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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF TWO TIME PROPHECIES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL - THE 2300 DAYS OF DANIEL 8 AND THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL 9.**

# **ASSUMPTION 25**

**THE YEAR-DAY "PRINCIPLE" IS A VALID BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE.**

**BY  
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## 1. Purpose of this Assumption

The year-day concept is a method of scaling time periods found in prophecies SDA historicists call apocalyptic in Daniel and Revelation. By calculating the days involved in the time period and then assuming those days are “symbolic” days, the “literal” period involved can be computed. These periods of time are inevitably much longer than those given in the text.

This topic is not just a exegetical exercise; rather, historicists tell us it is an issue that people have sacrificed their lives and the lives of their families over in the past. Historicists remind us that it was through the use of the year-day principle that Rome was identified as the Antichrist of the Middle Ages, and resisted by the Protestant movement. One historicist makes this connection between the year-day principle and the sacrifice this belief has cost the church in past ages:

As T.R. Birks notes, the Day-Year Principle was the “first object of attack” because it had not only helped identified the Papal Antichrist in Rome but had also showed that the papal antichrist rule would last for 1,260 years, exactly. The rule of the Papacy, in fact, did last for exactly 1,260 years, for Papa’s rule spanned the time from when the Roman Catholics gained control of Rome after the expulsion of the Ostrogoths as they were driven out of the city in 538 A.D., and afterwards Rome “made war on the saints”, and this period of rule extended down to A.D. 1798 when Napoleon’s army eventually entered Rome under General Berthier and took the Pope captive to France, where he died in exile under house arrest – a period of exactly and precisely 1,260 years! The Futurists, to relieve Rome of any guilt, sweep this heinous history of the “Dark Ages” under the carpet, and point with great gusto to a yet coming, future Antichrist that is yet to arise – they discount the Day-Year Principle whenever Rome or Antichrist or Babylon is discussed....

The Bible, on the other hand, speaks plainly of a present Antichrist making “war on the saints” and ruling for 1,260 years from the “great city” of Rome in Italy according to the Day-Year Principle. Historicists recognize the fearful place that Antichrist has already played in the world’s history, where for many bloody centuries the Spanish Inquisition and papal armies have killed millions of true Christians, murdered in the name of religion and truth. These saints however did not deny their Christ, and because of the “word of their testimony”, they were heinously burnt to a crisp in the fires and Autos-da-fé of martyrdom, or hanged, or drowned, stabbed, garrotted, shot to death, blown up with bags of gunpowder tied around their necks, wives and daughters ravished before their eyes, etc.; and, all the while during such persecutions these stalwart men pointed their finger at Rome and boldly declared: “Thou art Antichrist!” I don’t know of anyone who has died a martyr’s death defending the pre-Tribulation Rapture. (see extract by H. Frizell Snr in Appendix)

Therefore, historicists see the acknowledgement of the fallacy of the year-day principle as akin to betraying the testimony of all the saints before them who raised their voices against the corruptions of Rome. In these historicists’ eyes it would be a virtual abandonment of all that is truly Protestant. Viewed from this perspective, one can appreciate how emotionally-charged any defence is against an argument that weakens the strength of the year-day theory for SDA historicists.

Notwithstanding all this however, the focus of this paper will be just on textual evidence used by SDA historicists to defend the year-day principle.

## 2. Method.

How does the year-day principle work? In the following table I illustrate the steps of converting the time periods into the final time period espoused by SDA historicists. I have taken two periods, the 3½ ‘times’ and the 2300 ‘evening-mornings.’ In the second column I list the period just as it is given in the text; the third column gives us the period with the time unit clarified; the fourth column converts this period into ‘symbolic’ days; and in the fifth column, the ‘symbolic’ days are then converted to literal solar years.

**Table 1. A tabular summary of the traditional historicist method of interpreting time period in prophecy.**

Text Examples	As it appears in the text	Converted to 'normal' nomenclature	Converted to 'symbolic' days	'Symbolic' days converted to years
Dn7:25	3½ 'times'	3½ years	1260 days	1260 years
Dn8:14	2300 'evening-morning'	2300 days	2300 days	2300 years

According to the texts quoted above, this is the normal SDA historicist procedure with prophetic time periods .

## **2.1 The principle generally presented by the SDA pioneers using a mixture of Eze4:6, Num14:34 and Dn9:24**

The year-day principle is the anchor of SDA historicism. Robert Spangler, past editor of *Ministry* magazine, quotes Norman Douty as saying, “yet Seventh-day Adventism, which claims to be divinely called to this work of completion, has this very theory as its bed-rock foundation, so that to discard it would be to destroy itself.” (1980, p.44)<sup>1</sup>

The texts traditionally used by SDA historicists and other historicists before them to justify this year-day concept are Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4:6. The year-day principle is considered a “divinely chosen principle.” Notice the opinion of Spangler:

One of the most valuable keys to the historicist interpretation of the apocalyptic books, Daniel and Revelation, is the “year-day principle.” It is rightly called a principle because without its use the historicist interpretation of prophecy would not be possible....

The year-day relationship is a divinely chosen principle. It cannot trace its origin back to any type of human devising designed to solve the dilemma of the delay of the *parousia*, (Greek, “advent”) or the problem of unfulfilled prophecy. According to the two principal texts of explicating the year-day principle method of interpretation, Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, God is the initiator of the idea that a day is representative of a year and a year representative of a day. It is God, not man, who is the speaker in both passages. Notice how it is stated in Ezekiel 4:6: “I have appointed thee each day for a year” (K.J.V.). (*Ibid*)

As stated by the *SDABC* under their comments on Eze 4: 6, *both* of these texts are used to support the year-day principle:

**Each day for a year.** Literally, “a day for a year, a day for a year.” This expression may be compared with a similar statement in Num. 14: 34, “After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years.” In these statements are found the first intimations of the prophetic scale which later was to figure so largely in the interpretation of the great time prophecies, such as the “time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan, 7: 25), and the “two thousand and three hundred days” (Dan.8: 14). (*Nichol, 1976*, p. 590)

In addition to the use of Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6, other arguments used to defend this year-day theory come from Dn9. The fulfillment of the coming of the Messiah in accordance with the

<sup>1</sup> Spangler references: “N.F.Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism*, (Grand Rapids, 1962, p.95).”

time line in Dn9:24-27 is given as incontrovertible evidence of the year-day principle cited from Eze 4 and Num14.

With recent publication of Shea's new theory of the year-day principle (examined later in this paper), we now have the additional evidence being presented of the many occurrences in the Old Testament where the word "day" is used in a figurative sense to mean "year." These are cited as support of the year-day principle.

This idiosyncratic use of the year-day 'principle' did not originate with Seventh-day Adventists. Francis Nichol, in his apologetic, *The Midnight Cry*, quotes Moses Stuart's admission of the use by Protestant commentators for centuries using the year-day principle:

"It is a singular fact, that the great mass of interpreters in the English and American world have, for many years, been wont to understand the *days* in Daniel and in the Apocalypse [the Revelation] as representatives of *years*. I have found it difficult to trace the origin of this general, I might say, universal, custom. [Nichol inserts footnote: "Moses Stuart, *Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy*, p.74] (1944, p.460)

### **2.1.1 Pre-Millerite Writers**

It is widely known that the Advent movement in the early nineteenth century did not create the year-day principle to develop their scenario of end-time events they preached about from the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. This principle originated centuries before, with the first developments occurring in the Jewish communities in the ninth century A.D.

#### **Jewish expositors before Joachim**

Froom briefly portrays in volume II of his work, *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, chapters 8 to 10, the development of Jewish prophetic exposition from the tenth century to Abravanel in the early sixteenth century. He shows Saadia in the ninth century certainly applied the year-day principle to 1290-, 1335- and 2300-days. Froom, however, does not clarify as to whether Saadia uses the 'weeks of sabbatical years' method or the year-day principle in the calculation of the seventy weeks. No source material is quoted on the seventy weeks. (cf. 1948, pp.200-201) The picture he gives of Jewish contemporaries in the tenth century (before the times of Joachim) is that there was no consensus over the application of the year-day principle to the various time periods of the book of Daniel. Some applied it to one period but not to another; whereas others would dispute that decision and interpret it entirely differently. The seventy weeks were commonly understood to be "weeks of sabbatical years" but very little else had common consensus.<sup>2</sup> Jepheth ibn Ali's commentary on the book of Daniel says:

The scholars who preceded Joseph ibn Baktawi explained the 2300, 1290, and 1335 as *years*; the Rabbinites, too, spoke of the *end*, and fancied that from the third year of Cyrus to the *end* would be 1335 years; the term is passed some years since, so that their opinion has been disproved, and that of their followers; similarly El-Fayyumi [Saadia] explained it years, and has been proved false; he had however some marvellous inventions with reference to the *time and times*. He was answered by Salmon ben Jerucham; whom we need not in our turn answer, since his terms is past and the end not arrived. Certain of the Karaites too, made the 2300 years date from the exodus from Egypt; that term too is past years ago, and their prophecy not come true. Salmon ben Jerucham, in his Commentary on Ps lxxiv.9, denied that it was possible to ascertain the *end*; but on Ps cii.14 he offered a date which is passed and falsified. He agreed with many others in interpreting the 2300 and 1290 as days, but differed about the interpretation of the *time of the removal of the continual*, which, he thought, meant the *destruction of the Second Temple*. Benjamin Nahawendi agreed with him in the latter point, but differed from him about the days being days and not years. Benjamin took a separate view in believing that they were years. Salmon ben Jerucham referred the 1290 to the three and a half spoken of in chap x.27 [sic] ('for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease').

<sup>2</sup> Froom mistakenly understands this as indicative of the application of the year day principle, (1948, p.208).

“Each of the commentators has taken a different line, and all have gone wrong in making the days years. Benjamin Nahawendi, indeed made the 2300 date from the destruction of Shiloh, and *from the time of the removal of the continual* from the destruction of the Second Temple; this leaves still some 400 years; but this is a delusion.” [Froom footnotes: “Jepheth ibn Ali, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, translated by D. S. Margoliouth, p.77.”] (Froom, 1948, pp.208-209)<sup>3</sup>

### Joachim of Floris (c.1130-1202)

Joachim of Floris was an exceptional leader in prophetic understanding in Froom’s view, and clearly used the year-day principle in his exposition of Scripture. For example, when talking of the 1260 days when the woman of Revelation 12 would flee into the wilderness, he says, “*a day without doubt being accepted for a year* and a thousand two hundred and sixty days for the same number of years.” (1950, p.713) Froom gives no mention of Joachim’s use of either Eze 4:6 or Num 14:34 as a basis for this principle, nor does he mention or quote Joachim’s understanding of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9.<sup>4</sup> Froom says:

To what extent Joachim and the Joachimites, who likewise applied the year-day principle to these same periods [1290-, 1335-, and 2300-days (p.713)] were acquainted with or aware of these interpretations [by Nahawendi, Saadia, Jeroham, Hakohen, Jepheth ibn Ali, and Raashi of the tenth century (p.713)] we do not know. But it is most likely that they had some knowledge of this application. That there was some exchange of ideas between the two groups is evident, as, for instance, in the debate between Nahmanides and Fra Pablo in 1263, before King James of Aragon. (Ibid, p.714)

### Arnold of Villanova (1235-c.1313)

In a discussion proving the 2300 days to be 2300 years, Villanova explicitly cites Eze 4:6:

“When he says ‘two thousand three hundred days’ it must be said that by days he understands years. This is clear through the explanation of the angel when he says that in the end the vision will be fulfilled, from which he gives it to be understood by clear expression that in that vision be days are understood years.” [Froom footnotes: “Translated from Arnold of Villanova, *Introductio in Librum [Joachim] De Semine*, fol. 7 v, col. 2, line 34 to fol. 8 r, col. 1, line 2.”]

It is not accustomed in the Scripture of God, for days to understand years. Nay, it is certainly usual and frequent. Whence also the Spirit in Ezekiel also testifies: ‘A day for a year have I reckoned to you.’” [Froom footnotes: “Ibid, fol. 8 r, col.1, lines 14-20.”] (1950, p.750)

We can see in Villanova’s writings a dependence on Joachim of Floris’ work, the pioneer in Medieval prophetic interpretation. Consequently, noting this dependence, perhaps Villanova’s use of Eze 4 leads us to draw the inference that Joachim also used this text to substantiate his views.

### John Wyclif (1324-1384)

According to Froom, Wyclif also used Genesis 29 in his defence of the year-day principle:

After discussing the relationship of the lunar and solar years, concerning which there is “varied exposition,” Wyclif clearly sets forth the year-day principle (a prophetic day equals a year) for prophetic time, citing the experience of Laban and Jacob in Genesis 29.” (1948, p.57)

### Newton, Sir Isaac

Newton, like others of his time, continued the year-day tradition handed down to him:

The sanctuary and Host were trampled under foot 2300 days; and in Daniel’s Prophecies, days are put for years. (1733, p.43)

<sup>3</sup> An important point to note here is that these Hebrew readers all understood the 2300 days applied, not to the full vision, as SDA historicists argue, but to the desecration of the sanctuary and the sacrifice. The same can be said for Sir Isaac Newton (see the quote below).

<sup>4</sup> That is to say, Did he use the Jewish method of “sabbaths of years” without the year-day principle, or did he explicitly use the year-day principle with these “sabbaths of years”?

## Samuel Langdon (1723-1797)

Samuel Langdon, lived a generation before Miller, yet according to Froom (1946, pp.208-209), held virtually identical views on the year-day principle. Langdon is also typical of other Protestant writers of his time when it comes to the meaning of Num 14:34, Eze 4:6 and the use of Dn9 to prove the principle:

As we find in the old Testament several examples in which days are answerable to years, it is sufficient to justify the same way of reckoning in the prophecies of this Book. Thus Num. 14:34, it is said, ‘After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even 40 days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years.’ And in Ezek iv.4, 5, 6, a day for a year is appointed the Prophet to bear the iniquities of Israel and Judah. But Daniel’s prophecy of the time of the Messiah’s coming makes this prophetic way of reckoning quite clear. The time is there fixed to 70 weeks, and the accomplishment is a sufficient proof to christians that these weeks are to be reduced to days and each day taken for a year, making 490 years.” [Froom footnotes: “Samuel Langdon, *Observations on the Revelation of Jesus Christ to St. John*, contents summary of chapt.8”] (1946, p.210)

## Rev. T. R. Birks.

Birks (1810-1883), a British theologian and Church of England minister wrote *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy* in 1843 in defence of the year-day principle. (Froom, 1946, p. 706). He says:<sup>5</sup>

Year-Day Principle, General Nature of.—It may be summed up in these maxims:

That the church, after the ascension of Christ, was intended of God to be kept in the lively expectation of his speedy return in glory.

That, in the divine counsels, a long period of nearly two thousand years was to intervene between the first and second advent, and to be marked by a dispensation of grace to the Gentiles.

That, in order to strengthen the faith and hope of the church under a long delay, a large part of the whole interval was prophetically announced, but in such a manner that its true length might not be understood, till its own close seemed to be drawing near.

That, in the symbolical prophecies of Daniel and St. John, other times were revealed along with this, and included under one common maxim of interpretation.

That the periods thus figuratively revealed are exclusively those in Daniel and St. John, which relate to the general history of the church between the time of the prophet and the second advent.

That, in these predictions, each day represents a natural year, as in the vision of Ezekiel; that a month denotes thirty, and a time three hundred and sixty years. (1843, p.311, in Ford, 1978, p. 300)

Froom adds a telling comment by Birks in regard to the flimsiness of the historicist’s proofs *individually*:

The prophetic times, indeed, when separated from the context, and viewed in themselves only, are a dry and worthless skeleton: but when taken in connexion with the related events, clothed with historical facts, and joined with those spiritual affections which should attend the study of God’s Providence; like the bones in the human frame, they give strength to what was feeble, and union to what was disjointed, and form, and beauty, and order, to the whole outline and substance of these sacred and divine prophecies.(p.416) (Froom, 1946, p.710)

Birks is, in effect, saying that it is the historical fulfillment of the prophecies in accordance with historicist’s principles that give credibility to the system of interpretation.<sup>6</sup> One should note

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to the appendix in Ford’s 1978 commentary on Daniel for this extract from Birk’s 400pp. work.

<sup>6</sup> As Andrews said of the prediction of the fall of Turkey in 1840, “When the event verified the truthfulness of this calculation, the way was prepared for the advent message to go with mighty power. The prophecies were not only unsealed, but, in the providence of God, a demonstration of the truthfulness of the mode of calculation respecting the prophetic times was given to the world.” (1970, pp.26, 28) That it did not occur as proclaimed (see Assumption 21) is strong evidence to the contrary opinion – the *absence* of the predicted event verified the *fallacy* of the mode of



that it is the explanation of the fulfillment of the prophecy, *as explained by historicists*, that is presented as the evidence, *not* as explained by impartial historians, since independent historians do not confirm the assertions proposed by historicists for the historical events that they use to prove the fulfillment of the prophecy.<sup>7</sup>

Birks then uses Dn9 to bolster the year-day principle, and then argues how the year-day principle is made “firm and solid” by the evidence:

The prophecy of the seventy weeks has always held the foremost place in the direct arguments for the year-day system. The reasoning is very simple in its nature. The word *week*, or *shabua*, is used elsewhere in Scripture to denote seven days; but in this prophecy it denotes *seven years*. Hence the words of time are enlarged beyond their literal or usual sense, in the proportion of a *year* to a *day*. And since all these prediction of time bear one common character, occur in the same prophets, and have the same general object, they ought to be explained by one common rule. In one instance, which is decisively fulfilled, the proportion holds of a year to a day; and therefore it must be applied, in consistency, to all the rest. (1946, p.710, p.333)

In this statement Birks shows his total ignorance of the fact that Dn9 can be interpreted correctly without the year-day principle. Other writers contemporary with him asserted as much, such as Stuart and Hengstenberg, but Birks does not indicate any familiarity with their arguments or their sources in Aristotle, Censorinus or Varro.<sup>8</sup> A correct understanding of the use of septennates in ancient thinking will be shown in this paper to be devastating to the “foremost place” the seventy weeks takes “in the direct arguments for year-day system.”

## William Miller

William Miller has been the logical place for Seventh-day Adventists to start in examining this topic, even though the year-day principle predates him by many centuries. Sylvester Bliss records Miller’s views on the year-day principle. William Miller explains to us his dependence on both Num. 14:34 and Eze 4:6 together with Dn9 to substantiate the year-day principle.:

I therefore, felt that, in endeavoring to comprehend what God had in his mercy seen fit to reveal to us, I had no right to pass over the prophetic periods. I saw that, as the events predicted to be fulfilled in prophetic days had been extended over about as many literal years; as God, in Num. 14:34, and Ezek. 4: 4-6, had appointed each day for a year; as the seventy weeks to the Messiah were fulfilled in 490 years, and the 1260 prophetic days of the Papal supremacy in 1260 years; and as these prophetic days extending to the advent were given in connection with symbolic prophecy, I could only regard the time as symbolical, and as standing each day for a year, in accordance with the opinions of all the standard Protestant commentators. (1853, pp.75-76)

His rules of interpretation appeared in the *Midnight Cry*, November 17, 1842, and includes the following rules regarding prophecy, the specialty of Mr. Miller:

VI. God has revealed things to come, by visions, in figures and parables; and in this way the same things are often revealed time and time again, by different visions, or in different figures and parables. If you wish to understand them, you must combine them all in one. Proofs. Ps lxxxix.19. Hos xii.10. Hab ii.2. Acts ii.17. 1Cor x.6. Heb ix.9,24. ps lxxviii.2. Matt xiii.13,34. Gen xli.1-32. Dan ii, vii and viii. Acts x.9-16.

VII. Visions are always mentioned as such. Proof. 2Cor xii.1

VIII. Figures always have a figurative meaning, and are used much in prophecy to represent future things, times and events; such as *mountains*, meaning *governments*; *beasts*, meaning *kingdoms*; *Waters*

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calculation (See [Numbers](#) and [Butler](#), and [Arasola](#).) Hence with the failure in 1843-1844 of the appearance of the second Coming of Christ, people by and large, gave up on historicism as a dependable principle of interpretation and sought other solutions.

<sup>7</sup> This is discussed more fully in Assumption 21.

<sup>8</sup> This is typical of many historicist writers however from the Reformation forward. There was a line of commentators however, who understood these sources and who understood Dn9 using the “weeks of years” concept of these ancient sources. I trace this double line of commentators cited by Froom in the Appendix of Assumption 16.

meaning *people*. *Lamp*, meaning *Word of God*. *Day* meaning *year*. Proofs. Dan ii.35,44 vii.8.17. Rev xvii.1,15. Ps cxix.105. Ezek.iv.6.

X. Figures sometimes have two or more different significations, as day us used in a figurative sense to represent three different periods of time. 1. Indefinite. 2. Definite, a day for a year. 3. Day for a thousand years. If you put on the right construction it will harmonize with the Bible and make good sense, otherwise it will not. Proofs. Eccles vii.14. Ezek iv.6. 2Pet iii.8. (Arasola, 1989, pp.52-53)<sup>9</sup>

Miller had many ways of reinforcing the application of prophecies to his own day:

The power of Millerism lies in these time calculations. What steam was for an engine, definite times were for the Millerites. Miller is by no means original in his enthusiasm to create a timetable for the *eschaton*. However, his creative imagination located chronological prophecies in all parts of the Bible. He brought them together into a unique combination...Miller located eschatological time-prophecies in such diverse books of the Bible as Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, as well as Luke, Hebrews, and the Revelation. (Arasola, 1989, p.85)

In most of these time-prophecies, he extracted them from unusual places of the Bible (which became known as the “15 proofs,”) applied the year-day principle, located their end in 1843 and then found a start for them.<sup>10</sup> Says Miller, when discussing five of his fifteen proofs:

You will next inquire, How shall we know when these times will all end? I answer, when you or any other man can show by scripture rule that they all harmonize and come out in one and the same year, they cannot be far from the truth. (Arasola, Ibid, p.91)

Timm notes that Miller’s views of the year-day principle were standard for the time he lived in:

For Miller, the 2300 days of Daniel 8: 14 were symbolic in nature, and had to be understood as 2300 literal years. He claimed that, by taking “each day for a year,” he was in harmony with “all the standard Protestant commentators.” He found biblical support for the year-day principle mainly in: (1) Numbers 14:34; (2) Ezekiel 4:6; and (3) the assumption that the prophetic period of the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27, which had already been fulfilled as 490 years, was only the first part of the 2300 days. Additional support was provided by correlations with the historical fulfillment of other prophetic periods, such as the 1290 days (Dan 12:11), the 1335 days (Dan 12:12), the 2450 days (cf. Lev 25:8-13), and the 2520 days (cf. Lev 26:18-28). [Timm has copious footnotes for each of these points and readers are referred there to follow up the references. –FB] (1995, pp.28-29)<sup>11</sup>

In regard to general usage of the year-day principle, Arasola comments poignantly:

The high regard in which the year/day theory was generally held is reflected in the fact that Miller’s opponents rarely objected to it. Dr. Bush in his *Reasons for Rejecting Mr. Miller’s Views of the Advent* comments: “in taking a *day* as the prophetic term for a *year*, I believe you are sustained by the soundest exegesis, as well as fortified by the high names Mede, Sir. I. Newton, Bishop Newton, Kirby, Scott, Keith and a host of others. (1989, p.88)

William Miller developed his understanding from both his own study of the Bible, and the commentaries of the day. In the words of Arasola, he had a multifaceted method of developing a reliance on the year/day theory as a biblical interpretative tool for time prophecies. That said, however, SDA historicists have varied little in the manner of substantiating the year-day principle in the passing of time since Miller, with the exception that some recent SDA publications have looked more closely at the texts on which the theory is based, and have added a few more arguments.

After the demise of the Millerite movement, the Seventh-day Adventist church eventually fell into the vacuum made by the dissolution of the movement and they continued to uphold many of

<sup>9</sup> See also Damsteegt, 1977, p.19.

<sup>10</sup> A few others like the 1260 years, the 1290 years, the number of the beast 666 ending in 508 B.C., he located elsewhere (Arasola, 1989, pp.136-137)

<sup>11</sup> Timm fails to mention Miller’s use of the millennium idea as another confirmation tool. Note Arasola, (1989, p.88, cf.p.52 Rule X, cf. also p.170)

Miller's teachings. The following extracts are an example of how other SDA historicists explain the year-day principle. The writers understandably approach their proof of the year-day in a variety of manners, and it is difficult to group them under one heading. Some start with the texts from Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 and then discuss their proof from Daniel 9; others start with Daniel 9 and from there move to the 2300 days and the 3½ times based on their conclusions from their earlier points. But invariably, they include reasoning using the 3½ times of Dn7, with the use of "times" in Dn4 (and in some cases Revelation) as well as other places, Eze 4:6 and Numbers 14:34, the 2300 evening-mornings of Dn8, the trans-empire scope of the visions, and of course the 'pragmatic' confirmation of this method as exemplified in the seventy weeks of Dn9.

## James White

In his publication *Bible Adventism*, White addresses the interpretation of the vision of Dn8. He says:

The vision embraces Persia, Grecia, and Rome. And it is evident that twenty-three hundred days could not cover the duration of one of these kingdoms, much less all three of them. Hence, the days must be symbolic, a day for a year, even as the beasts and horns are shown to be symbols. And it is a fact that a symbolic, or prophetic day is one year. Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:5,6. Hence the period is twenty-three hundred years. (1972, p.136)

White combines the trans-empire scope of the vision, together with Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 to clinch the argument that the time is symbolic and must be extending in the ratio of a day for a year.

## Uriah Smith

Smith, like White, uses the length of the empires mentioned in the vision of Dn8 as a proof for the 2300 day-prophecy being a long period rather than a short one:

Now if in reply the angel only singled out a period only six years and one third in length, then there is no correspondence either between this answer and the vision in connection with which it was given, or between the answer and the question which directly called it forth. These days, if taken literally, would be far from covering the duration of any one of the kingdoms of the prophecy taken singly, how much less of them all taken together.

This is symbolic prophecy; it would be natural therefore, that the time introduced would be of a like nature. (Gordon, 1983, p.60)<sup>12</sup>

Smith says on "times" in Dn7:

How long a time were they to be given into the hands of this power? A time, as we have seen from Daniel 4:23, is one year; times, the least that could be denoted by the plural, two years, and the dividing of time, or half a time, half a year. ... We thus have three years and a half for the continuance of this power.

We must now consider that we are in the midst of symbolic prophecy; hence in this measurement the time is not literal, but symbolic. The inquiry then arises, How long a period is denoted by the three years and a half of prophetic time? The principle is given us in the Bible is, that when a day is used in symbolic prophecy, it stands for a year. (Ezekiel 4: 6; Numbers 14:34.) Under the Hebrew word for day... *yom*,... Gesenius has this remark on its plural: "Sometimes, ... [*yamim*] marks a definite space of *time*; viz., *a year*; as also Syr. and Chald... [*iddan*] denotes both *time* and *year*; and as in English several words signifying time, weight, measure, are likewise used to denote certain specified times, weights, and measures."

Bible students have recognized this principle though the ages.... The Bible year, which must be used as the basis of reckoning, contained three hundred and sixty days. ... Three years and a half contained twelve hundred and sixty days. As each day stands for a year, we have twelve hundred and sixty years for the continuation of the supremacy of the horn. (1944, pp. 143-146)

<sup>12</sup> Readers will note the bank of assumptions listed in my papers used by Smith to get to such a conclusion.

And further:

... the Bible gives the exact proportion between literal and symbolic time. Ezekiel, during the selfsame Babylonish captivity in which Daniel's prophecies were delivered, symbolizes *years* by *days*. He was commanded to make known to his fellow exiles by the river Chebar, near the Euphrates, the fate of Jerusalem, with her last king, Zedekiah, and also God's reason for it. For this purpose he was to lie prostrate with his face toward the city, on his left side three hundred and ninety days for Israel, and on his right side forty days for Judah, restricted all the while to a famine diet, like the Jews he represented, shut up in the siege. And God said, "I have appointed thee *each day for a year*." Eze. 4: 6.

In this representation Ezekiel himself became a symbol. He was acting a symbolic part, an individual representing a nation, the *days* in which he was acting his part symbolizing the actual *years* of the punishment of those whom he represented.<sup>13</sup>

Another instance, not so evidently symbolic in its nature, but equally definite in showing how God uses short periods of time to represent longer ones, and the proportion to observed between them, is found in Num. 14: 34, "Forty days, *each day for a year*."...that which demonstrates beyond question the correctness of the year-day principle, is the fact that we, living down in the last years of prophetic fulfillment, are now able to trace out in history the accomplishment of these predictions; and we find that the seventy weeks of Daniel 9; the 1260, 1290, and the 1335 days, of Daniel 7 and 12, and the 1260 days and the forty-two months of Revelation 12 and 13; and the five months of Rev. 9:5; and the hour, day, month, and year of Rev. 9:15, have all been exactly fulfilled, a day for a year. (1898, pp. 166 f.)

Smith focuses here on the two proof texts for the basis of his argument, together with the pragmatic test in finding the actually fulfilment of these periods in history. He points out that the *days* of Ezekiel's act were symbolic and the *years* were "actual." Notice here that Smith goes into print admitting that Number 14:34 is not "so symbolic in nature."

## F.C.Gilbert

Writing in 1902, Gilbert, a Jew converted to Adventism, discusses the symbolism of many of Old and New Testament passages. On the visions of Dn9, he says we should use the year-day principle since its usage is attested by two witnesses – Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6:

Here then we have the heavenly messenger giving to the prophet, directly from the court of glory, the definite and minute explanation of these seventy weeks, even when the reckoning was to be commenced. The time, therefore, from which these days were to be counted, was the decree to restore and build Jerusalem. If we can ascertain when this decree was issued, we have the definite certainty when to begin the numbering.

I should be borne in mind that these seventy weeks, or four hundred ninety days, are part of the twenty-three hundred days. This, therefore, being true, the beginning of the four hundred ninety days marks also the commencement of the twenty-three hundred, because the former are cut off from the latter.

When the angel gave to Daniel the vision in the eighth, he revealed it to him in metaphors; hence the reason for the angel's giving him the explanation in the latter part of the vision, it must be equally true of the last part; therefore, these days are metaphors; or, when speaking of prophecy, we use the term *symbols*. It will then be necessary to understand the meaning of these symbolic days, even as it is necessary for Daniel to understand the meaning of the ram, the goat, etc.

The Bible makes this point very clear; and a lucid definition is given of a prophetic day. In the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Numbers, we have the account of the twelve spies going to search the promised land, and their reports, - the evil report of the ten, the good report of the two. After spending the entire night in weeping, the people desired and hoped that they might die in the wilderness rather than go into such a country, where there seemed so many obstacles. The Lord answered their request, and informed them they should certainly die in the wilderness. A part of His sentence reads as follows: "After the number of the days in the which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day for a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise." [Footnote: "Num. 14:34"]

<sup>13</sup> Smith seems to be confusing Eze with Numbers here. The years Ezekiel represents with his days are not years of punishment, but years of rebellion. It was the *days* that symbolised the punishment.

The Prophet Ezekiel, in a vision given to him concerning a period of time, gives this description of the divine explanation: "Lie thou, also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquities. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days,...*I have appointed thee each day for a year.*[Footnote: "Eze. 4:4-6"]

We are told that out of the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Here then we have two witnesses to testify that a day in the Bible, when used as a metaphor, or symbol, represents a year. Therefore the twenty-three hundred days would represent twenty-three hundred years. The seventy weeks, or four hundred ninety days, would represent four hundred ninety years. (1972, pp.297f.)

Gilbert inserts an endnote at this point, and makes these cogent comments on "weeks" in Dn9, recognised as "weeks of years" universally by Jews:

Having given the reader a clear demonstration from the word of God that a day in prophecy represents a year, and therefore the 2300 days represents so many years, we will now call attention to the fact that the Hebrew teaches the same truth in a different way. Thus we shall have two witnesses from another view that this is the word of God.

The Hebrew words, translated *seventy weeks*, are *Sho-voo-im Shiv-im*..which by *all* Jewish translators are rendered "*Shib-tsik Shmee-tos*," or seventy *Shmee-tos*. But a *Shmee-tau* is a period of seven years. This is recognized by Jews everywhere. Therefore a literal translation from the Hebrew would be, seventy times the period of seven years, or four hundred and ninety years. In his translation of the Old Testament, explanatory note forty-seven, Leeser says on Daniel 9:24: "Ancient Jewish writers thought that the second temple stood four hundred twenty years, which, with the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, make four hundred ninety years." While their application of the time is incorrect and erroneous, it expresses the view of ancient Hebrew writers, showing their understanding of the seventy weeks. (*Ibid*, p.308)<sup>14</sup>

## Milton Kern

Here is a very standard presentation on the topic from a SDA historicists of the 1940s:

Did this happen within twenty-three hundred literal days, or about six and two-thirds years, after the decree went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem? No. But Jesus was baptized and anointed sixty-nine weeks of years (483 years) after the decree in 457 BC. He was baptized and anointed by the Holy Spirit in the autumn of AD. 27, and He was crucified three and a half years later in the spring of AD. 31. We are told in the pamphlet under review that this year-for-a-day theory is an unsound rule of interpretation. Some may consider it unsound, but it is the theory of interpretation adopted by the great prophetic students of the Protestant Reformation and many others. Dr. H. Grattan Guinness, a Church of England writer, in his book *The Approaching End of the Age*, page 302, used the seventy-week period to prove the year-day theory. In speaking of the prophetic periods of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, he says, "The great answer to this important query [the meaning of "day" in prophecy] is found in the fact that one of these periods has been fulfilled, and therefore supplies the key to all the rest." In these prophecies short-lived beasts are used as symbols of nations which lasted for centuries, and there is a certain propriety in using a short period of time to represent a longer period. In speaking of the prophecies regarding the Antichrist, Bishop Thomas Newton, D.D., in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, says, "It is impossible for all the things which are predicted of Antichrist to be fulfilled in so short a space of time; and neither is Antichrist, or the little horn [Daniel 7], a single man, but a kingdom. "- Pages 246-247. (Revised edition, p. 221.) But we have direct statements from the Bible regarding this matter. For instance, in Ezekiel 4:3-6 the prophet was instructed to lie on his side a certain number of days as "a sign to the house of Israel" These days represented an equal number of years of their iniquity. "I have appointed thee each day for a year." While the seventy-week period, as Dr. Guinness says, is the key to all other time prophecies, it also verifies the whole twenty three-hundred-day period. The seventy weeks were "to seal up the vision and prophecy." Dan. 9:24. Being able to establish by unimpeachable evidence the fulfillment of the events to occur in the first four hundred and ninety years of this prophetic period, we know conclusively when the twenty-three hundred years ended.

<sup>14</sup> Like all other Adventist writers, that the Jews could calculate a period of seven years by means other than the year-day theory does not even enter Gilbert's thinking. He does not eliminate other methods of arriving at that meaning of seven years before concluding that it had to be done using the year-day theory.



The seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, ended in AD. 34, when the apostles definitely turned their attention to the evangelization of the Gentiles. (Acts 13:46.) The remaining eighteen hundred and ten years of this period bring us to AD. 1844. And through all these years an apostate power has "cast down the truth to the ground ... and prospered." (1945, p.23)

## L. R Froom

Froom said much on the year-day principle, as is documented in his magnum opus *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*. In many ways, this four-volume work is an historical apologetic for the year-day principle. Here is one sample of his views on the topic:

Moses and Ezekiel had long before given the inspired key to all prophetic time measurement; namely, that the prophetic time unit is always *a day for a year*; [he footnotes here Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6] just as on a map one inch may stand for one hundred miles. In the application of this basic principle the fulfillment of the prophesied seventy weeks of years – which were to extend from the time of Persia to the Messiah – was first seen to be exactly accomplished in the baptism and death of Christ in connection with the seventieth week. These sublime transactions sealed forever for the Christian church the “year-day” principle already recognised by the Jews. (1948, p.124)

## Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood

In the early 1950s Horn and Wood wrote a seminal work seeking to justify the starting date of 457 BC for the seventy weeks. In that work they added a footnote on the 3½ times of Daniel 7, discussing how many early writers did not understand how many days there were in a prophetic year, or even in a Jewish lunar year:

The 3½ prophetic “times” of Daniel and Revelation (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14) have been regarded from early times as 3½ years, generally reckoned as 360 days each, equivalent to 1260 days (Rev. 11:3; 12:6) and to the 42 months (Rev. 11:2; 13:5) of 30 days each. Thus derived from prophetic periods, these are quite properly called *prophetic* years and months by many expositors. In the past, however, some authors, unfamiliar with the Jewish lunar calendar, have explained the 360-day year with 30-day months as an example of the official ancient Jewish usage.

Many of the leading expositors knew about the Jewish lunar year with its 29-day and 30-day months, or at least did not derive the 360-day prophetic reckoning from a calendar year at all, but from the obvious equivalence of the prophetic period of 3 ½ times with 1260 days (Rev. 12:6, 14) and of the 42 months with the 1260 days (Rev. 11:2,3). But other authors equally well known were misleading. C. S. Faber in 1806 calls the 360-year “the old computation” (*A Dissertation on the Prophecies...of 1260 Years*, vol. 1. p.4), and the following writers of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries designate either the 30-day month or the 360-day year as Jewish reckoning: Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, dissertation 14, p. 192; Edward Bickersteth, *A Practical Guide to the Prophecies*, p. 135; George Croly, *The Apocalypse*, p. 161; William Cuninghame, *A Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets ...and the...Twelve Hundred and Sixty Years*, p.115; *Fessenden and Co.’s Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, art. “Month.” The last-named work says that the Jews had a 365-day year like the Egyptians, with an intercalary month every 120 years!

The idea of a 365¼ Jewish year reflects the opinion of earlier authorities, such as Scaliger (1583) and Funck (1570), from an age when knowledge of ancient chronology and calendation was still rudimentary. Usher (1650) retains this view, but Prideaux (1719) dissents, holding that the Jews exchanged this type of year (which he attributes erroneously to the Chaldean and Persians) for a lunar form with an intercalary month.

The confusion of a prophetic year with a nonexistent Jewish year illustrates the danger of following outmoded authorities. (1970, p.51-52)

This statement illustrates the complex nature of the year-day principle in use, even though it does highlight the fact that so many Bible students used the principle in previous centuries, both Christian and Jewish.

