).¹⁰⁵

Even if the expression “from the east and the north” in Dan 11:44 is not literal, but simply refers to the idea that the coming deliverance is like that of Cyrus, this does not change the overall genre of Dan 11. As we found earlier, nonliteral expressions can be embedded in a literal genre. In v. 44, the king of the north is literally alarmed by news and sets out on a literal campaign to destroy many.

Verse 45 reads: “And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.” It appears that this action of the king of the north occurs during his “holy war” to destroy many (cf. v. 44). Having already entered “the glorious land” during his last crusade against the king of the south (v. 41), he returns and establishes temporary (implied by “tents”) royal headquarters between “the sea” (Heb. pl. of *yām*, lit. “seas”; v. 45), i.e., apparently the Mediterranean (cf. Ezek 27:4, 25, 33—of Tyre) and the “glorious holy mountain,” i.e., the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.¹⁰⁶

Here the objective of the church of Rome is not to take the Temple Mount, as the Crusaders did, because it will already control that location, having defeated the king of the south. There is no indication in Dan 11 that God’s true people will be gathered at the earthly or heavenly Temple Mount in some symbolic sense as holdouts against the king of the north, who prepares to assault them there in a physical and/or spiritual battle.¹⁰⁷ Rather,

¹⁰⁵ This parallel is strengthened by identification of an evil end-time power in the book of Revelation as “Babylon” (14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21), which the sixth plague makes vulnerable to conquest by “the kings from the east” through drying up the river Euphrates (Rev 16:12; on conquest of ancient Babylon by the Persians in 539 B.C. by diverting the Euphrates river, see Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990], 86, affirming Herodotus 1.191). LaRondelle comments on Rev 16:12: “Exegetes have observed that the description of the *sixth* plague—the sudden drying up of the great river Euphrates (verse 12)—merely announces the *preparation* of the political powers for the actual battle of Armageddon. The Armageddon clash itself we would therefore expect to occur during the seventh plague. But all we hear for the final plague is that Babylon the great collapses and is destroyed (verse 19). Armageddon and the destruction of universal Babylon are therefore identical” (*Chariots of Salvation*, 99-100; italics his; cf. Shea, *Daniel*, 268). Note that east can be literal in Rev 16:12.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. vv. 16 and 41, where “the glorious land” is the land of Israel, and Ps 48:2-3 (Engl. vv. 1-2), where God’s “holy mountain” is Mount Zion (the Temple Mount) in “the city of our God,” i.e., Jerusalem.

¹⁰⁷ Against Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 13-14, 26.

it seems that placement of headquarters in the land of Israel by the church of Rome will have something to do with affirming its claim to global religious authority that justifies its right to eliminate dissenters by destroying them. The event will be in the Middle East, but its impact will be worldwide.

There is no reference to the temple itself in Dan 11:45. The Second Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, and during the Christian era God's temple is in heaven (cf. above on v. 31).¹⁰⁸ So although the expression "glorious holy mountain" identifies the location in the land of Israel, which is called "the glorious land" in v. 41 even during the Christian era, the Temple Mount lost its glory and holiness when Christ departed from the temple and left it "desolate" (Matt 23:38) and "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (27:51) when he died on the cross.

Nevertheless, proximity to the Temple Mount will retain significance for the religious-political machinations of the end-time king of the north, which will affect God's loyal people everywhere. Furthermore, mention in Dan 11:45a of the Temple Mount, the nexus between heaven and earth in biblical times (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:29-30, 35, 43), is evocative of the vertical dimension of the struggle between the king of the north and God's people. He is actually fighting against God and is bound to lose (cf. Dan 7:21-22, 25-27; 8:10-14, 24-25), which he does in the very next clause of Dan 11: "Yet he shall come to his end. . ." (v. 45b).

To conclude this discussion, we have found that some non-literal language in Dan 11 does not make its genre, i.e., its sub-genre of the genre "apocalypse," symbolic. The prophetic narrative is basically literal throughout the chapter. Injecting assumptions into Dan 11 from symbolic apocalyptic prophecy can be regarded as "illegitimate genre transfer,"¹⁰⁹ which can be defined as reading characteristics of one genre or sub-genre into another (including related) genre or sub-genre.

