

tion between some theologians and some leaders, the mutual relationship between the two groups is still fraught with misunderstanding, tensions, distrust and occasional bitterness." Lowell Bock, an administrator, echoed the same sentiment when he observed the existence of "an element of suspicion between our theologians and church administrators" and called for the elimination of this "debilitating condition."

Most observers of, and participants in, the consultation would have predicted that in these meetings administrators and theologians would quickly flee to their respective corners of the ring. The former would play the role of preservers in the right corner. The latter would act as provocators in the left corner. For the most part, the theologians performed as expected. Most called for the continuity of a creative tension between preservation and provocation. However, the

administrators were not nearly so predictable. Although some approached the issues from a preservation perspective, not all administrators reflected that position. Some offered more intense criticisms of the preservation mentality than did certain theologians.

While this consultation did not achieve any significant concrete results in terms of major policy recommendations or theological consensus statements, it did succeed in bringing administrators and theologians face to face into amicable dialogue. This achievement must not be underestimated. Before two groups can work together, they must learn to talk together. Before they can enter the crucible of contemporary challenges, they must forsake the security of their isolated domains. Therefore, this initial step toward eliminating the suspicion must be applauded, although the walk must also continue.

## Daniel 8:14 and the Day of Atonement

by Desmond Ford

Since the *ad hoc* Sanctuary Review Committee was specifically summoned to review my views as set forth in my 991-page manuscript, "Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment," the editors believed that it was essential that the reader be thoroughly familiar with my positions in order to evaluate them intelligently. They have, therefore, asked me to summarize my manuscript. This summary covers seven principal points: first, my methodology; second, my review of Adventist sanctuary studies; third, the specific

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exegetical problems that I find concerning Daniel 8:14; fourth, my understanding of the sanctuary in Hebrews; fifth, my solution to the problems in Daniel and Hebrews; sixth, my concept of Daniel 8:14 and 1844; and finally, my use of Ellen G. White. I quote from the manuscript as much as possible, citing it by page numbers so that readers may refer to it for further analysis.

*Methodology.* As I state in the manuscript, my twofold objective is to "make clear the doctrinal problem confronting our church" and to "suggest a solution to the problem" (42). I follow the "grammatical-historical" method as "the only valid means of doing full justice to the meaning of Scripture" (43), and assume that the book of Daniel was written in the sixth century before Christ, that Ellen

White was a true prophet, and that the golden rule applies to the reader as well as the writer (43-44). I furthermore caution against basing doctrine on types or apocalyptic symbols (471), and against preconceived opinion, as a barrier to the discovery of truth (609). To support my views, I have included footnotes and other documentation and 37 appendices arranged by chapters providing additional documentation. Much of this information is from significant original sources heretofore unavailable in print.

*Adventist Sanctuary Studies.* The first chapter of my manuscript is devoted to a historical résumé of problems related to the sanctuary doctrine over the past 75 years. I quote from 17 Adventist writers who recognized these problems (53-115), name seven who left the church at least in part because of them, and others who, though perplexed, remained with the church (5). Although the recurrence of problems is not surprising, I note that the “failure to deal adequately with [them] is the strangest feature of any historical review of the subject” (47). To illustrate this point, I quote from a letter of M. L. Andreasen to J. L. McElhaney and W. H. Branson (December 25, 1942). Andreasen is concerned that once the immediate crisis occasioned by such “heresies” as those of Conradi and Fletcher had passed, the church gave the matter no further study and as a result was unprepared for the next crisis. This tendency, Andreasen writes, has “undermined the faith of the ministry in our doctrine of the sanctuary.” He continues:

If my experience as a teacher at the Seminary may be taken as a criterion, I would say that a large number of our ministers have serious doubt as to the correctness of the views we hold on certain phases of the sanctuary. They believe, in a general way, that we are correct, but they are as fully assured that Ballenger’s views have never been fully met and that we cannot meet them. They decide that the question is not vital and relegate it to the background (159).

*Exegetical Problems in Daniel 8:14.* Four specific areas of our traditional interpretation of Daniel 8:14 receive special attention in my manuscript: first, the identity of the

sanctuary; second, what defiled it, and the nature of its cleansing or restoration; third, its “daily” or “continual” services and its day of atonement/investigative judgment emphasis; and finally, the 2,300 evenings-mornings and the year-day principle.

According to the traditional Adventist interpretation, the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is, exclusively, the sanctuary *in heaven* presented in Hebrews, especially chapters 6 to 9. The validity of this concept hinges on the relationship of the sanctuary of 8:14 to the sanctuary mentioned in verses 11 to 13, and on the validity of the analogy with Hebrews 9. I assume that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is the *earthly* sanctuary, or Temple, in Jerusalem, but according to the apotelesmatic principle (the dual or multiple fulfillment of prophecy), it also becomes the symbol of the kingdom of God (in earth and heaven) in all ages.