## J. Robert Spangler,

Using his influence as chief editor of the *Ministry*, Spangler espouses his views on the year-day principle in the special edition that commented on the Glacier View conference:

We believe, however that the year-day principle is a valid hermeneutical tool and called for by the context containing the time prophecies. When the context relates to historical narrative with literal people, literal time periods are used in Daniel 1, 3, 5, and 6. [the reader should notice here that Spangler omits the crucial reference to Dn4 where we have a vision involving a symbolic tree and a symbolic time period – seven “times.” –FB] In the apocalyptic passages, when time periods accompany symbolic figures, it is natural and appropriate to expect those time periods also to be symbolic in nature. Numerous other reasons help the prophetic interpreter to distinguish between literal and symbolic time. [Notice “numerous other reasons” are referred to, but one is given; the following...-FB]

We further believe that all of the apocalyptic prophecies in which time elements are found have stood the pragmatic test. That is, their predicted events did occur at the intervals expected, according to the application of the year-day principle. [Readers are referred to Assumption 21 for more on this statement.] (1980, p.21)

It should be realized that a first-century fulfillment of these apocalyptic time prophecies is possible only if the year-day principle is not an inherent, Biblical hermeneutic....(p.30)

There is no reason why the year-day principle should not be accepted as a Biblical principle, especially when the historical fulfillment of these prophecies of the above time prophecies provides ample evidence of its validity [Readers are again referred to Assumption 21 for a rebuttal to this assertion-FB]. (Ibid)<sup>15</sup>

## Paul A. Gordon

Paul Gordon, in his collation of the pioneers’ writings, rehearses the texts supporting the application of the year-day and concludes by summarising:

The pioneers believed that Scripture strongly supports the year-day principle. Considering the concept essential to the unique Adventist belief regarding the sanctuary and its cleansing, they believed it to be explicitly stated in the symbolic instruction given to Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, and implied (1) in the symbolic nature of Daniel’s vision, (2) in the time lapse of the several kingdoms of the vision, and (3) in the pragmatic tests of fulfillment.

They demonstrated its validity within Daniel’s vision itself. The fulfillment of the 70 weeks has precisely demonstrated not only the accuracy of the prophecy but also the validity of the year-day principle in prophecy generally. (1983, pp.61f)

He mainly quotes Smith on this topic, using the standard arguments to prove that the periods in Daniel must be long literal periods from short symbolic periods. He also cites the “pragmatic” test of fulfillment. Readers will note that the third point, “the pragmatic tests,” is addressed in Assumption 21. His argument regarding the use of Daniel 9 to prove the year-day prophecy is covered in [Assumption 16](#).

It is interesting that Gordon refrains from quoting Numbers 14:34 as a text supporting the ‘prophetic’ year-day principle. He merely quotes to Eze.4 in his discussion. With only Ezekiel to rely on he places himself in a desperate position, as will become apparent later in the paper, since this text does not comply with the way SDA historicists apply the year-day principle to the time periods in Daniel.

## George McCready Price

Commenting on Dn7:25, he says:

<sup>15</sup> This simplistic statement by Spalding begs the question, just which historical fulfillment does he refer to for each of the prophecies? There are hundreds of explanations for each of the fulfillments by historicists down through the centuries, and most of them applied it to some point of time relative to their own era. Each generation has its ‘fulfillments’ for historicists. Of course Spalding is only referring to the SDA version of these fulfillments.

And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. The word “they” must include both the saints and the times and the law. All commentators are agreed that this is symbolic or prophetic time, and that it equals three and a half prophetic years, or this many times 360 years, which amounts to 1260 literal years. This period is mentioned repeatedly in these chapters of Daniel and in the book of the Revelation. See Daniel 12:7; Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5. (1955, p.69)

## Bible Readings for the Home Circle.

[Question:] In symbolic prophecy what length of time is represented by a day?

“After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day for a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years.” Numbers 14:34. (See Ezekiel 4:6)

NOTE. – A “time” in prophecy being the same as a year (Dan 11:13, margin and R.V.), three and one-half times would be three and a half years. This is obviously the same as 42 months. And as both these periods are identified by the above texts as equivalent to a thousand two hundred and threescore days, it is evident that a prophetic year is composed of 360 days, or 12 months of 30 days each. A 30-day month would seem reasonable enough to a Jewish writer for general computation, for although the Jews had lunar months of 29 or 30 days, they called the 29-day month “hollow,” or deficient, and a 30-day month “full.” An ideal or theoretical year of “full” months would be 360 days long; but it must be remembered that such a 360-day year was not literal but symbolic, even to the writer of the prophecy. Since in prophecy a day represents a year, the period then, which was to mark the time of the supremacy of the little horn – the Papacy – over the saints, times, and law of God, would therefore be 1260 symbolic, or prophetic days, or 1260 natural years. (1951, p.184)

## M.L Andreason

Andreason is typical of many SDA writers who do not even labour over the proofs for the year-day principle; he just states it and moves on:

These considerations will help us in our attempt to establish the meaning of the twenty-three hundred days of Daniel 8:14. They occur in the midst of a prophecy dealing with a power that has existed longer than any other power on earth. Since this is a part of a prophecy, doubtless prophetic time is here mentioned. If so, twenty-three hundred days stand for twenty-three hundred years, according to well-established prophetic interpretation. “I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Eze. 4:6. (1969, p.289)

Andreason leads us to the conclusion that because the vision dealt with a power that “existed longer than any power on earth,” the time period should be likewise long.

## C. Mervyn Maxwell

Maxwell does not spend a lot of time proving the validity of the year-day prophecy. He just asserts various points relative to Ezekiel and the 3½ times and moves on:

Daniel’s prophecy said that special prerogatives would be given to the little horn for “a time, two times, and half a time.” In Revelation 13: 5 this period is spoken of as 42 months and in Revelation 12: 6 as 1260 days.

‘We are dealing here with symbols. The Bible says that the four beasts are symbols of four kings or kingdoms, that the horns likewise symbolize kingdoms, and that the waters are symbolic of multitudes of people. The Bible also indicates that in symbolic prophecy days represent years.

You will recall that when Daniel lived in Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel lived at Nippur, not very far away... In the symbolic prophecy of Ezekiel chapters 4 to 6, God expressly said to Ezekiel, “I assign you, a day for each year.” Ezekiel 4: 6.

The 1260 “days” or years (538 – 1798) of rising and then declining influence of Roman Catholicism over the minds of men exactly fulfill the “time, two times, and half a time” of Daniel 7 and further confirm our understanding that the Roman Catholic Church is the fulfillment of the little horn. (1981, pp.130f.)

Maxwell also indicates the circular argument of historicists who use their interpretation of the 1260 days to confirm their interpretation of the 2300 days-years. He cites the historicist’s view of



the fulfillment of the 1260 years in 1798 as confirmation of the principle, thereby endorsing the use of the method for the 2300 “evenings mornings” of Dn8:14:

The fulfillment of the 1260 days as 1260 years confirmed the understanding of the 2300 days as 2300 years and this became a key to the further understanding of the sanctuary prophecy of Daniel 8: 14: “For [or rather, *until*] two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the *sanctuary* shall be restored to its rightful state.” (1985, p.278)

Daniel’s prophecy said that special prerogatives would be given to the little horn for “**time, two times, and half a time.**” In Revelation 13:5 this period is spoken of as 42 months, and in Revelation 12:6, as 1260 days.

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### SDA Bible Commentary:

The SDABC has the following entry under the title “Time,” and discusses the significance of “prophetic time” in the article:

Prophetic time: Prophetic time periods are sometimes literal, such as the 70 year captivity predicted by Jeremiah, and sometimes nonliteral, as in figurative, or symbolic, prophecies. In the figurative prophecies, that is, those in which representations such as beasts, horns, etc., stand for something different from the symbol itself, we would also expect the time periods to be nonliteral. From Num 14: 34 and Eze 4:6 the principle has been deduced that a symbolic day represents a literal year. Thus prophetic periods such as the 1260 days are to be interpreted as 1260 actual years.

We find in prophecy other time words besides “day”; for example, one time prophecy mentions “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year” (Rev 9:15). An hour is obviously the 24<sup>th</sup> part of a day. The key as to the number of days to assign to a prophetic month or years lies in the use of the word “time” in several related prophecies (Dan 7:25; 11:13; Heb 12:7; Rev 12:14; etc.).

A “time” in prophecy seems to be equivalent to a “year.” This is shown by a comparison of time periods in the book of Revelation, where 3½ times are equated with 1260 days (ch 12:6, 14) and forty-two months also are equated with 1260 days (ch 11:2, 3). Therefore 3½ “times” are the same period as 42 months (which would be 3½ twelve-month years). Further, from the total of 1260 days for this period it can be computed that one “time,” or year, has 360 days, and that the 42 months have 30 days each.

Now, a year of 12 thirty-day months, totalling 360 days, does not belong to any known calendar of Bible times. Therefore the question arises, Why would such an unusual scheme be used in prophecy? Possibly for the reason that in a lunar calendar such as was used by the Jews, Babylonians, and others, no one could predict the exact number of days in any future series of months or years without knowing not only what specific calendar they were to be reckoned in but also what specific months or years were involved. The year could be either a common lunar year of 354 days (with a day’s variation, depending on the moon) or a “leap” year of 384 days or thereabouts, when an extra month was added to correct the difference between 12 lunar months and the true year. Even an Egyptian, whose 365-day calendar had 12 thirty-day months and 5 extra days at the end of each year, could not tell exactly how many days were included in 3½ years unless he knew whether the interval embraced 3 or 4 of the extra 5-day periods. Thus 3½ calendar years, or 42 months, would not represent a precise period of time to Jewish readers unless the calendar was specified.

The year, then, in symbolic prophecy is a period of 360 symbolic days. A symbolic day in prophecy, it has been noted, is an actual year when translated into literal time. (Some expositors of prophecy have been confused because they forgot that the 30-day month and 360 years are not actual calendar years, and have

tried to reckon the 1260 symbolic days, for example, by 1260 x 360 literal days rather than 1260 actual years.) Now what is an actual, literal year? It is obviously a true solar, or seasonal, year; even the variable lunar calendar such as that used by both Daniel and John, or by the Jews to this day, is kept, through “leap” years, in step with the seasonal year, so that 1260 Jewish years total 1260 natural years. The prophetic, symbolic year (or time), reckoned on the theoretical 30-day month and 360-day year, is not real, but theoretical; but the symbolic day represents an *actual* year, and an actual year is not 360 days but the true solar year of approximately 365 ¼ days. So 3½ years in symbolic prophecy are 1260 symbolic days, which in turn represent 1260 full, natural years; a “time,” or year, in symbolic prophecy represents 360 symbolic days, which in turn represent 360 true, or solar years. ([Horn, 1960](#), Article, “Time,” pp.1097f)

## SDA Bible Encyclopedia

The article “Year-Day Principle” endorses the same view:

The reckoning of a symbolic day as a year in interpreting time periods in symbolic prophecy. The biblical texts generally cited for this are Num. 14:34 and Ezra [sic] 4:6, both of which mention a “day for a year.” This principle, used from medieval time for some of the periods in the books of Daniel and Revelation, became a basic part of the standard Protestant school of interpretation, called the historical, or historicist, view of prophecy. Seventh-day Adventists, being historicists, have inherited this method of interpretation from the earliest commentators.

According to the year-day principle, a symbolic *day* in prophecy stands for a literal year, but a symbolic *year* stands for the same number of actual years as there are days in the symbolic year. The 1335 prophetic *days* (Dan. 12:2) are thus interpreted as 1335 actual years; the three and a half prophetic *years* (as derived from the phrase “time, times and half a time,” Rev. 12:14; cf. Dan. 7:25) are 3½ x 360 = 1260 prophetic *days* or 1260 actual years. ([1996](#), p.920)

## Handbook of SDA Theology

No surprises from this standard SDA reference. Under the article “Biblical Apocalyptic” we read in the point on “the Day-for-a-Year Principle”:

The symbolic visions include time elements that are cast in figurative language. According to Daniel 7:25 the little horn will oppress the saints of the Most High for “a time, two times, and half a time.” In the audition of the following chapter one angel tells another that the sanctuary will be restored after “two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings” (Dan. 8:14)...What do these symbolic time references signify?

At the outset, it is important to recognize that these temporal references occur in symbolic contexts. Hermeneutical consistency, therefore, demands that the time elements be treated in the same way as the rest of the symbolic imagery. The interpreting angel indicated that the ram with the two horns was symbolic of the kings of Media and Persia (Dan. 8:20). The he-goat signified the king (kingdom) of Greece (verse 21). In the symbolism of Revelation 12 the great dragon represents Satan and the woman represents God’s people.

Clearly the imagery is symbolic. The beast, the woman, and the time references should not be understood literally. It is most reasonable, therefore, to assume that just as the short-lived creatures symbolize entities whose existence or dominion in history extended over long periods of time, so also the time elements associated with these symbolic creatures must signify extensive time intervals....

Given the interrelationships between the various time references in the visions and the parallel nature of the visions, it is reasonable to assume with historicist interpreters of the past that in the apocalyptic chapters of Daniel and Revelation a symbolic day signifies a literal year. ([2000](#), pp.797-798)

## 1998 Ministerial Association

In their publication *Seventh-Day Adventists Believe...* the SDA Ministerial Association invokes the year-day principle as the method by which one may understand the time periods used in Dn9:

The key to understanding time prophecies lies in the Biblical principle that a day in prophetic time is equivalent to a literal solar year (Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6) [Inserted footnote here: “On the Biblical foundations of the year-day principle, see William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*”]

(Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1982), pp. 56-93.”] According to this year-day principle, the seventy weeks (or 490 prophetic days) then represent 490 literal years. (1988, p.41)

## Gerhard Pfandl

In the 2004 Sabbath School pamphlet for the fourth quarter of 2004, which looked at the book of Daniel, we get a good summary of standard SDA historicist logic on the year-day principle. Readers will note that Pfandl adds a new argument to the ones used above, stating that the time must be symbolic since the term *year* is never used in the time periods:

A comparison of these texts [Dan. 7:25; Dan. 12:7; Rev. 11:2; Rev. 11:3; Rev. 12:6; Rev. 12:14; Rev. 13:5] shows that a prophetic year has 360 days, and thus three and one half years is the same as 1,260 prophetic days, or 42 prophetic months. As Adventists, we have long believed, and rightly so, that these prophecies demand the day/year principle. Among the biblical reasons for the day/year principle are the following: (1) The visions are symbolic, hence the times indicated should also be symbolic. (2) As the visions extend over long time period, the times specified, therefore, should also be seen as extending over long periods of time. (3) The peculiar way in which the time periods are expressed also indicates that they must apply symbolically; i.e., the fact that the word *years* is never used in any of the time expressions can be explained only on the basis of the year/day principle. (4) The pragmatic test of this principle in Daniel 9:24-27 indicates that, indeed years are intended. (2004a, p.65)

Dr. Pfandl, in his book accompanying the Sabbath School lesson on the book of Daniel, outlines nine reasons why the year-day principle is a valid principle. He begins his explanation by pointing out the uniqueness of the SDA church in holding onto the year-day principle and the accompanying historicist's interpretation of prophecy:

Throughout most of church history people have interpreted apocalyptic time prophecies according to the historicist method of interpretation. Only in the past 200 years have other systems, such as preterism and futurism, replaced historicism as the dominant method of interpreting the books of Daniel and Revelation. Seventh-day Adventists, however, have remained historicists, and they continue to use the year-day principle that forms the backbone of historicism. We can summarize the main points in support of it as follows: [Pfandl inserts a footnote: “For this summary the writer acknowledges his indebtedness to appendix F in Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn.: 1978), pp.300-305.”]

1. Since the visions in Daniel 7 and 8 are largely symbolic, with a number of different beasts representing important historical empires (7:3-7; 8:3-5, 20, 21), the time periods (7:25; 8:14) should also be seen as symbolic.

2. The fact that the visions deal with the rise and fall of known empires in history that existed for hundreds of years indicates that the prophetic time periods must also cover long time periods .

3. The peculiar way in which Daniel expresses the time periods – “time, times and half a time” (Dan. 7:25; 12:7) – indicates that we should not take them literally.

4. In Daniel 7 the little horn power follows the four beasts, which together account for a reign of at least 1,000 years. The horn is its focus of the vision, since it is most directly in opposition to God. Three and a half literal years for the struggle between the little horn and the Most High are out of proportion to the comprehensive scope of salvation history portrayed in the entire vision.

5. According to the context, the expression “time, times and half a time” (Dan.7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14), “forty-two months” (Rev. 11:12; 13:5), and “one thousand two hundred and sixty days” (Rev. 11:3; 12:6) all apply to the same time period, but the natural expression “three years and six months” does not appear even once. “The Holy Spirit seems, in a manner, to exhaust all the phrases by which the interval could be expressed, excluding that one form, which would be used of course in ordinary writing, and is used invariably in Scripture on other occasion, to denote the literal period. This variation is most significant, if we accept the year-day system, but quite inexplicable on the other view.” [Pfandl inserts footnote: “Thomas R. Birks, *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy* (London: William E. Painter, 1843), p.352.”]

6. The prophecies in Daniel 7 and 8, and 10-12 lead up to the “time of the end” (Dan. 8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4,9), which is followed by the resurrection (Dan. 12:2) and the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom (Dan. 7:27). “In the sweep of history described in these prophecies that extends from the prophet in the sixth century B.C. to our time and beyond, literal time periods of only 3 to 6 years are not capable of

reaching anywhere near this final end of time. Therefore, these prophetic time periods should be seen as symbolic and standing for considerable longer periods of actual historical time extending to the end of time.” [Pfandl footnotes: “William Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, rev. ed., Daniel and Revelation Committee Series (Silver Springs, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), Vol.1, p. 73).”]

7. The only commonly used measure of time not employed in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is the year. The prophetic passages refer to days, weeks, and months, but not to the time unit “year.” The most obvious explanation is that the “year” is the unit symbolized by everything else throughout the prophecies.

8. In Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4:6 God deliberately employed the day-for-a-year principle as a teaching device.

9. In Daniel 9:24-27 the 70-weeks prophecy met its fulfillment at the exact time if we use the year-day principle to interpret it. Many interpreters, who in other apocalyptic texts do not employ the year-day principle, recognize that the 70 weeks are in fact “weeks of years” reaching from the Persian period to the time of Christ. Thus the pragmatic test in Daniel 9 confirms the validity of the year-day principle. (2004b, pp.60-62)

## Clifford Goldstein

Goldstein is passionate about the year-day principle. In part 2 chapter 9 of his publication on the book of Daniel entitled, *1844 Made Simple*, Goldstein expresses his defence of the year-day principle. In addition to the type of arguments listed above, Goldstein adds text discussed in Shea’s 1982 publication, and cites the usage in these passages warrants the recognition of a long literary tradition of using days for years:

During the height of the sanctuary controversy, the day-year principle came under attack. People claimed that it was not valid, or at least, that it was not “explicit” in Scripture. Others challenged our application of the day-year principle in Daniel 7, 8 and 9.

The question is crucial. If the principle is not valid, or at least should not be applied in Daniel 7, 8 and 9, our message crumbles.

Is the day-year principle legitimate, and if so, why apply it to those three chapters in Daniel? ...What is the biblical evidence? We are all familiar with Numbers 14:34: “After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year.” And Ezekiel 4:4-6: “According to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it... I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Though these texts hint at the day-year principle, what other evidence exists?

The Old Testament has long recognized a relationship between days and years, and, in some cases, though the word *year* is meant in the text, the literal Hebrew word has been *days*. The Passover feast, for example, was kept once a year. See Exodus 13:10. The text in the KJV is translated: “Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year for [sic] year.” Yet the original Hebrew reads literally “from days to days,” even though it meant from year to year...

There is a common Hebrew word for year, *shanah*, but in these verses “days” is used instead, thus showing a link between year and day in the Bible. Other examples of this type can be found. See 1 Sam. 2:19; 1 Sam. 1:21; 1 Kings 1:1. Nevertheless, even if these and other verses help prove the idea of the day-year relationship, can we be sure that we should apply it to the time prophecies of Daniel 7, 8 and 9?

Daniel 9 stated that from the “commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah” would be sixty-nine weeks. Even if someone argued for a date fifty years different from 457 B.C. for the command to rebuild Jerusalem, about 400 years still exist between that date and the coming of Jesus – “the Messiah the Prince.” If the sixty-nine weeks are literal, then from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (fifth century B.C.) until the Messiah (first century A.D.) would have to be sixty-nine weeks – *or one year, four months, and one week*. Ridiculous! The day-year principle must be applied here, or else the prophecy becomes senseless.

Perhaps the greatest proof of the validity of the day-year principle and its application in Daniel 9 is that it *works*! Is it coincidence that if you apply the principle to sixty-nine weeks, you get a time span that fits the two events depicted in the verse? If you don’t use the principle, the prophecy becomes meaningless; if you

do use the principle, the prophecy works perfectly. That point alone irrefutably proves the day-year principle.

Obviously, the day-year principle is operating in the seventy-week time prophecy, which was “cut off” from the 2300-day time prophecy. Now if the day-year principle is working in one part of the time prophecy, then would it not be logical that it would be working in the other too? Of course, it would be very logical.

Indeed, not only logical, but absolutely necessary....More evidence exists in the 2300 days.... the 2300 days cover all the events listed in the question: the ram, the goat, and the little horn. The time frame then deals with Medo-Persia, Greece, as well as pagan and papal Rome. All these factors are within the time frame of the question “Until when?” and they must be completed with 2300 days.

Taken literally, 2300 days comes to six years, three months, and twenty days. How could this time prophecy be literal and cover all these events? It couldn't...Therefore it must be using the day-year principle, which covers over two millennia, enough to span all the events. Without the day-year principle, the prophecy makes no sense.

Also, though the prophecy starts out with nations that go back thousands of years, Daniel was told that the vision was for “the time of the end.” Obviously, any time frame involved must cover much more than six years in order to bring the prophecy from thousands in the past into the “time of the end.” Without the day-year principle, the prophecy could not extend that far. Here too, the day-year principle solves the problem.

In Daniel 7, we have this terrible little horn power. By far, more details are given about the horn than about all the other beasts, which included the mighty Babylonian, Media-Persian, Grecian and pagan Roman empires – nations that lasted hundreds of years apiece. Yet the emphasis is on the little horn power, who is so terrible that God himself in the judgment brings an end to it. Yet this little horn power, worse than any of the other beasts lasting for hundreds of years is going to last only a literal three and a half years?<sup>16</sup> A literal three and a half years doesn't fit the magnitude of the larger events depicted in the previous parts of the prophecy....Here, too, literal time does not fit the events that are depicted in the prophecy though, again, the day-year principle solves the problem....Clearly, much evidence exists for the day-year principle in Daniel 7, 8, and 9. They make no sense without it. (1988, pp.74-79; cf. also 2003, pp.104-111)

## Roy Gane

Another populist Adventist writer, Roy Gane published a book defending the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary, entitled *Who's Afraid of the Judgment?* In one chapter he looks at the objections regarding Judgment beginning in 1844, and then seeks to answer them. One of those objections was the year-day theory. Gane follows the same arguments as those listed above, including the new argument developed by Shea and mentioned by Goldstein previously based on the literary use of *day* and *year* in literary and historical writings of the Old Testament:

If the 2,300 “days” in Daniel 8:14 represent something other than years, then prophecy doesn't span 2,300 years nor does it point to 1844. What are the alternatives? If the period prophesied is 2,300 literal, twenty-four-hour days, it means that just 6.3 years lead up to the justifying of the sanctuary. What then would be the starting point, and when would the 6.3 years end? If we take seriously the text of Daniel 8, according to which the 2,300 “days” covers the span of the vision from the Medo-Persian period through Hellenistic domination into the Roman era and on to the “time of the end” (verse 17), the result is absurdity. Obviously the reigns of some individual monarchs alone, not to mention the Medo-Persian period itself covered more than 6.3 years.

Furthermore, why would Daniel be as upset as Daniel 9 portrays him about a delay in the restoration of the sanctuary of a mere 6.3 years? That would be like complaining when someone promises us peace in the Middle East in less than a decade...There is however, solid evidence for “days” representing literal years in the symbolic time prophecies of Daniel – a principle of interpretation that is crucial for the historical/historicist (as opposed to the preterist or futurist) approach to Daniel.

<sup>16</sup> Goldstein has forgotten here that the 3½ years is only for the persecution by the little horn, not for the duration of the little horn, which he himself states elsewhere, rather than to the existence of the little horn power. (see Ibid, p.23).



1. To begin with, the Hebrew word *yom*, “day,” can be used for a period of time other than a day of twenty-four hours. Scholars have recognized verses in which the plural of *yom* means “year.” Here are some examples:

“The man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the Lord the *yearly sacrifice*” – literally, “*sacrifice of the days*” (1 Samuel, 1:21, emphasis supplied; compare 2:19; 20:6).

“Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you then pieces of silver *a year*” – literally, “*for the days*” (Judges 17:10, emphasis supplied).

“And the number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was *a year* and four months” – literally, “*days* and four months” (1 Samuel 27:7, emphasis supplied).

2. In Numbers 14:34, God specified punishment for the rebellion of the Israelites, who refused to take the Promised Land because they believed the ten faithless scouts (see Numbers 13). The punishment fit the crime: “‘According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, even forty years, and you shall know my opposition.’” The Israelites were to wander for forty years in the wilderness, one year for each day of the scout’s mission.

3. In Ezekiel 4, the Lord commanded the prophet Ezekiel to perform symbolic actions to impress on his people the gravity of their situation. God told him to lie on one side for the number of days that corresponded to the years of iniquity committed by the northern kingdom of Israel, and then to do the same on the other side for the years of Judah’s iniquity: “ ‘As for you, lie down on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; you shall bear their iniquity for the number of days that you lie on it. For I have assigned you a number of days corresponding to the years of iniquity, three hundred and ninety days; thus you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year’ ” (Ezekiel 4:4-6).

4. ... we noted that the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27 are seventy sabbatical-year cycles of seven years each, comprising a total of 490 years, which comprise ten jubilee cycles of forty-nine years each (see Leviticus 25). In this case we can verify historically the result of applying the day/year principle: Jesus began his ministry in A.D. 27 at the beginning of the last “week” of years of the 490 years that stretch from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34. So Christ came exactly when Daniel said He would, *if* we understand Daniel’s “weeks” to be weeks of years rather than of days....

5. In keeping with the symbolic nature of the prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8, we would expect the time periods in these chapters to be symbolic also. Indeed, just as the symbolic animals in these chapters are unusual, so also the prophecies present the time periods in unusual terminology, apparently to emphasize their symbolic nature. Thus Daniel 8:14 specifies 2,300 “evenings-mornings,” an abnormal expression for 2,300 days....

Daniel 7:25 speaks of “a time, times and half a time” during which the little-horn power would persecute the people of God. The Aramaic word *‘iddan*, translated “time,” is not a usual word for a particular unit of time, such as the day, week, month, or year. But its meaning becomes clear when we look at Daniel 4, where the prophet uses the same word for the “seven times” (or “seven periods of time”) that would pass over Nebuchadnezzar before his mind would be restored (verses 16, 32). Verse 34 says, “ ‘At the end of *that period* [literally “the days,” that is, “the years”] I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me” (emphasis supplied). So if “times” means years here, the same meaning would work in Daniel 7:25 – three and one-half years. Comparison with Revelation 12 confirms this interpretation of Daniel’s times. In speaking of the same period of persecution, this chapter uses Daniel’s terminology of three-and-a-half “times” (verse 6). So, three-and-a-half times equals three-and-a-half years at 360 days per year. See also Revelation 11:2, 3; 13:5, where this period is given as “forty-two months.” At thirty days per month, forty-two months equals 1,260 days.

Now we can better understand the connection in Daniel 12 between “a time, times, and half a time” (verse 7), which we now know is 1,260 days, and two longer periods that are explicitly numbered in “days” rather than “times”: “1,290 days” (verse 11) and “1,335 days” (verse 12). The contexts in both Daniel and Revelation describe extensive persecution by a major religious power. Clearly, then, the 1,260 days cannot be 1,260 literal twenty-four-hour periods but must be prophetic/symbolic “days” – in other words, 1,260 literal years. Indeed, we have identified the persecutor as the Church of Rome, and the persecution carried out by that church extended over many centuries.

To dismiss the time periods in Daniel as merely symbolic and therefore not to be connected to real spans of specific historical time would not do justice to this kind of prophetic literature. First, the symbolic image, animals, and horns of Daniel 2, 7, and 8 represent actual historical powers, some of which explicitly identifies as such in his book (2:38; 8:20, 21). Second, we have found that in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 specific numbers of “days” are used symbolically for the same number of real years. Third, we have seen that in Daniel 9:24-27, the time frame of the seventy weeks matches the historical chronology of Christ’s second coming.

In the context of Daniel 9:24-27, the “weeks” are so obviously sabbatical year period, that is, weeks of years, that the day-year principle hardly seems to be in effect. However, elsewhere in the Hebrew bible the word for “week” denotes a week of days. The terminology for the sabbatical years in Leviticus 25:8 is related to that of Daniel but different – literally “sabbath of years”: ““You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time [literally “days”] of the seven sabbaths of years, namely forty-nine years.”” So again, we see that unusual use of terminology in Daniel, in this case “weeks” for weeks of years, is symbolic and alerts us to the presence of the day-year principle. (2006, pp.68-72)

On the use of Daniel 9 to defend the year-day principle, Gane refers us to the “sabbatical year” model, which interprets Dn9 *without* the year-day principle. He says:

... we noted that the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27 are seventy sabbatical-year cycles of seven years each, comprising a total of 490 years, which comprise ten jubilee cycles of forty-nine years each (see Leviticus 25). In this case we can verify historically the result of applying the day/year principle: Jesus began his ministry in A.D. 27 at the beginning of the last “week” of years of the 490 years that stretch from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34. So Christ came exactly when Daniel said He would, *if* we understand Daniel’s “weeks” to be weeks of years rather than of days....

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But Gane is not alone in doing this. In addition to Shea, another who takes this position and still uses the year-day principle in Dn9 is Jacques Doukhan.

## Jacques Doukhan

Commenting on the 3½ times, Doukhan says:

Our text indicates its duration in time – it is to last “a time, times and half a time,” that is, three years and a half. Our interpretation rests on several elements:

A preceding passage has used the same word for “time” (*idan*) [sic] in the sense of years (Dan. 4:16, 23, 25).

Aramaic understands the indefinite plural “times” (Dan. 7:25) as a plural of duality (that is, two times); thus adding up to a period of three years and half, that is 1260 days (the Jewish year, like the Babylonian year, follows the lunar calendar and consists of 360 days).

The same expression appears in Dan. 12:7 in relation to similar scopes of time (1290 days and 1335 days), all of which count down to the same time of the end (Dan. 12:7, 9, 11, 12).

<sup>17</sup> As I have shown in Assumption 16, the Greek form of this Hebrew concept is found in extant literature in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., as is the Latin equivalent, found in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. And even there, the Romans acknowledged the presence of the idea even in Etruscan society, which would put usage of the term by the Etruscans around the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C. Though irregular from standard terminology, it is attested in non-prophetic, non-symbolic literature. Perhaps we can classify this word as chronological metalanguage, that is, a specialised word dealing with aspects of chronology, and as such, is not really symbolic at all. Just as every science and branch of knowledge has language specific to itself, so “week” in chronology has more than one application among the ancient chronologers. The examples listed and given in Assumption 16 certainly attest this. But “week/sevens” was used more widely than chronology. Varro shows it was also used just to group things in sets of seven, as in his case, groups of seven books.

The book of Revelation (Rev. 11:2,3; 12:6; 13:5) further establishes our method of calculation. It uses the same formula, “one time, times and half a time,” in relation to the event of persecution, converting it into 1260 days (Rev. 11:3 and 12:6) or into 42 months (Rev. 11:2, 13:5).

Thus situated in time, the period takes on historical significance. Employing the information above, we can place it chronologically. There is, however, a contextual difference between the “times” of chapter 4 and the “times” of chapter 7. In chapter 4 the context was a historical one, while in chapter 7 we find ourselves in a prophetic context. The latter uses symbolic language that should not be taken literally. Evidences for such usage appear in the book of Ezekiel, a prophet contemporary to Daniel, and also in exile (Eze. 4:6). Traces of it are also present in the book of Daniel (see commentary on Daniel 9). We thus conclude that the expression “a time, times and half a time” signifies 1260 prophetic days, that is, 1260 years. (2000, pp.108f)

When we examine Doukhan’s comments on Daniel 9, we find him discussing the period of 70 weeks in units of sabbatical years, and then on turning the page, he changes tack and discusses them in terms of the day-for-a-year system:

These weeks are prophetic. One day, therefore, corresponds to one year, which gives us week-years, rather than week-days.

Already the passage in Daniel confirms this. The period of the seventy years in Jeremiah in the introduction (verses 2, 3) echoes that of the 70 weeks in Daniel in the conclusion (verses 24-27). The two periods are related in a chiasmic structure: the first phrase is “seventy year” (A B); the second phrase is formulated backwards, “weeks seventy (B<sub>1</sub> A<sub>1</sub>)...This chiasm already hints at the nature of those weeks by paralleling “seventy” with “seventy” and “years” with “weeks.” Right from the start, the text of Daniel should give us a directive as to what line of interpretation to follow: that we should read these weeks as weeks of years.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, immediately following chapter 9, the first words of chapter 10 directly confirm the interpretation given above. When it mentions three weeks of fasting, the text chooses to add the precise “three weeks of days” (verse 2, literal translation), the only occurrence in the whole Bible of such a careful distinction, as though to distinguish between the two sorts of weeks” the week of years in Daniel 9 and the week of days in chapter 10.<sup>19</sup>

The equation of “day-year” appears throughout the Bible. Narratives often employ the word “days” (*yamin*) in the sense of years to the point where most versions actually translate it by “years” (see Ex. 13:10; Judges 11:40; 1 Sam. 1:21; 2:19; 27:7; Num. 9:22; 1 Kings 11:42; “Gen 47:9). The poetic passages of the Bible contain many parallelisms between “days” and “years”: “Are your days like those of a mortal or your years like those of a man?” (Job 10:5); “I thought about the former days, the years of long ago” (Ps. 77:5); “To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa. 61:2).<sup>20</sup> (Ibid, pp.143f)

Then Doukhan intertwines the sabbath of years into this idea to give the impression that the development of the sabbatical agri-system endorses the year-for-a-day principle:

This principle also appears in Levitical texts. For six years the Israelite farmer was to work his land, but on the seventh year of rest a sabbath, like the seventh day of the week (Lev. 25: 1-7), with the difference that it was a Sabbath of years” and not a “Sabbath of days.” The Bible uses the same language in regard to the jubilee: “Count off seven sabbath of years – seven times seven years” (verse 8). The principle also applied to prophecy. (Ibid, p.144)

Then he reverts back to talking about the other occurrences of the principle:

<sup>18</sup> What Doukhan has failed to see here is that this idea only confirms his view on the previous pages – that the 70 weeks is related to the sabbatical-year system, rather than seeing the “week” as a group of seven “prophetic” days to be taken as days for a year. Observe too that Daniel 9 is not considered a vision, but is written in literal language; therefore the periods should be considered as literal periods as well; thus ruling out the caveat that the days of these 70 weeks are symbolic.

<sup>19</sup> Doukhan has not considered other research like Shea’s that show the use of the apposition in ch10 indicating that the concept of “three weeks days” means three *full* weeks. (Shea, 1982, p.76; See also Goldstein, 2003, p.105f)

<sup>20</sup> Does this mean that because the principle is found in non-prophetic literature, it is a principle that we should apply to all occurrences of the use of *day* in Scripture whether it be prophetic or not? Or that every occurrence of *years* in non-prophetic literature should be interpreted as though the days represent years? Doukhan argues that we should use the principle when it is only applied to “prophetic” time, but then he takes his examples to defend the use of it from non-prophetic references. Hardly a consistent position!!



Hence, the 40 days during which the spies explored Canaan became 40 years of wandering in the desert. “For forty years – one year for each of the forty days you explored the land – you will suffer for your sins” (Numbers 14:34). Likewise, God commanded the prophet Ezekiel to lie on his left side for so many days, each day symbolizing a year: “I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin” (Eze. 4:5).

Then he refers to the pre-Christian period reference to weeks in intertestamental period Jewish writings as supporting the year-for-a-day principle:

3. Both Jewish tradition and Christian tradition have understood the weeks of Daniel as weeks of years. Among numerous works, we cite from the Hellenistic literature texts such as the Book of Jubilees (third/second century B.C.E.), the Testament of Levi (first century B.C.E.), 1 Enoch (second century B.C.E.); in the Qumran literature (second century B.C.E.) such texts as II Q Melchisedek, 4 Q 384-390 Pseudo-Ezekiel, the Damascus Document; in the rabbinical literature, texts such as the Seder Olam (second century C.E.), the Talmud, the Midrash Rabbah, and later the classical exegetes of the Middle Ages such as Saadia Gaon, Rashi, Ibn Ezra in the *Miqraoth Gdoloth*. [Doukhan footnotes: “See Jacques Doukhan, *Drinking at the Fountain*, (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1981, p.67.”] All testify since the most ancient times to the validity of the our line of interpretation. The day-year principle is probably the most ancient and the most solid principle in the exegesis of our passage. (2000, pp.143-145, cf. also 1987, pp.31-44)

But not all Adventist writers spoke unreservedly for the implicit nature of the year-day principle in prophecy, nor the use of Numbers 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 for the basis of a general principle of interpretation. Notice the following writer.

### Don Neufeld.

Don Neufeld, an influential editor and writer, associate editor for the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, and past associate editor of the SDA church magazine “*Adventist Review*”<sup>21</sup> back in the late 1970’s, had this important comment to make on the year-day principle, before the Glacier View event burst onto the horizon. His views on the topic were a surprising variation from the usual party line that normally emanated from the pages of *Adventist Review*. This article was thus all the more significant:

...she [Ellen White] represents the promises concerning the time Jesus would return as being conditional. This means that if certain conditions had been met, Jesus would have come earlier, seemingly as early as the generation specified in Matt.24:34.

If this explanation is accepted, and Jesus had come long ere this, what would have happened to the long-time prophecies, the 1260-days and the 2300 days?