10. Compare Daniel 11 with Parallel Portions of Revelation

Intertextual comparisons within the total canonical context of Scripture provide valuable perspectives. However, any kind of valid comparative

¹⁰⁸ Doukhan interprets the "beautiful holy mountain" of 11:45 as "the heavenly location of God's dwelling" (*Secrets of Daniel*, 177; cf. *The Vision of the End*, 92).

¹⁰⁹ Analogous to semantic "illegitimate totality transfer" (James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961; repr. London: SCM, 1983], 218; cf. 222).

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

study, including intertextual comparison, first requires careful analysis of individual items on their own terms within their own contexts (including genres) before comparison and contrast between them is undertaken. Premature intertextual comparison can lead to distortion and illegitimate transfer of aspects of one text into another.¹¹⁰

The fact that the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation are closely related in genre and content invites, and indeed requires, intertextual comparisons between portions within them. However, such comparisons should be undertaken only after passages are thoroughly analyzed within the contexts of their respective books. Violation of this procedure tends to create problems.

For example, currently some SDA scholars treat the reference to “Egypt” in Rev 11:8 as an exegetical key to the identity of the end-time “king of the south” in Dan 11:40-43. According to longstanding SDA interpretation, 11:8 is in the context of a symbolic prediction of the French Revolution in which “Egypt” characterizes the atheistic aspect of revolutionary France by evoking the atheism (or anti-theism) of the ancient pharaoh of the Exodus (see esp. Exod 5:2).¹¹¹ Because Egypt in Rev 11:8 is associated with atheism near the time of the end and Egypt is a prominent part of the end-time “king of the south” in Dan 11:42-43, it is concluded that the “king of the south” who provokes the “king of the north” at/during the “time of the end” in v. 40 must be atheism or secular, rationalistic humanism that leads to atheism and agnosticism.¹¹² This interpretation is

¹¹⁰ Related to the forms of eisegesis that occur in illegitimate totality transfer (in semantics) and illegitimate genre transfer. Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 8-17, exemplifies premature intertextual comparison.

¹¹¹ E.g., Smith, 535-9; Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, 7:802-3. This interpretation was held by Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1950; orig. 1888), ch. 15—“The Bible and the French Revolution,” 265-88. There is no hint in this chapter to identify the “king of the South” in Dan 11:40 as atheism.

¹¹² Shea, *Daniel*, 264-6, 268; Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 17, 20-22, 25, 31. Rodriguez, 8-17, tries to support this interpretation by premature intertextual comparison between Dan 11 and Exodus. Stefanovic simply states without support: “While the ‘king of the North’ stands for a spiritual power, the ‘king of the South’ represents secular powers that use reason as their weapon” (420). Without citing Rev 11:8 for support, Doukhan continues his allegorical/symbolic approach into Dan 11:40-45 (*Secrets of Daniel*, 175-79), interpreting the victory of the north over the south as follows: “Historically, it means that the politico-religious power will triumph over the atheistic and political movements” (176). “The king of the north gathers together all religious movements that in

based on premature comparison that overlooks or disregards several contextual and historical factors in Dan 11 and Rev 11:

1. It is methodologically illegitimate to pull out symbolic “Egypt” in Rev 11:8 from its context in order to apply it to the end-time king of the south in Dan 11. Revelation 11:8 reads: “the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.” These epithets of a “city” are contradictory in geographic terms because Sodom, Egypt, and the location where Christ was crucified (Jerusalem) are different places. So “Egypt” here is not a geographical designation, unlike in Dan 11, which refers to literal Egypt from the Ptolomaic period (explicitly in v. 8) onward. Although intertextual connections between “Egypt” as an ideological system in Rev 11:8 and background to this system in the book of Exodus are significant for interpretation of Rev 11, they are no more relevant to Dan 11 than the Sodom (Gen 19) and Jerusalem/Calvary (Matt 27, etc.) backgrounds.¹¹³