According to the traditional Adventist interpretation, the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is *defiled* by the confessed and forgiven sins, or sin guilt, of God’s repentant people of all ages, transferred to it by the ministry of Christ our Great High Priest during the antitypical phase of the “daily” or “continual” ministrations; it is *cleansed* on the antitypical day of atonement that began in 1844, which cleansing consists of the removal of the sins or sin guilt thus accumulated. The validity of this concept hinges on the meaning of *nisdaq*, “cleansed,” or “restored to its rightful state,” on the relation of this word to its context and on the validity of a supposed analogy with the day of atonement cleansing of Leviticus 16.

I affirm that *nisdaq* is to be understood in terms of its context in verses 9 to 13 as a restoration of damage done by the little horn. In terms of the apotelesmatic principle, furthermore, the sanctuary of 8:14 is “restored” by a rediscovery of the true gospel as imaged in the sanctuary and by an understanding, appreciation and appropriation of the great principle of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, I argue that “while it is true that among the many lesser meanings of *nisdaq*, ‘to cleanse,’ could be invoked, the cleansing thus indicated would have to comport with what the context states about the need

for cleansing” (348). It is essential, therefore, to remember that “the context says nothing about believers doing despite to the sanctuary, but unbelievers” (346). In terms of the apotelesmatic principle, however, I also state plainly that I do not “question the eschatological cleansing of the sanctuary, and the fact that the day of atonement and Daniel 8:14 point to that.” I further state that “such positions were landmarks of our pioneers and I accept them heartily” (595).

**A**ccording to the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary on a great antitypical day of atonement consists of an investigative judgment — an examination of the life records of those of all ages who have professed to be among God’s people. This judgment culminates in the transfer of their confessed and forgiven sins, or sin guilt, which has accumulated there, to Satan. This concept depends on an analogy between the cleansing of 8:14 and that on the day of atonement in Leviticus 16, interpreted as a work of judgment by analogy with the judgment of Daniel 7, and on the validity of applying the year-day principle to the 2,300 evenings-mornings.

The concept of an investigative judgment was proposed about 13 years after Adventists had adopted the idea of a heavenly sanctuary; it was not an original part of that concept (293). The Bible does not teach an investigative judgment as we proclaim it (651). Thus, I believe that “our use of sanctuary imagery to support the investigative judgment concept has been faulty” (651). It is a metaphorical concept that points to reality but is not reality itself (624). Ellen White’s description of it is not stated in literal terms (626). In Daniel, judgment has to do with unbelievers, not believers (355ff). However, I agree that “Seventh-day Adventists have been right in seeing the theme of judgment in Daniel 8:14” (367), for “the fact that Scripture clearly teaches two resurrections with only the righteous coming up in the first, demands that their destiny be settled prior to Christ’s coming, for they are released from the house of death with immortal bodies” (650). I

further affirm that “at every point in His intercession, Christ knows whether professed believers are truly abiding in Him” (477), that “the professed Christian must stand before the judgment bar of God” (476), and that men are being judged *now* (523).

I also point out that the debate over “the daily” in the early decades of this century was a “battle to give the context its right place” by relating verse 14 directly to verse 13 (395). The new view of “the daily” “practically ignored the investigative judgment concept and spoke in terms of restoring the ‘daily’ — the gospel of Christ which had been taken away by Antichrist” (395).

According to the year-day principle of the traditional Adventist interpretation, the 2,300 evenings-mornings stand for 2,300 days which, in turn, represent 2,300 years that commenced in 457 B.C. and terminated

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in 1844. This interpretation hinges on the meaning of *ereb-boqer*, “evenings-mornings,” on the validity of the year-day principle, on the viability of 457 B.C. as their *terminus a quo*, and on the relation of the 2,300 evenings-mornings to the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. But, according to the apotelesmatic principle, there is no biblical basis for the year-day principle. The 2,300 evenings-mornings met their original fulfillment when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Temple in Jerusalem, and the cleansing of the sanctuary at their close was fulfilled by restoration of the everlasting gospel in the Advent Movement of 1844 (646).