It should be noted that these prophecies were not understood as referring to long periods of time, until many centuries after the birth of Christ. According to the researchers of Leroy Froom, the year-day principle (a day in prophecy represents a solar year in fulfillment) was not understood until about the ninth century AD. Therefore no one would have detected any breaking of prophecy if Jesus had come earlier.

It should also be noted that these prophecies were expressed in terms such as “days,” (Dan.8:14; Rev. 12:6), “time,” (Dan. 7:25) and “months” (Rev. 13:5). There is no indication in the prophecies themselves that any scale measure ought to be applied to “days,” “months” or “times.” The Holy Spirit gave direction to do this only after the time was postponed. At whatever time the fulfillment would have come, the Holy Spirit could have provided the appropriate scale.

Some have felt that Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 establish the year-day principle as needing to be applied to all time prophecies. But a careful examination of these passages shows that the principle is applied only to specific cases and that there is no general statement in these passages suggesting that a universal principle is set forth. In fact, Seventh-day Adventists do not apply the principle consistently to all time prophecies. For example, the length of the millennium is stated in Revelation 20:3, 5, 7 as being “a thousand years.” This is accepted literally. If the year-day principle were applied, the length would be 360, 000 years.

<sup>21</sup> Also named around the same time “*Review and Herald*.”

To me, the conditional element Ellen White applies to prophecy supplies the simplest solution to the problem of Matt. 24:34, one that is fair to the biblical text. I know that people have proposed other solutions, all of which to my mind present certain problems. I suggest those who have not previously considered the conditional element at least give it a consideration. (1979)

What is staggering here is that this opinion appeared the magazine that had been the standard bearer since the inception of the church, *the Adventist Review*, the standard church magazine for SDA members since the inception of the church. Had Neufeld fronted up with copy like that today, he would certainly been shown the door, and serious doubts cast over his membership in the church. It is a pity that Neufeld's appeal for an honest examination on the topic fell on deaf ears, or more correctly, his ideas hinted of directions in study those in the positions of power and authority in the church did not want to pursue.<sup>22</sup> This statement of Neufeld's is as pertinent today as it was then, coming from one of the great minds of Adventism, and yet, in spite of the challenge from the conservative, orthodox editor's desk of the Review and Herald office itself, an answer has not been forthcoming that satisfies the obvious parameters, as this paper shows. Scholarship in the Adventist church instead has gone in entirely the opposite direction to that of Neufeld, shedding the need along the way for rigorous, honest, reasoning. With these comments we conclude this section reviewing the views of standard SDA historicists' on the definition and application of the year-day principle.

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<sup>22</sup> An attempted rebuttal to Neufeld's ideas of conditionality applying to apocalyptic prophecy was written by fellow editor William G. Johnsson entitled, "Conditionality in Biblical Prophecy with Particular Reference to Apocalyptic," in *The 70 Weeks, Leviticus and the Nature of Prophecy*, edited by Frank Holbrook, Biblical Research Institute, 1986.

## 2.2 The Textual Basis of the Year Day Principle

Having examined a sample of pioneer and contemporary views on the year-day principle, we should examine the two main texts from Numbers and Ezekiel used to substantiate this principle. After that, we will look at how SDA historicists use Dn9 to support their theory. Later in the paper, we will examine other texts that have been presented recently in support of this principle from historical prose, poetic and legislative texts in the OT.

The two texts cited century after century by historicists in support of the year-day principle have been Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. To these we now turn. I will firstly cite the Hebrew and the English version of each text and then give a short context for these texts. Then we will consider them together.

### 2.2.1 Numbers 14:33-34:

**BHS:** <sup>23</sup>

**KJV:**

33. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

34. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

**NIV:**

33. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies dies in the desert.

34. "For forty years – one year for each day of the forty days you explored the land – you will suffer for your sins and know what it is to have me against you."

#### Context of Numbers 14.

According to Numbers 10:11-13, the children of Israel had been camped in the wilderness of Paran. They had moved from the wilderness of Sinai. Just prior to the sending out of the spies to reconnoitre the land they were destined to inhabit, there were a number of rebellious incidents in the camp. These included the complaints at a place called Taberah (Num 11: 1-3); and the complaint over the plainness of the manna (Num 11: 4-35). After the camp then moved to a place called Hazeroth, another complaint arose against Moses' marriage to an Ethiopian woman which involved Moses' sister Miriam. She was punished. The nation then moved from Hazeroth to the wilderness of Paran (Num 12:16). This was when the directive came to spy out the land of Canaan (Num 13: 1-2). Representatives from the tribes were organised and sent (vs 3-20) with a brief of knowledge to collect. The rest of chapter 13 details their mission into the land of Canaan and the report they brought back to Moses. However, they had managed to get a good idea of the land to which they were going, and the nature of the present inhabitants, the majority report of the spies was a negative one, not believing they were able to eject the present inhabitants from the territory. The minority report of Joshua and Caleb – a report supported by faith in the leading of God was discounted by the crowd.

<sup>23</sup> Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia., see [Elliger and Rudolph, 1984](#).

The results of the report did not go down favourably with the populace and so they grumbled and complained (Num 14:1-10) to the point of nearly stoning Moses. The Lord intervened (vs.11-12) and explained the retribution he was intending on the unbelievers. Moses intervened on behalf of the people (vs.13-19) and God, in response to Moses' pleadings, instead condemned the nation to a life in the desert (vs.20-39) until that generation died out, and a new generation would be given the opportunity of believing the Lord and invading the land of Canaan and taking possession of it. It is in the explicating of this punishment that the Lord points out his use of the days of spying as the measure for doling out the years of punishment (v.34).

Every year that passed, and was deducted from the forty years of punishment, was a new and solemn exhortation to repent, as it called to mind the occasion of their rejection. (Kurtz, in [Keil, 1978](#), The Pentateuch, vol. 3, p.97)

### **2.2.2 Ezekiel 4: 1-6:**

**BHS:**

**KJV:**

1. Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and portray upon the city, even Jerusalem:
2. And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about.
3. Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city; and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.
4. Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it; according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity.
5. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.
6. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

**NIV:**

“ Now, son of man, take a clay tablet, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem. Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face towards it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel.

Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel.

After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. Turn your face towards the siege of Jerusalem and with the bared arm prophesy against her. I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.”

## Context of Ezekiel 4

In the early chapters of Ezekiel, the prophet is given a variety of messages. The first chapter is a vision of the glory of God; the second chapter is Ezekiel's commission; the third chapter continues with instruction regarding his responsibilities as a prophet to Israel. The fourth chapter describes a dramatic exercise Ezekiel was to undertake symbolising the siege of Jerusalem.

He is told to take a tile/brick as a symbol of the city of Jerusalem and build model fortifications around about the brick as would be done in a real siege. This included a wall of iron, siegeworks ("fort" KJV) and an earth ramp up to the wall tops (vs.2-3).

Ezekiel is then told to lie on his left side (presumably near this model-city siege) 390 days, and then on his right side 40 days (vs.4-6). During this time he would bear the iniquities of Israel and Judah (vs.4-6) (how he does this is not given). He will also be bound in that position for that period of time (v.8). During this time he was to remain on tight food and water rations (vs.9-12) and would cook his food with cow dung (vs. 13-15).

### 2.3 Examining Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6

Numbers 14 and Eze 4 together with the fulfillment of the coming of the Messiah as fulfilled in Dn9 constitute the bastion of the year-day principle since Medieval times among Christians. I intend to examine Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 to ascertain the validity of seeing in them a prophetic principle that teaches one symbolic day in prophecy equals one literal/solar year in fulfillment. Daniel 9 will be discussed in the next section.

#### 2.3.1 Discussion of the Relationship between Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6.

##### 2.3.1.a What is 'literal,' or 'symbolic' in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 – "days" or "years"?

The usual English phrase found in SDA literature to explain this so-called principle is 'the year for a day' principle or 'year-day principle.' This means that one year in calendar time is equivalent to one day of prophetic time. SDA historicists say the situation in Numbers and Ezekiel highlight this phrase correctly, since in the case of Numbers 14, the 40 *years* are for 40 *days* and in the case of Ezekiel, the 430 *years* are for 430 *days*. Some SDA writers try to be more correct than this and call it the day-year principle.<sup>24</sup> That is to say, the "symbolic" part is put first in the phrase and the "literal" period is placed second. The second part of the phrase is the part that results from the application of the year-day principle to the "symbolic" days in the prophecies. But although the convention of expressing it changes, they still mean that *one symbolic day in prophecy is equivalent to one literal solar year in fulfillment*. The first period is the one that is being converted and the second one is the period after applying the conversion. But I will show they have ignored the context entirely.

The process of interpreting prophetic time is to use the time period that is given *first in the text* as the symbolic one and convert that to days and then by saying that these *days* are symbolic or figurative, then convert them to calendar time by saying the number of days represents the same number in *years*. Taking Numbers 14: 34, SDA historicists say we take the forty days and convert them to forty years. The forty *days* are *symbolic* and the forty *years* are *literal* time.

However, in the case of Ezekiel, the period subject to being converted is the time Israel and Judah spent in rebellion. Since the first time period should be symbolic, this would mean that

<sup>24</sup> E.g., Goldstein (1988, pp.74-79; cf. also 2003, pp.104-111), Gane, (2006, pp.68-72), Pfandl, (2003, pp.104-111), Mansell, (2002, pp.31-34).

these *years* of rebellion are symbolic. The second time period – the number of *days* that Ezekiel was to spend on either side is literal according to this rationale. As is readily seen, this concept is never taught by SDA historicists. They teach the opposite: that it is the *days* of Ezekiel on his side are symbolic, and the *years* of rebellion are literal. (Nichol, 1976, pp. 589f., 833) This is correct. But it does not fit either the analogy of the phrase nor the example given us in Numbers 14:34.

If we were to look at the normal process used by SDA historicists to convert so-called prophetic time into calendar time, we would use the following logic to calculate the periods in Ezekiel. We would take the unconverted time period, which is the number of years they rebelled and convert this into “symbolic prophetic” days. *These* days would be then be converted into literal solar years. Taking the 390 years of rebellion, which would be 140,400 symbolic days ( $390 \times 360 = 140900$ ), Ezekiel should have lied on his side for 140,400 years (since the symbolic day needs to be converted into a calendar year). In the case of the forty years of Judah’s rebellion, which equalled 14,400 days, Ezekiel would need to lie on his other side 14,400 years since the symbolic 40 years or 14,400 days represents 14,400 calendar years. The SDA historicists do not do this and would argue against this logic, even though they apply this logic to the other time periods except the millennium of Revelation 20. Their objection to applying their rationale to Ezekiel clearly shows that they cannot use Ezekiel 4 to justify their “prophetic principle.” And later in the paper, I will show that Numbers 14 does not support their position either, since it is the forty *years* that are symbolic, not the forty *days*.

The conclusion I arrive at later in this section is that since SDA historicists cannot use Ezekiel 4:6 as their model for calculating prophetic periods as indicated above, and they cannot use Numbers 14: 34 as their model since it is the *years* of their banishment that are symbolic, not the *days* of spying, they do not have any text to use as a model to support their method of calculation. Later in the paper we examine the ideas of Shea, who supports the view that the method of time conversion in Num 14 and Eze 4 are indeed the reverse of each other.

Ford says a similar thing in his recent commentary on Daniel:

In neither instance is it declared that the Lord is setting forth a principle that is to govern symbolic time prophecies. In Numbers 14 it is only said that as the spies on their mission of unbelief had searched the land forty days, so that many years would the people wander in unbelief. The prophetic part of the verse uses years for years.<sup>25</sup> They are literal, and not the symbol of anything else. If we were to apply the year-day principle to Number 14:34, the result would be an anticipated fourteen-thousand-four-hundred years of wandering, not forty. But nobody makes that mistake, for the words are clear. So, in this instance, literal years answer to literal days, and the prophecy is not to be taken symbolically and translated from years to days and then days to years, as SDAs do with Daniel 7:25. There is no parallel here to usage elsewhere, and neither is there use a principle intended to govern passages elsewhere. (1996, p.239)

Other historicist writers before the nineteenth century *quoted the phrase* from the passage in Ezekiel 4: 6 using the proof-text method, but they never followed what Eze. 4: 6 taught. Why not? Because the principle taught in Ezekiel is *exactly the opposite calculation* as the one alluded to in the phrase “a year for a day” and as applied in Numbers 14: 34.

Looking again at Ford’s comment on Ezekiel 4:

In Ezekiel’s experience, the days he is told to lie on his side mean actual days and not years. What we have here is not a symbolic prophecy at all, but a symbolic action. If here a day stands for a year, then we would anticipate that Ezekiel would need to lie on his left side three-hundred and ninety years, and on his right side, forty years. Nobody has ever applied the passage in that manner for obvious reasons. The prophet is clearly told that each day of his future activity is a symbol of a year *in the past*. Note, this is the reverse to the usual (SDA) application of the relationship between days and years for prophecies. The

<sup>25</sup> According to what Ford is saying we should see the text say “According to the number of days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day a year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty **days**, and you will know my displeasure. (Num. 14:34 RSV) Then the fact that it was fulfilled in forty years indicates that this statement meant days for years, and thus the year-day principle would be operating.



period ahead is smaller, not greater, for Ezekiel real days ahead image real years in the past – not visa versa. (Ibid, pp.239-240)

The mere fact that both texts have the statement in the same order “a day for a year” may have been enough for their superficial ‘proof-text method’ of teaching the Bible, but closer study will yield the conclusion that the concepts in both texts yield entirely different results with the same numbers, in the same manner as I have done in the example above with the 2 year period. The fact that the Bible says “a day for a year,” and it says it in the same order in both texts, though the texts use those figurative periods are calculated and operate in entirely different ways, is a significant problem that these SDA historicists just gloss over and refuse to adequately address. This, however, is one of the points that are the nemesis of their theory.

There is no correspondence between Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4:6 in the way that SDA historicist's want us to see it. What is worse, if these two texts are used as justification for the year-day concept, then the application of both Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4: 6 are contradictory and would cancel out each other. SDA historicists quote *both* these texts to support their conversion of days in prophecy to calendar years. But they cannot use both texts for converting periods of time in prophecies since one (Num 14: 34) would turn *days into years*, whereas applying the other (Eze 4: 6) would turn *the years into days*. For example, 2300 “prophetic” days or 6.3 “prophetic” years, converts into 2300 “literal” years using the Numbers 14:34 analogy, whereas 2300 “prophetic” days or 6.3 “prophetic” years converts to 6.3 literal days using the Eze 4:6 analogy. SDA historicists have chosen the system used in Numbers 14: 34 and *not* the system used in Eze 4: 6, and have incorrectly said that just as the “days” in Num. 14: 34 are symbolic and are converted into years by God himself, so the “days” in the prophecies are symbolic and need to be converted to years. Yet even Numbers 14: 34 poses insuperable problems for them. The “days” in Num.14:34 are *not* symbolic/figurative as is required by them for the text to be used the way SDA historicists argue. It is the “years” in Numbers 14: 34 that are symbolic/figurative. Observe the following table. I have arranged the details in this text so that it corresponds with the form “day for a year.” That is, I have placed the “day” part of the text in the first column, which they say is the symbolic part, and I have placed the “year” part or the literal part in the second column. This creates problems for Numbers 14. if the years is the year then does the 40 years in the desert determine the amount of time the spies can scout the land?

**Table 2. The SDA Understanding of the Phrase: “a Day (symbolic) for a Year (literal).”**

	DAYS (SYMBOLIC)	YEARS (LITERAL)
Numbers 14: 34	The scouts wander the land of Canaan for 40 <i>symbolic</i> days and Israel do not believe report of conquest possible. (A day symbolising each year of banishment.)	Israel to wander in the desert for 40 <i>literal</i> years.

Ezekiel 4:4-6	Ezekiel to lie on his <u>left side</u> , on rations and tied up for 390 <i>symbolic</i> days.  Ezekiel to lie on his <u>right side</u> , on rations and tied up for 40 <i>symbolic</i> days. (A day symbolising every year the nation rebelled)	Israel rebelled 390 <i>literal</i> years.  Judah rebelled 40 years.
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If we are looking at the days being ‘symbolic’ and the years being literal, this table summarises the facts quite well. When we ask the question: “What do the 390 *symbolic* days and the 40 *symbolic* days of Ezekiel’s experience represent?” the answer comes back, the days that Ezekiel endured enacting the siege of Jerusalem are indeed symbolic of the *literal* years of the national rebellion.

But the SDA position falls apart with Numbers 14: 34. By following the rubric of the SDA historicists saying that the days are symbolic, then we have to ask the question, What do the forty ‘*symbolic*’ days of scouting in the land symbolise? What are they symbolic of? We have no answer. We know that the days for Ezekiel symbolise the pre-existing national rebellion. What pre-existing time or event do the 40 days of scouting represent? Did it represent the 400 years that Israel was in Egypt? The phrase would have to say “a day for a decade” if that was the case. Did it represent the eighty years that Moses the deliverer had been in preparation to deliver the people? The phrase would have to say “a day for two years” if that was the case. Did they spy the land knowing that each day was symbolic of something, just as Ezekiel and those watching his actions were aware that for each day he was lying there, he was enacting the siege caused by the sins of previous generations? The 40 days of scouting *cannot* represent the 40 years in the desert because that rebellion had not occurred yet. Therefore, this is an unanswerable position. The period of scouting by the spies symbolised nothing. It was not symbolic. The “days” part of the phrase “day for a year” does *not* indicate that the days in Numbers 14: 34 are symbolic and the “years” are literal. The opposite is the case. The period of scouting by the spies was the literal period and the 40 years in the wilderness symbolised the days of scouting. Every year that they were in the desert they knew it represented one day of the spies in Canaan. It represented a pre-existing period, just as the days of Ezekiel represented a pre-existing period.

SDA historicists’ failure to address this question is a fatal flaw in their argument. What they do with the “day for a year” statement is twist it to mean something different in one text when compared to the other. That is to say, one cannot line up the SDA statements in both Num. 14: 34 and Eze 4: 6 and see that they are using the phrase “day for a year” in the same manner in both cases. They have to change the meaning of symbolic so that they can make the “day” part of the phrase symbolic in Numbers 14: 34.

Notice Smith:

In this representation Ezekiel himself became a symbol. He was acting a symbolic part, an individual representing a nation, the *days* in which he was acting his part symbolizing the actual *years* of the punishment of those whom he represented.

Another instance, not so evidently symbolic in its nature, but equally definite in showing how God uses short periods of time to represent longer ones, and the proportion to observed between them, is found in Num. 14: 34, “Forty days, each *day* for a *year*.”....(1898, pp. 166 f.)



Smith here argues that in Eze 4: 6, the days are symbolic and that the years are literal years. In Num 14: 34, he says that the days here are “representative” of the literal years Israel was to spend in the desert. This is incorrect. It is the *years* that are ‘representative’ in Numbers 14: 34. Those years represented the days of scouting. There is nothing ‘representative’ about the 40 days. They do not represent the longer period of 40 years. I will address this concept of what is literal and what is figurative shortly. Suffice to say, if the statement “a day for a year” is to be seen to be a consistent principle in both cases, it needs to say the same thing in both texts.

Smith is blind here to his own statement. According to his first paragraph, it is the “days in which Ezekiel was acting” that were “symbolizing.” And in his second paragraph, he says “God uses short periods of time to represent long ones.” This is all in accord with the experience of Ezekiel, but then he takes Num 14:34 where apparently God uses *long* periods of time (the 40 years) to represent *short* ones (the 40 days sortie). This is quite the reverse of what Smith wants to argue, but it is in fact what God did to the Israelites. Smith would want to argue in defence of his position that the spies’ journey was a symbolic event, but that is an indefensible position, as this paper argues. But it was not a symbolic event. It did not symbolise anything. It was a literal historic event. The length of time was not tied to any pre-existing chronological agenda, as the 40-years wandering was.

So Smith discounts the symbolic nature of Num 14 because God uses long periods of time to represent short ones. A further problem for him is although he appeals to Eze 4:6, he does not apply the way it is used in Eze 4 to the prophetic periods. A closer examination of Ezekiel reveals the opposite to what Smith is arguing. To illustrate how the principle in Ezekiel would work, let us take the time periods in the book of Daniel as an example.

**Table 3. Using Day for a Year "Eze 4:4-6 Style"**

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Literal Length</b>	
1260 days	42 months /3.5 yrs	3.5 days
1290 days	43 months / 3.6 yrs	3.6 days
1335 days	44.5 months / 3.7 yrs	3.7 days
2300 days	76.6 months / 6.4 yrs	6.4 days
70 weeks	490 days /1.3 yrs	1.3 days

As is readily apparent from this simple exercise, there is no element in the SDA chronology of the prophecies where the logic of Ezekiel is applied. Smith is wrong to appeal to Eze 4:6.

Surely there needs to be a recognised usage of the concept in this experience of Ezekiel to warrant calling it a principle? But there is none. If every one-off prophetic experience in Scripture was used as a prophetic principle, we could create some very esoteric principles indeed – as readers will see shortly in the examples I give in this paper using the visions of Joseph and Daniel.

### **The statement “day for the year” the same in both texts**

Shea has argued that *the principle is stated in exactly the same way in both Numbers 14 and Eze 4*, even though its application is different in both texts:

Both are introduced with the same phrase that refers to “the number of the days,” and both express the idea of “each day for a year” with the same reduplicated phrase: “day for the year, day for the year.”

From these comparisons it can be seen that the latter of these two texts (Ezek.4) is directly dependent upon the earlier one in Numbers in several significant ways. The year-day principle found in Ezek 4:6 is, therefore, linguistically the same as that found in Num 14:34.

While the principle involved in these two passages is the same, there is a significant difference in the way the principle has been applied. Ezekiel's prophetically future "days" are derived from historically past "years." This is the reverse of the situation in Numbers, therefore, we have a day-for-a-year application, while in Ezekiel, we have a year-for-a-day situation. But the principle involved in both of these instances is the same, as is evident from the preceding linguistic comparisons between them.

Ezekiel does not say "year for the day" when Numbers says "day for the year." The latter phraseology ("day for the year, day for the year") appears in *both* passages, *stated the same way*. There is no difference between them in this regard even though their historico-chronological application differs. This fact demonstrates the point that the same year-day principle could be employed in different ways on different occasions. (1982, p.74)

These are important points Shea has made and should be examined closely:

At the outset, it should be acknowledged that the phrase "day for the year" is indeed in the same format and sequence in both texts, as the reader will discover if he looks at the texts in either the Hebrew or the English given earlier in the paper.

The statement in Numbers was probably written before that in Ezekiel.

The *application* of the phrase in Numbers 14 is opposite to the way it is applied in Eze 4.

This leads Shea to conclude: "This fact demonstrates the point that the same year-day principle could be employed in different ways on different occasions."

There is nothing that needs to be added to his first two observations. It is mainly the conclusion he makes from these observations that we need to address. To the astute student, the occurrence of opposite applications in both texts do not lead to a conclusion made by Shea – that the "same year-day principle could be employed in different ways on different occasions." They mean the time periods are converted in different ways on different occasions and there is no principle involved here accept conversion of one time period into another – whether of days into years or years into days; but this is not the "year-day principle" advocated by historicists.<sup>26</sup>

Consider the dissimilarity of Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 using another illustration. Consider the trading statement "A cup of oil for a shekel." This is a two-way statement, depending on whether you have the shekel, or the oil. The statement does not have to be reversed to "a shekel for a cup of oil" to make the person with the shekel understand that he can get a cup of oil. It is understood that the reverse occurs. And so if a person has a cup of oil and wants to sell the oil, he can get a shekel for it, or if he has a shekel and needs oil, he can get a cup of oil for his shekel. Of course the same principle applies, yet in reverse depending on whether you are the person needing the oil, or the shekel.

That example is fine with these two different products. Each side of the equation is easily understood. This example concurs with Shea's reasoning. The principle can state the same thing in the same order, and be understood to mean the reverse, depending on whether you are in the position of a buyer or a seller.

When the differentiation is not between *two different products* but *identical items in different quantities*, the issue is the same. On the original analogy "a cup of oil for a shekel," if we now alter that to "a cup of oil for a flagon of oil" we now have the same medium of conversion similar to "time" in the year day principle, but the difference is in the quantification. If the person has a flagon, he knows he gets a cup of oil for his flagon – that is, a reduction in his quantity. However, the person with a cup of oil, gets a flagon of oil. He gets an increase in his quantity. The phrase does not need to be reversed for either to understand what they must do. The one holding the cup gets the flagon of oil, and the one having the flagon gets the cup of oil. Applying this to the phrase in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6, If it is days, then reckon them as years; if

<sup>26</sup> Later in the paper we look at Shea's proposal who sees the "year-day principle" as being merely a conversion of a day to a year, regardless as to whether it goes from a longer period to a shorter period (years to days) or from a shorter period to a longer period (days to years). To him, either conversion *is* the year-day principle.

it is years, reckon them as days. There is no special understanding required here. It is just a process of conversion depending on what is the initial period being converted. And it is the initial period that determines the quantification of the second period.

Shea argues that the conversion of “prophetic” and “literal” time from one quantity to another is really the same regardless which way the conversion goes. It is just a different manifestation of the same principle.

There is something about this assertion which is correct. There *is* a single principle at work in this example, but it is not the year-day principle. The principle at work here is one of exchange, or in the words of Gesenius’ grammar, “distribution.”<sup>27</sup> To put it simply, it is a case of “this” for “that.” “This” oil for “that” money, or from the point of view of the other person in the exchange, “this” money for “that” oil. Similarly, following Shea’s analogy, we could say, “this” day for “that” year, or “this” year for “that” day, depending on whether you are reading Numbers 14 or Ezekiel 4. Shea would argue that it does not matter whether “days” come first or second, the conversion takes place, and that conversion is the year-day principle at work.

That is where he makes a mistake. Without a doubt, there is the conversion of the period from one quantity to another. But to say that the conversion is identical is incorrect. There is no possibility that in using the same material in the conversion process that the process is identical. Consider for an instance, the example of the child who had \$10 in her hand. If I said I would give her \$10 for every \$1 she had, this would give her \$100. On the other hand, if I gave her \$1 for every \$10 in her hand, she would be left with only \$1. There is no way someone would say the same principle is in operation here. But Shea would argue the sheer exchange of money from one quantity to another proves the existence of the principle.

What he is trying to do here is to ignore the difference in the quantification between the two conversions, and just focus on the fact of the conversion. True, Shea acknowledges a reversal in application between Num 14 and Eze 4, but his acknowledgement does not do justice to the difference that is going on here. He cannot justify the use of either Numbers 14:34 or Ezekiel 4:4-6 as the rationale for the way SDA historicists use it, so he goes one step more basic. He says the principle is the conversion of time from one quantity to another. That is the year-day principle. He is wrong. What has always been said in past by those who defend the year-day principle is that this principle is the conversion of “symbolic” days into “literal” years, and they have quoted these two texts to prove it. Shea now knows that neither text can be used to do that, so now he just asserts there is conversion, and that proves the existence of the year-day principle, manifest in different ways. The basis of what he is saying is that there is a conversion from one period to another, and that is enough to prove the existence and usage of the year-day principle. It raises the question as to whether *every incidence in the OT* where there is a reference to a time period being related to another time period, we are to see the year-day principle at work?

What Shea should have seen in these two texts where the reversal of the conversion takes place, even though the phrase does not change the order in which it is said, is that that phrase “day for the year; day for the year” is not really talking about a concept of time conversion at all, but a concept of “distribution” spoken so widely by grammarians and commentators. The concept of distribution does not need to know which item occurs first in the equation. It simply says for years, give it days; if it is days give it years.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed, using this invalid understanding of the “year-day principle” Shea has gone much further than anyone else and seen the year-day principle being highlighted in many texts.<sup>29</sup> This widens the parameters and now he sees the application of the year-day principle as a

<sup>27</sup> Kautzsch, 1982, pp. 395.

<sup>28</sup> This point is covered more fully in the section “[The Problem of Misunderstanding the Idiom of Repetition in Hebrew](#).”

<sup>29</sup> He does not go as far as J. Robert Spangler does and assert the presence of the year-day principle in Genesis 29 (discussion on this later in the paper.)

“continuum” applied in a *different* way on *every* occasion where he finds it – Leviticus, Numbers and Ezekiel, and again in the book of Daniel.

If the year-day principle is, as Shea says, just a conversion from one time period to another, then anyone converting the time periods in Daniel to any other time periods is using the year-day “continuum,” and Shea should not complain. Neither should he complain if they convert it to a scale he does not condone, because he condones such a variation in his justification of the continuum of application in a variety of ways in the texts he examines, in addition to the method used by SDA historicism. As long as a conversion takes place, then according to his explanation, the year-day “continuum” is being used.

If however, the year-day principle means applying the conversion in a certain way – a “symbolic” day becomes a “literal” year – then he has a problem, since he has chosen to acknowledge that the proof texts (Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6) convert in a different manner than the SDA historicist manner. Then we are back to the issue as to which is the correct method, since neither Num 14 or Eze 4 follows the SDA historicist’s method.

### 2.3.1.b Further considerations on what is symbolic/figurative and what is literal in prophetic time.

I would like to spend a little more time developing the arguments briefly mentioned in the previous section some more and explaining to readers the difference between what is “symbolic” and what is “literal” in these two texts, so they can see clearly why I conclude that the SDA historicists’ method is invalid. In defining what is symbolic/figurative<sup>30</sup> and what is literal in Eze. 4: 6 and Num. 14: 34, it is interesting to note that the year-day concept in Eze 4: 6 uses a day for a year concept (i.e., every year that something happened to Israel was indicated by one day in the actions of Ezekiel) whereas Numbers 14: 34 uses a year for a day concept (i.e., every day that the spies scouted Canaan indicated another year in the desert for the nation of Israel). Does this mean then that *either* system of conversion applies (that is, when there is a *long* period it can be converted back into a *short* period, and where there is a *short* period it can be converted into a *long* period)? Or does it mean that *both* systems are applied when there is a prophetic period? If that were the case, they would cancel out each other thereby making the exercise useless. For example, if there was a 2-year period in a prophecy, and I applied the concept from Numbers 14: 34, the 2-year or 720 day period would yield a period of 720 years. If then I applied the principle in Eze 4: 6, the 2-year period would then become 2 days. So if one was to invoke the principle in *both* texts for this prophecy, the exercise would yield a difference of 1296% ((720yrs x 360 days per yr) / 2 days = 129,600 / 1).

SDA historicists argue it is the “days” that are symbolic and the “years” are literal in the phrase “year-day principle,” it has been shown by this paper to be exactly the opposite in this text. My argument for this text in Numbers 14: 34 is that it is the 40 *years* are symbolic of the people bearing the punishment of not trusting the report of the land, and the 40 *days* are just the time it took for the reconnaissance of the land. Thus the actual phrase “a day for a year” in Numbers 14:34 puts the literal part of the text first – the “day” – and the symbolic part of the phrase – the “years” second. This is the opposite of the concept inherent in the SDA “year –day principle.” In Ezekiel, SDA historicists say the *days* are symbolic and the *years* are literal. This is correct, but it is the opposite of the occurrence of its usage in Numbers 14:34.

Although the same phrase is used in both Ezekiel and Numbers 14 – “A DAY for a year” – the phrase must be read according to the context. The fact that the idiom is the same in both texts (i.e., day for the year), even though the time periods in both Numbers when compared to Ezekiel are in reverse, is clear proof that the phrase is not talking about a time scale, but rather a time

<sup>30</sup> “Symbolic” and “figurative” in SDA writings seems to be interchangeable descriptions for the same phenomenon.

*distribution*.<sup>31</sup> That is to say, for *each and every* day/year being used as the quantification factor, a unit of time has been allocated; in the case of Number 14:34 it is a year, and in the case of Ezekiel 4:6 it is a day. Although this reading is correct for Ezekiel 4:6, in Numbers 14:34, it should be understood as “a YEAR for a day,” *not* “a day for a year.” I will argue shortly that the *literal* time in Numbers 14: 34 is the 40 days. This is the independent variable. The *figurative* time is the 40 years. This is the dependent variable. It depends on the time it took for the spies to scout the land. Taking then the phrase “day for a year,” this would mean that a *literal* “day” is taking the place of or being substituted for the *symbolic* “year” in much the same way as the phrase “a year for a day” means a *literal* “year” is taking the place of or being substituted for the *symbolic* “day.” Therefore, if we were to take the phrase “day for a year” literally in this text, the first part of this phrase “day” is the literal period that the years are going to be converted to and “years” are the symbolic part of the phrase.

Thus for Num. 14:34 we have “a day (literal time – time they were going to spend in the wilderness) for a year (symbolic time- which is the 40 days scouting).” The 40 days of scouting have to be converted into years because of the years that the symbolic portion is attached to, according to the “day-for-a-year” rubric and so the 40 days represents only 0.11 or 1/11<sup>th</sup> of a year. If, as the phrase says, a year (or part of it) is going to be represented by a day, (or in this case a part of a day), then Israel would only be in the desert for 0.11 or 1/11<sup>th</sup> which is only 2 hours, 38 minutes and 24 seconds! That would be hardly time to get all the livestock moving!!

Let me repeat the argument differently. Assume for the moment that the 40 days of spying out the land is the literal portion of these two times. The “year for a day” principle expresses the literal portion – “year.” – of the saying first. It expresses the symbolic one – “day” – second. In applying this concept to prophecy, they say that the “day” part of the phrase “year for a day” is symbolic and the “year” part is literal. If the literal part comes first and the symbolic part comes second, then in the phrase “day for a year,” the “day” is the literal part and the symbolic part is the “year.” Since Numbers 14 uses the exact phrase “day for a year,” we can safely test out the SDA logic here. Since the SDA historicists say that the 40 days scouting are the symbolic part, the symbolic part is the second part of the phrase “day-for-a-year” and as such should be converted into parts of a year. And conversely, since they say that the “year” part is literal, that means that we must take the symbolic “year” length and use its portion to work out the amount of literal days the Israelites were to be in the desert. This exercise yields a desert banishment of 2 hours and 38 minutes following their reasoning (Step 1: 40 days /360 days in a year = 0.11 portion of the symbolic year time . Step 2: 0.11 x 24hrs = 2.664 hrs in a literal day)

But we can read from the context that 40 years were meant, so then, the phrase should read “a year for a day” since the Israelites were sentenced a year for every day the spies scouted the land.

<sup>32</sup> That is to say, the phrase *yôm lashshanah* “day for a year” as used in Numbers, should not be understood literally, but rather it should be understood as meaning *shanah layôm* “year for a day.”

In the words of Kurtz as quoted by Keil:

Every year that passed, and was deducted from the forty years of punishment, was a new and solemn exhortation to repent, as it called to mind the occasion of their rejection. (1978, Vol I:97)

Readers can therefore agree with me that the term “year-day principle” cannot be reversed and mean exactly the same thing in relation to what is symbolic and what is literal. This explains why

<sup>31</sup> See the section on [Misunderstanding the Idiom of Repetition in Hebrew](#) for more detail.

<sup>32</sup> Some SDA historicists might say that Eze 4: 6 is not used for the calculation of prophetic time. They might want to limit their biblical defence of the year-day principle to Numbers 14: 34. This would be problematic for them because there is no indication in Scripture why one text should be chosen over another. Therefore, if they can reject Eze 4: 6 as being the text to calculate the time periods (i.e., years should be turned into days –3½ times means 3½ day), then I can just as rightly reject Number 14: 34 and say that only Eze 4: 6 should be used since it is the only one of the two in a prophetic context. In fact, the abundance of printed evidence in SDA literature indicates that both texts are quoted as implying the same conversion of ‘symbolic prophetic time.’

through the years, with different publications from SDA presses this issue has reoccurred with various authors calling the principle by different names to try and standardise some way of naming this ‘principle’ to reflect what they are referring to.<sup>33</sup>

Admitting that the two texts pose different principles of calculation raises the next question: If only one concept is to be chosen from either Num14: 34 or Eze 4:6, what guidance is there to show us which text to use instead of the other? Under what conditions? Who judges what is a long period and what is a short period? Who decides when this conversion should not be done? What independent controls are present to guide this process? Is the time of the scout’s reconnoitring symbolic time or literal time? Is the time of the banishment to the desert literal time or symbolic time? Is the time of Ezekiel lying on his side symbolic of the literal time endured by Israel? Is the time period of Israel and Judah’s rebelling against the Lord literal or figurative time?

Even the method of interpreting the events in these two passages is not straightforward. The SDA Bible Dictionary states “From Num 14: 34 and Eze 4:6 the principle has been deduced that a symbolic day represents a literal year.” (Horn, 1960, Art, “Time”) Horn says that the “day” part of the text is figurative/ symbolic, and the “year” part of both texts is literal, regardless of the position and relation of those periods in the texts. . In that case, it would be that both the time of the nation in both texts are the literal times since they are given in years and the time for the scouts and Ezekiel are the figurative times since they are given in days. This is incorrect. It is forcing the text to say what it does not say.

In Numbers 14: 34 it was the actions of the scout that were used to measure out the judgment of the years of banishment on the nation. The days are the literal period. In Ezekiel 4: 6, it is the years of national rebellion that are used to measure out the length of the enactment of Ezekiel’s siege on Jerusalem. This is the literal period. In both these cases, the literal period defines the period for the consequential figurative experience. This is the only way it can be interpreted. Expressed in a table:

**Table 4. What is Historic and Symbolic Num. 14:34 and Eze 4:4-6**

Literal/Historical Event	Commemorative/Symbolic Event
40 Days Spying Out the Land	40 Years in the Wilderness
Israel 390 years in Rebellion	390 Days Laying on Left Side
Judah 40 years in Rebellion	40 Days Laying on Right Side

In the case of Numbers 14: 34, the banishment into the desert are directly related to the spying sortie, and the banishment is calibrated in ratio to the length of that sortie. They were to be banished *one year for every day* of spying. In the case of Eze. 4: 6, Ezekiel’s actions are directly related to the time that the nation was in rebellion to God, and his actions are calibrated in ratio to the length of their rebellion. He was to lay siege to the symbolic tile/brick-city of Jerusalem *one day for every year* of rebellion. The ratio is different. The “day” part of Ezekiel and Numbers 14 cannot be symbolic in both cases. Horn has not thought this through correctly.