2. The reference to “Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified” in Rev 11:8 is explicitly symbolic (*pneumatikōs*, literally “spiritual”) in order to characterize revolutionary France as immoral (Sodom), anti-theistic (Egypt), and anti-Christian (Jerusalem). Revelation 11 belongs to a *symbolic* sub-genre of historical apocalyptic prophecy, which refers to real entities (e.g., political powers and territories) indirectly through symbols. On the other hand, Dan 11 belongs to a *literal* sub-genre of historical apocalyptic prophecy, which refers to real entities directly, without using symbols. There is no indication that the sub-genre suddenly changes midstream in this prophecy, e.g., between v. 39 and v. 40, because 11:2-

any way exercise political power under the cover of godly intentions, as well as all organizations promoting heaven on earth, while burying all hopes of a heavenly kingdom. Recent political developments confirm Daniel’s prophecy only too well” (178).

¹¹³ Against Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 1, 8-17, 21, who explicates the Exodus background (premature textual comparison) in an attempt to condition the reader to accept the (really non-existent) evidence in Rev 11:8 for atheism as the king of the south in Dan 11. This results in eisegesis. If “Egypt” in Rev 11:8 were the key to identification of the king of the south in Dan 11, we should also read “Sodom,” and “where their Lord was crucified” (i.e., Jerusalem) into the profile of this southern power. Consequently, the king of the south would be characterized by immorality (Sodom) and rejection of Christ as much as by atheism.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

12:3 is a continuous speech.¹¹⁴ The geographic and military details in 11:40-45 are like those in earlier parts of the chapter and do not lend themselves to a symbolic interpretation.

3. “Egypt” in Rev 11:8 cannot be simply equated with the territory of the king of the south in Dan 11:40-43, which contains a number of “countries” (plural; vv. 40, 42). Other countries include more than Libya and Cush, i.e., Nubia (v. 43), which in ancient times could have been regarded as part of “Greater Egypt.”¹¹⁵ The fact that “Edom and Moab and the main part of the Ammonites” “shall be delivered out of his hand” (v. 41) means that although these territories (now in the country of Jordan) belong to the king of the south, their people will not suffer the destruction that the king of the north will inflict on other areas, especially Egypt. Of course, “countries” could include more than those specifically mentioned near the end of Dan 11. For one thing, the fact that the king of the north will first enter “the glorious land,” i.e., the land of Israel (v. 41), suggests that it may have come under the control of the king of the south, triggering a reaction from the king of the north to liberate it, similar to that which began the Crusades (cf. v. 25).

4. In Rev 11, the church of Rome is not portrayed as clashing with atheistic revolutionary France, which would be likely if the atheism here is the king of the south in Dan 11:40-43. It is historically true that the French Revolution and its aftermath (Napoleon’s rule) seriously wounded the church of Rome (cf. the temporary “mortal wound” in Rev 13:3),¹¹⁶ but this resulted in a long recovery, not the kind of swift and massive retaliation carried out by the king of the north against the provoking king of the south in Dan 11:40-43.

5. Historical fulfillment of Dan 11 shows clear continuity from one “king of the north” to the next, which took his political place, ending with the church of Rome (see above).¹¹⁷ If the “king of the south” in vv. 40-43

¹¹⁴ Near the beginning of 11:40, the pronoun “him” in “the king of the south shall attack him” refers to the king of the north in v. 39, so v. 40 continues the prophetic narrative. Contrast Dan 7 and 8, where changes from symbolic vision to literal interpretation are clearly marked by changes in discourse.

¹¹⁵ Libya and Nubia were under Egyptian control during the Ptolemaic period (Edwyn Bevan, *A History of Egypt Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty* [rev. ed.; London: Methuen, 1927; repr., Routledge Revivals; New York: Routledge, 2014], 75, 324).

