

An Excerpt from Appendix I of:
*Discovering the Jewish Messiah
Within the Prophecy of Daniel 9*
pp. 136-140.

Seventh-Day Adventists and the 1844 Dilemma

by W. Glenn Moore

While I believe this brief study is not necessary for most Bible students, I also believe some who read this presentation may be familiar with or even belong to the Seventh-day Adventist faith. . . . William Miller, a farmer (who later became a Baptist minister), proclaimed to a wide audience that the Messiah would come around the year 1843 in fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14. He later revised the date to October 22, 1844, after it became apparent that the prophecy was not fulfilled in 1843 as he expected. Miller, to his credit, finally admitted his error, but from that movement came the Seventh-Day Adventists, who still believe the 2300-day prophecy refers to 2300 years, and that it was secretly fulfilled in 1844 CE. Instead of attributing this fulfillment to the return of the Messiah (as the Millerites originally believed it would be), they introduced a new teaching regarding an investigative judgment and a special work for the Messiah in the heavenly sanctuary.

The SDA's still believe the prophecy of Daniel 8 and 9 are directly connected, and that the 2300 days represent 2300 years, which extend from 457 BCE to 1844 CE. In fact, this teaching is without a doubt the *single most important doctrine* within the SDA church. It is so fundamental to Adventism that you could not *in good faith* remain an Adventist and at the same time reject this teaching. I do not share their beliefs with regard to the importance of 1844, as they attempt to link it to the prophecy of Daniel 8:14. Therefore, for those who may be interested in learning more, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly explain *why* I believe this view is in error.

Having been a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church for nearly 20 years, I can honestly say that I have devoted much time towards the study of this teaching, and during that time I accepted it as truth. Even after leaving this denomination, I continued to hold on to much of what I considered the *core* teachings of Adventism, including this particular belief regarding Daniel 8:14. However, once I studied these prophecies carefully, on my own, I came to see that there are some serious errors being perpetuated by them, including their beliefs regarding what happened in 1844. While I agree that the starting date of 457 BCE is *still valid* for the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9, the idea that the 2300 days is connected to it and also starts at the same time is really impossible to prove. Here is why this aspect cannot be valid:

In the prophecy of Daniel 8, SDA's rightly recognize that "determined" also means "cut off," and they also acknowledge that the prophecy of the 70 weeks extends to the time of Yahushua's ministry. However, they erroneously connect the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 to the prophecy of Daniel 8:14 (the 2300 "evenings and mornings") and they believe the 70 weeks are "cut off" from that prophecy. The major problem with this idea is that there really is no way of making a direct contextual connection between the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 and the 2300 evening and morning prophecy of Daniel 8. Who is the one to determine just exactly what the 70 weeks are "cut off" from? And based upon what evidence?

According to Daniel 8, Yahweh gave a commandment to Gabriel: "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision" (Daniel 8:16). Did Gabriel fail in his mission to explain the vision? No, he did not. Gabriel had already explained the vision of Daniel 8, and it is universally agreed that several years had elapsed between the end of chapter 8 and the beginning of chapter 9. Thus, any attempt to connect the 2300 "evenings and mornings" prophecy of Daniel 8 with the 70 weeks' prophecy of Daniel 9 is to take those two prophecies out of context.

The context clearly shows that the issue Daniel was concerned with in chapter nine was the 70 years of desolation that were soon to come to an end. Where in Daniel 9 do we find evidence linking it directly to the vision of Daniel 8? There is no evidence to link the prophecies. Daniel was not praying about the vision of chapter 8; rather, he was praying about the 70 years of desolation. In fact, prior to this chapter, Daniel was commanded

by the angel Gabriel to “seal up the vision.” Why, then, would he need to *unseal it* so as to connect it to another prophecy?:

And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true:
wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. (Daniel 8:26)

Nowhere in Daniel 9 is Daniel commanded to “unseal” the vision of Daniel 8 so as to introduce another prophecy, nor to explain the prophecy of Daniel 8 in more detail. Instead of being concerned about the vision of chapter 8, Daniel was now clearly concerned with the 70 years of desolation mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah. *His entire prayer is focused on that issue!* He must surely have been thinking, “Will Yahweh restore the people of Israel to their land after the 70 years have expired and restore them to their former glory?” The answer came later: Yes, He would restore them to their land, but afterwards they would be allotted 70 weeks of years (490 years) to prepare their hearts to receive the Messiah.¹ The fact that Gabriel assigns 70 weeks to this prophecy in contrast to the 70 years of captivity is the final proof that the “matter” and the “vision” Gabriel refers to are clearly **not** connected to the prophecies of Daniel 8—but instead to the 70 years of captivity.