Said differently, in addressing the question of the “literal” and the “figurative” parts of the two texts, how can we define what is figurative and what is literal?<sup>34</sup> Taking an example from

<sup>33</sup> E.g., Goldstein ( 1988, pp.74-79; cf. also 2003, pp.104-111), Gane, (2006, pp.68-72), Pfandl, (2003, pp.104-111), Mansell, (2002, pp.31-34).



contemporary life, if I observe April 25 in Australia each year for ANZAC Day, is that time I keep each year “literal” or “symbolic”? The event that it commemorates is the 1915 landing by the Australian troops at Gallipoli, Turkey in the First World War. I would assert that April 25 each year is “symbolic” or better “commemorative” in that it commemorates that moment many years ago when young diggers<sup>35</sup> faced an enemy and put up such a brave and heroic defence in the face of insurmountable odds, that it became an event encapsulating the ethos of the Australian fighting forces.<sup>36</sup> The literal event was when the real thing happened, which was not controlled by any previous date or length of time.

When the *second period* uses the quantity of numbers created by *the original period*, then the *second period* is the symbolic/figurative period. So, I commemorate April 25 because that is when the event happened. The Aussie diggers did not land on Gallipoli on April 25 because that was going to be the memorial date for the participation of Australian armed forces in future. That question had not been decided then. The landing on Gallipoli was the literal event and Anzac Day each year is the symbolic event. Applying this to these two texts under discussion, we can say that the literal period is where the length of time is created which will be used to mark off the quantity of numbers involved in the second period.

Why does the USA celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July for Independence Day? It is because on that day in 1776, the representatives of those 13 British colonies in America signed the Declaration of Independence thereby throwing off the shackles of a monarchy and a parliament 5,000 kilometres away. This was the important date history chose to honour all the hopes and aspirations of those who had fled from the Old World. Had that event occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> July, the 10<sup>th</sup> July would be the commemorative Independence Day. The causative element in this is the actual date of the original event – when it actually happened. Expressed in statistical terminology, the causative element is the independent variable (the decision to add their signatures to the document) and the consequential element is the dependent variable (the commemorative celebration of Independence from England on July, 4<sup>th</sup>. Change the independent variable and the dependent variable changes automatically.

Applying this to Numbers 14: 34, had the spies only taken 14 days to scout the land, the Israelites would have only spent 14 years in the desert. If the spies had taken 60 days, the Israelites would have been in the desert for 60 years. The causative period on the text is the period of spying. It determines the length of the symbolic period. This is comparable to the landing of the Australian Infantry Forces, or the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It was this event and the *day* on which it occurred that determined the *date* of the later annual commemorative *day*.

The same applies to the text in Ezekiel but in reverse. Had Israel only been in rebellion for 100 years, Ezekiel would have only been on his left side for 100 days, enacting the siege of Jerusalem. If Judah had been in rebellion 323 years, Ezekiel would have been on his right side for 323 days. The causative period in Eze 4: 6 is the length of time Israel and Judah rebelled. It is this that determines the time that Ezekiel will take to enact the siege of Jerusalem. The causative period is the literal period of rebellion. The consequential period is the symbolic period of Ezekiel’s enactment of the siege.

In the case of Num 14:34, it is *the 40 days sortie* that determines the unit of numbers to be used for the banishment to the desert. The *40-days* is the literal unit in this text. In Eze 4: 6 it is *the*

<sup>34</sup> As far as I can work out there seems to be no difference in SDA literature between the use of the words “symbolic” and “figurative.” And the Shorter Oxford Dictionary has these definitions to add: Symbol: “*sb.* 2. Something that stands for, represents, or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion, or by some accidental or conventional relation).” Figurative: “1. Representing by the figure of emblem; symbolic, typical....3. Of speech: based on figures or metaphors; metaphorical, not literal.” (Onions, 1980)

<sup>35</sup> An Australian term for infantrymen who “dug” in and fought in trenches against an entrenched enemy.

<sup>36</sup> The acronym stands for Australian (and) New Zealand Army Corp, and was an umbrella for both Australian and New Zealander service personnel during the First World War.

*years of rebellion* that determines the unit of numbers to be used for the siege re-enactment by Ezekiel. Furthermore, since the literal periods determine the quantity of the numerical unit to be used, they can be called the *causative* element in the phrase – in that it *creates* the quantity of the numerical unit.

If we say on the other hand, that the literal period is the *consequence* of the first period, and the first period being used as a symbolic determinant, then in Num 14:34, it is the *40 years of banishment* that is the literal period, and in Eze 4: 6, it is *the days of re-enactment* that are the literal period here.

Therefore, regardless of whichever way you define figurative and literal here, you end up with different *time units* in either text. If you choose the first definition above, then your symbolic unit is *days* in Num 14: 34 and *years* in Eze 4: 6, but if you choose the second option, then your symbolic unit in Num 14: 34 is *years* and in Eze 4: 6, it is *days*. This means that one cannot argue that there is only the “day for a year” concept acting in both texts. The texts are opposites. And regardless of your definition of symbolic/figurative or literal, you still come out with opposite units of time.

The core question in classifying the periods in these two texts is: Which part of the text determines the numerical quantity of the time unit to be imposed on the other part of the text – is it the literal part or the symbolic part? The part that defines the numerical quantity of the time unit is really the causative element in the couplet. *The literal period is the one that is the determinant for the numerical quantity in the other period.*

To express it tabularly, the triggers that are directly related to the calculation of the punishment are called the causative factors and are listed in the first column and the actions that God deals out are called the consequential factors, which are listed in the second column.

**Table 5. What is Causative an Consequential in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:4-6**

	Causative	Consequential
Num 14: 34 (Year for a day)	The scouts wander the land of Canaan for 40 <i>days</i> , Israel do not believe report of conquest possible.	Israel to wander in the desert for 40 <i>years</i> . (A year symbolising every day of the spies' sortie)
Eze 4:4-6 (Day for a year)	Israel rebelled for 390 yrs ⇒ ⇒	Ezekiel to lie on his left side, on rations and tied up for 390 <i>days</i> .
	Judah rebelled for 40 yrs ⇒ ⇒	Ezekiel to lie on his right side, on rations and tied up for 40 <i>days</i> . (A day symbolising every year the nation rebelled)

In the case of Num. 14:34, Israel's unbelief is directly related to the quality of the report given by the spies, and their unbelief is punished in ratio to the days spent spying the land. God was to punish Israel *one year for every day* the spies reconnoitred their prospective new homeland. The 40 days are the literal time used to explore the land of Canaan. The 40 *years* are the symbolic



punishment, each *year* for a day of study that went into the report that was delivered to the nation. The *years* are the symbol in this experience. For each day of gathering facts for the nation, facts that went unbelieved, Israel endured an annual symbolic consequence. The scout's trip into Canaan was not symbolic of anything. They went for as long as they needed to. But the 40 years in the desert is symbolic as the time factor is tied to a representation. That representation is the literal 40-days scouting trip.

In the case of Ezekiel, the *days* that Ezekiel has to perform the enactment of the siege are symbolic of the years spent in rebellion by Israel and Judah. In this verse, the *days* are the symbol in this experience, each day for a year. For each year of national rebellion, Ezekiel endured a daily consequence. The years of rebellion are not tied to any representation. They could not say, "Since Ezekiel will lay on his side for 390 days in the distant future, we can rebel for 390 years." Expressly differently, the phrases day for a year in Ezekiel and year for a day in Numbers 14 are really saying: *this consequence for that action*. Numbers 14: A consequence of 40 *years* for unbelief in the 40 day scouted report. Ezekiel 4: A consequence of 390 + 40 *days* for 390 + 40 years of national rebellion.

There is another point to consider about the SDA explanation of the text in Ezekiel 4: 6, that highlights the difficulty of their position. To support their view, they only ever use the day for a year principle even though the text in Ezekiel which teaches a year for a day concept. Furthermore, Why quote it if there is no application of it anywhere in prophecy outside of this experience of Ezekiel? How can a once-only event be called a principle of prophecy? Ezekiel never uses this concept again and none of the other exilic or post-exilic writers use this principle. The SDA church never uses Ezekiel's conversion scale in their application to any of the time periods in Daniel or Revelation.

### Brempong Owusu-Antwi

Owusu-Antwi is another SDA scholar who demonstrates the unusual logic of SDA historicists regarding this dichotomy between "literal" and "symbolic" in Eze 4:6 and Numbers 14:34, in the ATS dissertation publication *The Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27*.<sup>37</sup> He explains the "principles" in the example of Eze 4:6 as follows:

The importance of the symbolic prophecy of Ezek 4:1-6 is that it uses symbols to show (1) by typology, the Messianic function of the vicarious bearing of sin, (2) the future destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its people, and (3) that one actual day of a symbolic action *equals* one actual year in apocalyptic chronology. (2004, p.104)

Owusu-Antwi sees the actions of Ezekiel done with "symbolic" days not only portray the sins of Israel, but also "the future destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its people." And what scale does he give us for that "future destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its people"? The scale is "one actual day of a symbolic action *equals* one actual year in apocalyptic chronology." He has not thought this through properly because translating that into numbers, the siege by the Babylonians against Jerusalem would take 430 "symbolic" *days* or 430 literal *years* before the city would yield!!!!

Ezekiel (Eze 4) is instructed to perform a symbolic action to portray the sins of Israel and Judah (vss. 4-6), the consequent siege of Jerusalem (vss. 1-8), and the exile of its people (vs. 13). Vss. 4-6 particularly show Ezekiel being asked to bear the iniquity of the people. Ezekiel is addressed as "son of man," a title that is used later only of Jesus in the Bible. The use of this title and the relationship of Ezekiel to Israel in the symbolism of Ezek 4:4-6 suggest a Messianic typology. The typological nature of Ezekiel's

<sup>37</sup> One of the major weaknesses of these publications is that even at doctorate level now, we have the "new guard" of the ATS overseeing their own. In Owusu-Antwi's case, the chair of his doctoral committee was Dr G. Hasel, with Drs. Doukhan, Richardson and Shea being closely associated with the manuscript. All examiners being dyed-in-the-wool missionaries of the new defence for the traditional SDA historicist position, they cannot possibly be seen to be impartial to views different to their own. How can we expect a dissertation emanating from such a project to be rigorously honest?

relationship to Israel is strengthened by the instruction to bear the 'awon of the people. The vicarious bearing of sin is the main function of the Messiah, as seen in the Prophets.

It is also necessary to note that in Ezekiel's symbolic bearing of Israel's iniquity, one actual day equals one actual year (vss. 4-6). This means that one actual day symbolically represents one actual year.

The importance of the symbolic prophecy of Ezek 4:1-6 is that it uses symbols to show (1) by typology, the Messianic function of the vicarious bearing of sin, (2) the future destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its people, and (3) that one actual day of a symbolic action *equals* one actual year in apocalyptic chronology.<sup>38</sup> These things seem to be echoed in Dan 9:24-27.

The Messiah's work is summarized in Dan 9:24 where the Messiah brings everlasting righteousness, and in subsequent verses he is "cut off." His cutting off has been shown to refer to his death, which is described in Isa 53:1-12 where the Messiah-Servant engages in a vicarious bearing of human iniquities.

The destruction of Jerusalem in the future is also predicted in Dan 9:26, and in the chronological time scale in Dan 9:24-26, as shown above, one actual day (of the week) *symbolically translates into* one actual year. The chronological scale in Dan 9:24-27 is, therefore the same as that in Ezek. 4:5-6. In Ezek. 4:5-6. In Ezek. 4:5-6, the scale is given in the following manner:

Vs. 5a – A: I have assigned to you the years..... according to the number of days

B: three hundred and ninety days

C: and you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel

C<sub>1</sub>: and you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah

B<sub>1</sub>: forty days

Vs. 6c-A1: a day for a year, a day for a year I have assigned to you.

There is an ABC :: C<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub>A<sub>1</sub> chiastic relationship between the first part (vs. 5) and the second part (vs. 6). The juxtaposition shows that the instruction of vs.5a "I have assigned to you ... years according to the number of days" (A) bears a direct relationship to the of vs.6c, "a day for a year, a day for a year I have assigned to you" (A<sub>1</sub>). Ezekiel was thus supposed to bear the iniquity of Israel, *symbolically*, three hundred and ninety days for the actual three hundred and ninety years of their iniquity. Hence the chronological scale is the equation of "a day for a year." In the same manner Ezekiel was actually to bear the sins of Judah *symbolically* forty days for their actual forty years of sinning. This chronologically scale reveals that one actual day of symbolic bearing of sin equals one actual year of real time. This symbolic correlation of time corroborates the chronological scale of Dan 9:24-26.

The derivation of this chronological scale of one actual day of symbolic activity *equals* one actual year of real time adopted by the apocalyptic prophecies is traced to historical prophecies. Commenting on the chronological scale used in Num 14:34, Jacob Milgrom has stated: "The same scale is adopted by Ezekiel whose forty days lying on his side represents forty years of Judah's sin (Ezek 4:6).<sup>39</sup> The linkage between Ezek 4:4-6 and Num 14:34 is noted also by Moshe Greenberg.<sup>40</sup>

Ten of the spies brought a bad report which caused the children of Israel to rebel against God. As a result of the rebellion God gave a prophetic judgment in which the number of days that the spies spent in spying the land of Canaan became the symbolic representation of the punishment that the whole nation was to suffer in future. This symbolic representation is considerably emphasized not only in the thought but also in the parallel structure of the text:

A: According to the number of the days

B: Which you spied out the land, forty days

A<sub>1</sub>: a Day for a year, a day for a year

B<sub>1</sub>: You shall bear the iniquity forty years

<sup>38</sup> Osuwu-Antwi is suggesting here that Eze 4: 4-6 is apocalyptic prophecy!! Furthermore, he is intimating that we should convert the 430 literal days of Ezekiel's symbolic action into literal years for the siege of Jerusalem, since his action is predicting a future event!! That means we should understand the prediction of God to mean a 430-year siege.

<sup>39</sup> He footnotes: "Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPS Torah Commentary, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 115."

<sup>40</sup> He footnotes: "Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel, 1-20*, AB, Vol. 22, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 104."

The structure of the verse depicts an AB :: A<sub>1</sub>B<sub>1</sub>. A, “the number of days,” is to A<sub>1</sub>, “a day for a year” as B, “forty days” is to B<sub>1</sub>, “forty years.” This structural relationship articulates the actual day of symbolic action representing the actual year of history. Like Ezek 4:5-6 and Dan 9:24-27, the chronological scale in Num 14:34 is one day symbolically equals one actual year. (1995, pp.104-109)

Owusu-Antwi says:

Ezekiel 4 is a symbolic prophecy. So apparently, we are to understand that he does not understand Eze 4 to be an apocalyptic prophecy.

“that one actual day of a symbolic action” is speaking about Ezekiel’s days of symbolising past actual years.

The symbolic days of Ezekiel “uses symbols to show...the future destruction of Jerusalem.”

Therefore, since he says, “one actual day of a symbolic action equals one actual year in apocalyptic chronology” we can expect the future destruction of Jerusalem to last for 430 years!

That this is future is confirmed by Daniel 9:24-27. There the symbolic day refers to a future actual year “one actual day (of the week) symbolically translates into one actual year.”

What Owusu-Antwi is trying to achieve in his literary pirouettes, turns and spins is to give the appearance of greater clarity in defining ‘symbolic’ days and ‘literal/actual’ years. He explains that “one actual day of symbolic time equals one actual year of real time.” By stating that the symbolic day is an “actual” day, he dresses up the old formula, but there is no actual change in the application of the year-day principle at all. The difference is merely cosmetic.

However, Owusu-Antwi has confused the idea of what is future and what is past in the prophecy of Ezekiel. He has tried to avoid the blatant fact that the application of the scale in Ezekiel is the reverse of that found in Numbers 14:34. Owusu-Antwi shows his desperation when he says:

As a result of the rebellion God gave a prophetic judgment in which the number of days that the spies spent in spying the land of Canaan became the symbolic representation of the punishment that the whole nation was to suffer in future.<sup>41</sup>

He wants us to believe that the 40 days of spying are a symbolic representation of the 40 years of punishment!! And this, readers, is to be found in an ATS dissertation publication!! If Owusu-Antwi means that the 40 days are used as a guide to allot the 40 year punishment then we can agree with him. This is equivalent to Dn9 where the 70 years of captivity is a guide used to calibrate the probationary post-exilic period of grace for Israel in their return from Babylon. Another analogy could be a judge consulting the punitive guidelines of some legislation to get some gauge as to the severity of a punishment on a felon. But this is not to say the specifications for punishment are a symbol of the actual punishment. The seventy sabbaths when the land rested during the exile are not symbolic of the 70 weeks of future probation for post-exilic Israel.

In fact, the reality is the reverse of what Owusu-Antwi proposes. It is a *later* period that symbolises a *former* period. And to assert that the judgment given Israel is a “prophetic judgment” proves nothing. No evidence is provided to indicate it has any ‘prophetic’ qualities as all. As asserted later in the paper where we look at the question as to whether these two texts are prophetic, it is a judicial pronouncement, not a prophetic one.

### 2.3.1.c The Difference between the “Principle” in Num14:34 and Eze 4:6.

The traditional position of SDA historicists is that the phrase “day for a year” is operating in the same manner in both Eze 4:6 and Num 14:34. Some, however, admit there could be a difference and then try to negate it. Typical of this is Owusu-Antwi again:

<sup>41</sup> There is no support in the text for the idea that the judgment is ‘prophetic.’ He has insinuated this into the text. The judgment is determined, absolute and final. See the section entitled, “. Are the periods of time recorded in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 predictive prophecy? Are they apocalyptic prophecy?”

In the same manner Ezekiel was actually to bear the sins of Judah *symbolically* forty days for their actual forty years of sinning. This chronologically scale reveals that one actual day of symbolic bearing of sin equals one actual year of real time. This symbolic correlation of time corroborates the chronological scale of Dan 9:24-26.

Aldrich also says of Ezek 4:1-6 that “this gives a year-day relationship which is the reverse of that found in Num 14:33-34.”<sup>42</sup> On the face of it his remark may seem correct. However, the point is quite different. As far as the chronological scale is concerned, it would have been in reverse if it had been stated as one actual year symbolizes one actual day instead of the opposite. In Num 14:34 the symbol is that the actual days of spying are symbolic of the actual historical years of wandering. In Ezek. 4:5-6, the actual days of lying down are symbolic of the actual years of iniquity. In the same way, the “actual” which is symbolized in Num 14:34 is the forty years of wandering, and the “actual” which is symbolized in Ezek 4: 5-6 is the years of iniquity committed by Israel and Judah. Since the symbol is expressed in the correlation of actual “days” which are equal to the actual in “years,” the scale works in the same way in Ezek 4:5-6 as in Num 14:34.<sup>43</sup> (1995, pp.104-109)

A gallant attempt by Owusu-Antwi but even the superficial reader can see the fallacy of his reasoning. He says, “As far as the chronological scale is concerned, it would have been in reverse if it had been stated as one actual year symbolizes one actual day instead of the opposite.” This is incorrect. Even though the phrase is formulated in the same way on both occasions, the conversion is done in a different manner both times – days to years in Num. 14:34 and years to days in Eze 4:6. The phrase did not have to be stated differently to indicate a different mathematical operation.

Owusu-Antwi also raises another point. He wants us to believe that the “actual days of spying are symbolic of the historical years of wandering”!! And that “the actual days of lying down [of Ezekiel] are symbolic of the actual years of iniquity.” Looking at the second statement first, when Ezekiel was lying down on the ground, asking himself why he was there, the answer would come back, “because today I am representing another year of rebellion that Israel and Judah rebelled against the Lord before we were invaded.” This explanation fits the situation quite well.

Yet Owusu-Antwi wants us to believe that when the spies were searching out the land, asking themselves why they were there, the answer would come back, “because we are symbolizing the forty years that we are going to wander in the desert (that we don’t yet know about), that’s why we have to spend 40 days spying out Canaan.”!! And this logic is associated with a doctoral dissertation supervised by Hasel, externally examined by Shea, and recommended for publishing by the Adventist Theological Society!!!

For the rigorous Bible student, one but cannot but admit that there is a difference application of the “day for a year” statement in the two texts. Even Shea admits this:

When one comes to the interpretation of a “day for a year” in apocalyptic prophecy, it is evident that the prophetic “day” is used for a historical “year” in a slightly different way than it is here used. In this instance a past *day* stands for a *future year*; in apocalyptic a *future day* stands for a *future year*. This does not mean, however, that these two operations are necessarily unrelated. With two different, but related, kinds of time prophecies (classical/apocalyptic), it is only to be expected that some elements found in the earlier type would be transformed and used in the later type in a somewhat different manner. This does not mean that the year-day principle found in both is of independent origin. It simply means that it has been adapted and transformed for its particular use in later apocalyptic kind of time prophecy. The two classes of time prophecy can still be seen as related; and the former (classical) still speaks to the nature of the latter (apocalyptic). Apocalyptic does not have to use the prophetic days of classical prophecy in precisely the same way that classical prophecy did; but apocalyptic’s later use of such time elements is still drawn from the basic model provided by classical prophecy.

<sup>42</sup> He footnotes: “Roy L. Aldrich, “Can the End of the Age Be Computed by the Year-Day Theory?” *BSAC*, 115 (1958): 163; also Leupold, *Exposition on Daniel*, 407-408.”

<sup>43</sup> I expect that like myself, many readers, are thoroughly surprised that such crooked thinking can get the imprimatur of supposed men of erudition, as worthy of representing the calibre of doctoral material. Worse still, that such twaddle is the basis of an argument at the crucial point of clarification! But this is not the first time. The chairman for Owusu-Antwi’s doctoral committee, Dr. Hasel, does exactly the same thing at the crucial points of his papers examined in Assumption 1 and Assumption 2.

This is already true of the divergence between the nature of the operation of the year-day principle in Leviticus and the way it was used here in Numbers. It is also true of the next case discussed, that of Ezek4:6, in which the same principle has been applied in yet another manner differing from its application in Num. 14 and Lev. 25.

Its still later use in Daniel actually harks back to its earliest use – that found in Leviticus 25 – as has already been pointed out. Thus the spectrum of this usage may be seen as a continuum, and not as discontinuous. Just as the linguistic usage of “days” paired with “year” in prose and poetic passages of the OT forms a background for the development of the principle, so those passages in which the year-day principle is employed in different ways provides a background for the specific application that is made of it in apocalyptic. (1982, pp.72-73).<sup>44</sup>

Shea’s comments are very interesting, and come the closest to actually admitting the problem and then trying to explain it. He admits there is a reversal in the way the time periods are applied. He also points out that the statement “day for the year” is in the same grammatical form in both cases, rather than in reverse. On the basis of the second point then, he establishes the argument that in Eze 4, the same year-day principle is at work, though “in yet another manner differing from its application in Num 14 and Lev. 25.” But this does not bother him, since it is just a different manifestation of the same principle.

When we come to the way SDA historicists want to apply the principle to the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel, Shea readily admits, in referring to Numbers 14:34:

“when one comes to the interpretation of a ‘day for a year’ in apocalyptic prophecy, it is evident that the prophetic ‘day’ is used for a historical ‘year’ in a slightly different way than it is here used. In this instance a past *day* stands for a *future year*; in apocalyptic a *future day* stands for a *future year*.”

So, in effect, he admits that SDA historicism does not follow the application of the year-day principle, as evidenced in any of the three texts that are used to highlight its application.

When he refers to apocalyptic application of the principle, he makes a mistake. What he really means here is *the SDA historicists’ interpretation of Apocalyptic*: “When one comes to the interpretation of a “day for a year” in apocalyptic prophecy, it is evident that the prophetic “day” is used for a historical “year” in a slightly different way than it is here used...This does not mean that the year-day principle found in both is of independent origin. It simply means that it has been adapted and transformed for its particular use in later apocalyptic kind of time prophecy.”

Readers should pause and notice this: Shea admits there is no precedent for the method of applying the year-day principle in the texts cited by SDA historicists in either Eze 4, Num 14 or even Lev 25. The method used in apocalyptic interpretation by SDA historicists is entirely different from those incidents in either Num 14:34 or Eze 4:6.

For Shea, each incidence where he sees the year-day principle operating – Lev 25, Num 14:34; and Eze 4:6, the principle is being used in an *entirely different manner, both from each other and from the way SDA historicists interpret apocalyptic prophecies*. Shea says, “this is already true of the divergence between the nature of the operation of the year-day principle in Leviticus and the way it was used here in Numbers. It is also true of the next case discussed, that of Ezek4:6, in

<sup>44</sup> Shea does not have any examples for this. If he is trying to prove the validity of using this text to illustrate a principle at work, we should be seeing it in action exactly the way it should be used. But he cannot do that. And he cannot use Ezekiel either. Therefore, his only argument is: “This is the text we base it on, but we don’t use it that way. The way we use it to interpret time periods in apocalyptic prophecy is a different way, and that is because it is apocalyptic prophecy.” He has made two failures here. He calls Num. 14:34 a prophetic text, and secondly, he has not shown that this text is coincident with the way the principle is applied by SDA historicist to apocalyptic. Since he admits that the way SDA historicists interpret the time periods in Daniel is different to both Numbers 14:34 and Eze. 4:6, someone else could propose an entirely different outcome for the time periods in Daniel and be just as correct because, they say, apocalyptic prophetic application of this “principle” adapts it in a different way. Therefore, anybody’s interpretation of the time periods is correct. There is no precedent to the apocalyptic time period’s in the way done by SDA historicists anywhere in the O.T. according to Shea’s view!! He proposes four different ways the year-day principle is applied, if we include Lev 25 in the count. That means there is no occasion when the principle is used the same more than once. And there is no text that follows the way SDA historicists interpret apocalyptic prophecy. It is assumed from other items such as the length of the empires in the vision etc, indicating that long periods of time were intended. But that is implied by historicists using the other texts which Shea says are not used the way they have said they were by historicists in past.



which the same principle has been applied in yet another manner differing from its application in Num. 14 and Lev. 25.”

He tries to cover these differences by saying that the use of the year-day principle in a different manner in the four incidences is an illustration of a ‘continuum’ of this application: “Thus the spectrum of this usage may be seen as a continuum, and not as discontinuous.”

And his justification for such a view? Shea says, “With two different, but related, kinds of time prophecies (classical/apocalyptic), *it is only to be expected that some elements found in the earlier type would be transformed and used in the later type in a somewhat different manner.*” [Italics mine] Now one must wonder, what is the basis of this expectation by Shea? “It is only to be expected” is his justification. Why should we *expect* this change of application? If there is change in the principle on every occasion where he finds its presence, in what way can we say there is enough constancy to call it a principle? Surely for a principle to be a principle, there must be constancy. But even Shea cannot find it.

Readers must realise that we have come here to the nexus of his argument. Here is where he gives us the rock bottom base of his reasons why we can believe that SDA historicists are justified in applying what we find in Eze 4:6 and Num 14:34 in an entirely different way not applied anywhere in Scripture. And what is this basis? A sheer expectation that it is so!!! “*It is only to be expected....*” Nothing else; no scriptural basis; just conjecture. Ponder this, readers. Here is the year-day principle – the very basis of every other doctrine on the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, the day of atonement, the three angel’s message of Rev 14 – and at the very foundation of the expectation as to why SDA historicists apply the examples of Numbers 14 and Eze 4 in an entirely different way, we are given the explanation “*It is only to be expected...*” Undoubtedly, some will be surprised by this, but there it is in print.

SDA historicists write in current books and articles about the value of the material in the DARCOM series as being the best the church can offer on the topic.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, what we read in this material from Shea, we are to take as the best the church can do to defend their conversion of the time periods in Daniel in an entirely different way than that done by either Numbers 14:34 or Eze 4:4-6.

And so this poses an insuperable problem for Shea. He has admitted that the year-day principle has not been demonstrated in a consistency of manner, but, on the contrary, has been shown in a variety of ways, even in the texts traditionally used by SDA historicists. And the way SDA historicists apply the year-day principle in the apocalyptic prophecies has no precedent in any of the texts they cite for defence. Therefore, we come to the Achilles’ heel of his argument, three Achilles’ heels: First, in what way is there any justification for the SDA historicist’s method of applying the year-day principle? Second, if the ‘principle is applied in three different ways in scripture, what is to stop anyone using *any one of the three methods* in interpreting the time periods? At least they would be doing what the two texts in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 direct them to do. He admits that historicists do not use the method demonstrated in the texts cited. So for a person to invoke any one of the methods in the texts cited, there is more demonstrable evidence to corroborate this method, than there is for SDA historicists.

And the third Achilles’ heel for Shea is this. He has explained the difference in the applications of the cited texts as a continuum. And the SDA historicist’s explanation of the apocalyptic prophecies is a fourth method in the continuum. The year-day method did not begin until the 9<sup>th</sup> century, but was not *perfected* until the advent movement.<sup>46</sup> The SDA church, in their

<sup>45</sup> Goldstein, (2003, pp. 18, 104,)

<sup>46</sup> “The interpretation of 25 centuries show that our role, as Seventh-day Adventists, is that of recoverers and continuators of honored and orthodox prophetic expositions of the centuries, cumulatively developed and now restored, re-emphasized and **perfected** [emphasis mine] in these latter times. Our special emphasis today is appropriately, and logically, on those last-day segments of the prophecies not heretofore perceived or stressed. In the past the time had not yet come for their fulfillment, and consequent recognition, application and emphasis.



own view, is now the chief proponent of this method. Therefore, what is to stop another group claiming to extend this “continuum” yet one step further? There is no evidence that this “continuum” has to stop with the SDA historicists’ interpretation. Therefore, his justification for the difference of the SDA apocalyptic interpretation from the texts in the OT as a part of a “continuum” becomes the justification for any other application of either the former principle or an entirely new application.

Shea’s position is hypocritical. On the one hand, Shea justifies the difference of the SDA application of the year-day principle with the biblical texts Eze 4, Num 14 and Lev 25, on the basis of a “continuum” model, but when we come across Ford’s “continuum” model for multiple fulfillments, Shea wants to deny its legitimacy. How can we condone Shea’s explanation of the difference of the SDA interpretation of the time periods in apocalyptic prophecy because “it is expected” to be different, and not allow Ford the same latitude when it comes to applying the prophecies differently than what it envisaged by SDA historicists as the original intent of the prophecies? Does not Ford have the same right to say “it is expected” that it can be applied to different events in history where the circumstances mesh with the details of the prophecy to a great extent? Furthermore, if Shea’s opinion of a year-day “continuum” is to be taken seriously then this could work against SDA historicists and eventually be their own demise. This is because, being a continuum, the application of the principle should have varied in the last thousand years a number of times. Future historicists could use the principle as applied in either Num 14:34 or again in Eze 4:6 which are both different from the way SDA historicists apply it. In addition, if the ‘principle’ is a continuum, then we should expect future changes in the way the principle is applied and those changes could be described as nothing more than a different application of the year-day principle. After all, such a development is only *to be expected!!* But there has been no change in the application of this principle at all since the ninth century. This means either the current SDA historicists are not applying it correctly and should change their use of it, or the idea of a “continuum” is an erroneous explanation for the differences we find in the proof texts cited by SDA historicists.

One point that Shea raises needs to be looked at here. He states:

“It simply means that it [the year-day principle-FB] has been adapted and transformed for its particular use in later apocalyptic kind of time prophecy. The two classes of time prophecy can still be seen as related; and the former (classical) still speaks to the nature of the latter (apocalyptic). Apocalyptic does not have to use the prophetic days of classical prophecy in precisely the same way that classical prophecy did; but apocalyptic’s later use of such time elements is still drawn from the basic model provided by classical prophecy.” (1982, p.73)

Shea is saying that the ‘year-day principle’ is something that is extracted from “classical prophecy.” What is his basis for this? Outside of the instance of Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6, which have both been rightly questioned as belonging to predictive or ‘classical’ prophecy, there is no instance where the idea of converting days into years is applied. Even if we did allow both Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 as predictive or ‘classical’ prophecy, we can hardly call it a principle since the application of this principle is actively avoided in all other classical predictions.

This variation of application Shea speaks of here is not a principle. A principle is an abiding process; it has stability and durability across time and events. That is why it is called a principle. It is always there. Not so, with Shea’s explanation of the year-day principle. The only thing that is constant in his justification for the variation in the texts traditionally used for proving the year-

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All of our present-day basic interpretations, including all the great outline prophecies (such as the 1844 terminus of the 2300 years of Dan. 8:14, and their synchronous beginning with the 70 weeks of Dan. 9:25), can consequently be traced back to former expositors of note. Thus we as Seventh-day Adventists simply stand in the line of sound expositors of the years, gratefully recognizing our indebtedness to the noble pathfinders. We are the inheritors of the prophetic truths of past expositors and the special heralds of last-day fulfillments.” (Nichol, 1976, p.43)

day principle, is the conversion from one time scale to another, regardless as to whether it is converting years to days, or days to years. Thus, the only “principle” Shea can find in common across the texts considered is *time conversion*. That is the stable factor for him. But that is not what is traditionally understood by the year-day principle. Traditionally, the principle was seen to be turning “symbolic” days into “literal” years. Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6 have always been cited as the proof of that principle. Shea’s admission of the inability to use either text in Num 14 and Eze 4 forced him to come up with a desperate novel attempt to defend the “principle.” But he has failed. His solution makes a mockery of what historicists held to be the principle, and opens the way for anyone to interpret the time periods in any manner they please, as long as time conversion is involved, calling it a “Shea-style historicist’s approach.” As an example, SDA historicists currently use the scale of a future “symbolic” day for a future “literal” year. On the other hand, someone else using justification from Shea’s “conversion” theory, could use a scale of a future “symbolic” year for a future “literal” day, and be within the parameters Shea sets for the dynamic application of this year-day “continuum.”

For all intents and purposes, Shea is not defending the traditional SDA year-day principle when he presents his novel arguments in favour of the year-day principle. He has abandoned it. In his attempt to try and find some common ground that applies to all of the texts he examines, as well as the method used by SDA historicists, he has to pare it back to the rudimentary concept of conversion – one period being converted to another – whether day to year, year to day, whether past to future, or future to past, or future to future, - whether “symbolic” to “literal” or “literal” to “symbolic” – whether short to long, or long to short; *it does not matter; it is all the year-day principle operating*. This is the only commonality with these texts that he can find.

In doing so, he has abandoned the SDA historicists’ rationale for the year-day principle. They have always argued that Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6 support their method of interpreting a *short, future, symbolic* period for a *long, future, literal* period. Shea knows this cannot be done, and so he has opted to try and find an argument that supports the SDA historicists’ view *and* has the support of Numbers 14 and Ezekiel 4, but in the process he has abandoned the SDA historicists’ definition of the year-day principle.

In conclusion, one could say no better to Shea’s proposed explanation of the “continuum” of the application of the year-day principle in prophecy, than what he himself said in a Glacier View paper against Ford:

... this ‘principle’ rests upon an inconsistent and unsound premise, and it has been applied in an arbitrary fashion...in the interpretation of prophecy. In view of these difficulties with this “principle” it is difficult to see why it is called a “principle” at all. (1980b, p.39)

Shea has given his best to try and salvage the year-day principle from oblivion and in that process has shown us that the impossible just cannot be done. He has had to resort to desperate arguments, and in the end, he has placed himself in exactly the opposite position to where he expected himself to be – his conclusions make a mockery of the year-day principle. His argumentation has done exactly that. He has defended the year-day principle out of existence, until it is nothing more than a devise for converting one time period to another – a common feature found throughout biblical and common literature. This is hardly a principle that can be applied especially to apocalyptic prophecy. It is used globally in literature and language. Given then the fallacy of Shea’s argumentation, the year-day principle stands as a self-contradicting exercise in converting prophetic time periods, without the justification for it provided by Shea. Furthermore, since the SDA historicist method does not apply the principles of conversion as indicated in either Num 14 or Eze 4, their hermeneutical tool remains embarrassingly

unjustifiable. Little wonder then that “competent, reverent scholarship”<sup>47</sup> abandoned it when prophecy failed in the 1840s. (Arasola, 1989)

## Summary

THIS NEEDS TO BE REWRITTEN IN LIEU OF THE CHANGES YOU MADE BY PASTING NEW SECTIONS INTO THIS PART.

In summary of this section on the relationship between the text in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6, I posed the question as to whether either or both of these texts taught what SDA historicists assert they contain – that is, that a symbolic day stands for a literal year. They say the days in both Num 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 are symbolic, and the years are literal. I looked at either text in their context. I noted that in Num. 14:34 that the *symbolic* period in this text is the *years*, not the days. Conversely, in Eze 4:6 it is the *days* that are *symbolic* and the years are literal.

The argument of the SDA historicists that these texts prove that symbolic “days” in prophecy stand for literal “years” is not plausible. These texts are diametrically opposed when it comes to applying their temporal concepts to time periods in prophecy. Thus, the phrase “day for a year” in Numbers 14: 34 does not mean that the days are symbolic. They are used by God to measure out the limit of Israel’s punishment. It is the *years* in the desert that are symbolic in this instance. In Ezekiel 4: 6 however, it is the *days* Ezekiel lay on his side that are symbolic of the *years* of rebellion of Israel and Judah the phrase.

And although Eze 4:6, may suit their explanation on one count, the other considerations on the text overturn any possibility of the principle being taught in that text from endorsing the method SDA historicists use it. This is because Eze takes the period first given, and turns it into a *shorter* period, not a *longer* one. This shorter period is the symbolic period. Whereas in Numbers 14:34 the literal period is given first and converted into a symbolic period. In both cases, it is *the literal period that occurs first* in the calculation – whether the *days* in Num 14:34 or the *years* in Eze 4:6, and they are converted into symbolic periods – *years* in the case of Num 14:34 and *days* in the case of Eze 4:6.

Another conclusion of this section is the observation that the phrase “day for a year” can be taken at face value in *both* places, and does not have to be reversed to indicate a reversal of application. It is an idiom meaning that there is going to be an interchange in the time periods used. What was one particular period of time (whether it be days, or years) is going to be represented by another particular period of time (whether it be days or years). By taking it this way, everything harmonises, the causative and the consequential are preserved in their obvious order, and the phrase can have its full force in both texts. The actual value of the time periods involved has to be gained from the context itself. The phrase does not have to be reversed to understand a reversal is present in either text when they are compared with each other. Shea wants to believe that because the phrase does not change in either text it is referring to something other than what SDA historicists have argued in past regarding these texts. He argues that this interchange of year-to-day or day-to-year has an underlying principle common to both of them – the year-day principle but he is mistaken, and misleads his readers. His year-day principle is merely time conversion, from either days to years or years to days. This is not what SDA historicism as argued for in past. They have always argued that the year-day principle is that a short symbolic future day is “desymbolised” to indicate a long future literal year.