¹¹⁶ With a low point of the church of Rome coming in 1798 when Napoleon’s general Berthier captured Pope Pius VI.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Shea, *Daniel*, 264-6, 268.

is atheism, it has no continuity with earlier phases of the “king of the south” in this chapter, including Ptolemaic Egypt (vv. 5-6, 9, 11, 14-15), which was absorbed into the Roman Empire, followed by the later Middle Eastern power that opposed Rome and its allies during the Crusades (vv. 25-30).

6. SDA scholars (including myself) generally agree that the “king of the north” remains the church of Rome, supported by its allies.¹¹⁸ This is a literal religious-political union with geographic boundaries of domination. So it makes sense that the “king of the south” would also be a literal religious-political union with geographic boundaries of domination. In history up to and including the present, with no change in sight, the southern competitor of the church of Rome (and “Christendom” that has supported it), which has controlled literal Egypt and neighboring countries since the seventh century A.D., is also a religious-political power. Atheistic ideology has been an aspect of some political powers (e.g., revolutionary France and communist countries), but it is not a self-standing power, nor is it southern in relation to the church of Rome.

7. In support of the atheism interpretation of the king of the south, it has been argued that the events of the end of Dan 11 are represented elsewhere in the Bible, especially in Revelation.¹¹⁹ It is true that the overall trajectories of Daniel and Revelation are in parallel and there are many intertextual connections between these two books, with Revelation complementing and illuminating Daniel. However, there are plenty of details in Daniel that are not repeated in Revelation, including the removal of three horns = nations during the rise of the “little horn” (Dan 7:8, 20) and the detailed outline of the northern and southern Hellenistic dynasties in the first half of Dan 11. So it is not necessary for the war between the end-time kings of the north and south in Dan 11:40-43 to be represented in Revelation at all, let alone in Rev 11.

8. Daniel 11:40-43, as contextually interpreted in this article, provides background to Rev 13:3-4:

One of its [sea-beast, representing the church of Rome] heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole

¹¹⁸ E.g., Maxwell, 296-7; Shea, *Daniel*, 264; Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 26, 28, 30-31, 34. Uriah Smith interpreted the king of the north in Dan 11:40-45 as literal Turkey, which ruled the territory controlled in ancient times by the Seleucid kings of the north, in opposition to literal Egypt as the king of the south (289-99).

¹¹⁹ Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*, 28.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

earth marveled as they followed the beast. And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and *who can fight against it?*” (brackets and italics supplied).

The mortal wound of the church of Rome in 1798 removed its political power, curtailing its ability to exert coercive force, including through physical persecution (cf. Dan 11:33; cf. 7:21, 25; 8:24; Rev 13:7). Therefore, the healing of its mortal wound involves restoration of its political and coercive power through support from its political allies or surrogates (cf. Rev 13:7-8, 11-17; 17:2, 15; 18:3). Consequently, the rhetorical question in Rev 13:4, “who can fight against it?” (implied answer: nobody with any chance of victory) at least includes reference to the possibility of literal physical warfare in geographic space, not only an ideological struggle against a philosophy such as atheism.¹²⁰ Why would end-time people be constrained to marvel at the dominance of the church of Rome? Perhaps because its revival from a past attack shows the futility of fighting against it. Daniel 11:40-43 suggests another possible reason that would pack a bigger punch: The church of Rome initiates an overwhelmingly successful military retaliation against the king of the south, which paves the way for the Roman church in its end-time alliance to carry out persecution with greater scope than ever before (Dan 11:44; cf. Rev 13:12, 15-17; 17:6).

The king of the south = atheism interpretation is based on faulty intertextual comparison that reads associations of the word “Egypt” in Rev 11:8 into identification of the king of the south at the end of Dan 11. To ignore the contextual differences between Dan 11 and Rev 11 is to commit a major exegetical error that James Barr exposed and labeled “illegitimate totality transfer.” Barr wrote: “The error that arises, when the ‘meaning’ of a word (understood as the total series of relations in which it is used in the literature) is read into a particular case as its sense and implication there, may be called ‘illegitimate totality transfer.’”¹²¹ Insofar as the “atheism” identification of the king of the south at the “time of the end” in Dan 11:40-43 is based on the invalid pseudo-exegetical strategy of illegitimate totality

¹²⁰ If the “throne of the beast” in Rev 16:10 (fifth plague) refers to headquarters at a geographic location, why cannot the king of the north have secondary geographically located headquarters in Dan 11:45 (“his palatial tents”)?