Furthermore, I note that Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 do not yield the day-year principle, nor is it to be found, contextually, in either Daniel 8:14 or 9:24 (295). Adventist Old and New Testament scholars frequently confess that it is impossible to prove the year-day principle from the Bible (35), and even the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*

assigns its origin to medieval times (326-36). However, I believe that “it was in the providence of God that the year-day principle was espoused after the Advent hope of the early church had faded away” (294). It “is not a primary Bible datum, but a providential strategy of God, only pertinent after the long centuries of unnecessary delay” (643-44). Concerning the viability of 457 B.C., the *Seventh-day Adventist Commentary* notes that several dates in the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, including those of the restoration decree, the crucifixion and the *terminus ad quem* of the seventieth “week,” are not precisely known (317, 320, 345).

*The Sanctuary in Hebrews.* I argue that the expression *ta hagia*, “the holies,” of Hebrews 9:3, 8, 12, 24, 25, Hebrews 10:19, and Hebrews 13:11 is a plural with singular meaning; it refers exclusively to the Most Holy Place. The same is true of the expression “within the veil” or “the inner shrine behind the curtain” of Hebrews 6:19-20 (RSV), which is equivalent to “after the second veil. . . the Holiest of all” or “behind the second curtain . . . the Holy of Holies” of Hebrews 9:2-3 (RSV) (57, 261).

In the comparison of Hebrews 9 “the first apartment [of the ancient sanctuary] is symbolic of the whole earthly sanctuary during the Jewish age” prior to the cross (243; see verse 9), and the second apartment, of the entire ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary between His first and second Advents (480, 507). The antitypical day of atonement thus spans the entire Christian era, with its inauguration at the cross and its consummation when Christ appears a second time (480). I make this comparison to point out the superiority of Christ’s ministry to that of the ancient sanctuary — direct access to the Father without the mediation of human priests. Ellen White repeatedly applies the day of atonement to the cross, with no mention of 1844 (550-551).

According to my interpretation, since Hebrews 9:23 clearly applies the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary to “something already accomplished by our great High Priest” (236), “Hebrews is saying as clearly as words can say it that Christ already in the

first century was engaged in the equivalent ministry to that which the typical high priest performed in the second apartment of the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement” (175). In Hebrews, the day of atonement spans “the whole period from the cross to the coming. . . [it] reaches its climax in eschatological salvation” (204-205; see verses 27-28). Furthermore, I believe “this relationship between fulfillment in the days of the first Advent and consummation with the second is vital for our understanding of use made of the [ancient] day of atonement in the Atonement [of Christ]” (442).

In this connection, it is important to note that “the whole weight of New Testament testimony that God’s ideal plan was that Jesus should have returned in the first century A.D., not long after His ascension to heaven. This is clearly taught from Matthew to Revelation and recognized by the vast majority of New Testament scholars” (295-197), as it is by the Spirit of Prophecy, the *Bible Commentary* and numerous Adventist scholars. We believe “that the long delay in our Lord’s return was not necessary, but caused by the failure of the church” (643-644).

Over the past 20 years, Adventist Bible scholars have repeatedly affirmed that it is impossible to prove the investigative judgment from the Bible, and pointed to the fact that Hebrews 9 clearly assigns Christ’s ministry in the Most Holy Place and the antitypical day of atonement to the entire period between the two Advents (34-35). Thus, I conclude that “frank denials [in the *SDA Bible Commentary*] that Hebrews teaches our sanctuary position, plain statements to the effect that Christ should have returned not in 1844 but in the first century, the teaching of the conditional element in prophecy, and the admonition that prophecy always had direct relevance for the people first addressed,” these developments, along with our recognition of “the true meaning of the key original terms,” have changed “the complexion of our former apologetic in the area of the sanctuary” (525).

Over the years, we have made numerous changes in our sanctuary teaching, the first of

these being abandonment of the “shut door” theory of 1852 (564, 593). As background, I list 55 details in which our sanctuary teaching today differs from the nineteenth-century exposition of it (28-33). After listing 12 proof-text era presentations of the sanctuary, I also note that all “have been repeatedly challenged by Adventist scholars, and several of them, at least, repudiated by a majority of those who are specialists in the particular area of Scripture concerned” (466-77). Finally, I point out that on 20 points, Adventist scholars already agree in rejecting the traditional interpretation (469-70; see also 115-36, 564, 590, 593, 596).

*Suggested Solution.* I believe that the problems in Daniel and Hebrews may be solved by applying the apotelesmatic principle. Numerous Adventist publications state that all Bible prophecy is conditional (305-306,

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366). Furthermore, when Ellen White “spoke ever in terms of the divine ideal for the people of God,” she noted that it “was conditional on the faithful response of the church” (539). Scholars recognize that “every part of the Bible had meaning for the people who first received it” (392), so that one may conclude that “all prophecy had relevance for the people first addressed” (525, 564). But “Scripture clearly shows that prophecies may have more than a single fulfillment, and Ellen G. White amply exemplified that truth” (345).