<sup>47</sup> Froom, 1946, p.792.

### **2.3.2 How many times must symbolic time be treated?**

There are two main issues with the way SDA historicists handle the time periods in Daniel. This first is the argument that the time periods come in the midst of symbolic prophecy and so the time periods themselves must be symbolic. The second issue is the number of times the time period is desymbolised to get to a literal period of time. In regard to the first issue notice what Smith says on “times:”

How long a time were they to be given into the hands of this power? A time, as we have seen from Daniel 4:23, is one year; times, the least that could be denoted by the plural, two years, and the dividing of time, or half a time, half a year. ... We thus have three years and a half for the continuance of this power.<sup>48</sup>

We must now consider that we are in the midst of symbolic prophecy; hence in this measurement the time is not literal, but symbolic. The inquiry then arises, How long a period is denoted by the three years and a half of prophetic time? The principle is given us in the Bible is, that when a day is used in symbolic prophecy, it stands for a year. (Ezekiel 4: 6; Numbers 14:34.) Under the Hebrew word for day... *yom*,... Gesenius has this remark on its plural: “Sometimes, ... [*yamim*] marks a definite space of *time*; viz., *a year*; as also Syr. and Chald... [*iddan*] denotes both *time* and *year*; and as in English several words signifying time, weight, measure, are likewise used to denote certain specified times, weights, and measures.”

Bible students have recognized this principle though the ages.... The Bible year, which must be used as the basis of reckoning, contained three hundred and sixty days. .. Three years and a half contained twelve hundred and sixty days. As each day stands for a year, we have twelve hundred and sixty years for the continuation of the supremacy of the horn. (1944, pp. 143-146)

Smith says, “We must now consider that we are in the midst of symbolic prophecy; hence in this measurement the time is not literal, but symbolic” Of course Smith is incorrect. But in this paper I have argued using SDA historicists’ own division of the revelations into symbolic prophecy and literal explanation, that the time period does *not* come “in the midst of symbolic prophecy,” but rather *after* the symbolic prophecy. This means that being in the literal section of the prophecy, according to their own criteria, we can expect the time periods also to be literal. So this argument does not justify interposing the extra step of making the days “prophetic days.”

The second issue is in regard to the number of times a “symbolic” time period is desymbolised to get the literal period. Taking Dan 4 for instance, SDA historicists take the “seven times” and turn it into seven years and leave the period at that. The time of Nebuchadnezzar’s illness was seven literal years, they tell us. But this is not the case when we come to the same time expression in Dn 7:25.

One of the main questions is why calls this time “prophetic time”? This term is deliberately deceptive. We have the symbolic time unit – ‘*iddan*. This is desymbolised to mean years, and then we are told these are “prophetic years.” These “prophetic years” therefore, need desymbolising one step again to give the literal time length. So then we turn it into ‘prophetic’ days which are then converted to literal days.

The usual procedure when interpreting a symbol in apocalyptic prophecy is that you take a symbol, find its interpretation from other precedents and then apply it. There is no rocket science here; it is straightforward. Some examples of applying this Principle could include: Animals represent kingdoms: Dan 7, 8; head: a king Dn2, 7; horns a king /kingdom Dn7, 8; Stars, Sun, Moon: God’s people Dn 8, Rev 12; Gen 37:5ff. From this simple exercise we see that *there is only one step* for interpreting the symbols of a prophecy: turn them into normal nomenclature and the process is complete. The problem of applying this same principle to the time prophecies

<sup>48</sup> Smith does not seem to be aware that this is the dual in Dn7:25, not the plural.

can be illustrated by simply asking the question: *How many times is a symbol interpreted before it is considered literal?*

This question is one of the major issues associated with the question covered in this paper. The time period associated with Dn7 – ‘*iddan*’; the period associated with Dn8 – ‘*ereb-boqer*’; and the period associated with Dn9 – ‘*shabu’im*’; are all indeed figurative. They are terms were used commonly to express units of time. ‘*Iddan*’ is used in figurative nomenclature in Dn4, and again in the literal explanation at Dn7. ‘*Shabu’im*’ is admitted by the SDABC and Doctrinal Discussions and QOD, all official SDA Publications, to be a figurative expression of a group of “seven;” and ‘*ereb and boqer*’ are both normal nomenclature. It is just the combination of ‘*ereb and boqer*’ that is figurative.

The words “morning” and “evening” are expressions used in colloquial language. They are not symbolic. Yet to change these temporal terms into standard temporal nouns day, week and year, we need only one step: 49 *iddan* (“times”) is “year,” ‘*ereb-boqer*’ (“evening-morning”) is “day” and ‘*shabu’im*’ is “seven” and depends on the context for the actual length. The time periods in Dn7-9 then are 3½ years, 2,300 days and 70 sevens. This is the actual length of the time periods. These are the literal lengths of these time periods. They need no further “desymbolising.” Yet, historicists assert that the literal meaning is still figurative, and needs to be desymbolised again. Thus 3½yrs (1260 days) become 1260 years; and 70 “sevens” receive a varied treatment, sometimes without using the year-day method, sometimes by using it. Yet this second desymbolised step is wholly unwarranted. Someone else could take the historicist’s calculations and assert that they are figurative and then multiply everything by 360 and come up with a new literal interpretation of the time periods.

The question should be asked: If it is legitimate to treat a literal unit as figurative, what is to stop others treating the next the next order of literal units as being figurative. Thus, calculations could go on ad infinitum. The literal words for time are hour, day, night, month and year. Where these literal words occur, the time period is literal. Where an unusual usage of the expression of time is used, this word is then explained in its literal meaning, and that then is the literal explanation. Thus ‘*iddan*’, ‘*ereb-boqer*’ and ‘*shabu’im*’ are figurative expressions and ‘*shabu’im yamim*’ “weeks of days” (10:2), and ‘*yamim*’ “days” (Dn12: 11) are literal expressions. The “unorthodox” expression of small units of time in large blocks eg; 1290, 1335 or 2300 days is no argument that the literal expression of the unit of that time period is figurative. The quantity of that time unit, and the nomenclature of the unit itself are two separate issues and should be treated as such. In any case, there is nothing less figurative about 2300 years than 2300 days; 1290 years than 1290 days; or 1335 years than 1335 days. To argue that one is literal and the other is figurative merely from the large quantification of the time unit is mere rhetoric.

The following is a table of what the SDA historicists do in their treatment of the time periods in the book of Daniel. You will notice that there has been another step added in the calculation of the periods. They have taken the figurative time period and decoded it to normal nomenclature, but then they have insinuated the concept that these periods are “prophetic periods” and as such, need to be subject to yet another level of decoding, by multiplying them by 360 (that is, turning them into years) in order to arrive at the literal meaning of the period meant by the prophecy.

### Problem of the extra definition of “Prophetic/Symbolic Time”

<sup>49</sup> Taking the standard SDA position here as to the meaning of these units of measure.

**Table 6. Vision and Explanation In Dn 7-12**

Text	Vision or Explanation?	Symbolic / Figurative Time Period	Still a Symbolic Time Period	Literal Interpretation of the Time Period
Dn 7:25 Dn12:4	Explanation	3½ 'iddan	3½ years or 1260 days	1260 years
Dn8:14	Explanation	2300 'ereb-bôqer	2300 days	2300 years
Dn 9: 24	Explanation	70 shabu'îm	490 days	490 years
Dn12:11	Explanation	1290 days	1290 days	1290 years
Dn12:12	Explanation		1335 days	1335 years

It will be readily apparent to the reader that the issue of this difference centres on what arguments the SDA church can produce to justify on creating a separate category called “prophetic” when in fact, throughout their literature, they refer to what they call “prophetic” as figurative or symbolic. In the first table above, I have included the concept of “Prophetic” with “Symbolic / Figurative.” SDA historicists feel they have enough evidence to support an argument that creates a *distinct* category of “prophetic” which is not “symbolic or figurative.” How that is justified is not explained in any literature I have read in this area. There are plenty of references to symbolic and figurative, and it is freely admitted and explained how the time periods in Daniel are symbolic and/or figurative. But there is no discussion how the “prophetic” category is justified or how it can be warranted as being a separate concept worth applying another level of interpretation to the numbers. In actual fact, the texts that contains the time periods in Dn7, 8, 9, and 12 are all sections labeled “literal explanation” by SDA historicists, indicating that we should not expect the contents of these explanatory sections to be ‘symbolic’ but literal. Therefore, by their own admission, they sabotage completely this step of the conversion of the time period. And even in the case where a time period occurs in the midst of a ‘symbolic’ vision – in Daniel 4 – no SDA historicist argues that we must consider the period there ‘symbolic’ and in need of a four-way conversion – from seven times to seven years to 2520 ‘symbolic’ days to 2520 ‘literal’ years, as William Miller so applied it, and a host of historicists before him.

Taking this one step further, if there is justification to apply *two* processes of interpretation to the time period, using the day for a year principle as supposedly taught in Numbers 14:34, what is to stop someone else applying *three* processes and using the year for a day principle as supposedly taught in Eze 4:6, and turning these *long* periods back into *short* periods? Or on the other hand, perhaps they might feel that this present state of things in the world will continue for many hundreds of millennium and apply the day for a year principle for the second time, turning the 1260 years into a persecution that will continue for 453, 600 years (1260 x 360) and announce that the sanctuary will be cleansed in 828,000 years time (2300 x 360), etc.



### **2.3.3 The 'Scale' not the Context of the phrase "a day for a year."**

This quoting of Ezekiel 4: 6 can only be a vestige of the old "proof" text system without considering the context of the phrase "I have appointed a day for a year" in the book of Ezekiel. The proof-text system used quotes entirely out of context to prove a point. As long as it said what was wanted – in this case, the phrase "I have appointed a day for a year" – that was as close as they got to the real meaning of the text from which they lifted the phrase. This mentality is reflected in the SDABC's comment on Eze 4:6 where it says:

In these statements [referring also to Numbers 14:34] are found the first intimations of the prophetic scale which later was to figure so largely in the interpretation of the great time prophecies, such as the "time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25), and the "two thousand and three hundred days" (Dan. 8:14). ([Nichol, 1976](#), p.590)

From this comment, we understand that all they are interested in with this text is the actual statement of the "scale" of a day for a year. There is no close study of the context for the appropriateness of using this scale for the time periods they want to apply it to. There is no close study of a prophetic "principle" in this text. All that interests them is the SCALE. There is no principle taught here that can be generalised elsewhere. It is not even a predictive prophecy. Yet SDA historicists are confident in calling this a *principle* when they name these two verses. But contrary to all the hollow rhetoric of SDA historicists, the SDABC is the most honest. SDA historicism has ever only used the *scale* in these verses, not the context, and definitely not a principle, to support their concept of converting time periods in the book of Daniel. It is clearly a proof-text motive, and it is merely the statement of "a day for a year" that they wish to focus on.

### **2.3.4 "Bearing the iniquities."**

Before leaving this section discussing the similarities of both texts in Eze 4:6 and Num 14:34, I would like to examine again these texts and draw out some parallels which further prove the point that the symbolic period in Num.14:34 is the 40 *years* and in Eze. 4:6 it is the 430 *days*. In Numbers 14: 34 says:

After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

The period given to the children of Israel as banishment in the wilderness was given in order for them to "bear their iniquities," so that they might know why God breached his promise concerning the land of Canaan. This was to continue until "your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness." v.33. "I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die." v.35. They were to bear their iniquities, not during the forty *days* of spying but during the forty *years* of wandering in the wilderness. This is important to keep in mind when considering a comparison with the text in Ezekiel 4:6. They bore their iniquities during the forty years in the sense that they suffered their punishment.

Now we turn to the text in Ezekiel 4:5,6.

For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

And when thou hast accomplished, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

The siege of Jerusalem symbolised by Ezekiel was a part of the punishment by God for the nations many years of rebellion.

Take thee a tile...and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem.... and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel.... According to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. vs. 1-4

The days of the siege were literal days, and each day that the city was besieged by the Chaldees (here represented by Ezekiel), was a punishment for a year of their prior rebellion. This is supported throughout the book even further. Note these statements from chapter 5 concerning the siege:

5:8 Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgment in the midst of thee in the sight of nations.

5:9 And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations.

5:10 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee. And the sons shall eat their father; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds

5:12 A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them

5:13 Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the Lord have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.

From this text we can read that the siege of Jerusalem was a punishment for the past sins of the people, as Ezekiel enunciated in chapter 4. Now the important comparison can be made. In *both* texts, Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4:6, we read of the phrase “a day for a year.” But it is not often noted that both these texts define one of the periods as the period for the “bearing of iniquities.” Yet this is an important part of the text. It indicates the judicial nature of the period. It is a time of carrying the punishment for the sins previously committed.

This phrase is significant because it associates the punishment with the appropriate time period. In Numbers 14: 34, it is the forty *years* that are the period for the “bearing of iniquities.” In Ezekiel 4: 5,6, it is the 430 *days* that are the period for the “bearing of iniquities.” It is indisputable. And as surely as the phrase “day for a year” occurs in these texts, so also does this phrase with all the significance attached to it. And it should be noticed that it supports the position that I argue for here, and does not support the SDA historicists’ position. In the case of Numbers 14:34, the period “a day for a year” that would be received for the “bearing of iniquities” was given in *years*; in Ezekiel the period “a day for a year” that would be received for the “bearing of iniquities” was given in *days*.

The phrase “bearing of iniquities” defines the symbolic period. It is the time when the perpetrators come to consider hopefully, in the case of numbers, why God breached his promise to allow them into the land of Canaan, and in the case of Ezekiel and the siege under Nebuchadnezzar, why they suffered such a catastrophic siege during which such inhumane acts were perpetrated upon family members. Their acts of wickedness against each other were the baleful harvest of a long tradition of disobedience. This is how Ezekiel 5 leads us to believe it.

It was during the “bearing of their iniquities” or enduring their punishment, that God says they will know certain things. In the case of Numbers 14, they would “know my breach of promise;” that is, why God did not bring them into the land of Canaan as he promised he would. This would teach them that the promises of God are conditional. In the case of Ezekiel and the siege of Jerusalem, God said “I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted: and they shall know that I the Lord have spoken it in my zeal, when I have accomplished my fury in them.” (5:13) In the awful events of the siege, the besieged would have a sense of the fury of

God against them, and His intense displeasure with His people. They would know the awful consequences of refusing to follow the word of the Lord through Jeremiah and others. They would know that the threatenings of God, even against His own people are real, and that Jeremiah did not speak in vain. The Lord did indeed allow the very atrocities that Jeremiah warned of but which those in authority denied could occur.

Therefore, these considerations of the phrase “bear your iniquities” in both Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4:6 prove conclusively what is the symbolic period in both texts and what period is used as a guide to determine the penal period for them to “bear their iniquities” or punishment. In Num 14:34 it is during the *years* in the desert that they were to bear their iniquities, and know God’s breach of promise and the reason why he breached it. In Eze 4:6 it is the *days* endured by Ezekiel that he bears the iniquities of his forefathers, and it is the *days* of the siege that Judah bears the iniquities of her forefathers and knows the anger of God in the horrors of that holocaust. The conclusion does not support the SDA position that the “days” are symbolic and the years are literal. This consideration does support my position that the phrase “day for a year” is interchangeable and uses both periods – day and year – to refer to the other. It depends on the context and offers no support to a general “principle.” This shows that the phrase “yom lashshanah” is not a principle since its application is interchangeable. Rather, the phrase is used as explained by Gesenius’ grammar as a statement of distribution of the symbolic period for the literal period.

Furthermore, the admission quoted earlier from the SDABC, that the interest of SDA historicism in these two texts is one mainly of the *scale*, and not of the context or the way in which the periods are converted in either text, or consequently of the interchangeability of the periods involved. This clearly indicates that correct context is not paramount to the establishment of their “year-day principle.” They are only interested in the statement of the *scale* and not the context in which it is found. They are only interested in a “proof-text” use of these two texts. If they did focus on the context as this paper has attempted to do, their assertions would be confounded and proved to be without a solid basis.

### **2.3.5 Are the periods of time recorded in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 predictive prophecy? Are they apocalyptic prophecy?**

This is a more fundamental question and strikes at the heart of the appropriateness of even thinking of extracting a method of converting prophetic time to calendar time. One would assume that the first principle to be considered in looking for methods of understanding the use of time periods in predictive prophecy would be to look at the use of time in predictive prophecy where the context makes it clear that the texts under consideration are predictive prophecy

Are these texts predictive prophecies? This depends on the definition of the term “predictive prophecy.” Is every use of the future tense of the verb whether by God or a Biblical person when referring to something a prophecy? When Moses says in Numbers 14: 42: “Go not up for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword, ” – is this a prophecy? What he said did come to pass: “Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.” But can it be categorised as a predictive prophecy? Is this not a conclusion based on cause and effect? Moses said, “Because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.” (v. 43). For Moses it was simple: the Israelites needed the Lord for the victory (he had witnessed this with the Egyptians); and the Lord’s will was for them to go into the desert, not to conquer the land; therefore, this attempt to conquer Canaan would be fruitless.

Shea thinks the text in Num 14:34 is a predictive prophecy. Here is his opinion from *Daniel and the Judgment*, an unpublished document he volunteered for the Glacier View conference in 1980:

Num. 14: 34 –10 of the twelve spies who scouted the land of Canaan out for 40 days brought back a bad report; that the walled cities were too strong and the people were too big to be conquered. Israel accepted their report and rejected the minority report of Caleb and Joshua that they could be conquered. As a result, they also rejected God's plan of settling them in the land that He had promised them. For this rebellion God sentenced that generation to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. The figure of 40 for the years of their punishment was chosen from the number of days during which the spies who brought back the bad report that they accepted had been out on their scouting expedition. One was derived from the other on the basis of a day for a year, "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day a year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years."

Was this a judgment or a prophecy? It obviously was a judgment, was it also a prophecy? Several elements suggest it can be viewed this way. The fate of the generation that was to die in the wilderness was foretold, as is also the fate of the generation that was to arise in the wilderness. The period of their wanderings was to be delimited to the specific period of 40 years. These are some elements which indicate there is a prophetic character to this passage. It can be objected that this was a self-limited period of wandering that the leadership of the Israelites themselves would end. This is different than, say, Cyrus sending the exiles back to Judah after Nebuchadnezzar had deported them. The Jews had no control over those circumstances whereas it would appear that they had some control over their own wandering in the wilderness. Both circumstances were ultimately in the hands of God, however, and He is the one who projected both of these time periods into the future, one through Moses and the other through Jeremiah. That this 40 years was hard and fast could not be changed by the Israelites is evident from the fact that when they attempted to do just that by attacking southern Canaan when they changed their mind, they suffered a disastrous military defeat (Num 14:45). Thus prophetic elements are involved in this time-calibrated sentence of God's judgment upon rebellious Israel also.

When it comes to the interpretation of a day for a year in apocalyptic prophecies, it is evident that the prophetic day is used for a historical year in a different way than it is used here. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the two are completely unrelated. According to the list of time prophecies collected above [not cited, cf. pp.187-188 -FB] those found in historical narratives like this one, and those found in classical prophecy like the one discussed next from Ezekiel, differed from the time prophecies that are found in apocalyptic prophecy in several respects. One important difference for our purpose here is that the former do not employ symbolic time periods while the latter do. But these two types of prophecies still belong to a similar class of prophecy in that they delimit the future in terms of time....Apocalyptic does not have to use the prophetic days of classical prophecy in the same way that classical prophecy did, but apocalyptic's later use of such time elements still is drawn from the basic model provided by classical prophecy.... (1980, pp.221-222, 224)

The ideas expressed here became the basis for his publication in 1982 on *Selected Studies in Prophetic Interpretation*, where he devotes nearly 40 pages to defending the year-day principle. It is divided into 23 sections,<sup>50</sup> and continues to support his theory that this text is a prophetic one:

Thus the fate of the generation which was to wander in the wilderness was foretold here in the form of a prophetic judgment, a prophetic judgment calibrated in terms of the year-day principle. (1982, p.72)

J. Robert Spangler, past editor of *Ministry* magazine, echoes the same thoughts in his issue covering the Glacier View conference:

The year-day principle is upheld in the prophetic portions of the Old Testament. (a) Numbers 14:34 is self-explanatory in showing the direct relationship between the 40 days of spying out the land of Canaan and the 40 years of wandering in the Sinai Peninsula: "According to the number of the days in which you

<sup>50</sup> Those sections are entitled: 1. Philosophy of history; 2. Theology of time prophecies; 3. The end-point of prophecies; 4. Magnitude of events involved. 5. Time of the end; 6. Symbolic context; 7. Symbolic time units; 8. Symbolic time numbers; 9. Daniel's days in general; 10. Especially short time periods; 11. Trumpets and plagues; 12. Time periods that span kingdoms; 13. Historical narratives; 14. Old Testament Poetry; 15. Leviticus 25:1-7; 16. Leviticus 25:8; 17. Numbers 14:34; 18. Ezekiel 4:6; 19. Weeks of Daniel 9; 20. Weeks and years in Daniel 9; 21. Days in Daniel 8 and years in Daniel 11; 22. Pragmatic Test of historical fulfillment; Pragmatic test of predictive use.

spied out the land, forty days, for every day a year, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years, and you shall know my displeasure. I, the Lord, have spoken" (verses 34, 35). Some have argued that this passage is not a prophecy and should not be applied to prophetic time periods. The fact is that the punitive declaration was made in advance of the 40 years' wandering, and so it qualifies as a prophecy." (1980, p.45)

## Numbers 14:34

This text is not a prophecy and the 40 days of spying is not a predictive prophecy of the time of banishment in the wilderness. At that time they had no idea that there would be a banishment, or even that Israel would not be happy with the report or the evidence they would carry back with them in the form of agri-produce.<sup>51</sup> The searching out of the land was not a "predictive-prophetic event."

The question needs to be raised as to whether the declaration of a punishment is a predictive prophecy? When God says, "You shall wander 40 years in the desert," this is a doling out of a consequence of their behaviour, in a similar way that a parent would say, "You are grounded for three weeks for your behaviour." The parent's statement is not a prophecy but rather a statement of how they will order the life of the child. They are in control of what can and cannot happen. It is a statement of what they are going to do in relation to their child. It is a statement of purpose, not of prophecy. The context indicates that Numbers 14: 34 is not a predictive prophecy either; it is a statement of purpose.

Another question that could be raised is whether every judicial decision is a prophetic statement? When a person is sentenced to serve a certain time in prison, is this a statement of a judicial system in control of this person's destiny, or a predictive prophecy? Spangler was quoted above as saying, "the punitive declaration was made in advance... and so it qualifies as a prophecy." This criteria of Spangler's has thereby made every magistrate a prophet!! But in fact, they are sentenced according to the guidelines given to the judge and the other considerations including among other things, the attitude of the perpetrator and the severity of the crime. In the case of Israel, God uses the period of the spying of the land as the guideline to decide on the severity of the punishment. He sentenced them, in judicial terminology, to 40 years exile in the desert. It was not a prophecy. It was a statement of fact. They would stay there until everyone had died there. They would be all buried in the desert – sooner or later – every last one, except Caleb and Joshua. If a penal judgment is a prophetic statement, then every magistrate in the world is also a prophet!! When a magistrate rules that a certain person is to receive a certain punishment, the social mechanisms in place to support the magistrate's decision swing into play, in order to execute what the judge has decided. The bailiff/sheriff comes and retains the prisoner. Wardsmen then are employed to dispatch that person to the appropriate place of detention, the state government has already instituted means to build institutions of detention; there are employed wardens to supervise the person during their detention; there are welfare personnel employed for cooking, cleaning, administrative tasks etc., and even when the person has been released there are probationary employed officers to ensure appropriate social integration occurs. The same in the Bible stories. When God gave a judgment, He swung into action processes to ensure his word would be fulfilled, and to go against that judgment brought consequences because God did not support rival plans. Take the example of the decision of the Israelites to invade after they heard the punishment. They tried to conquer Canaan, but were confounded because the divine support they needed was withdrawn. Consider the incident:

14:39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.

40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned.

<sup>51</sup> Numbers 13:26: "They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh, in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land."

41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? But it shall not prosper.

42 Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.

43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.

44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.

45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

If Numbers 14: 34 was a predictive prophecy in much the same vein as Jonah's prediction concerning the destruction of Nineveh (which was averted due to their repentance, or the prediction of Hezekiah by Isaiah, that he would die, but his repentance altered the outcome,) then we should have seen the Lord supporting their willingness to go up and fight the Amalekites and the Canaanites, with Moses perhaps with his arms upstretched and Aaron and Hur keeping them upheld while the Israelites defeated their enemy (see Ex 17). But not so. Why did Moses protest even before the event, saying it was not possible for them to win? Because the Lord was not among them (verse 42); "the Lord will not be with you." verse 43.

God had decreed his will for them for the next forty years. His will was not in the conquest of Canaan then and there. He was in control of events, and their change of attitude was fruitless. There was to be no change. Punishment had been doled out and punishment will be experienced. The Israelites attempt to conquer the land was just another avoidance of the will of God, just as the previous day, they avoided the will of God by refusing to conquer the land. Same rebellion, manifest in a different way. There were no conditions involved with this punishment; it was absolute. Unseen mechanisms were initiated to lock them into that decision to wander in the desert forty years, and no amount of opposition to that decision would be successful. There was no more prophetic characteristics to that penal judgment, than a judgment from any circuit or high court judge. As Shea says:

Both circumstances were ultimately in the hands of God, however, and He is the one who projected both of these time periods into the future, one through Moses and the other through Jeremiah. That this 40 years was hard and fast could not be changed by the Israelites is evident from the fact that when they attempted to do just that by attacking southern Canaan when they changed their mind, they suffered a disastrous military defeat (Num 14:45). ((1980, p. 224)

This is unlike the repentance of Nineveh or the repentance of Hezekiah. Surely, if Numbers 14:34 was a predictive prophecy, there would be a conditional element involved? But it is not predictive prophecy. It is a determination – a judicial determination, sure and final. It will be fulfilled. The term of banishment will be completed. Their carcasses will fall in the desert – every last one except for Caleb and Joshua.

## Ezekiel 4:6

Is the text in Eze 4 predictive prophecy? Shea seems to think so. Here again is his opinion from the 1980 Glacier View document *Daniel and the Judgment*:

Just as Ezekiel lived closer in time to Daniel than the generation that wandered in the wilderness, so his use of the day-for-a-year principle is closer also. It still is not identical though, and this is only to be expected from the different types of prophecy we are dealing with here, as has just been emphasized. Eze 4 can still be considered classical prophecy while the transition has been made to apocalyptic in Daniel. In spite of this difference, however, the way in which Ezekiel used his prophetic days still bears some relationship to the matter of interpreting the prophetic days in Daniel.



Eze 4 describes an acted prophetic parable. This acted parable involved three main elements; what the parable itself was to signify, what the prophetic time period connected with it stood for, and what the original time period back of the prophetic time stood for. The first element is not difficult to analyze since the context makes it evident that Ezekiel was to represent the siege and conquest of Jerusalem, and the exile of its people. In the preceding instructions Ezekiel was to make a model of Jerusalem under siege and in the following instructions Ezekiel was to represent its siege by eating siege rations (4:9-17) and the exile of its people after the conquest by shaving, burning and scattering his hair (chapter 5). Thus the point of the acted parable is clear.

What is not clear is how the time periods associated with these actions were to be related to these events. The prophet was told to lie on his left side in front of his siege model for 390 days during which time he was to bear the sin of Israel, and then he was to turn over and lie on his other side for an additional 40 days. These days were to represent his bearing the sin of Judah. As verse 5 shows about the 390 days and verse 6 shows and specifically states about the 40 days, these days during which Ezekiel did this were to represent the years during which Ezekiel did this were to represent the years during which those kingdoms committed those sins, on the basis of a year for a day. Three main questions arise here: were the 390 and the 40 days to run contemporaneously or consecutively, what were the 390 and 40 historical years of the sins of Israel and Judah, and to what do these prophetic days taken from those periods refer?

...the question may now be asked, how does the day for a year principle expressed here relate to its employment in the interpretation of apocalyptic time periods in Daniel? Some differences are evident here. Ezekiel acted out his prophetic days that were derived from the historical years in the experience of Israel and Judah that preceded the time that the prophet was to act them out with these symbolic days, they did not follow them. The later days stood for the former years. This is almost the reverse of the situation in Numbers where the years of judgment followed their sentence for the preceding days of sinfulness.

Here in Ezekiel the days of the investigative judgment followed the years of sinfulness. After the expiration of those prophetic days of judgment the sentence of defeat and exile was to be carried out. In Numbers therefore, we have a day-for-a-year principle, while in Ezekiel we have a year-for-a-day principle. In Daniel we find a third situation, one in which the symbolic time period equalled the same historical period that was to be understood in actual time according to the day-year principle. They were to be run concurrently in terms of symbolic and actual time. Thus there is a gradation here from the prophecy that is given in this historical narrative of Numbers where a literal period of days was to be followed by a literal period of years, to the classical prophecy in Ezekiel where a literal period of years was to be followed by a period of symbolic days, to the apocalyptic in Daniel where a symbolic period of days was to correspond to a literal period of years. From this order of development in the use of the year-day principle it can be seen that Ezekiel stands midway between Numbers and Daniel. This is to be expected according to the different nature of these three bodies of literature and from their respective dates. The partially symbolic use of this time unit in terms of Ezekiel's actions represents a way station along the path to its use as a full blown symbol for units of prophetic time in Daniel. As has already been pointed out above, one can expect this type of development, transition, and adaptation as one proceeds on into apocalyptic. This different uses of "day" in prophecy do not demonstrate that they are unrelated, they demonstrate that a development has taken place in the use of "day" in the course of time and through different bodies of literature. Such differences in the nature of the applications made do no deny the underlying continuity of the use of this figure and the validity of the former as a base upon which to understand its continuing use in later passages of apocalyptic. A functional shift has occurred here, but such functional shifts have to be based upon something pre-existent, not something that was introduced *de novo*.

Since this prophecy of Ezekiel is closer in time and nature to that which is found in Daniel, it is worthwhile to consider the relationship between their two prophetic careers. Both were exiles in Babylonia, Daniel have been deported in the first wave of exiles in 605 B.C., and Ezekiel was deported in the second wave of exiles in 597 B.C. Ezekiel was called to the ministry first, in 592 B.C. according to the date of his first vision. Daniel had interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan 2 before this time but there he acted essentially as a wiseman, not primarily as a prophet. Ezekiel's last prophetic message is dated in 570 B.C. (29:17) Daniel did not begin his personal and direct prophetic ministry until ca. 550 B.C. (7:1) (1980, pp.224-231)

Spangler also sees the time periods in Ezekiel 4 as being a predictive prophecy:

Ezekiel 4:4ff. is a parabolic prophecy in the same vein of thought as the parabolic prophecy of the siegeworks in chapter 4:1-5 and that of the cut hair in chapter 5:1-12. Generally chapter 4:6 is quoted in

support of the year-day principle, but verses 4 and 5 should be added as well. Ezekiel was commanded by God to lie on his left side 390 days for the 390 years Israel was standing in opposition to God, and to lie on his right side 40 days for the violation of God's law by Judah. Here we have Numbers 14 in reverse. The punishment in Numbers 14:34 was to be one year for each day of unbelief and rebellion, while in Ezekiel the punishment was to be just one day for each year of transgression and rebellion. Ezekiel, then, has the day-for-a-year principle, while Numbers has the year-for-a-day principle. This does not invalidate the principle, because the ratio holds true no matter which way the equation is used.<sup>52</sup> In spite of the difference in reckoning the punishment, there is a close relationship between Numbers and Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 4, the prophet steps into the role of high priest (Ezekiel was born into the priestly family, although not that of the high priesthood, according to 1:3) as he vicariously bears the weight of 430 years of rebellion and obstinacy, and in Numbers 14 Moses takes on the role of high priest instead of Aaron, his brother, as he intercedes for the future of Israel and as he shields them from possibly instant destruction (Numbers 14:10ff).

The 430 years is broken into two parts, the 390 years for the sins of Israel and the 40 years for the sins of Judah. The 390 years best fits the time span for the divided monarchy, which began in 931/930 B.C. according to the most reliable chronology. However, the seeds for the division were sown when Solomon took the throne and began exacting heavy taxes. According to the latest Biblical chronology this occurred about 975/974 B.C. when David his father granted him a co-regency (or share in his throne) that was to last about four years. The 390 years, then, using inclusive reckoning, brings us down to 586 B.C., the archeologically confirmed date for the destruction of Jerusalem. The term "Judah" would refer to Judah under the divided monarchy. It would apply to the 40-year reign of David, who was of the tribe of Judah, and thus a descendent of Judah (Gen. 46:12; Ruth 4:18-22). The 40 years cannot apply to Saul's reign, even though it most likely was of the same duration as David's because Saul set up his capital in Gibeah of Benjamin, and not in the territory of Judah. It fits precisely into the 40-year reign of David, whose capital was first at Hebron (2 Sam. 2:1-4) and later at Jerusalem (1 Kings 2:11), both of which lay in the territory of Judah (Joshua 15:13, 63). Some scholars have attempted to make the 40 years and 390 years as being contemporaneous rather than successive, but Ezekiel's 40-day and 390-day ordeals could not have been overlapping, otherwise he would have been lying on both sides at the same time. The total period of 430 days for his ordeal fits nicely within the time period from his first receiving the command to the day he received another vision (Ezekiel 1:2; cf. 8:1). This 430-day ordeal is somewhat reminiscent of the 430 years Israel spent in Egypt (Ex. 12:40). In the former case the prophet is an exile in a foreign land, eating a very meager fare, while in the latter case God's people were exiles in a foreign land, living under oppressive conditions. Ezekiel is giving a multi-directional prophecy: first, he looks backward to the 430 years that God's people first spent as exiles; second, he looks backward at the 430 years of transgression from the time that Jerusalem was chosen to be Israel's capital to the time that the glorious city was destroyed; and third, he is looking forward with a prophetic eye to the immense suffering the Jerusalemites would undergo in the final days of the siege of the city (Ezekiel 4:1-3, 9-11). Indeed this is a prophecy, and it does employ the year-for-a-day equation! (1980, pp.45-46)

Spangler assures us that Ezekiel's experience in Eze 4 was prophetic in the sense that it was a parabolic prophecy. And what did he prophesy? "he is looking forward with a prophetic eye to the immense suffering the Jerusalemites would undergo in the final days of the siege of the city." So the prophecy is about the days of the siege in the days ahead from when Ezekiel enacted the drama. The time scale is on a one-to-one scale as far as the actions of the prophet is concerned; that is to say, the 430-day drama that Ezekiel enacted will equate to a 430-day siege on Jerusalem, even though the 430 day-drama of Ezekiel's was modeled on the 430 years of rebellion against God. We shall examine shortly whether the prediction was fulfilled.

The SDABC defines this action of Ezekiel's as "symbolic preaching." (Nichol, 1976, p.589): "The impending judgments were portrayed before the people in significant emblems that spoke with greater force and efficacy than words."

The SDABC states under v4. that "there is a difference of opinion as to whether Ezekiel was called upon to symbolize the sin of Israel or its punishment. Probably both ideas were involved." (Ibid). But both of these ideas have doleful ramifications for the assertion that we have a

<sup>52</sup> The result of this logic is that we can make the prophetic periods of Daniel and Revelation short and be correct, as long as it is still day-year. We will still be using the day-year principle.

predictive prophecy in Eze 4. Taking the first option – that “Ezekiel was called upon to symbolize the *sin* of Israel,” – SDA historicists have a problem in that the period the “symbolic” days represent, are days *in the past!!* Hardly a predictive prophecy.

Taking then the second option – that “Ezekiel was called upon to symbolize...its *punishment*,” – they are in a similar predicament, in that the “symbolic” days of the prophet’s mock siege would represent literal years of the actual punitive siege by the Babylonians (if we are to apply the year-day principle here as SDA historicism tells us to.) extending the siege to nearly half a millennium.

In fact the issue is worse than that for the historicists if we go with this second option. If they discount this second conundrum for the outworking of what they explain is the year-day principle – of turning “symbolic” days into literal years – for the siege, then there is the other option for symbolism of the punishment – that the “symbolic” days represent literal days – and this option presents even worse options for them. Firstly, this option would dictate a prophetic principle that says “symbolic” days are converted only to literal days; and “symbolic” years are converted to literal years. Secondly, if we are looking for the fulfillment of the siege in 430 literal days, there is absolutely no confirmation that the prophecy was fulfilled in the manner predicted. In fact, the SDABC confirms that the siege took thirty months. (Nichol, 1976, p.589) According to the facts of history, the fulfillment of the event did not occur, using either the “symbolic” day for a literal year (i.e., 430 years siege; which should be expected if we take the SDA historicists’ view), or the “symbolic” day for a literal day.

If this text were a predictive prophecy, we would expect to be able to trace the exact fulfillment of the 430 days in the siege against Jerusalem to the very day, to comply with the time scale used in the prophecy.

Did this occur? In 2Kings 25:1-11 we read the following:

1. And it came to pass in the ninth year of his [Zedekiah’s] reign, in the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it: and they built forts against it round about.
2. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.
3. And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.
4. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king’s garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.
5. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.
6. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.
7. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon;
8. And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:
9. And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king’s house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man’s house he with fire.
10. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.
11. Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.

According to the details in this verse, the siege of Jerusalem referred to by Ezekiel, and carried out by Nebuchadnezzar, lasted from the tenth day of the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah and lasted until the seventh day of the fifth month of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. Calculating at thirty days to the month, as Horn would have us do ([1960](#), p.1097ff), yields a siege period of 567 days (9<sup>th</sup> year (20+30+30) + 10<sup>th</sup> year (360) +11<sup>th</sup> year (30+30+30+30+7).<sup>53</sup> This was supposed to be 430 days according to Ezekiel. This period is even longer if we include the first half of the siege before the king of Babylon had to deal with the Egyptian army.