¹²¹ Barr, 218; cf. 222.

transfer, this interpretation is fatally flawed and invalidated, and it should be abandoned.

An important reason why some Seventh-day Adventists want an ideological or merely religious but not religious-political-military interpretation of the end of Dan 11 is to avoid specific identification of the king of the south. This desire is based on factors such as fear of embarrassment that has resulted from misidentification and consequent non-fulfillment in the past and fear of reprisal by members of a political religion if they become offended by a biblical interpretation that portrays their group in a way that they do not like. This second fear has not dissuaded Adventists from openly identifying the king of the north, but for some reason the king of the south is deemed to be different. In any case, the atheism view is regarded as safer, and therefore it is supported by research writing that looks exegetical to an undiscerning reader because it utilizes exegetical tools and terminology, although with pseudo-exegetical methodology.¹²²

On the other hand, some who lack the fears just mentioned may be so eager to see fulfillment of prophecy that they identify the king of the south according to what they are witnessing in current news.¹²³ Either way, if desire for a certain kind of outcome due to factors outside the biblical text influences (i.e., is read into) interpretation of that text, this approach could be characterized as “teleological eisegesis.”

Conclusion

This article has identified and exemplified a number of methodological guides to valid interpretation of the prophecy in Dan 11:2-12:3:

1. Gain perspective from the narrative framework of the prophecy.
2. Analyze relationships in the literary structure.
3. Take the context of a text profile into account.
4. Take all internal features of a text profile into account.
5. Correlate with earlier prophecies in Daniel to establish the historical framework.
6. Observe features of the historical framework.
7. Recognize geographic succession.

¹²² E.g., Rodriguez, *Daniel 11 and the Islam Interpretation*.

¹²³ Which was used to support the atheism view until the collapse of communism in Europe.

GANE: METHODOLOGY FOR INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 11:2-12:3

8. Recognize some topical arrangement.
9. Consider some non-literal language.
10. Compare Daniel 11 with parallel portions of Revelation.

Along the way, I have pointed out some pseudo-exegetical strategies that have led interpreters to wrong conclusions and that they have deployed in attempting to persuade others of their views. These include illegitimate totality transfer (in the area of semantics), illegitimate genre transfer, premature intertextual comparison, and teleological eisegesis.

As expressed in the Introduction, the present article is not intended to lay out a comprehensive interpretation of the prophecy in Dan 11:2-12:3. But hopefully it can lay a few detours and dead-ends to rest and help SDA scholars to work together with solid hermeneutics. Even if some of the interpretations in my examples should prove to be inaccurate, the overall point of this article stands: Sharing valid methodological principles can facilitate constructive dialogue and collaboration “on the same page,” even if it does not guarantee agreement on all conclusions.

Roy E. Gane is Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University. He has been at Andrews University since 1994, after teaching in the Religion Department of Pacific Union College from 1992 to 1994. Originally from Australia, he earned his M.A. (1983) and Ph.D. (1992) degrees in biblical Hebrew language and literature at the University of California, Berkeley. Gane studied for two years (1986-88) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as an exchange student during his doctoral program. He has published seven books, including *Leviticus, Numbers* (NIV Application Commentary) and *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy*. His eighth book is due to appear in August, 2017: *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic). He has also published numerous articles for refereed journals and chapters in scholarly books, and he was the primary translator for the Leviticus portion of the *Common English Bible* (2011). Roy is married to Constance, who holds a Ph.D. in Mesopotamian Archaeology from the University of California, Berkeley. She teaches at Andrews University and is Curator of the Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum there. Connie and Roy have excavated together in Iraq, Jordan, and Israel.