Thus, Daniel 8:14 may be understood as pointing both “to a local sanctuary cleansing in the days of Antiochus” and “to the final resolution of the sin problem by the last judgment” (347). From this, it follows that the 1844 interpretation was “a providential reinterpretation of an apotelesmatic fulfillment, rather than the primary intention of the apocalyptic passage. It is by no means insignificant because of that, but ceases to be

a competitor with Calvary and the Second Advent” (367).

The apotelesmatic principle affirms that a prophecy fulfilled, or fulfilled in part, or unfulfilled at the appointed time, may have a later or recurring, or consummated fulfillment, with the recurring fulfillment repeating the main idea rather than precise details and each fulfillment being a pledge of that which is to follow (485, 489). The church has already accepted this principle when it interprets the little horn as both pagan and papal Rome (395). In fact, I list numerous Bible and Ellen White applications of the apotelesmatic principle, to which I believe all will agree (488-92, 505, 531, 655).

Applying the principle to Daniel 8:14, then, I believe that “every era of revival of the truths symbolized in the sanctuary” can be seen as fulfilling the prophecy (486). Antiochus was the first antichrist, the papacy another and Satan in his final counterfeit of Christ the last (486). It is essential, therefore, that we realize that “the Adventist application of Daniel 8:14 to 1844 was an application in principle, an apotelesmatic fulfillment — a legitimate but not exhaustive application” (574).

*Daniel 8:14 and 1844.* I do not argue that the church has been wrong in applying Daniel 8:14 to the “emergence of the Advent movement.” I believe that “the year-day principle as regards its practical essence has always been correct. That which could have been fulfilled in days had the church been faithful is now taking years” (344). Furthermore, “Seventh-day Adventists, and their predecessors the Millerites, were not wrong when they asserted the eschatological significance of Daniel 8:14” (366), for it “is an eschatological message regarding judgment” (367). I affirm that “Seventh-day Adventists have been right in seeing the theme of judgment in Daniel 8:14” (481).

I also believe that 1844 is a key date, for it was then that “in the providence of God, He brought to birth the movement with the last message to the world” (623). “In 1844, God raised up a people to preach the everlasting gospel” (646). Thus, I see 1844 and the Advent movement as “a fulfillment of Daniel 8:14, an apotelesmatic fulfillment in the same

sense that A.D. 70 was a fulfillment of Matthew 24, and John the Baptist of Malachi 4:5, 6, and Pentecost of Joel 2:28” (624). In my view, Daniel 8:14 “is the most important verse in the book” (643), and 1844 “a providential reinterpretation and an apotelesmatic fulfillment, rather than the primary intention of the apocalyptic passage” (367, 420). However, “the fact that 1844 rests on several assumptions impossible to demonstrate does not invalidate God’s raising up of a special people at the time to preach ‘the everlasting gospel’ — in the sanctification setting of salvation and the judgment” (648). “In the providence of God, Adventists were raised up in 1844” (622), and to me “that message. . . is beautifully enshrined in the symbolism of the sanctuary” (623).

*Ellen White.* I maintain that the Bible is “the sole basis of doctrine. But for that very reason, I must also be open to any manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit promised therein, including the gift of prophecy. If I find, as is the case with Ellen G. White, one who leads me to Christ and His Word as supreme in all things, and who exhorts to holiness, I should accept the messenger, but without surrendering the right to exercise the canonical test of Scripture” (641, 656). Since I found Christ through the writings of Ellen G. White and since she has influenced me more than any other writer since John the Apostle, I thank God for the spiritual help I find in her writings, and acknowledge her “as one of God’s greatest saints, specially raised up and endowed to lead the weak and needy remnant into areas of service allotted by the counsels of heaven” (661). “What type of people would we be if we followed the counsels of Ellen White? One word answers — saints” (614).

**H**owever, we must remember that “never did Ellen White claim to be a medium of truth that superseded Scripture” (604). “We do her wrong, therefore, to make her writings the sovereign interpreter of the Holy Scriptures. She never made *that* error, but continually revised even her written statements on the basis of continuing light from the Word. The church, if it is to pros-

per, must follow her example” (594). “I believe that we should take the writings of Ellen G. White, confident that God has spoken through her in a way He has not spoken through us, and acknowledge them as light. . . . Let us read them for pastoral admonition, for spiritual insight” (602). But we must be clear that “Ellen White is not our [doctrinal] authority. That position only Scripture can hold. To divert from ‘the Bible and the Bible only’ as the ‘sole bond of union’ and ‘our only creed,’ would be to cease to be either biblical or Protestant, and could only result in splitting this church down the middle” (623). “Let us build our framework of truth solely on the Word, but use with gratitude the counsels meant to be for ‘upbuilding and encouragement and consolation’ ” (628).