The SDA Commentary says on the siege of Jerusalem:

The siege of Jerusalem probably began Jan 15, 588 B.C. (see on ch.39:1), and lasted till July 18, 586 B.C., a period of two years and a half. However, the city was not under attack continuously for the entire time. At some point during the campaign the army of Apries, king of Egypt (Pharaoh-hophra, ch.44:30), advanced toward Palestine, whereupon the Babylonians temporarily withdrew (ch. 37:5-11). ([Nichol, 1976](#), p. 538) (See also the comments at Jer32:2)

On Jeremiah 39:1-2

1. In the ninth year. The final siege against Jerusalem began approximately Jan 15, 588 BC (see on 2 Kings 25:1 for the basis of this date).

2. The city was broken up. After besieging Jerusalem for 30 months, the Babylonians broke through its defenses on "the ninth day" of "the fourth month." This date can be approximated on the same basis as that in v. 1, as July 18, 586 B.C. ([Nichol, 1976](#), 489)

On Jeremiah 32: 2

2. Besieged Jerusalem. Zedekiah's policy of treachery and intrigue caused Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem. It was at this time that the king of Judah, provoked to anger by Jeremiah's persistent prediction of defeat (see vs. 3-5; ch. 34:2, 3; 38:20-23), had the prophet "shut up in the court of the prison" (see Neh 3:25). Actually, Nebuchadnezzar began to besiege Jerusalem in the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign (see on Jer39:1), but he had been forced temporarily to abandon the siege because of the approach of an Egyptian army (see ch. 37: 5, 11). From the time of the beginning of the siege (see ch39:1), until the temporary lifting of the siege by the Babylonians, Jeremiah had been at liberty in the city (see on ch. 37:4). ([Nichol, 1976](#), p. 470)

The title given by the SDABC for Eze 4 is "The Siege of Jerusalem symbolically portrayed, 4: 1-17."([Nichol, 1976](#), loc cit.) Coupled together with comments about the symbolism of the entire event (see on vs 1,3) and the admission that "the specifications of the symbolic period are not precisely enough stated to use this synchronism ["the now obsolete method of reconciling the Judah-Israel synchronisms by assuming interregnums"] as a basis for chronology" ([Ibid](#), p. 590), it is fairly safe to say that according to this statement, the SDABC does not attempt to apply the time period of Ezekiel to the siege of Jerusalem etc. as one would expect, in order to prove the historical fulfillment of such a "principle." In any case, to prove the fulfillment of the principle from Ezekiel 4 would involve three steps. First, it would include the literal time of rebellion, which secondly would be then converted into symbolic days. Thirdly, the symbolic days would *not* be converted into literal years for the actual siege, but rather the symbolic days of Ezekiel's actions *are* the literal days of the siege against Israel and Judah. Therefore the symbolic days are fulfilled in literal days, and do not need to be converted into any other time scale.<sup>54</sup> This would

<sup>53</sup> Intercalation would increase this figure even further.

<sup>54</sup> It is important to consider here that though the chapter deals with a symbolic event, the days of the prophet's action are the literal days of the siege. Though they do not represent the exact number of days involved, we are led to believe that the days are *solar* days. We are not to take the 430 days and convert them to another time frame. Thus, although the days involved are symbolic of Israel's past rebellion, they represent the actual days in the siege. Therefore, in one sense, both the 430 years of rebellion and the 430 days of the siege are both literal periods. Both of them represent real time periods: the first represents the time of rebellion and the second represents the time of the siege in literal time, even though the latter is symbolic of the former. As Owusu-Antwi says, "that one actual day of a symbolic action *equals* one actual year in apocalyptic chronology." ([2004](#), p.104)



spell the doom of the year-day principle being illustrated in this text because the ratio would be “day for a day.”

A much more devastating conclusion for the SDABC is if they consider the periods in Eze 4 to be predictive prophecy (in contrast to Num14 where even Smith is prepared to admit it is not a predictive prophecy), then we must take a precedent from the method of applying the principle in Ezekiel and applying it elsewhere. In this case it would involve *shortening* the period referred to using the year-day principle, not *lengthening* it. If this is the *only* example of its use in a prophetic context where SDA historicists say we have a historic fulfillment (at least for the 40-day part), then it behooves us to follow the precedent set in that text.

Therefore, if this was fulfilled to the day, and it is established as a prophetic period, then the principle we can get from it is the following:

1. Take the literal time and convert it into symbolic days;
2. The symbolic days are not converted into any other time period and the symbolic days are the length of the literal calendar period. That is to say, symbolic time periods are *not* given any further treatment in order to arrive at the calendar period involved in the prediction.

This is not what the SDA historicists argue is the principle of Ezekiel 4:6 but this is what the text teaches. Had we followed the SDA method exactly, we should have converted the 430 years to days ( $430 \times 360 = 154,800$ ) and then converted these “symbolic days” to literal days. Therefore, the Lord should have told Ezekiel to lie on his sides for 154,800 solar days.

Therefore the next point to consider is that since Ezekiel 4 is not a predictive prophecy, the context of Ezekiel 4: 6 is not given in the context of predictive prophecy; it is a symbolic *one-off* representation and has *no lasting relevance* to any real period, much less to the actual siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The use of this text as a concept to convert time in prophecy cannot be applied generally to prophetic periods. If it could, then there is no reason why it cannot be applied to the siege of Jerusalem with its inevitable failure to match up with the time frame of the actual siege, or to other time periods in the prophets such as the 65 years in Isa 7:8. But we would be turning years into days, in harmony with the calibration of Ezekiel, not days into years. Do commentators see this as a predictive prophecy or as a typological message? Typical is Keil who states “Ezekiel, as God’s representative, carries out in a symbolical manner the siege of Jerusalem.” (1978, Vol 9:71)

What do SDA historicist’s say regarding the predictive nature of Ezekiel 4:6? The SDA Bible Commentary avoids the question entirely of the fulfillment of this prophecy as a predictive prophecy. It does not compare the siege of Jerusalem with the prediction of Ezekiel. Yet they confidently assert that

In these statements [referring also to Numbers 14:34] are found the first intimations of the prophetic scale which later was to figure so largely in the interpretation of the great time prophecies, such as the “time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan. 7:25), and the “two thousand and three hundred days” (Dan. 8:14). (Nichol, 1976, p.590)

This statement ignores the context of Ezekiel entirely. There is no prophetic fulfillment of Ezekiel’s time period. How can there be any demonstration of a prophetic scale here when it is understood that Eze 4:6 is not a prediction? One would at least expect to see this principle in action in the relevant verse being used, just as I do in the next section using the texts from Genesis 40 or 41. But in Ezekiel, it is only a symbolic representation. It is not a time prophecy. The time period has no relevance to the siege of Jerusalem. The period it represents is a period in the past. It is symbolic of the *past* in much the same way as Lent is used in Christian churches around the world. It is a remembrance and soul searching based on past events – in the case of Ezekiel – the past rebellion of Israel. There is no “principle” employed here that can be applied to *later* prophetic periods, and even if there was, it would yield a calculation the opposite of what the SDA historicists would want. Therefore, both the *context* as a symbolic illustration rather

than predictive prophecy, and the *reversal of the periods* under consideration when compared to what the SDA historicists want them to say, definitively augur against the SDA arguments and rule out using this text as a basis for the year for a day concept.

### Other texts of the same type.

If SDA historicists want to argue that texts like Num. 14:34 are predictive prophecy, how do they categorise texts such as the following:

Joshua 6:3

And the Lord said unto Joshua, See, I have given into Thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour.

And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

Here is God speaking of a future event, and a time period involved in that event, in exactly the same manner as he gives it in Num. 14:32-34:

But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

The argument that this statement is just an observation and not a command, is negated by a statement made just minutes before where the Lord specifically commands them to turn and move into the desert:

Numbers 14: 22- 25

Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

...Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea.

In both cases, it is an instruction – an imperative instruction – a statement of their future behaviour. Why do SDA historicists say one is predictive prophecy and the other cannot be such?

Exodus 20:8-11

The Sabbath commandment can also be seen, according to this definition, as a predictive prophecy also. It predicts that for six days, people will work and do all their business, and rest on the seventh.

This same logic could then be extended to all the instructions regarding the festivals in different times of the year. They also could be seen as predictive prophecy. And so what SDA historicists classify in Num. 14:34 broadens to any command of God in the imperative tense involving a period of time. One begins to see to what a ridiculous end their reasoning has led them. The obvious solution to this dilemma is to give up the absurd notion that in Num. 14:34 we have a predictive prophecy. If this text is a predictive prophecy, then every command of God is a predictive prophecy, subject to the year-day principle where a time period is involved.

Conclusion.

We have looked at the notion that both Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 are predictive prophecies. We found SDA historicists have insoluble problems with this argument in both texts. Therefore we must discard these fanciful ideas in order to retain integrity in our interpretation of the texts.



## Do Num. 14:33-34 and Eze. 4:6 display apocalyptic qualities?

We come now to the second part of the question – as to whether these two texts are *apocalyptic* prophecies. To be able to use these two texts as a justification of applying the phrase occurring there “a day for the year, a day for the year” to apocalyptic prophecies one would expect, at a minimum, for them to be apocalyptic texts. How could one justify applying a principle to apocalyptic prophecies from predictive prophecies? It cannot be done. We need to know that these two texts are apocalyptic. We have found that these two texts are not predictive prophecies. Are they apocalyptic prophecies?

SDA historicists argue that the year-day principle is the principle for apocalyptic prophetic time periods. And in their defence of this principle, they cite Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:6 and even perhaps Lev 25. These periods, they tell us, are ‘predictive prophecies.’ But what justification can be given for applying a predictive prophetic principle to an apocalyptic prophecy, when SDA historicists argue vehemently for entirely different characteristics for either type of prophecy. It would be highly dubious to say the least, to apply a principle from another class of literature that cannot be generalised to another. We have just seen that we cannot generalise the “year-day” principle to any time prophecy in Scripture indiscriminately. Even if Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 teach a year-day principle, this is no endorsement for applying it to apocalyptic literature. It would only mean that we should apply it to predictive prophecies (with all the incongruity that that would imply). According to their classification of apocalyptic prophecy, it is an entirely different genre of prophecy, with its own unique characteristics. They have failed to establish a link between the so-called ‘predictive prophecies’ of Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 and the apocalyptic prophecies.

So the question needs to be asked, Are Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4 and Lev 25 in an apocalyptic prophetic context? In order to answer that question, I will examine the qualities SDA historicists cite for apocalyptic prophetic literature and then see whether this is the case with either text. In the following example we see how SDA historicist writers explain the characteristics of apocalyptic prophecy. The following extract is from the DARCOM series by the SDA Biblical Research Institute:

The book of Revelation represents a type of literature and style unique among the books of the New Testament. Its closest Bible parallel is the Old Testament book of Daniel. These two Bible books generally are classified as "apocalyptic prophecy," in contrast to "classical prophecy" (sometimes called "general prophecy"), the latter being represented by such books as the major and minor prophets.

Both kinds of prophetic literature teach divine truth, as do all the other kinds of literature in the Bible. But just as in the case of the other literary types, the characteristics peculiar to this kind of literature must be taken into account by the student. Unfortunately, the distinction between classical and apocalyptic prophecy is frequently blurred by Bible expositors.

**Striking contrasts.** Apocalyptic prophecy makes a clear and invariable line of demarcation between good and evil, between God's forces and Satan's forces, between the righteous and the wicked, between salvation for God's children and doom for their enemies. Among the numerous striking opposites in the book of Revelation are the seal of God and the mark of the beast, the faithful and true witness and the serpent that deceives the world, the virgin of Revelation 12 and the harlot of Revelation 17, the armies of heaven and the armies of earth, the fruit of the tree of life and the wine of the fury of God's wrath, the New Jerusalem in glorious splendor and Babylon in flaming destruction, and the sea of glass and the lake of fire.

**Cosmic sweep.** Classical prophecy deals with the local and contemporary situation as its primary focus, with a certain degree of broadening to depict a final great day of the Lord. Apocalyptic has instead, as its very warp and woof, the element of cosmic sweep or universal scope. Apocalyptic prophecy approaches the great controversy between good and evil, not within a local and contemporary historical framework (such as depicted in the messages of the major and minor prophets), but from the vantage point that draws aside the curtain, as it were, on the *entire world* for the *whole span* of human history.

For example, Daniel 2 and 7 treat world empires in succession for the remainder of earth's history from Daniel's time until the final consummation and setting up of God's everlasting kingdom. Revelation likewise scans major historical developments from John's day up to and including a portrayal of the grand eschatological finale.

**Eschatological emphasis.** At times the general prophets broaden the scope of the doom oracles or "day-of-the-Lord" judgments" -- whether directed against Israel, Judah, Nineveh, Babylon, Moab, Edom, or whatever entity it might be -- to portray briefly a final judgment at the end of earth's history. However, the major thrust of their writing is for the situation of their own day.

On the other hand apocalyptic prophecy, although it treats history down through the stream of time, has a particular focus on the end-time events. Apocalyptic describes an ongoing struggle between good and evil in history, a history that tends to degenerate as it proceeds in time. But it is a history that is actually moving toward an end at which time God Himself will directly intervene to destroy evil and establish righteousness.

In a sense we may say that the general prophets looked upon history from the standpoint of their own position in time, whereas the apocalyptic prophets envisage a sweep of history with a special focus on history's eventual climax.

**Origin in times of distress and perplexity.** In its historical setting, biblical apocalyptic such as Daniel and Revelation arose in times of distress, perplexity, and persecution. Thus, it appears that Apocalyptic prophecy emerges when dire circumstances for God's people might well lead them to question whether God is still active and in control. And it teaches clearly and forcefully that God is indeed still the master of history, that He is with His people, and that He will fully vindicate them at a grand and glorious eschatological climax. Apocalyptic prophecy is a kind of literature that is particularly suited to give comfort and hope to oppressed and downtrodden servants of God in their time of critical need for precisely such comfort and hope.

**Basis in visions and dreams.** A comparison of apocalyptic prophecy with classical prophecy and other biblical literature indicates that apocalyptic is characterized by more frequent reference to visions and dreams than is true of any other kind of literature found in the Bible. Also, the appearance of angels to interpret such visions and dreams is not uncommon.

**Extensive use of symbolism.** Moreover, whatever symbolism the classical prophets use, it tends to follow true-to-life patterns, whereas apocalyptic often departs from conventional forms. It depicts, for example, animals that are nonexistent in nature, such as the seven-headed dragon and the sea beast of Revelation, the winged lion and the four-headed leopard of Daniel, etc. Composite symbolism was common, of course in the art and literature of the ancient Near East. (Strand, 1992, pp.11-14)<sup>55</sup>

We must ask ourselves then the question whether these qualities are to be found in either Num. 14:34 or Eze. 4:6. To understand how to deal with apocalyptic time periods, we cannot use principles used in prosaic, poetic or legislative or even predictive prophetic literature.

**Table 7. Characteristics of Apocalyptic**

<b>Apocalyptic Qualities.</b>	<b>Lev 25:</b>	<b>Num 14:34</b>	<b>Eze 4:6</b>
1 Striking Contrast between good and Evil	No	No	No
2 Cosmic Sweep	No	No	No
3. Eschatological Emphasis	No	No	No
4. Origin in Times of Distress	No	No	No
5 Basis in Visions and Dreams	No	No	No
6 Extensive Use of Symbolism	No	No	No

<sup>55</sup> Also found at <http://www.patmospapers.com/apocalyptic.htm>

We can see from this examination that these texts do not qualify as apocalyptic prophecy. Therefore, by what leap of unexplainable logic SDA historicists want to assert that a statement in a non-apocalyptic literature applies specifically to apocalyptic literature? There is no justification for this. They would have to find the presence of this principle operating in apocalyptic literature to have any justification for such an assertion. But they have none. They have no justification for such an application. The highly symbolic vision in Daniel 4 depicts the time periods there as being literal. Even Daniel 9:24 eludes their clutching for a text to use as a basis. The reader has seen from earlier discussions in the paper how desperately SDA historicists try and establish that Eze. 4 and Num. 14 are predictive prophecies. Sure it is contrived and unsuccessful, and fails on a number of fronts. *But what they absolutely cannot do is to take it the next step and establish that these two texts are in an apocalyptic prophetic context. Yet this is exactly what they have to do to try and argue any correspondence between the context in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 and apocalyptic prophetic literature.* It is an impossible task; and consequently all of their arguments in favour of the year-day principle, gleaned from anything *except* apocalyptic literature must fail. They have no example in an apocalyptic situation that serves as a demonstration - unequivocal and unambiguous – upon which a principle can be established to interpret the time periods in Daniel and Revelation.

When it comes down to it, the only basis on which they can stand is the fact that it had been used that way for hundreds of years. What SDA historicists overlook is that the rationale was introduced when Biblical studies were anything but reasonable; when in fact, Medieval reasoning was the order of the day. The year-day principle was a vestige of that time and has been discarded by all of the world as being unscriptural. Horn and Wood warn us against using “outmoded authorities.” Seventh-day Adventists, in company with Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Worldwide Church of God are the only groups still advocating such an idea.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, it cannot be argued that the principle applies even to predictive prophecy, since Desnoyers, in his article, cites a multitude of predictive prophecies from both the Old and New Testaments where SDA historicists would protest if a year-day principle was to be applied.<sup>57</sup>

It should be noted that the phrase “day for a year” only occurs in two places in Scripture, and in both those cases a distribution of time is made. Therefore, the corollary of that demonstration is that when the phrase is used, the distribution is made according to the phrase, and in cases of temporal statements where the phrase does not occur the distribution is not made. Consequently, since this phrase does not occur in the time statements in Daniel, a conversion is not made.

### **2.3.6 Summary**

In this section I have examined Numbers 14:34 and Eze 4:6. I looked at what is symbolic and literal in these time periods. . With Number 14:34 I examined the context of the text. I made the conclusion that the symbolic section of the 40 days and the 40 years was the 40 years of punishment. The forty days represented the historical event. It was not symbolic of anything. The conversion went from a *short past historic day to a symbolic long future year*. With Ezekiel 4:4-6 I examined the context of the text and made the conclusion the symbolic section of the two periods 430 years and the 430 days was the 430 years of Ezekiel’s “symbolic “preaching.” The 430 years in the past represented the actual historical event. It was not representative of anything. The conversion here went from a *long past historic year for a short symbolic future day*.

<sup>56</sup> Desnoyers, credit must go to [Fernand Fisel](#) for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>57</sup> Desnoyers, [Ibid.](#)

Neither of these texts teach the method of transforming short periods into long periods as used by SDA historicists. This is admitted in Shea's writings. The SDA historicists' method transforms a *short future "symbolic" day* into a *future long "literal" year*. Expressed tabularly, we have the following:

**Table 8 Year-Day Formulation Options**

	First Period	Second Period
Numbers 14:34	a <u>short</u> <i>past</i> "literal" historical day.	a <u>long</u> <i>future</i> "symbolic" year.
Ezekiel 4:4-6	a <u>long</u> <i>past</i> "literal" historical year.	a <u>short</u> <i>future</i> "symbolic" day.
Leviticus 25	A <u>short</u> "literal" week.	A <u>long</u> <i>future</i> "literal" 7-year period.
SDA Historicism	a <u>short</u> <i>future</i> "symbolic" day.	a <u>long</u> <i>future</i> "literal" year.
Not used yet	A <u>long</u> <i>future</i> "symbolic" period of years.	A <u>short</u> <i>future</i> "literal" period of days.

Therefore, Numbers 14:34 and Eze 4:4-6 should not be used as a basis for their transformation process of short future "symbolic" periods to long future "literal" periods, on a day for a year scale, since the transformation process in both texts are dissimilar to the SDA historicists' position. Numbers 14:34 and Eze 4:6 cannot give any credibility to their method, for in fact, their method of converting time in apocalyptic prophecy does not have any similarity to the method in either text, as Shea is prepared to admit.

I then considered the difference between the two texts. The conclusion was that these texts teach the reverse of each other, and by using both of these texts would cancel out the effect of the other. Some SDA historicists like Owusu-Antwi dogmatically refuse to see this; while others, like Shea, cannot help but admit it. Shea's arguments, admitting the difference in both Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6, try to explain it away by trying to tell us that these differences are part of a *continuum* in the development of the year-day principle. I examined his arguments and highlight his admission that the way the 'year-day principle' is supposedly used in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 is entirely different to the way implemented by SDA historicists. I then examined his theory of the 'year-day' continuum and found it goes outside the traditional understanding of the year-day principle and is an aberration. It does not defend the year-day principle at all. His explanation is not only untenable, since it is founded on an unfounded expectation, but contradicted the traditional position of SDA historicists. It merely justifies time conversion. His conclusion that "the same year-day principle could be employed in different ways on different occasions" (1982, p.74) flies in the face of the position of SDA historicists and undermines what they stand for. They see the year-day principle being applied in *one* way – a *future symbolic day* standing for a *future literal year*.

His use of poetic and narrative texts to illustrate this conversion do not defend the year-day principle. They merely indicate time conversion, no-more, no less. His argumentation has abandoned the traditional year-day explanation offered by SDA historicists.

Thirdly, I considered the concept of the process used by historicists getting from the text as it reads to their configuration of so many years. This included turning the time period in the text into days, then saying that the 'days' in this period were really 'symbolic' days, and had to be converted to literal years, in order to arrive at the correct time period. The problem with this

rationale is that there is no justification for inserting the argument that the period, converted to days, makes those days 'symbolic.' Furthermore, there is no reason, for somebody else to insert another step into the process and extend even further, these so-called 'literal' years, that are converted from the 'symbolic' days.

Then I looked at the question as to whether either of the texts in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6 are prophecies, and found that if they say Eze 4 is not a prophecy, they are faced with the problem of applying a non-prophetic time conversion to a prophetic passage; and if they say it is a prophecy, then we must apply it differently to what SDA historicists' apply it, since the scale in Ezekiel is *long historical periods in the past for short symbolic periods in the future*. Either way poses insuperable problems for them. Furthermore, if it is a prophecy, then the siege was not fulfilled according to the time specified. Therefore, Eze 4:6 is not a true prophecy and should be discounted as either being a false prophecy (Jer 18). If it is not a prophecy of the time period for the siege, then we cannot draw a principle from it to apply to the prophecies of Daniel.

## 2.4 Dn9 - Sabbatical years in Dan9: 24-27

So far in this paper we have principally looked at the two texts used to support the year-day theory – Exe 4:6 and Num 14:34. We have found the evidence wanting for this theory to be judged valid. The third most important text in the establishment of the year-day principle is Dn 9:24-27. A more thorough examination of the place of the year-day principle has been given in Assumption 16, and readers are referred there for a more detailed study. In this section, some matters will be addressed here relative to this text.

In this section, I will look briefly how SDA historicists use the history of the interpretation of this prophecy to underpin their interpretation. Froom is the writer *par excellence* for samples of this approach. Then I look at how dependent SDA historicists are on the year-day principle to show the fulfillment of the year-day principle in Dn 9:24-27 – that is to say, that use circular reasoning. Thirdly, I look at some contemporary ideas from Shea to try and support the traditional position, and address them.

### 2.4.1 A historical defence of the SDA interpretation of the 70 weeks.

Froom, in his *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, looks at various writers through the centuries who tried to use the year-day concept to explain Dn9. He starts with the statements of Jesus, “the time is fulfilled,” and builds an argument for Jesus using the year-day principle based on Dn9:

Jesus’ first entry into the field of prophetic interpretation was the initial declaration of His ministry, soon after His baptism – “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:15. What other time could He mean except the completion of Daniel’s sixty-ninth week, which was to extend “unto Messiah the Prince”? Dan. 9:25. There is definite evidence that about that time many Jews were looking for “Messiah the Prince” to come<sup>58</sup>. Here was prophecy fulfilling before their eyes. We may see in this Christ’s corroboration of the year-day reckoning of the seventy weeks, a principle already partially glimpsed in the original Septuagint translation of Daniel, and now established by Jesus’ coming to fulfill the prophecy of “Messiah the Prince,” and to usher in a new era of broader and clearer prophetic understanding, beyond that of Old Testament times. (Froom, 1950, pp. 144f.)

Without any further evidence to examine on the use of the 70 weeks of Dn9 in the New Testament, Froom concludes at the end of this chapter with: “The year-day principle is certified by the fulfillment of the seventy weeks.” (1950, p. 164) And the only evidence he provides from the Apostolic Age is his own assertion regarding Jesus’ statement from Mark 1:15.

Froom traces the use of the year-day principle to pre-Christian writers:

In spite of the impropriety of the Septuagint translators injecting their own interpretation into a version, their procedure is useful to us because it reflects certain of their prophetic interpretations, thereby *unwittingly revealing the Jewish prophetic understanding of the times*, which is what we seek. ...In Daniel 4:16 and 3... in place of the “seven times” of Nebuchadnezzar’s humiliation, the expression is four times rendered “seven years” in the LXX – though the phrase occurs in verses 13, 29 and 30 in the LXX, because the verses are differently divided. In further confirmation of this year-time principle, the LXX in Daniel 11:13 states that the king of the north comes “at the end of a time, of a year.” This key principle of a time for a year carries over into the Christian Era and reappears constantly.... (Froom, op. cit, pp. 174)

Whiston, the classic translator of Josephus, adds this cogent footnote concerning the years for “times, “the prophetic character of parallel expressions, and the extension of the seventy weeks into the time of the Romans:.... “he withal lets us know, by his hint at the interpretation of the seventy weeks, as belonging to

<sup>58</sup> Froom includes a footnote here: “About the time of Christ there prevailed a general expectancy of some sort of deliverer soon to appear. That this was found among the pagans, as well as the Jews, is indicated by the Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, as well as by Josephus, according to Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Christ*, p. 21...



the fourth monarchy, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the days of Josephus (ch. Ii, sec. 7), that he did not think those years to be bare years, but rather days into years; by which reckoning, and by which alone, could be seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety days, reach to the age of Josephus. (p. 200)

The original Alexandrian version of Daniel avoided Hebraisms which that of Theodotion subsequently restored, but the earlier translations contained glosses on the text, and in the historical portion expressions appear that were evidently intended to make the narrative more acceptable and understandable. In the passage on the seventy weeks in Daniel 9, attempts were made to modify the text so as to give it the obvious appearance of an early fulfillment, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. There are noticeable differences between this paraphrasing of the text of Daniel 9 and the Masoretic Hebrew text which is the basis of our English version....In verse 26 there is an expansion of the “threescore and two weeks” into “seven and seventy and sixty-two.”... In verse 27, instead of “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks,” we find “seven and seventy times and 62 of years” – the significantly interpretative phrase “of years” being inserted. This, says Pusey, is actually a falsification of the time. Boutflower explains that, when the vowel points are omitted, the same Hebrew characters (sh'im) stand for both “weeks” and “seventy,” thus rendering it easy to confuse the intent of the original prophecy.<sup>59</sup> ...Striking and significant is the injection of the interpretative “of years” into the numerals of the prophecy of the seventy weeks. It should be noted that in this first interpretation of Daniel, giving mere flashes of third century B.C. prophetic understanding, the first recorded exposition of time prophecy appears – the application concerning the “sixty-two of years” in the seventy weeks pertaining to the Jews, which if followed through would bring them face to face with the first advent and the suffering Messiah. The time had not yet come for emphasis to be centred on the second advent being the immediate concern. This prophetic exposition “of years,” hints of the year-day principle, which was later to become an abiding heritage in the Christian Era, and never to be lost throughout succeeding centuries by either Jewish or Christian expositors....(Froom, 1950, pp.174-176)<sup>60</sup>

In summarising his observations of the Septuagint translation of Daniel 9, Froom concludes:

The seventy weeks involve the thought of periods ‘of years.’ Thus the application of the year-day principle is begun.” We may therefore properly conclude that the Jewish interpretation of the four metals as the four successive empires of prophecy, and the year-day principle, formed the groundwork of that system of interpretation upon which the apostles and succeeding Christian writers of the early centuries built their amplified exposition of Daniel, and of the complementary prophecies of Paul and John.(1950, p. 203)

the foundations of Daniel’s great outline, and the year-day principle of the great time prophecies, as laid down by Daniel and subsequent Hebrew leaders, were carried over into the Christian church, becoming its priceless heritage, though likewise held by a paralleling line of Jewish expositors extending of the Christian Era. (1950, p. 889)

In regard to the position of the early church Froom summarises:

The seventy weeks were understood as 490 years, on the year-day principle, from Persia unto the Messiah, or thereabout, and pertaining particularly to the Jews.

All other “time prophecies” were as yet restricted to literal time – the time, times, and a half, or 1260 days, and the 1290, 1335 and the 2300 days. (1950, p.459)

The close of the second century...we ...find in this period the seventy weeks of Daniel interpreted as 490 years, but there was no application of the year-day principle to the longer time periods by any Christian writer of this early era – not, indeed, until we come to the twelfth century. Only in the seventy weeks was this principle clearly applied – and that, obviously, because they were recognized as actually past and certified through the first advent of Christ. But in no instance was this principle carried over and applied to the prophesied 1260 days in its varying forms of numeration in Daniel or the Apocalypse.

There could be no concept, on the part of any of these early expositors, or a long reign of entrenched apostasy through centuries – as the symbolic time would indicate – before the final developments and the

<sup>59</sup> He inserts references here as Boutflower, Charles, *In and around the Book of Daniel*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1923, pp. 173, 174; and Pusey, E.B., *Daniel the Prophet, Nine Lectures Delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Oxford*, Oxford: John Henry and James Parker, 1864, p. 379

<sup>60</sup> The concept of 6,000 years for this world and 1,000 years for the millennium has had the same venerable history, preserved by both Jewish and Christian expositors alike up to the present, but SDAs would hardly argue for this as an “abiding heritage”!!

return of Christ. Time was naturally foreshortened to them, for they looked for the speedy return of their Lord. Indeed, only as history actually unrolled the prophetic scroll through fulfillment, could its intent be perceived. To have unfolded clearly in unveiled terminology the spreading span of the intervening ages would doubtless have been to shake or crush the faith of the harassed martyr church. Yet for the prophets not to have spoken thus would have left God without this matchless predictive witness, and would have deprived later generations of the certainties of such prophetic declarations. (p. 242)

Froom summarises the ante-Nicaean period by saying: “The seventy weeks connected with Christ’s first advent. The year-day principle not yet applied to the longer prophetic periods.” (1950, p. 348)

The dependence on Dn9 to give respectability to the year-day principle cannot be understated. It has been a bastion for the year-day principle down through the centuries. Typical in the post-Reformation era is this statement from an anonymous writer R.M., in 1787:

“This jubilee or cleansing of the sanctuary must begin within 2300 years from the time of Daniel’s vision of the Ram and He-Goat, mentioned in chap viii., for in verse 14 of that chapter, it is said that the vision shall be until 2300 days. These days are to be understood as years: in the prophecies of Ezekiel, we read that God appointed each day should denote a year; and by so interpreting Daniel’s 70 weeks, relating to the first coming of Christ, the time exactly corresponds with the event; so we have a sure confirmation that Daniel’s days are to be understood as years. (Froom, 1948, p.691)

Froom (1946, p.710) quotes Birk’s use of Dn9 to reinforce the validity of the year-day principle. Birks wrote around the time of the advent movement, even though he was not a Millerite:

The prophecy of the seventy weeks has always held the foremost place in the direct arguments for the year-day system. The reasoning is very simple in its nature. The word *week*, or *shabua*, is used elsewhere in Scripture to denote seven days; but in this prophecy it denotes *seven years*. Hence the words of time are enlarged beyond their literal or usual sense, in the proportion of a *year* to a *day*. And since all these prediction of time bear one common character, occur in the same prophets, and have the same general object, they ought to be explained by one common rule. In one instance, which is decisively fulfilled, the proportion holds of a year to a day; and therefore it must be applied, in consistency, to all the rest. (Ibid, p.333)

### **2.4.2 SDA historicists who use Dn9:24-27 to prove the year-day principle**

Modern SDA historicist writers still point to Dn9 to establish the validity of the year-day principle. The following are a sample of their views.

#### **William Miller**

Timm notes that Miller’s views of the year-day principle were bolstered by the fulfillment of the 70 weeks of Dn9:

For Miller, the 2300 days of Daniel 8: 14 were symbolic in nature, and had to be understood as 2300 literal years. He claimed that, by taking “each day for a year,” he was in harmony with “all the standard Protestant commentators.” He found biblical support for the year-day principle mainly in: (1) Numbers 14:34; (2) Ezekiel 4:6; and (3) the assumption that the prophetic period of the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27, which had already been fulfilled as 490 years, was only the first part of the 2300 days. Additional support was provided by correlations with the historical fulfillment of other prophetic periods, such as the 1290 days (Dan 12:11), the 1335 days (Dan 12:12), the 2450 days (cf. Lev 25:8-13), and the 2520 days (cf. Lev 26:18-28). [Timm has copious footnotes for each of these points and readers are referred there to follow up the references. –FB] (1995, pp.28-29)

## U. Smith

Smith sees the 70 weeks fulfillment as proof for the year-day principle along with the other prophetic periods, since we can observe in history the outworking of the principle in the history associated with the 70 weeks:

Another instance, not so evidently symbolic in its nature, but equally definite in showing how God uses short periods of time to represent longer ones, and the proportion to observed between them, is found in Num. 14: 34, "Forty days, each *day* for a *year*."...that which demonstrates beyond question the correctness of the year-day principle, is the fact that we, living down in the last years of prophetic fulfillment, are now able to trace out in history the accomplishment of these predictions; and we find that the seventy weeks of Daniel 9; the 1260, 1290, and the 1335 days, of Daniel 7 and 12, and the 1260 days and the forty-two months of Revelation 12 and 13; and the five months of Rev. 9:5; and the hour, day, month, and year of Rev. 9:15, have all been exactly fulfilled, a day for a year. (1898, pp. 166 f.)

## F. C. Gilbert.

Jewish Seventh-day Adventist Gilbert cites the "universal" custom of Jews who saw the 490 years depicting the existence of the second temple as years. He assumes they did this on the basis of the year-day principle:

Having given the reader a clear demonstration from the word of God that a day in prophecy represents a year, and therefore the 2300 days represents so many years, we will now call attention to the fact that the Hebrew teaches the same truth in a different way. Thus we shall have two witnesses from another view that this is the word of God.

The Hebrew words, translated *seventy weeks*, are *Sho-voo-im Shiv-im*..which by *all* Jewish translators are rendered "*Shib-tsik Shmee-tos*," or seventy *Shmee-tos*. But a *Shmee-tau* is a period of seven years. This is recognized by Jews everywhere. Therefore a literal translation from the Hebrew would be, seventy times the period of seven years, or four hundred and ninety years. In his translation of the Old Testament, explanatory note forty-seven, Leeser says on Daniel 9:24: "Ancient Jewish writers thought that the second temple stood four hundred twenty years, which, with the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, make four hundred ninety years." While their application of the time is incorrect and erroneous, it expresses the view of ancient Hebrew writers, showing their understanding of the seventy weeks. (*Ibid*, p.308)<sup>61</sup>

Gilbert points out that "Jews everywhere" understood that a "seven" unit in Daniel 9 was a seven-year period. He does not cite evidence that indicates they calculated the 490 years in Dn9 using either Num. 14:34 or Eze. 4:6. They could get to 490 years without a year-day principle.<sup>62</sup> That Gilbert does not rule out the 490 years being gained by methods other than the year-day principle is a major weakness in his argumentation.

## Milton Kern

Kern quotes Guinness' reference to the 70 weeks as the means of proving the year-day principle:

Did this happen within twenty-three hundred literal days, or about six and two-thirds years, after the decree went forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem? No. But Jesus was baptized and anointed sixty-nine weeks of years (483 years) after the decree in 457 BC. He was baptized and anointed by the Holy Spirit in the autumn of AD. 27, and He was crucified three and a half years later in the spring of AD. 31. We are told in the pamphlet under review that this year-for-a-day theory is an unsound rule of interpretation. Some may consider it unsound, but it is the theory of interpretation adopted by the great prophetic students of the Protestant Reformation and many others. Dr. H. Grattan Guinness, a Church of England writer, in his book *The Approaching End of the Age*, page 302, used the seventy-week period to prove the year-day theory. In speaking of the prophetic periods of the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, he says, "The great answer to this important query [the meaning of "day" in prophecy] is found in the fact that one of these

<sup>61</sup> More information about Isaac Leeser can be found at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/loc/Leeser.html> and <http://www.library.upenn.edu/cajs/leeser.html>

<sup>62</sup> Such as the sabbatical-year model or the 'sevens' of years attested by Solon, Aristotle, Varro and Censorinus – see Assumption 16.

periods has been fulfilled, and therefore supplies the key to all the rest." In these prophecies short-lived beasts are used as symbols of nations which lasted for centuries, and there is a certain propriety in using a short period of time to represent a longer period. In speaking of the prophecies regarding the Antichrist, Bishop Thomas Newton, D.D., in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, says, "It is impossible for all the things which are predicted of Antichrist to be fulfilled in so short a space of time; and neither is Antichrist, or the little horn [Daniel 7], a single man, but a kingdom." - Pages 246-247. (Revised edition, p. 221.) But we have direct statements from the Bible regarding this matter. For instance, in Ezekiel 4:3-6 the prophet was instructed to lie on his side a certain number of days as "a sign to the house of Israel." These days represented an equal number of years of their iniquity. "I have appointed thee each day for a year." While the seventy-week period, as Dr. Guinness says, is the key to all other time prophecies, it also verifies the whole twenty three-hundred-day period. The seventy weeks were "to seal up the vision and prophecy." Dan. 9:24. Being able to establish by unimpeachable evidence the fulfillment of the events to occur in the first four hundred and ninety years of this prophetic period, we know conclusively when the twenty-three hundred years ended.

The seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, ended in AD. 34, when the apostles definitely turned their attention to the evangelization of the Gentiles. ' (Acts 13:46.) The remaining eighteen hundred and ten years of this period bring us to AD. 1844. And through all these years an apostate power has "cast down the truth to the ground ... and prospered." (1945, p.23)

Kern refers to his evidence in Dn9 for the year-day principle as "unimpeachable evidence." This is indicative of the ignorance of so many like Kern in past to the primary evidence of Aristotle, Varro and Censorinus. Kern points out that great historicists in past used Dn9 as the foundational basis for the validation of the year-day principle. In his words, it "is the key to all other time prophecies..." Therefore, the corollary of this is that without the validation of Dn9, the foundation of their argument evaporates, as does the validity of the principle *per se*.

## Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology

Under the section on the year-day principle in the article "Biblical Apocalyptic," we read of the usage of Daniel 9 to confirm the use of the year-day principle in apocalyptic prophecy:

It is most reasonable, therefore, to assume that just as the short-lived creatures symbolize entities whose existence or dominion in history extended over long periods of time, so also the time elements associated with these symbolic creatures must signify extensive time intervals.

