

Why I Do Not Believe that Atheistic Communism is the King of the South

By Tim Roosenberg

Many believe that the king of the South in Daniel 11:40-45 is atheistic Communism. They remember that the atheistic perpetrators of the French Revolution attacked the Roman Catholic Church (the king of the North) and, like Pharaoh, said, "I don't know God."

According to such a view, the king of the South in Daniel 11:40-45 denies knowing God. Those who hold such a perspective go on to say that Communism, rooted in the French Revolution, took the place of the French Revolution as the king of the South. Many also assume that the Roman Catholic Church overcame the king of the South in the late 1980s with the fall of Communism at the hands of the United States and the Vatican.

This leads them to conclude that Revelation 11 describes the French Revolution. I agree with them in their understanding of Revelation 11, but I do not believe, for the following reasons, that the king of the South in Daniel 11 is the same power:

- Daniel 11 is literal/geopolitical from the beginning, so I would expect it to stay that way to the end. On the other hand, Revelation is symbolic, or "signified," from the beginning (Rev. 1:1). We should not apply the same rules to both Daniel 11 and Revelation 11. They are not alike.
- We have no reason to interpret the powers of Daniel 11 as only religious or only spiritual, because Daniel 11 already describes them as both geopolitical and religious.
- The historical fit of Islam as the king of the South from verses 25 to 43 is too great to ignore. It fits each of the details throughout the prophecy.
- We should not change the identity of the powers partway through the period between the Roman Empire and the second coming of Jesus Christ. Both viewpoints understand the king of the North to be the Roman Catholic papacy.

Daniel 2, 7, and 8; 2 Thessalonians 2; and Revelation 13 all indicate that the king of the North covers the period from the fall of Rome to the second coming of Christ. If this is so, then the king of the South should also extend from the fall of the Roman Empire and last until just before the second coming of Christ.

We would expect, based on Daniel 11:29, three eras of conflict between these same two powers in the time period between the collapse of Rome and the Second Advent. When

we understand Islam to be the king of the South, we do not need to change the identity of the king of the South partway through the prophecy—Islam fits all the way through.

- Some have said that after Christ's death, the prophecies become symbolic or spiritual. If this is true of Daniel 11, why do we find such a good description of the Crusades and the Reformation, which are literal and geopolitical and yet occur after the time of Christ's death?

It is not wise to spiritualize a prophecy when it makes sense literally. On the other hand, Revelation 11:8 does say that the power referred to as "spiritually called Egypt" is not literal, but symbolic. By not differentiating the styles of the writers, those of the atheistic Communism viewpoint have mixed apples and oranges.

- The context of Daniel 11:40-43 lends itself to interpreting the king of the South as Islam. When the king of North launches its final attack against the king of the South, it lists nations by name. They are Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, and western Jordan (Ammon, Edom, and Moab).

What do these countries have in common? They are all predominantly Islamic, not Communist or atheistic. The question should be asked, How does the context of Daniel 11:40-45 indicate Communism? Answer: It doesn't. Those who believe this must find support for their view from outside Daniel 11:40-45.

- Geopolitical consistency: After the demise of the Roman Empire, the papacy takes the northern part of the empire, and Islam takes the southern part. For 1,400 years this has been true. Even today, you can see when you look at a map of Europe and the Mid East that it remains so, with Africa and Asia coded for Christian and Islamic-controlled countries.

Christian nations predominate to the north of Israel, and Islamic nations occupy lands predominately to the south of Israel. Those who believe that atheistic Communism is the king of the South find themselves forced to explain how the king of the South got so far north into Russia. In short, the atheistic Communism view is not geopolitically consistent with the prophecy.

Because the literal explanation fits so well, I am exceedingly reluctant to look for any other supposed meaning. So I firmly believe Islam to be the king of the South in Daniel 11:25-43.

This said, I will agree that some similarities do exist between Islam and atheistic Communism. As I mentioned in the chapter on Islam in prophecy, I believe Islam to be the king of the South,

but I also believe that from about 1798 to 1990 Satan used the atheistic French Revolution/ Communism to keep Christianity in check.

In 1798, the French overthrew the papacy, and the Islamic Ottomans became a de facto protectorate of the British in 1840. That meant that the Protestant mission movement had its two major restrictions removed, and the mission and Bible societies flourished. With Islam down, Satan used the rising Communist movement to hold back the spread of Christianity.

At the same time that Communism was collapsing in the 1980s, Islam and Islamic terrorism was on the rise. It is interesting to note that the papacy and the United States apparently worked together to bring down Communism, and as I mention in the chapter on the United States in prophecy, I expect that they will crush Islam at the end. Now that Communism is not holding back Christianity as it was, Islam is once again strong and resisting Christianity in much of the world.

So I see Islam as the real king of the South, but atheistic Communism, as in Revelation 11, being a temporary substitute for the king of the South that took the leading role while Islam and the papacy were recovering from their wounds.

Since Daniel 11 describes the king of the North as both a geopolitical and religious power, as is Israel in the New Testament, I believe we should expect that the final conflict will have both localized geopolitical and worldwide religious application.