I conclude with the following point: “It is true that in the early days of the movement, when our brethren were yet dependent upon the proof text method, and when every man had a different interpretation, at such a time God through Ellen G. White indicated some evidence from Scripture which decided the point at issue” (605). Later, however, she wrote: “I request that my words shall not be used as the leading argument to settle questions over which there is now so much controversy. . . . that they make no reference to my writings to sustain their view of ‘the daily.’ . . . I cannot consent that any of my writings shall be taken as settling this matter. . . . I now ask that my ministering brethren shall not make use of my writings in their argument regarding this question” (608).

*Conclusion.* To summarize my manuscript’s argument as briefly as possible, I set forth the following main points:

1) Many recognized Adventist Bible scholars, past and present, have acknowledged the problems in the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9, and standard Adventist publications such as the *SDA Bible Commentary* explicitly acknowledge them. Over the past 75 years, repeated crises have arisen over these problems and not a few have left the church because of them, but once each crisis had passed little or nothing was done to deal adequately with the substance of the problems.

2) On the basis of sound, recognized prin-

ciples of exegesis and interpretation these problems are: a) in context, the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 is the sanctuary or Temple in Jerusalem, not the sanctuary in heaven, a fact that invalidates equating it with the sanctuary of Hebrews; b) in context, it is the acts of the little horn that defile the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14, not the confessed and forgiven sins, or sin guilt, of God's repentant people; c) in context, the "cleansing" or "restoration" of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 consists of its restoration from the damage it suffered from the little horn, not from the sins or sin guilt of God's repentant people; d) there is nothing in the context to suggest a day of atonement setting for the "cleansing" or "restoration" of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14, a fact which invalidates the day of atonement ritual analogy with Leviticus 16; e) etymologically and contextually, the word *nisdaq* means "to be right" or "to be restored," not "to be cleansed;" f) there is no etymological or analogical basis for interpreting *ereb-boqer* as "days," nor is there any clear biblical basis for the year-day principle in Bible prophecy; g) there is no unambiguous basis for identifying the decree of Daniel 9:23, 25, to restore and build Jerusalem, with Artaxerxes' decree in 457 B.C., or that date as the commencement of the 2,300 *evenings-mornings* or 1844 as marking their close; h) Hebrews 9 clearly equates Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary commencing with His ascension — and not 1844 — as the antitypical counterpart of the day of atonement.

3) Despite this interconnected series of linguistic, contextual and analogical non-sequiturs in the traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 and Hebrews 9, the apotelesmatic principle of multiple fulfillments provides a sound, biblical basis for applying Daniel 8:14 to a final gospel-restoration message involving judgment, and also to the ultimate eradication of evil as "imaged" in the eschatological symbolism of the ancient sanctuary day of atonement ritual.

4) Every professed Christian must stand before the judgment bar of God in a pre-

Advent judgment now in progress. All are now judged according to their response to the gospel, and as Christ's ministry above closes, their state will be fixed eternally by His fiat.

5) Over the years, we have progressively refined our understanding of Daniel 8:14 and the sanctuary doctrine, with the result that at many points our present official teaching differs from what it was originally. The apotelesmatic principle can be the final, master link in this process.

6) The Bible itself, the writings of Ellen White and standard Seventh-day Adventist publications have all acknowledged the conditional element in Bible prophecy, the relationship of Old Testament predictive prophecy to the Jewish people and its intended fulfillment within the historical perspective of God's covenant with them, the possibility of a first-century Advent and Christ's day of atonement ministry as our great High Priest in the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary since His ascension.

Finally, I would like to affirm my personal belief in the following: 1) the validity of Daniel 8:14 as a message of eschatological judgment; 2) the validity of the year-day principle as a providential provision rather than a biblical datum and its application to the prophecies of Daniel, though without punctilious precision — a rough rule of thumb that saved the waiting church from losing hope in the return of Christ; 3) the validity of the 1844 Advent movement as a fulfillment of the gospel-restoration motif of Daniel 8:14; 4) the validity of 1844 as marking the time when God, in heaven and on earth, raised up a people to whom He entrusted His last, everlasting gospel message of righteousness by faith in Christ, for the world; 5) the validity of the prophetic gift manifested in the life, ministry and writings of Ellen White; and 6) the Scriptures as the sole basis of doctrine, and Ellen White as God's chosen and inspired messenger to the remnant church, to bless His people and to prepare them for the soon coming of Christ.