Daniel 9 provides a key to the nature and meaning of these expressions. The vision of Daniel 9:24-27 begins with a time period that literally reads: "seventy sevens" or "seventy weeks." The "seventy sevens" commence with the going forth of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem and continue until the coming of the Anointed One, His death, and the destruction of the city and sanctuary.

Both historico-critical and conservative scholars believe that the period of "seventy sevens" must be understood in terms of years in order to allow sufficient time for the fulfillment of the various aspects specified in verses 24-27. The unfolding of events detailed in this passage requires more time than the one year, four months, and 10 days that a reading of "seventy sevens" in terms of *days* (i.e., 490 *days*) would allow. It is for this reason that commentators generally and some Bibles (e.g., the RSV) supply the word "years" after the "seventy sevens" and read "seventy weeks of years."

This interpretation of the "seventy sevens" or "seventy weeks" receives support from the larger context. From Daniel 9:2, verse 24 takes up the concept of "seventy years" that Jeremiah predicted Israel would spend in Babylon (cf. Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10). In effect, Daniel says that the time allocated to the events mentioned in Dan. 9:24-27 would amount to *seven times "seventy years,"* of which Jeremiah spoke. The reference to "seventy years" in Daniel 9:2 therefore suggests that the word "seventy" in verse 24 should also be understood in terms of years.

Given the interruption between the various time references in the vision and the parallel nature of the visions, it is reasonable to assume with historicist interpreters of the past that in the apocalyptic prophecy chapters of Daniel and Revelation a symbolic day signifies a literal year. (2000, p.798)<sup>63</sup>

The Handbook states “Both historico-critical and conservative scholars believe that the period of “seventy sevens” must be understood in terms of years in order to allow sufficient time for the fulfillment of the various aspects specified in verses 24-27.” That is correct. What is incorrect and misleading is that the Handbook does not state that the majority of these scholars do this without any year-day principle. The Handbook tries to muster support from other scholars for the year-day principle but they are unwilling to divulge the method by which these same scholars today come to such a conclusion. The fact that “commentators generally and some Bibles (e.g., the RSV) supply the word ‘years’ after the ‘seventy sevens’ and read ‘seventy weeks of years’” is no indication that the year-day principle is at work at all. One would expect from the authors of the Handbook much more honesty when invoking the views of others.

## Gerhard Pfandl

Gerhard Pfandl, like the writers quoted above, uses Dn9:24-27 to confirm the validity of the year-day principle:

In Daniel 9:24-27 the 70-weeks prophecy met its fulfillment at the exact time if we use the year-day principle to interpret it. Many interpreters, who in other apocalyptic texts do not employ the year-day principle, recognize that the 70 weeks are in fact “weeks of years” reaching from the Persian period to the time of Christ. Thus the pragmatic test in Daniel 9 confirms the validity of the year-day principle. (2004b, pp.60-62)

Pfandl falls into the same trap as the authors of the Handbook. He does not point out that these “Many interpreters, who in other apocalyptic texts do not employ the year-day principle, recognize that the 70 weeks are in fact “weeks of years” reaching from the Persian period to the time of Christ” come to such a conclusion without using the year-day principle. He is not prepared to put his assertions under the microscope by naming the authorities he refers to. He is not even prepared to declare what method they use. The fact that they use another method to arrive at the same conclusion, does not mean that they give pragmatic confirmation of the year-day principle. It is most unfortunate that these SDA historicist scholars stoop to such an dishonourable practice to garner support for their ailing theory.

Had he spent the time reading the Venerable Bede, who was the commentator *par excellence* for centuries up to the twelfth century, and was the reference of choice for commentators coming even after this date, he would have seen that the seventy weeks was not considered using the day-for-a-year system, since Bede saw the word “weeks” as a grouping of seven. And Julius Africanus, who lived in the third century, from whom Bede gained his arguments, used the same definition of the word “week” in concert with the common usage of the idea in the Latin and Greek language at the time.

## Clifford Goldstein

Goldstein, predictably, follows the same well-worn “calftail” as used by others and uses Dn9:24-27 to validate the year-day principle:

Daniel 9 stated that from the “commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah” would be sixty-nine weeks. Even if someone argued for a date fifty years different from 457 B.C. for the command to rebuild Jerusalem, about 400 years still exist between that date and the coming of Jesus – “the Messiah the Prince.” If the sixty-nine weeks are literal, then from the command to restore and rebuild

<sup>63</sup> It is worthy of noting that in this statement, the writers of the handbook are prepared to admit that *shabu'a* can rightly mean “seven” in the sense of a group of seven things.



Jerusalem (fifth century B.C.) until the Messiah (first century A.D.) would have to be sixty-nine weeks – *or one year, four months, and one week*. Ridiculous! The day-year principle must be applied here, or else the prophecy becomes senseless.

Perhaps the greatest proof of the validity of the day-year principle and its application in Daniel 9 is that it *works*! Is it coincidence that if you apply the principle to sixty-nine weeks, you get a time span that fits the two events depicted in the verse? If you don't use the principle, the prophecy becomes meaningless; if you do use the principle, the prophecy works perfectly. That point alone irrefutably proves the day-year principle.

Obviously, the day-year principle is operating in the seventy-week time prophecy, which was “cut off” from the 2300-day time prophecy. Now if the day-year principle is working in one part of the time prophecy, then would it not be logical that it would be working in the other too? Of course, it would be very logical. (1988, pp.74-79; cf. also 2003, pp.104-111)

Taking Goldstein's logic, the “week of years” method was common in various parts of the world in the time of Daniel, (e.g., the Etruscans, the Greeks). The greatest proof of the validity of “the week of years” is *that it works, and it works without the year-day principle!*

## Roy Gane

... we noted that the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27 are seventy sabbatical-year cycles of seven years each, comprising a total of 490 years, which comprise ten jubilee cycles of forty-nine years each (see Leviticus 25). In this case we can verify historically the result of applying the day/year principle: Jesus began his ministry in A.D. 27 at the beginning of the last “week” of years of the 490 years that stretch from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34. So Christ came exactly when Daniel said He would, *if* we understand Daniel's “weeks” to be weeks of years rather than of days.... (2006, pp.68-72)

Gane contradicts himself. The seventy sabbatical years are literal periods without any need to use a year-day principle to decipher the period involved. We do not need a year-day principle to calculate that a sabbatical year period is seven years. We do not need a year-day principle to calculate that seventy sabbatical-year periods amounts to 490 years. His double-speak is not convincing. But he unknowing confirms what we find elsewhere – for example, in Marcus Jastrow's Talmud Dictionary – that שבוע refers to a seven-year period, but without any bogus year-day principle. (Jastrow, )

## Angel Rodríguez

Rodríguez takes the traditional position that the events of the prophecy could have to be a symbolic 70 weeks as opposed to a literal 70 weeks:

The Messianic prophecy we just discussed was to find its fulfillment within a prophetic period of 70 weeks. The chronological information provided by the text itself makes it obvious that the weeks designate a period of 490 year (each week has seven days). The passage cites a specific event as marking the beginning of the prophetic period leading to the Messiah. (2002, p.64)

As we can see from these sample statements, Dan9: 24-27 has been a text that was and is still being used by historicists to prove that the year-day principle was at work.

There is another point of view in contemporary SDA historicism that bypasses the need to use the year-day principle in Dn9. This perspective sees a strong association between the seventy weeks of Dn9 and the reference to sabbatical years in Dn9:2. This view is widespread among many SDA scholars who comment on the seventy weeks. They understand the seventy weeks to be a collection of seventy sets of seven sabbatical years. This gives us 490 literal years, without any chronological gymnastics, as we see when the year-day principle is used with Dn9.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> See Assumption 16 for more details on this.



### **2.4.3 SDA historicists who do *not* see the year-day principle in Dn9:24-27**

There are a number of influential SDA historicist writers and publications that do not see the year-day principle at work in Daniel 9. The fact that the current clique of historicist scholars and writers advocate the presence of the year-day principle in Daniel 9 is no proof that that is actually the truth of the matter. Other SDA writers, just as influential as these neo-historicists, advocate the view of seeing the seventy sevens as 490 years *without* the year-day principle. For instance, notice the following:

From Seventh-Day Adventist Bible Commentary on Daniel:

**Seventy weeks.** This expression seems to be a rather abrupt introduction, but the angel had come for the specific purpose of causing Daniel to understand the vision. He immediately began to explain.

The word here translated “week,” *shabua*’, describes a period of seven consecutive days (see Gen. 29:27; Deut. 16:9; Dan. 10:2). In the pseudepigraphical Book of Jubilees, as well as in the Mishnah, *shabua*’ is used to denote a period of seven years. Here, evidently, weeks of years are intended rather than weeks of days, for in ch. 10:2,3 when Daniel wishes to specify that the “weeks” there referred to are seven-day weeks he explicitly says, “weeks of days” (Heb.; KJV, “full weeks”). Seventy weeks of years would be 490 literal years, without (here) applying the day-year principle (see on Dan. 7:25) (Nichol, 1957, p851.)

It is interesting that the same SDA reference books has opposing opinions on this topic. The commentary in Daniel admits *the calculation in Dn9 is done without the year-day principle*, and yet the SDA Encyclopedia, and the Handbook of Theology, all a part of the same reference work on the Bible, contradicts the statement in the commentary in Daniel, and *argues that Daniel 9 is the proof for the year-day principle in action*. Of course, in time these neo-historicists, as arch-conservatives, will produce another edition of the commentary on Daniel that will delete this glaring inconsistency.

From Questions on Doctrine:

**Seventy “Weeks of Years” Indicated by Context and Usage.-** The word translated “weeks” in Daniel 9:24, is *shabu'im* (singular, *shabua*’). *Shabua*’ simply denotes a unit of seven, and may designate a period of either seven days or seven years. The intent must be determined by context and usage. In post-Biblical literature, also, the meaning “seven years” can be clearly demonstrated. *Hebdomas*, the LXX translation of *shabua*’, is used for a period of seven days and also for a period of seven years. The intent in the LXX must also be determined by context and usage. It is to be observed that this latter usage can be demonstrated in classical literature as early as the sixth century B.C. (see Liddell and Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, under *hebdomas*).

We accordingly are led to conclude in harmony with a host of scholars, that in Daniel 9:24-27 the prophet used *shabua*’ to designate a period of seven literal years. The following are, to us compelling reasons:

*Shabua*’ occurs six times Daniel 9:24-27. In each case the noun is without qualification. Elsewhere in the book of Daniel *shabua*’ occurs only in chapter 10:2,3. In these latter references the meaning is clearly “a period of seven days,” for the verses are describing Daniel’s fast-obviously of three literal weeks. But it is to be particularly observed that *shabua*’, as here used, is qualified by the word *yamim*, “of days,” which is indicated in the K.J.V. margin as “weeks of days.” Now the very fact that Daniel, the inspired writer, felt that qualification was necessary when merely a week of seven days was indicated, surely suggests that when he used the word without qualification, as in Daniel 9:24-27, but qualified by “of days” in Daniel 10:2,3. The distinction and the intent are obvious.

It has been noted ... that a characteristic feature of symbolic prophecy is to give the component time periods, not literally, but in symbolic form. And it has been further demonstrated that Daniel 9:24-27 is a continuation of the literal explanation of the symbolic vision that was begun in Daniel 8:19-26. Now, inasmuch as Daniel 9:24-27 is a portion of the literal explanation of the symbolic vision, we would logically expect the time elements likewise to be given in literal terms. Such is the case if *shabua*’ is here

given the obvious meaning of “seven years.” It is generally agreed among Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant scholars alike that if *shabua*’ in Daniel 9:24 has the meaning “seven years,” then seventy *shabu'im* clearly indicates a period of 490 years. ([Seventh-day Adventist, 1957](#), pp.276-278)

#### From Doctrinal Discussions.

*Doctrinal Discussions*, a compilation of articles by none other than the SDA Ministerial Association, defending Adventist-theology against the publication *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism* by Walter Martin, includes an article by Walter Read, which among other things, say this concerning *shabua*:

Through the years Adventists have used two periods of time in dealing with the question of when this pre-Advent judgment begins—that of the 2300 days (Daniel 8:14) and that of the 70 weeks (Daniel 9:25). The 2300-day period is connected with the symbolic prophecy of Daniel 8. This prophecy is in the form of four symbols—the ram, the he-goat, the little horn, and the 2300 days. If “day” is a symbol in prophecy, and the 70-week period is to be understood as a key to the understanding of the 2300-day prophecy, we should expect the 70-week period to be in literal language. In the light of this, it is interesting to note that a more correct translation of the Hebrew word *shabu'a*, rendered in the King James Version as “seventy weeks,” would be “seventy weeks of years,” as we find in the translations of Goodspeed, Rotherham, Moffatt, and the Revised Standard Version. ([Ministerial Association, 1961](#), n.p.)

#### From Ford:

“Seventy weeks of years are decreed.” Because this is a part of the literal explanation of 8: 1-14, we need not invoke the year-day principle, although it is true that the “years” are implied rather than stated in the Hebrew. Such matters as rebuilding Jerusalem could never be fulfilled in weeks of days. Furthermore, Daniel had been studying concerning seventy *years*, and he is now told that that period is to be multiplied seven times as a further period of probation for Israel. Weeks of years were well known to the Jews and to other ancient nations. ([1978](#), p.225)

#### From Maxwell:

Daniel was concerned about the calculation of time. *The seventy weeks cut off*. Said Gabriel, “Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.” Daniel 9:24. *Seventy weeks* of years! Daniel had been looking at a prophecy by Jeremiah that talked about seventy years. Now Gabriel was speaking about a period seven times as long. Commentators are virtually unanimous in saying that Gabriel meant 490 years (70 x 7). ([1981](#), pp. 205f)

#### From Weber:

A total term of seventy weeks (units of seven) is involved here, counting “‘from the issuing a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem’ (verse 25) ... So the seventy weeks that would bring in the Messiah began in the autumn of 457 B.C. ... It is quickly obvious that “a week of days could not have been meant inasmuch as the events foretold could never have been fulfilled within 490 days, particularly the rebuilding of the city that was allotted seven weeks only.” [This is quoted from [Ford, 1978](#), p.214.] The Hebrew word here in Daniel 9 translated “weeks” “simply denotes a unit of seven, and may designate a period of either seven days or seven years.” [This is quoted from *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 276] “There is virtually unanimous agreement among interpreters of all schools of thought that the phrase “seventy weeks” or literally “seventy sevens” ... means 490 years. [This is quoted from Gerhard Hasel, “The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24-27,” insert in the *Ministry*, May, 1976, p.5-D.]. ”. ([1985](#), pp.50f.)

Some may question why the seventy weeks of years are taken literally, while the 2300 days are interpreted symbolically as a day for a year. *Questions on Doctrine* proposes an answer:

"A characteristic feature of symbolic prophecy is to give the component time periods, not literally, but in symbolic form. And it has been further demonstrated that Daniel 9:24-27 is a continuation of the literal explanation of the symbolic vision that was begun in Daniel 8:19-26. Now, inasmuch as Daniel 9:24-27 is a portion of the *literal explanation* of the symbolic vision, we would logically expect the time elements likewise to be given in literal terms." [Weber inserts footnote: *Questions on Doctrine*, p.277] (*Ibid*, p.58)

#### From Heppenstall:

“Seventy weeks of years” was all the time left to the Jews as a nation to fulfill God’s original purpose in making them His people.

The phrase “seventy weeks of years” actually means seventy periods of seven years each, or 490 years. We are thus concerned with the long period that reaches from the restoration of the Jews to the time of Christ. The seventy years of captivity were a judgment of God upon an idolatrous nation. The seventy weeks of years promised deliverance and an opportunity to fulfill their God-given destiny. The message of the seventy weeks of years was a message of hope for Israel. The historical perspective included not only Israel’s return from captivity but also the realization of the Messianic hope during the seventieth week.

This prophecy proclaimed God’s mercy and determination to fulfill His purpose for Israel – to send the promised Redeemer and establish the kingdom of God. God still loved Israel. His plan for them was still in operation. The prophet’s purpose in this chapter was to give hope and direction to Israel, to those scattered abroad. He called on Israel to return, not only to their own land, but to God, and fulfill the divine purpose for which they originally had been chosen. God still planned to fulfill to them all the Messianic prophecies. Within this period God had fixed the time for the first advent of Christ and His redemptive work on the earth....

The prophecy of the seventy weeks of years proclaimed God’s final effort to fulfill His purpose with and through the Jews. The seventieth week was the climax....

This vision, then, takes the reader through the 490 years of Jewish history to the climactic seventieth week and the atoning work of Christ for the salvation of man.... Their failure to keep the covenant God made with their fathers, and to receive the Christ to whom all the sacrifices pointed, did not make of none effect the everlasting covenant of God. God’s purpose continued to prevail. “Christ must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25). (1972, pp.143-145, 148, 152)

From G. McCready Price:

Many peoples of ancient times, the Romans and the Greeks scarcely less than the Hebrews, were fond of dwelling on the mystic meanings of numbers. Such persons must have found much pleasure, if not instruction, in comparing the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity with the 70 x 7 years spoken of in this prophecy with its many subdivisions, and then comparing all of these with the “seven times more” (Leviticus 26:18), which was the term God used in His threat to chastise the Israelites for their sins. It is probably true that some mystical values of seven do enter into these predictions here in Daniel; though our present purpose is not to discover any mystical or recondite meanings which may underlie them, but to deal with the obvious facts which lie on the open face of these predictions. Above all other prophetic periods given in the entire Bible, this period of seventy weeks, or seventy hebdomads, to use a term familiar to the Greeks which has become sufficiently Anglicized to be used in the plural form, stands out as a definite, unambiguous prediction, of vast importance to Christian doctrines, and easily capable of definite location both as to its beginning and its termination....

Seventy weeks. The original word here translated weeks is merely the plural for seven; thus it means seventy of these periods of seven, or a total of 490 in all; that is, 490 years. The Greeks and the Latins, as well as the Hebrews, were familiar with the custom of counting many things in groups of sevens, and of reckoning long periods of time in units of seven years each. The Hebrews not only reckoned their days in sevens, but years were also grouped in sevens, and then seven times seven years gave them their period of jubilee. Pusey (page 165, footnote) gives examples from the classical writers of a similar use of seven-year units. Few scholars deny that these seventy weeks are meant to represent 490 literal years. (1955, pp.101f.)

From Cottrell:

The key to the expression “weeks of years” lies in the meaning of the Hebrew word translated weeks. This word, *shabua*’, literally means “seven” or a “unit of seven.” It is closely related to the more common Hebrew word for “seven,” which is *sheba*’. The difference between the two words is this: *sheba*’ means “seven” by actual count, whereas *shabua*’ is a sort of chronometrical yardstick with seven subdivisions. Ancient Jews used it as a convenient term for measuring off longer periods of time, somewhat as we sometimes count by decades or centuries, or by dozens or scores. The Jews reckoned the week with its seven days as a complete unit of time, its seventh day, the Sabbath, being a Holy day. The “Feast of Weeks” came exactly seven weeks after the Passover. The law of Moses also recognized seven-year cycles, each cycle being a discrete unit, and observed every seventh year as a sabbatical year. See Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 25:3-12; Deuteronomy 16:9,10 Ezekiel 45:21. *Shabua*’ might thus refer either to a unit of seven

days or to one of seven years, and ancient Jewish writers used it of both. In the Bible *shabua'* more commonly denotes a period of seven consecutive days. The Hebrew of Daniel 10:2 reads specifically "weeks of days"-probably to make clear that "weeks of years are not intended.

In other ancient Jewish writings, such as the Book of Jubilees and the Mishnah, it denotes a period of seven consecutive years; and this apparently is the sense in which Daniel uses it in chapter 9:24-27. Seventy literal weeks-490 days, or about a year and four months-would obviously be far too short a time for the Jews to return from Babylon and rebuild Jerusalem, and for all the other specified events to take place. In verse 24 the Hebrew reads simply "seventy weeks," the phrase "of years" having been supplied by the translators in order to make Daniel's intended meaning clear to English readers.

A few ancient Hebrew manuscripts actually do read "weeks of years" here, and the Jewish scholars who translated the Old Testament into Greek two centuries or so before Christ so rendered it. The expression in chapter 9:24 could thus be translated more intelligibly, perhaps, as "seventy sevens of years," that is, 70 times 7 or 490 years, which, as the angel declared, were to be reckoned from the restoration decree soon to be issued. (Cottrell, 1963, pp 316f.)

From Raymond Woolsey:

"Seventy weeks are determined [or "cut off"] upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end to sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy" (verse 24).

A better translation has "weeks of years" instead of "weeks"; the angel was actually saying that 70 seven-year periods, or 490 years, would be allotted to Daniel's people, the Jews. They had many opportunities to realize God's purpose for them, but they had spurned them all, going after the gods of the nations around them. God had delivered them into exile. But He would return them, and give them one more chance, 490 more years. (2001, pp.47f)

From Jean Zurcher:

QUOTE DON'T NEED YD P FOR DANIEL 9 STATEMENT.

However some SDA historicists, who value this perspective using the week-of-sabbatical-years model, but who do not want to take any ground from the year-day principle operating in Dn9, try to blend the idea of the year-day principle with the sabbatical year method of interpreting the period in their admission of presence of the sabbatical-year motif in the seventy weeks. Doukhan and Gane are typical samples of this type of approach:

## **2.4.4 Daniel 9:24-27 and the sabbatical year motif**

### **Doukhan**

Doukhan wrote about such in 1979. Doukhan wants to present both schools of thought in his thinking. He presents both the sabbatical-year method of calculating the 490 years, *and he also presents the year-day principle as the means by which the sabbatical year system can operate.* Readers can easily see the confusion he creates from such a strange co-mingling of these thoughts. Comforting for SDA historicists, but hardly orthodox with the Jewish system of calculating their year-weeks.

This principle also appears in Levitical texts. For six years the Israelite farmer was to work his land, but on the seventh year of rest a sabbath, like the seventh day of the week (Lev. 25: 1-7), with the difference that it was a Sabbath of years" and not a "Sabbath of days." The Bible uses the same language in regard to the jubilee: "Count off seven sabbath of years – seven times seven years" (verse 8). The principle also applied to prophecy. (2000, p.144)

If the introduction and conclusion of Dan 9 deal with the same concerns - the salvation of Israel and the number 70 - it follows that the two periods of time (70 years in the introduction, and 70 weeks in the conclusion) must belong to the same essence. Both are historical, and both point to the levitical principle. The second one refers to the Jubilee (7 x 7 x 10), as the first refers to the sabbatical year (7 x 10). Furthermore, the use of the unit "weeks" in Dan 9 supports this indirect reference to the levitical principle.

"The notion of a 'week' seems to have been suggested implicitly on the basis of the seven-day and seven-year periods culminating in a 'Sabbath' (Lev 25: 2-4; 26:33ff). " [Doukhan footnotes here: "Hasel, 'Seventy Weeks of Daniel,' p.6. See also Charles, *The Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh, n.d.) p.104; Montgomery, p.373)]. It follows that just as Jeremiah predicted the seventh years of desolation from the perspective of the sabbatical year, Daniel sets forth his prophecy from the perspective of the Jubilee. Moreover, since Daniel places his prophecy in the perspective of Jeremiah's historical prophecy, it means that Daniel also refers to an historical event.

The conclusion has important implications in terms of history and theology: (1) The seventy weeks' prophecy must be interpreted with regard to *history* in as realistic a way as Daniel did for the prophecy of Jeremiah. [Doukhan footnotes here: "This stands against the symbolic interpretation."] (2) The event to which the 70 weeks point receives a *theological* dimension; it has something to do with the Jubilee, just as the prophecy of Jeremiah had something to do with the sabbatical year. [ Doukhan footnotes here: "This stands against the historical-critical interpretation."] Thus the introduction and the conclusion of chap. 9 express the same basic concern, relating to the levitical meaning of the number 7." (1979, p.8)

## Gane

Like Doukhan, Gane tries to blend the sabbatical-year motif with the day for a year theory:

... we noted that the "seventy weeks" of Daniel 9:24-27 are seventy sabbatical-year cycles of seven years each, comprising a total of 490 years, which comprise ten jubilee cycles of forty-nine years each (see Leviticus 25). In this case we can verify historically the result of applying the day/year principle: Jesus began his ministry in A.D. 27 at the beginning of the last "week" of years of the 490 years that stretch from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34. So Christ came exactly when Daniel said He would, *if* we understand Daniel's "weeks" to be weeks of years rather than of days.... (2006, pp.68-72)

## Jean Zurcher

HIS CONCEPT OF CALCULATING THE 490 USING JUBILEES.

## Brempong Owusu-Antwi

Dr Owusu-Antwi has produced an extensive publication in the Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, called *The Chronology of Daniel 9: 24-27*. Despite its obvious bias, it is thorough and worthy of close attention. In chapter 2 where he examines "The Chronological Data in Dan 9:24-27," we find a gallant attempt to try and convince us that the "weeks" referred to in this chapter are regular weeks of days, and since the literal period of 490 solar days could not cover the events contained in the chapter, a scaling method must have to be applied to the seventy weeks of days, in order to make it compute correctly. Owusu-Antwi concludes that the year-day principle is that scale:

However it had been established that the biblical usage of *shabu'a*<sup>65</sup> is consistently used in reference to the regular seven-day week. If *shabu'a* in every other place in the Old Testament, even in Dan 10:2-3, means a regular seven-day week chronologically except in Dan 9: 24-27,<sup>66</sup> where the meaning is different from the normal chronological meaning, then the regular chronological relationship of "week" must be operating on a scale different from the normal. Specifically, the relationship of the regular to chronological meaning portrays a scale of:

490 (70 x 7) days :: 490 years

Hence, 1 day :: 1 year

In this relationship, it is clear that since *shabu'im* cannot, by biblical definition, mean "sevens," "year-weeks," or "weeks of years," a day symbolically being used to represent a year. Thus:

One actual day *symbolically represents* one actual year.

<sup>65</sup> Owusu-Antwi transcribes the Hebrew characters differently to what I have typed here, as I cannot use the keystrokes he uses-FB

<sup>66</sup> [Owusu-Antwi footnotes: "Montgomery, 373, observes that 'the term is not used absolutely of years elsewhere in the Bible.' So Bevan, 153, who emphasizes that "elsewhere in the Old Testament *shabu'a* always means 'a week of days,' here only 'a week of years'"]



While the contextual analysis of the relationship of Dan 9:2 with Dan 9:24 makes this clear, the legitimacy of the chronological scale of “a day for a year scale” is corroborated evidence elsewhere.<sup>67</sup> (1995, pp.104-109)

Owusu-Antwi acknowledges here the close relationship between the sabbatical-year mentioned in Dn9:2, yet he tries to convince us that it is only on the basis of the validity of the year-day principle, (which, incidentally, must be proved from other places in the OT) that the conversion on a scale of a day for a year can occur. That *another* method of calculating the 490 years using the 70 weeks exists, yet *without the year-day principle* has not been dismissed by Owusu-Antwi. For a dissertation that is so exhaustive, this is a major failing. For all the hints given by writers quoted above and the bulk of non-historicist scholars, as to their method of calculating the 490 years without the year-day principle, Owusu-Antwi is without excuse in showing himself totally ignorant of these matters and not addressing these vital counter-arguments in his dissertation. Either that, or he is unwilling or unable to put up any arguments against the damning and daunting evidence I have cited in this paper showing how commentators through the ages have exegeted the 70 weeks without the year-day principle. He has just taken the easy road and bypassed it. How a doctoral supervisory board can overlook this absolutely fatal flaw in this methodology, and do it with more than one doctorate that I have looked at, is beyond my ken. Surely it must reflect poorly on Andrews University that allows committee’s like this to endorse dissertations.

### M. Donald Ernest Mansell

Another populist defender of the SDA historicist faith, Mansell launches in to defending the year-day theory. He approaches the topic from the perspective of Catholic thinking, showing that the year-day principle is accepted by Catholics for Dn9, and so there is good reason to apply it to the 3½ times that deal with the Antichrist:

...which school is correct? Before answering this question, let us begin with the common ground: “times” in Daniel 7:25 means “years.”

...the time period mentioned in Daniel 7:25 literally reads, “a time, times, and a division of a time” (Young). In Daniel 12:7 this period is called “a time, times, and half a time,” so “a division of a time” is simply another way of saying “half a time.” Most translations render it this way. The expression “a time, times, and half a time” is also found in Revelation 12:14 (D-R). But now notice. In verse 6 of that chapter this time period is equated with “a thousand two hundred and sixty days.”

Revelation 11:3 (D-R) also contains the expression “a thousand two hundred and sixty days,” which the preceding verse equates with “two and forty months.” Forty-two months, of course, is three-and-a-half years. So, “a time, times, and half a time” stands for 1,260 days. A footnote on Revelation 11:2 in the Catholic-and Protestant-approved *New Oxford Annotated Revised Standard Version* sums up and confirms this conclusion, putting it simply “Forty-two months 1260 days = 3 ½ years (Dan. 7:25; 12:7).” Bible students unanimously agree with this synchronization.

Does this expression, then, represent three-and-a-half literal years, as preterists and futurists claim, or 1,260 years, as the Protestant Reformers claimed?

As first blush, one might think that the preterist/futurist interpretation that the three-and-a-half times represent literal years is better explication of the expression than is the historicists’ 1,260 solar years. However, technically, three-and-a-half literal years equal 1278.375+ days, not 1260 days. This disparity strongly suggests that the three-and-a-half years are *not* to be understood as years of 365.25+ days each. Yet, this is not the most serious objection to the futurist/preterist interpretations concerning this time period.

The expression “a time, times, and a division of time” is not the usual way of saying three-and-a-half literal years. This peculiarity, plus the fact that much of the book of Daniel is clearly symbolic, suggests

<sup>67</sup> [Owusu-Antwi footnotes: “Cf. Doukhan, *Daniel*, 34, 35”]



that this expression has a cryptic meaning. How do historicists decipher the “cryptogram”? How do “a time, times, and a half a time” equal 1,260 literal years.

Many conservative Bible scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, agree that the prophecy of Daniel 9:25 is a prediction about the Messiah. This prophecy says that “from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.” (D-R). The Douay-Rheims Version interprets this to mean that, from a starting point sometime during the Medo-Persian period (539 to 323 B.C.), a span of 483 years would extend “to the baptism of Christ, when he first began to preach and execute the office of Messiah.” [Endnote: “D-R, footnote on Dan. 9:25.”] So, we see that conservative Catholic and Protestant scholars understand that a prophetic day represents a solar year, *at least in the prophecy of Daniel 9*.

Is this interpretation of a day for a year far-fetched? No. Numerous Bible versions and translations render the expression “seventy weeks” in verse 24 as “seventy weeks of *years*.” When Daniel wishes to differentiate between ordinary weeks and prophetic weeks, he uses the expression “week of days” to refer to the former.

So certain is Roman Catholic scholar Monsignor Ronald Knox that the weeks of Daniel 9:24 are weeks of years, not weeks of seven days that he says in a footnote on verse 27 in his translation of the Bible: “Modern commentators, who understand the whole passage [Daniel 9:24-27] as a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, and the profanation of the Temple in B.C. 167, are driven to *very unconvincing explanations* of the time periods involved.”<sup>68</sup>

Clearly, Msgr. Knox rejects the interpretation that the time periods of Daniel 9 signify literal time. Instead he holds the historicist view that a day stands for a solar year in this Messianic prophecy.

One thing is certain, 483 years from the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes – which turns out to be 457 B.C., as will be shown – until Jesus’ baptism, at which time he began to exercise His role a Messiah, fits the prophetic time period with undeniable accuracy. This agrees with Jesus’ announcement at the beginning of His Galilean ministry that “the time is fulfilled” (Mark 1:15). Clearly, Jesus was referring to the time prophecy of Daniel 9 (cp. [sic] Gal. 4.4).

If a day stands for a year in Daniel 9:24-27, it seems reasonable to assume that the same principle applies to the expression “time, times, and the dividing of time” (= 3½ years = 42 months = 1,260 days). If this is correct, 1,260 prophetic days stand for 1,260 solar years.

Does the Bible anywhere state that a day stands for a year in Bible prophecy? *It does!*

In the prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem, God told Ezekiel, “A day for a year, I have appointed to thee” (Ezek. 4:6, D-R). And Numbers 14:34 (NJB), says, “Each day shall count for a year.”

Since God is the One who set forth the principle that a day stands for a solar year in the time prophecies of Numbers and Ezekiel, it seems only natural that He would employ the same principle in all the time prophecies of Daniel. Thus, the day-for-a-year principle is not some far-fetched idea dreamed up by Protestant historicists to condemn the papacy. It has a divine precedent. (2002, pp.31-34)

Mansell makes the same mistake as so many other SDA historicists when they see non-SDA scholars proposing 490 years, assuming they *have* to do it using the year-day principle.

### **2.4.5 Do we read “sevens” or “weeks” for *shabû'im*?**

Another important question, as far as the SDA historicist’s argument is concerned is whether they are justified in holding to the word “weeks” or should it be abandoned for the more recent translation as “sevens.”

This modern translation has come about because it is seen that this same word is used for a group of seven days and seven weeks in Scripture, and in Dn9, it appears that it is referring to yet

<sup>68</sup> [Mansell endnotes: “*The Holy Bible*, Monsignor Ronald J. Knox trans. (New York: Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1950), footnote on Daniel 9:27. *Nihil Obstat*. Imprimatur: Bernardus (Cardinal) Griffin, Archiepiscopus Westmonasterienus, Westmonasterii, die 8 Decembris 1954. Abbreviated Knox. Emphasis supplied.”]

another grouping of seven –seven years. Given that the word “week” does not really clarify the septenate idea of grouping in sevens (of days, weeks, or years) for modern readers, and we do not have popular vocabulary to describe it as the Greeks and Latins did, without having to revert to such archaic terms as “heptad,” or “septenate,” the word “sevens” was chosen instead.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THESE CHOICES?

But is this choice correct?

### Hengstenberg on *shabû‘a*

Hengstenberg sees the word “seven” as a participle with the sense of being “besevened,” so that we get the idea of *making* a group of seven.

On the contrary, it is evident from Gen. xxix. 27, [*malle’ sh’bu‘a zoth*] “fill up the week of this one,” i.e., first keep with her the seven days’ marriage-festival, that the word was originally masculine; for the fact that we find the masculine form employed here, in the case of a word in which the meaning could have no influence upon the gender, is a proof that it was originally regarded as masculine. In such words as these, where the feminine is only an ideal form, and more or less an arbitrary one, we nearly always find some traces of the early masculine gender. The co-existence of the two genders in the case of this word must be all the more readily admitted, since it is really a participle, “sevened,” just as in the song “alle Menschen müssen sterben” the “gezöhlte Zahl” is used for the Zwölfzahl. But in both adjectives and participles the gender, as a rule, is shown in the form; and therefore the existence of the masculine form [*shabû‘a*] is at the same time a proof of the existence of the masculine gender. [*Shabû‘a*] with the plural [*shabû‘im*] is a “sevened” period; [*shabû‘ah*], of which the plural is [*shabû‘oth*], a “sevened” time. In both cases, [*eth*] must be understood, and there is less reason to suppose the gender to be definitely fixed, since even in the case of the word [*eth*] itself is very variable. The extent, to which the words [*shabû‘a*] and [*shabû‘ah*] still retained their force as adjectives may be seen from Ezek xlv.21, where the feast of the Passover is called [*hag shib’oth yamim*], “the feast of the ‘sevened (periods) of days,” i.e., the feast, in which the days, were divided into sevens, unleavened bread being eaten for seven days....(1854, pp.807-808)

Hengstenberg argues that the masculine and the feminine plural nouns are adjectival nouns and also participles; that is to say, a “sevened” period.<sup>69</sup> He sees in this particular form, a participle – that is to say, a word being formed from the verb with the sense of “making something seven, or grouping into seven.” In that sense the participle is also adjectival because it describes the qualities of the time period – it is a “sevened” period, or a period that is designated with the quantity of seven units in it. Being a participle, it can carry two genders – and the feminine plural is the plural of the feminine singular for of the word. He also argued that “[*eth*] must be understood” meaning one should read “a time of seventy weeks...” For some *qatîl*-type nouns, this is appropriate. (see Kautzsch, §84.L; cf. Young, *ibid*, p.196) But not for the *qatûl*-type nouns.

Others have followed this line of reasoning. Benjamin Davidson, sees *shabû‘a* similarly. Initially written in 1848, he suggests that it is a “noun, masc., sing.” He refers us to his earlier comments on the third declension of the masculine nouns (i.e, “an immutable vowel in the last syllable and a mutable *Kamets* or *Tseri* in the penultima,” p.63, sect.XXX11, No.1), where he discusses the *qatûl*, *qatîl*, and *qatôl* forms of the noun where he specifically lists both the masculine and feminine forms of the plural of this word and its suffix format. His reference at the word entry suggests the word is denominative from *sheba’*. (1984, pp. 63, 697) In his entry discussing *shabû‘a*, Davidson refers us to his section on “Nouns derived from the Regular Verb (Sect. XXVI, p.55), where he says of this particular type of noun that they are “passive participle of Kal, the (*qatîl*) form employed rather as a substantive...In intransitive verbs, also with an active signification...The feminines and the plurals are apt to take the abstract signification...” This explanation fits harmoniously with Hengstenberg’s explanation of the word as a passive

<sup>69</sup> A similar style appears with other numbers too. Consider the concept of dividing days into groups of three: Deut 19:3; 1 Sa 20:19. In Deut 19:3, the concept is of “threeing the coast” meaning to divide into three parts.

participle of the *qatûl* type. Kautzsch, in his edition of Gesenius' grammar, says on this class of nouns, "the *qatûl*-forms proper, with passive meaning, especially all the passive participles of Qal; fem. eg [Heb. *b'ethûlah*] *virgin* (properly *secluded*)."<sup>70</sup> (§84. m. 1982, p. 231) Thus, following this line of understanding, it is quite proper to see *shabû'a* as a Qal passive particle of the verb denom from "seven" with the sense of "sevened, or "besevened." Further, the old Tregelles' version of Gesenius' Lexicon says that *shabû'a* is "denom. From [Heb: *sheba*] 'seven.' Compare [Heb: *ashôr*] decad."