Another major obstacle for the Adventist position involves the fact that the prophecy of Daniel 8 clearly identifies the power that would cause the “desolation” of the “sanctuary” and the general time frame during which it would be fulfilled. This power is really a subsidiary (i.e., the “little horn”) of Alexander’s Grecian empire. It places the fulfillment of that prophecy in the ancient past—not a secret fulfillment in the distant future. It certainly cannot apply to a hidden “sanctuary” that is beyond this earth. Notice how clearly this is proven by the following text:

And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be. The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a

¹“Messiah” is from the Hebrew word for “anointed” (*Moshiach*). In the Greek it is typically translated as “Christ” but we will consistently translate it here as Messiah.

king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. . . (Daniel 8:19-23)

This text plainly interprets for us the meaning of the vision of Daniel 8:1-14. The kingdom of Greece would be that power which causes the “desolation,” (to “cast down the truth to the ground”), and bring desolation to the “sanctuary”—“in the latter time of their kingdom” (as explained in Daniel 8:23). The “latter time” is not a reference to the mid 1800’s, but instead to the “latter time” of the empire of Greece. The prophecy of Daniel 8:14 *was indeed fulfilled* in the “latter time” of the Grecian empire. This period of 2300 “evenings and mornings” is a reference to the “morning” and “evening” sacrificial offerings made in the temple at Jerusalem. In 167 BCE, Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated that temple by sacrificing a pig on the altar and erecting a statue of Zeus in its sacred precincts, which brought an abrupt halt to the ordained temple sacrifices.²

Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred forty and fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Juda on every side. . . (1 Maccabees 1:54)³

The book of Maccabees clearly identifies the correct fulfillment, even using the same term as found in the book of Daniel (the “abomination of desolation”). Daniel’s reference to the “evenings and mornings” is also fulfilled since sacrifices are commanded in Scripture to be carried out twice in each day, and the actions of Antiochus disrupted that process. The actual word “day” is not used in this text, so there is no legitimate reason to use the “day for a year” principle here. Finally, *even if we wanted* to use the “day for a year” principle in this text, the prophecy of Daniel 8 *does not give any* starting point from which to begin such a time period. It only *suggests* to us that the time period should be connected to the Grecian empire (sometime after 330 BCE) and start when the temple was desolated by the little horn power of Daniel 8. In addition, the use of “evenings and mornings” strongly links it to a literal, twice-daily event, which was carried out at the temple in Jerusalem.

²An historical overview regarding this event can be found at <http://www.bibarch.com/Biographs/Ancient/Antiochus%20IV.htm>

³The Seleucid era begins in 312 BCE [Please see *Wikipedia*, article under “Seleucid era.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seleucid_Era#_note-0], which when you subtract 145 it gives us the date of 167 BCE (the year of the desecration of the temple).

While the purpose of this brief study is not to give a detailed explanation of the prophecy of the 2300 days, I can say with confidence that this prophecy was fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes, and the 2300 days took place sometime following 167 BCE. It is, therefore, a prophecy in reference to the desolation of the temple by Antiochus—not a 2300-year prophecy which Adventists claim was secretly fulfilled in 1844.⁴

[Glenn Moore is a former Seventh-Day Adventist who studied for the ministry between 1982 and 1985 and spent about 20 years as a faithful member within that religious system.]

⁴I would like to suggest an *excellent* online article for further study, located at: <http://www.ellenwhiteexposed.com/2300.htm>. It is entitled *The 2300-day Dilemma—The TRUTH about 1844 Made Simple*. While I do not agree with every teaching proposed by the *ellenwhiteexposed.com* site, I find this particular study to be very compelling.