Hasel likewise, quotes Johann J. Stamm from the *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, who says on *shabû'a* "the singular from which both the feminine plural *šabû'ôth* and the masculine plural *šabû'im* are derived, is 'a primary noun which is formed on the basis of the *qatûl* formation, belonging to the word group *šeba*/'*šibah*.'" (Hasel, *ibid*, p.108) This is virtually identical to Hengstenberg's explanation.

Hasel takes pains to point out that Stamm chooses to translate the term as "weeks," even though he has the same arguments as Hengstenberg and Davidson as to the form of the word. Konkel however adds something extra by pointing out that "both seven and week are primary nom[inative]s. with independent nom. formation patterns, so the meanings are not interdependent (Stamm 1287)." (1997, p.20)

The significance of this understanding of *shabû'im* and *shabû'ôth* is that these words do not indicate a specific length of time, as in seven days, months or years, but rather, just a collection of seven units of time that have been "sevened."

Given the correctness of Hengstenberg's view, it is easy to see how the Jews understood this to be "of years." Just as Dn9:2 talks of seventy years, this scale takes each one of those years and raises them to a "besevened" period – of seventy "sevens." What are *years* in Dn9:2 becomes *seven years* in Dn9:24. The scale has been risen one year to seven years. All scholars see the connection between the end of Chronicles and the comment in Dn9:2. For example notice these two comments from Charles and Tregelles:

Charles:

But the word 'week,' which here means a week of years, has not this sense elsewhere in the O.T. It occurs, however with this meaning some hundreds of times in Jubilees (before 100 B.C.) and in the Mishna (Sanh. v. I) and in the Talmud. But the way had been prepared for the statement in our text [Dn9:24-FB] by 2 Chron. xxxvi.21, 'Until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill three score and ten years' (cf. Lev. xxvi. 34.35). Here the idea of seventy years and of Sabbatical years are brought together. (1929, p.104)

Tregelles:

Daniel had made inquiry about seventy *years* of the captivity in Babylon; the answer also speaks also of seventy periods, which in our English translation are called "weeks"; the word however, does not necessarily mean seven *days*, - but a period of seven parts: of course it is much more often used in speaking of a week than of anything else, because nothing is so often mentioned as a week which is similarly divided. The Hebrews, however, used a septenary scale as to time, just as habitually as we should reckon by them; the sabbatical years, the jubilees, all tended to give this thought a permanent place in their minds. The denomination here is to be taken from the subject of Daniel's prayer; he prayed about years, he is answered about periods of seven years, i.e., the recurrence of sabbatical years. (1883, pp.97-98)

Many SDA scholars quoted in this paper echo the same idea.<sup>71</sup>

QUOTE ZURCHER ON SHABUA LIKE HEBDOMAD HERE

<sup>70</sup> His introductory comments on the noun are worth noting: "In Hebrew, as in Greek and Latin, the *verbal nouns* are connected in form and meaning primarily with certain forms of the verb, especially the participles and infinitives, which are themselves, even in their ordinary form, frequently used precisely like nouns." (§83.a, 1982, p.226)

<sup>71</sup> See the Section "SDA historicists who do *not* see the year-day principle in Dn9:24-27" earlier.

This raising of the scale by a multiplication of seven compares to the Sabbatical year legislation in Lev 25 where with the Jubilees, *one* year of the sabbatical year becomes in the Jubilee numerology a group of *seven* years. As Tregelles highlights, this is a simple scale of one to seven; it has nothing to do with the year-day principle. SDA historicists have to cover some fairly fancy footwork to try and find the year-day principle at work in these texts.

There are however, many Adventist scholars who see the same connection as Tregelles.

### **The Historical Precedence for international interchange of temporal units between cultures.**

The antiquity of grouping years in sets of seven years is attested long before the Archimedes come onto the scene of power, in the Babylonian literature. Shea sees an inkling of it in the seven-year-regal cycle at Ebla,<sup>72</sup> and in Jacob's choice of seven years to work for the two daughters of Laban. There is no need, and indeed, no basis to inject a bogus "year-day principle" into the reasoning behind the usage in these cultures. The Babylonian method of using this predated the Hebrews, and is probably associated with the Babylonian worship system. The Babylonian use of the "sevened" period, and the Jewish adoption of the Babylonian names of the months are indicative of heavy dependence by the Hebrews on these cultures for their chronography.

This widespread dependence on the Babylonian cultures across the many and varied peoples of Europe and Asia is widely attested. For instance there is corroborating evidence that the Etruscans in the seventh century B.C. were using groups of seven years as a common grouping for counting purposes, even though they used an eight-day week. Censorinus, in the third century A.D. comments on the Greek and Etruscan practice of using septenates:

[3] Hippocrates, the physician divides life into seven periods; the first according to him, terminates at seven years, the second at fourteen, the third at twenty-eight, the fourth at thirty-five, the fifth at forty-two, the sixth at fifty-six, while the seventh extends to the last day of life.

[4] As to Solon, he made ten periods, which he calls septennates, having the third, the sixth and the seventh periods of Hippocrates; so that each period is of seven years.

[5] Staseas, the Peripatetic, added two to the ten hebdomades of Solon and assigned eighty-four years as the last term of life, comparing those who passed this limit to those racers and charioteers who had passed the goal.

<sup>72</sup> "This incident in Jacob's life occurred at Haran which was located on the Balikh River, a tributary of the Upper Euphrates. This also occurred some time around 2000 B.C., in the patriarchal period. The fact that a 7-day week and possibly a Sabbatical year were known this early in this northern location bears an interesting relationship to the 7-year terms of elective kingship that we now know were practised at Ebla. The tablets which refer to this practice date to the late third millennium B.C. and they come from a site in northern Syria that is located only about 100 miles west of Haran. This biblical passage suggests that the Sabbatical week and a Sabbatical-type year were known in this area around that time and these texts from Ebla presently provide some evidence that points in the same direction." (Shea, 1980a, p. 220) In contrast to Shea's theories, the evidence from Babylon, indicate that any 7-unit time cycle is probably attributed to the culture of the Euphrates basin rather than the influence of the Israelites or the presence of any 'year-day principle' being used by these peoples using a 7-day weekly cycle.

Another text not looked at in this respect is Gen 41 where God divides the years of boon and bane into units of seven. "The seven good cows are seven years and the seven good ears of corn are seven years; it is one and the same dream. The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterwards are seven years, and so are the seven worthless ears of corn scorched by the east wind; they are seven years of famine. Gen. 41:25." Can we see here another evidence of the septenate scale? This dream was given to a pagan king, and is similar in many ways to the revelation to Nebuchadnezzar in Dn4. The scale of seven years was given to a pagan king, as was the same scale given to the Babylonian king; and the scale was repeated four times in all to the Egyptian Pharaoh in the form of seven fat cattle and seven poorly cattle; seven full ears of corn, and seven poorly ears of corn. Given the interaction between Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the presence of a septenate period in the communications to the leaders in both regions, can we see here an intimation that God was speaking in septenate units already familiar to these leaders? We know the Babylonians used a seven-day week based on the sun (Sunday), moon (Monday), and the five major planets: Mars (mardi [fr for Tuesday]), Mercury (Mercredi -fr for Wednesday); Jupiter (Jeudi [fr for Thursday]); Venus (Vendredi [fr for Friday]); and Saturn (Saturday).

Further evidence comes from the Babylonian Creation Epic which ascribes to the moon the dividing of the month into groups of seven days.

Comparative anthropological studies have identified a seven-day week involving the use of the names of the Sun, Moon and the planets for the days of the week in the Sanskrit writings of the Hindus, as well as in Chinese, Korean, Tibetan and Vietnamese sources. Cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Week> Clearly, if this is the case, then there is a good argument for a spreading of the seven-day week both eastward and westward from the Sumer Valley very early in history.

[6] According to Varro, the Etruscans, in their books called *Fatalibus*, (Book of Fate) also divided human life into twelve hebdomades. They thought that by prayers, there could be obtained from the gods; that man, after eighty-four years, insensibly loses the use of his faculties and is not worth such efforts.

[7] Of all the writers on this subject, those who divide human life into hebdomades of seven years, appear to me to approach nearest the truth. In effect, it is by intervals of seven years that nature changes us and affects a series of revolutions. So we learn from the *Elergy* of Solon. He says that in the first hebdomade man loses his first teeth; in the second, appears the down; the beard appears in the third; in the fourth, he acquires all his strength; in the fifth, comes the maturity that is necessary for procreation; the sixth moderates his passions; the seventh achieves the perfection of his reason and language; this perfection is maintained in the eighth and according to some authors his eyes lose their force; in the ninth, all his faculties commence to become enfeebled; and the tenth, precipitates him toward death. (Maude, 1900, pp.10-13)<sup>73</sup>

In addition, the revolutionary Babylonian concept of liver divination found its way into many cultures, including the Etruscan religious rites. Hinting how widespread Babylonian ideas had spread, Jastrow writes:

... in the case of an animal devoted to a deity and accepted by the latter, the liver of the animal in question became, as it were, identical with the liver or soul of the god, so that the careful inspection of the liver furnished a tangible means of noting the disposition of the god. noting the disposition of the god. Strange and even absurd as such a notion may appear to us, the system not only continued its strong hold upon the people of the Euphrates for thousands of years, but passed on to other nations, to the Etruscans, to the Greeks, and to the Romans, perhaps also to Eastern nations, and survives among primitive peoples to the present time. [Jastrow footnotes: "For, a full discussion of this third system, traces of its spread to other nations, and the part it played in giving rise to the belief in monsters, sent, as the name indicates, as "signs" to give warning of portending disaster, see the writer's monograph, *Babylonian-Assyrian Birth-Omens (Religions Religionsgeschichtliche geschichtliche Fersuche und Forarbeiten*, ed. Dietrich und Wunsch, vol. XIV, No. 5). Copious specimens of Babylonian-Assyrian birth-omens, both official reports and extracts from the omen collections of the priests, will be found also in Jastrow, *Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, II, pp. 837-931."] Even Plato, the great philosopher, was not prepared to throw this method of divination aside entirely, and in describing it he makes use of a metaphor which admirably describes the fundamental principle of the system. In a passage in one of his dialogues he speaks of the liver of the sacrificial animal as a mirror in which the image of the gods is reflected [Jastrow footnotes: "See, further, the chapter on "Astrology," in the author's, *Aspects of Belief and Practice in Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 207-264 (New York, 1911)."] (1914, p.140)

The mentioning of the periodisation in hebdomads used in Babylon occurs in Etruscan literature. If the Etruscans incorporated the liver divination rites from Babylonian sources as a major reform in their religion, then the assimilation of other less important items like a septenary scale is a possibility as well. The circumstantial evidence is there to support the theory of the borrowing of this periodisation from the eastern empires. To add fuel to the fire, recent DNA studies on Etruscan remains have reinforced the idea that the Etruscans emigrated from the Near East.<sup>74</sup> This scientific evidence supports the unpopular assertion of Herodotus who records the legend that the Etruscans came from Lydia in Asia Minor:

<sup>73</sup> This septenate scale of seven years has no relationship to the weekly system in the Etruscans. The Etruscans used an eight-day week. Yet Varro testified of the existence of the septenary-year scale among the Etruscans. This unnatural difference in scaling tends to lean support to the idea that the septenary scale was borrowed from the East, where earlier evidence for its use is attested.

<sup>74</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/03/science/03etruscan.html?\\_r=1&ex=1187236800&en=fca83514614f96a5&ei=5070&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/03/science/03etruscan.html?_r=1&ex=1187236800&en=fca83514614f96a5&ei=5070&oref=slogin)



This is their story: [...] their king divided the people into two groups, and made them draw lots, so that the one group should remain and the other leave the country; he himself was to be the head of those who drew the lot to remain there, and his son, whose name was Tyrrhenus, of those who departed. [...] they came to the Ombrici, where they founded cities and have lived ever since. They no longer called themselves Lydians, but Tyrrhenians, after the name of the king's son who had led them there. (*Histories*, I. 94)<sup>75</sup>

Babylonian chronography was incorporated in many cultures. Bickerman says of the Babylonian calendar:

The prestige of the Babylonian civilization was such that its lunisolar calendar, imperfect as it was at the time, was adopted c.1100 by the Assyrians. Later the Babylonian kings, like the Egyptians before them (O. Tufnell, *Lachish*, 1958, 133) propagated their reckoning system in the conquered territories (cf. E. Dhorme, *Rass.* 1928, 54) as in the case of the Jews.

The pre-Babylonian time reckoning of the Hebrews is virtually unknown. It is certain that the calendar was lunisolar. The names of some of the months are known and seem to refer to agricultural seasons. For instance, 'Abib' (Ex. 13,4) is the time of ripening barley. The months were also numbered. In 586, after the annexation of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the Jews began to reckon by the regnal years of the kings of Babylon (e.g. II Kings 24, 12) and to use the imperial calendar. As the ancient Rabbis already noted, the Jews had also adopted the Babylonian month names: Nisan is Nisanu, and so on.

The Persian kings, after the conquest of Babylon in 539, adopted the Babylonian calendar. In the reign of Artaxerxes II (c.380) the court astronomers switched definitely to the 19-year cycle, which became standardized in 367...

Like their predecessors on the throne, the Achaemenids made the Babylonian calendar official in the whole Persian empire. This is shown by the documents found at Elephantine in Egypt. Since these records happen to come from a Jewish military colony, modern scholars erroneously speak of a 'Jewish' calendar at Elephantine. Newly discovered papyri prove that this calendar was used by Gentiles and that it was the official calendar of the Persian empire to the end of the Achaemenids (cf. Bickerman, *ArchOr* 1967, 205).

After the fall of the Persian empire, Seleucus I continued the practice of the Achaemenids. He ordered that the 'Syrian' (Babylonian) months receive Macedonian names (Malalas, p. 25, Oxon). For the Seleucid court and the Greek settlers Nisanu became Artemision, and so on. Later, the Parthian kings followed the Seleucid arrangement. (1968, pp.24-25)

Furthermore, Herodotus (*Histories*, Bk II, 109), writing between 432 and 425 B.C. attests to the fact that the Greeks borrowed from the Babylonians the concept of dividing the time of a day into "hours" using a 12-hour day and a 12-hour night. Notice Bickerman again:

The division into hours is first attested in Egypt. As early as c.2100 BC, the Egyptian priests were using the system of twenty-four hours: ten daylight hours, two twilight hours, and twelve night hours. This arrangement, based on the decimal method of counting, gave way c. 1300 BC to a simpler system which allotted 12 hours to the day and 12 hours to the night. The Babylonians similarly divided the day and the night by 12. The Greeks, according to Herodotus (II, 109), learned this arrangement from the Babylonians. The Greek term *ώρα*, from which, via Latin *hora*, we get our word "hour," originally referred to a season, then to the fitting or appointed time (e.g., Arist. *Ath. Pol* 30,6; Sappho, *ap. Hephaest. De re metr.* 11, 3 = D. L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (1962) fr. 976, for a lovers' assignation). The sense of 'hour' is first attested in the second half of the fourth century BC (Pytheas in Geminus, *Elem. Astro.* 6, 9; Arist.*fr.* 161). At the same time the expression a 'half-hour' appears in our sources (Menander).

The hour of the ancients, however, was not, as it is for us, 1/24 part of the whole (astronomical) day, but a 1/12 part of the actual length of the time from sunrise to sundown and, again, from sundown to sunrise. Thus, the length of an hour varied according to the latitude and the season. These seasonal hours equalled between 3/4 and 5/4 of our hour.... The hours were reckoned from the rising of the sun, or at night, from the coming of darkness. (1968, pp.14-15)

<sup>75</sup> This is a controversial topic among Etruscan scholars and a variety of origin theories can be read at this address: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etruscans>



Did the Greeks borrow the hour – first used by the Egyptians – from the Egyptians? Here is Herodotus' statement:

109. Sesostris also, they declared, made a division of the soil of Egypt among the inhabitants, assigning square plots of gromad of equalsize to all, and obtaining his chief revenue from the rent which the holders were required to pay him year by year. If the river carried away any portion of a man's lot, he appeared before the king, and related what had happened; upon which the king sent persons to examine, and determine by measurement the exact extent of the loss; and thenceforth only such a rent was demanded of him as was proportionate to the reduced size of his land. From this practice, I think, geometry first came to be known in Egypt, whence it passed into Greece. The sundial however, and the gnomon with the division of the day into twelve parts, were received by the Greeks from the Babylonians. (Book II, 109, but in Volume 1 of Rawlinson's translation, p.293)

See [http://oll.libertyfund.org/files/1898/1300.01\\_Bk.pdf](http://oll.libertyfund.org/files/1898/1300.01_Bk.pdf) on page 293)

In his view, the Greeks got the hour from the Babylonians, even though it was an Egyptian invention.

Herodotus further extends this borrowing of ancient peoples from each other, with the Greeks borrowing not only the months of the year, but also the gods of each month from the Egyptians:

Now with regard to mere human matters, the accounts which they gave, and in which all agreed, were the following. The Egyptians, they said, were the first to discover the solar year, and to portion out its course into twelve parts. They obtained this knowledge from the stars. (To my mind they contrive their year much more cleverly than the Greeks, for these last every other year intercalate a whole month, but the Egyptians, dividing the year into twelve months of thirty days each, add every year a space of five days besides, whereby the circuit of the seasons is made to return with uniformity.) The Egyptians, they went on to affirm, first brought into use the names of the twelve gods, which the Greeks adopted from them; and first erected altars, images, and temples to the gods; and also first engraved upon stone the figures of animals. In most of these cases they proved to me that what they said was true. (**The History of Herodotus** By Herodotus Written 440 B.C.E Translated by George Rawlinson) (Book II) <http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.2.ii.html>

Horn and Wood indicate that the Assyrian system of dating years by the accession year of the king was adopted later by the Babylonians, Persians and some of the Hebrew kings.

The Assyrians, Babylonians and the Persians after them, used the accession-year system. Some of the Hebrew kings also employed it, as can be determined by synchronisms between the years of contemporary kings of Israel and Judah. (1970, pp.16-17)

On the other hand, the Egyptian system of a 'non-accession' year system was also borrowed by the Hebrews. They conclude by saying, "these examples and others that could be cited show that the Hebrews used both systems at different times." (Horn and Wood, 1970, pp.18, 21)

Further evidence exists in the naming of the days of the week in Eastern Asia of affinity with the Sumerian and Babylonian system of naming the days after the sun, moon and the five planets, and in the same sequence, of a common influence guiding such an uncanny coincidence. (see chart in [Appendix](#)).

We see the natural progression of periodisation of the Hebrews from the seven-day week and the seven-year cycle. It is argued that the second is based on the first. This analogy breaks down when we consider the Etruscan example. They had an eight-day week yet the seven-year periodisation occurs in their religious literature which has no correspondence with what we know of their other periodisations.

Similarly with the Greeks. Their calendar was localised and they had a number of calendars, including a state calendar, based on a 10 month cycle, an agricultural calendar that used star risings to fix a time of the year, and a festival calendar based on the cycles of the moon. They also had a periodisation of years in Olympiads, and they also used a periodisation of "decades" in units of ten, which was used also in their dissection of the month into three 10-day 'weeks,' or phases. It is strange therefore that the seven-year periodisation occurs in this culture. Was this

periodisation in base7 imported from the Mesopotamia basin, as was other parts of their chronology?<sup>76</sup>

The Roman system is worthy of mentioning in passing. Before the fourth century AD, the Romans did have a division of the month based on a market day recurring every eight days. The market day was called *nundinae* (*novem dies* = "nine days," the Romans counted both ends of a series),<sup>77</sup> but this unit of time did not seem to shape the lives of the ancient Romans the way our week does for ours with its regular recurring rest days at its end (Saturday and Sunday). They did break the month into collections of days but these collections of days were based on their relation to the phase of the moon. The Romans did not have weekdays in the same sense as our Monday, Tuesday, etc., however, they did have defined markers within each month. Originally, the month and the markers were based on the moon.

At the time of their early kings, Roman months were of a length identical to the lunar cycle. Each month was divided into sections that ended on the day of one of the first three phases of the moon: new, first quarter or full. All days were referred to in terms of one of these three moon phase names, Kalends, Nones or Ides.

At that time a *pontifex* (priest) was assigned to observe the sky. When he first sighted a thin lunar crescent he called out that there was a new moon and declared the next month had started. For centuries afterward, Romans referred to the first day of each month as *Kalendae* or *Kalends* from the Latin word *calare* (to announce solemnly, to call out). <http://webexhibits.org/calendars/calendar-roman.html>

The Babylonian system is not unlike the Roman system, in that they used the movements of the heavenly bodies to define the days. Whereas the Romans used the phases of the *moon* to define the day, the Babylonians used the *stars* to name the day according to the God /Planet of that day.<sup>78</sup>

This gives some indication of the pervasive influence of both Egyptian and Babylonian ideas transculturally. The borrowing and assimilation of a seven year cycle –*hebdomad*– a small item in chronography –into the Greek and Etruscan culture is not a difficult step to imagine.<sup>79</sup> The Greeks borrowed from the Babylonian “hour”, and from the Egyptians, the calendar. Therefore, this international interchange on calendrical item lends support for the idea that the Etruscan septenary scale is also borrowed. Combine that with extant evidence from the Elephantine indicating a familiarity of that Greek-speaking enclave of Jews with Babylonian chronography (used by the then ruling Persian empire, since Egypt was a province of Persia),<sup>80</sup> and one can easily see the correlation between the seven-year period of the Babylonians, the every day use in Greek language of *hebdomad*, and the Jewish idea of a “sevened” period –a *shabû‘a*– and we can see why the translators of the Alexandrian Septuagint, who were Greek-speaking Jews – rendered their interpretation of Dn9:24 as being seventy weeks “of years.”

## N. Porteous

Porteous does not labour over the words, being a more generalist commentary; he merely follows Montgomery; but he does choose the word “week” as opposed to “sevens”:

<sup>76</sup> See the public domain article on the Greek Calendar in the Appendix.

<sup>77</sup> <http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/dunkle/romnlife/romntime.htm> See also the public domain article on the Roman calendar in the Appendix.

<sup>78</sup> See the public domain article in the appendix [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Days\\_of\\_the\\_week](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Days_of_the_week)

<sup>79</sup> The Babylonians used a septenary scale in the naming of the hours, in the days of the week, it is quite in line with this that a concept of a septenary year scale would be considered as well. Is there evidence for this? Apart from the regnal term of office at Ebla? Would they have named the years after the seven deities in their turn, as they did the hours and the days? Each new year was dedicated to Marduk, not to each of the gods. What does the evidence say?

<sup>80</sup> Horn and Wood, 1970, pp. 75ff. Note especially p. 85: “*Kraeling* 7....with the exception of one other document (*Kraeling* 1), it is the only one with a date line showing the peculiarity of presenting the Egyptian dating first, and then the date using the Babylonian month name, which is followed by the regnal year of king Darius II...The accession year of Darius, according to the Persian reckoning, thus lasted to the following New Year’s Day, Nisan 1, which fell on April 11, 423 B.C., according to the Babylonian calendar used by the Persians.”

The solution of Daniel's perplexity about Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years is given by the explanation that the seventy years are to be understood as seventy 'weeks of years', i.e., a period of 490 years. There is no exact parallel in the Old Testament to this use of the word year as meaning a week of years, i.e., as seven years, though, as Montgomery says (p.373), the usage may have been suggested by the instructions about the seven-year periods in Lev. 25 and 26. It appears in later writings, e.g. Mishna Sanh. 5.1, Baba Metzia 9.10. The seventy weeks of years' are clearly intended to span a certain stretch of time, but, as a period of 490 years cannot be made to fit exactly the known facts of history, it may be concluded that it is a round number. This, however, need not trouble us unduly, as the purpose of the revelation is to suggest powerfully to the readers of the book that the predetermined time for God to act is imminent and that history has been leading up to this crisis. (1979, pp. 139-140)

## Tregelles

Similarly Tregelles, writes of "weeks:"

Daniel had made inquiry about seventy *years* of the captivity in Babylon; the answer also speaks also of seventy periods, which in our English translation are called "weeks"; the word however, does not necessarily mean seven *days*, - but a period of seven parts: of course it is much more often used in speaking of a week than of anything else, because nothing is so often mentioned as a week which is similarly divided. The Hebrews, however, used a septenary scale as to time, just as habitually as we should reckon by them; the sabbatical years, the jubilees, all tended to give this thought a permanent place in their minds. The denomination here is to be taken from the subject of Daniel's prayer; he prayed about years, he is answered about periods of seven years, i.e., the recurrence of sabbatical years. (1883, pp.97-98)

## Walvoord

## Archer

## Hartman and DiLella

## Charles

Charles says on the occurrence of "weeks" in Dn9:

But the word 'week,' which here means a week of years, has not this sense elsewhere in the O.T. It occurs, however with this meaning some hundreds of times in Jubilees (before 100 B.C.) and in the Mishna (Sanh. v. I) and in the Talmud. But the way had been prepared for the statement in our text [Dn9:24-FB] by 2 Chron. xxxvi.21, 'Until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill three score and ten years' (cf. Lev. xxvi. 34.35). Here the idea of seventy years and of Sabbatical years are brought together. (1929, p.104)

## Montgomery

## Leupold

Leupold favours the translation of *shabû'a* as "heptad." Here is his reasoning:

Shea

M. Jastrow

SDA Bible Commentary

Keil

Baldwin

Goldingay

### Gerhard Hasel on masculine plural *shabû'im*

Hasel, in an excellent [1993 Andrews University Seminary Studies](#) article on the occurrence of the nature of the masculine plural in Dn9:24 discusses some of the variants of the translation of *shabû'a*. He suggests that the pervading influence of the LXX use of *hebdomēkonta* and the Vulgate use of *hebdomades* has influenced modern translators to choose 'sevens/ besevened' in their translation rather than 'weeks.' Sadly for Hasel, he seems to ignore the abundant evidence in both Greek and Latin literature which supports the choice of modern translators. This evidence that I cite in this paper and mainly in Assumption 16, shows that the Greeks were using the concept of septenary grouping back beyond the sixth century, and extant evidence is available to support this. Similarly, we have secular extant evidence from Roman writers from the first century B.C. that endorse this idea of a *heptad* of something, such as a group of seven years, and even in something not related to time, such as a collection of books. Konkel Hasel's argument is that "the concept of 'sevens' or 'besevened' has been derived from the interpretation of 'weeks' as 'hebdomads' or 'heptads'. The 'heptad' is taken to signify 'a period or group of seven of something.' [Hasel footnotes: "Goldingay, 228."]" (1993, p.106) This position is anchored firmly in the literature beforementioned. Then Hasel makes a statement that involves an assumption. He assumes in this statement that "the straightforward meaning of the Hebrew word in the text" of Dan 9:24-27 is "weeks:" He says "modern renditions or interpretations that use such terms in place of 'weeks' for the time elements in Dan 9:24-27 reveal the influence of backgrounds other than that which is based on the straightforward meaning of the meaning of the Hebrew word in the text, *šābû'im*, as 'weeks.'" <sup>81</sup> His assumption here is that the translation "sevens" is not "based

<sup>81</sup> Hasel footnotes a comment here. "Young, 196, argues that the 'seventy sevens' are (in the words of Kliefoth, whom he quotes) 'an intentionally indefinite designation of a period of time measured by the number seven, which chronological duration must be determined on other grounds.' This cannot be followed. I agree with the criticism of Young by Aage Bentzen, *Daniel*, HAT, 19 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1952), 66, who notes, 'Aber eine unbestimmte Zeitangabe hier anzunehmen, ist vollkommen textwidrig. Das wäre keine Antwort auf Daniels Gebet.' [roughly translated: "But taking an indefinite time here is absolutely foreign/contrary to the text. That would be no answer to prayer of Daniel."] Young, 195, also claims that 'the form [masculine plural of the word for *sevens*] is really a participle meaning *besevened*, i.e., computed by sevens (so Stuart and H[engstenberg])...' A correct morphological understanding of the origin of the *qatûl*-type noun *šābû'a* and its plural forms shows that this old view, which Young still keeps alive, can no longer be supported. For further pertinent observations concerning definitions and interpretations other than 'weeks,' see William Shea, *Selected Studies in Prophetic Interpretation*, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 74-79." (Ibid, p.106)

on the straightforward meaning of the Hebrew word in the text.” Only the word “week” deserves that description.

Against the view that *shabû‘a* means “sevens, besevened,” Hasel says in his footnote:

“a correct morphological understanding of the origin of the *qatûl*-type noun *šābû‘a* and its plural forms shows that this old view, which Young still keeps alive, can no longer be supported. For pertinent observations concerning definitions and interpretations other than “weeks,” see William Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 74-79.” (*Ibid*)

And what is the morphological origin of this word as explained by Young? In discussing the morphology of the word, Young says:

The word *sevens* here occurs in the m[asc] pl., whereas it generally has a f[em] pl. This m pl also appears in Dan 10:2,3. The reason for this m form is not that Dan is a late writing (BDB), nor was it likely that the m was chosen because it would sound like the word seventy (Rosenmueller – the two words are spelled with exactly the same consonants), nor is it to indicate that the usual weeks of seven days are not intended, not is it to be regarded as an arbitrary correction (Ewald), since it has already appeared in Gen. 29:27 (in the s[ing].). The form is really a participle meaning *besevened*, i.e., computed by sevens (so Stuart and H[engstenberg]), and here gives evidence of the fact that the word was originally m. What led Dan to employ the m instead of the f however, is not clear unless it was for the deliberate purpose of calling attention to the fact that the word *sevens* is employed in an unusual sense. The word means *divided into sevens*, and generally signifies the most common of such divisions, namely, the ordinary week of seven days, e.g., Gen. 29:27f and Dan. 10:2,3. In the expression itself there is no intimation as to the length of time intended. How long, then, is the seven? In Dan. 10:2, 3 an expression of time, *days*, is added, so that in this passage we are to understand ordinary weeks of 7 days each, or perhaps, three full weeks. Also in Dan. 8:14, when Dan intends a definite period of time, he adds an expression “evening-mornings.”

How then are we to determine the length of that which is designated by the present word *sevens*? We can determine this, not from the word itself, but only from other considerations. It seems obvious that ordinary weeks of 7 days are not intended. There does appear to be a reference to the “years” of Jer which such an interpretation would not satisfy. Also, the prophecy, upon this view, would become practically meaningless. The brief period of 490 days would not serve to meet the needs of the prophecy, upon any view.

Most expositors find here a week of 7 years duration, a total of 490 years. To support this, various expedients are adopted, but the most convincing is an appeal to the years of Jer. “A reference to these is sufficient to show that seventy ordinary weeks cannot for a moment be thought of. For what comfort would it have afforded to Daniel, if he had been told that, as a compensation for the seventy weeks of desolation, the city would stand for seventy ordinary weeks, and then be destroyed again? Moreover Daniel himself must have been able to perceive, from the magnitude of the events, which were to take place during this period; that something more was intended than ordinary weeks” (H[engstenberg]).

But this appeal to the years of Jer does not prove that the of years are intended, and in fact, there is no satisfactory proof of this position. Keil, therefore, correctly, I believe, follows Kliefoth in the assumption that the reference is to “an intentionally indefinite designation of a period of time measured by the number seven, whose chronological duration must be determined on other grounds. (1949, pp.195-196)

From this statement by Young, we can guess that Hasel takes issue with Young’s explanation of the purpose of the masculine and feminine forms of the noun:

The word *sevens* here occurs in the m[asc] pl., whereas it generally has a f[em] pl. This m pl also appears in Dan 10:2,3. The reason for this m form is not that Dan is a late writing (BDB), nor was it likely that the m was chosen because it would sound like the word seventy (Rosenmueller – the two words are spelled with exactly the same consonants), nor is it to indicate that the usual weeks of seven days are not intended,

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My initial answer to Bentzen’s comment is that it is incorrect to say that talking in terms of seventy ‘sevens’ is not indefinite. That Young rejects the view correlating the seventy in Dn9:24 with Jer; and rejects the sabbatical-year model in favour of an indefinite “designation for the period of time,” does not thereby mean that “sevens” need be ousted as unfavourable as well. Hasel uses guilt by association. There are many who take the view that ‘sevens’ is appropriate and yet see it as ‘sevens’ of years. The intertestamental period literature supports the view that this view is appropriate, in that they used this term for periods of seven years, identical to the method used in common Greek and Latin literature. And I have commented elsewhere on the pseudo-scholarship of Shea in his articles on the use of *shabua’* in *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*.



not is it to be regarded as an arbitrary correction (Ewald), since it has already appeared in Gen. 29:27 (in the s[ing].). The form is really a participle meaning *besevened*, i.e., computed by sevens (so Stuart and H[engstenberg]), and here gives evidence of the fact that the word was originally m. What led Dan to employ the m instead of the f however, is not clear unless it was for the deliberate purpose of calling attention to the fact that the word *sevens* is employed in an unusual sense.

If this is what Hasel has issue with, then we can support him. We know that these reasons for choosing a different gender ending are not because of these factors. Looking at Hasel's sentence again, he says, "A correct morphological understanding of the origin of the *qatûl*-type noun *šābûa'* and its plural forms shows that this old view, which Young still keeps alive, can no longer be supported." (p.106) In this sentence Hasel does not appear to dissent from the view of the word being a *qatûl*-type noun, thereby agreeing with the analysis that it is a Qal pass participle; he does appear to take issue with Young's "understanding of the *origin*" of that noun. And what does Young understand by the *origin* of the masculine noun *šābû'im* in Dn9:24?

Is it this statement:

What led Dan to employ the m[asculine] instead of the f[eminine] however, is not clear unless it was for the deliberate purpose of calling attention to the fact that the word *sevens* is employed in an unusual sense. The word means *divided into sevens*, and generally signifies the most common of such divisions, namely, the ordinary week of seven days, e.g., Gen. 29:27f and Dan. 10:2,3. In the expression itself there is no intimation as to the length of time intended. How long, then, is the seven? (p.195)

Hasel spends the greater portion of the rest of the paper explaining why the masculine is present in the text. The conclusion of Hasel's article is to show that the masculine plural here is used to highlight the *unity* of the seventy weeks, "as being a *single unit* of prophetic time." (p.116) Interestingly, Young makes the same conclusion "the s[eventy] is decreed shows that the phrase is to be taken in a collective sense. We might paraphrase: "A period of sevens – even 70 of them – is decreed." The 70 sevens are thus to be regarded as a unit. (1949, p.197) This is what he sees is the purpose of the morphology of the masculine *qatûl*-type noun. This allows Hasel to argue for a definite length of time being intended in the seventy *šābû'im*.

Another convincing piece of evidence is cited by Hasel as to the unity of the seventy *šābû'im* in the use of the *singular* verb, not the plural, with "determined/decreed":

The fact that the masculine plural form *šābû'im* stresses the idea of the sum totality of the "seventy weeks" in Dan 9:24 provides a basis for explaining the fact that the verb associated with this expression (the Niphal form *nehtak*) is in the masculine singular form. One normally expects congruence/accidence in number as well as in gender between a noun and its verb. In this case there is congruence or accidence only in gender, both the noun and the verb being masculine. Since the verb is singular and the noun is plural, congruence in number is lacking. The subject "weeks" is properly in the plural form from a syntactical point of view, but why does the verb have the singular form?

Montgomery suggested that the verb here is in the singular because the "pl. subj [weeks] ...itself represents a single idea...or possibly the subj is to be treated as accus to the pass....[Hasel footnotes: "Montgomery, 376"] John Goldingay gave priority to the second possibility, stating that the singular of the verb "implies 'there has been determined/God has determined...' or perhaps '[a period of] seventy sevens has been determined'....[Hasel footnotes: "Goldingay, 229"]

In contrast to Goldingay, I would give priority to Montgomery's first option. I believe that the analysis of the meaning and nature of the plural ending, as presented above, reveals the grammatical-syntactical basis for the use of the verb in the singular. That basis is, as we have seen, the fact that the masculine plural form *šābû'im* stands with the numeral "seventy" for an entity of time in its totality, completeness and unity – that is, it expresses the "seventy weeks" as being a *single unit* of prophetic time. The verb in the singular simply provides further substantiation for this conclusion. The type of usage that is represented is familiar in Hebrew syntax.

Indeed, this sound grammatical-syntactical reason for the use in Dan 9:24 of a singular verb with a plural noun having the masculine ending explains what otherwise would seem to be an anomaly, but is really



nothing of the sort. The construction exemplifies and supports Karl Marti's view that "the singular [verb] after the plural subject considers the seventy weeks as a unitary concept of time. (*Ibid*, pp.115-116)

Therefore I can concur with Hasel that Young's explanation for the reason of the masculine plural *šabû'im* in Dn9:24 is indeed outdated. This argument however, does not thereby discount the translation of "sevens" as a legitimate translation. It has to be done on other grounds.

Hasel explains the morphology of the word. He quotes Johann J. Stamm from the *Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, who says on *šabû'a* "the singular from which both the feminine plural *šabû'ôt* and the masculine plural *šabû'im* are derived, is 'a primary noun which is formed on the basis of the *qatûl* formation, belonging to the word group *šeba' /šibah*." (Hasel, *ibid*, p.108) This is virtually identical to Hengstenberg's and Davidson's explanation. All acknowledge the passive participle form of the noun, all acknowledge that the words are denominative from the numeral "seven," and all acknowledge the dual plural form of the word.

Hasel however goes further in his paper and offers reasons to dispense with the translation of "sevens" and adopt the translation "weeks."

Some etymological considerations used since the nineteenth century for the interpretation of the term *šabû'im* are vital: (a) The word for "weeks" is a "primary noun" which is formed on the basis of a regular noun formation of the *qatûl* type, as H. Bauer and P. Leander noted long ago, and which is affirmed by the Hebrew grammar of Rudolf Meyer.<sup>82</sup> (b) It is a fact of Hebrew grammar that the term *šabû'im* is not a plural of the word for "seven." The plural for "seven" (*šeba'*) is *šib'im*, not *šabu'im*. (c) There is no direct or indirect etymological derivation of the word "weeks" from the cardinal number "seven," as was surmised long ago at a time when the study of the Hebrew language was not yet far advanced. There seems to be a family of words related to the trilateral root *šb'* from which different "primary nouns" derive. Each "primary noun" is developed on the basis of its own noun-formation pattern, and each function with its own meaning independently of the meaning of the other "primary nouns." (*Ibid*, pp. 108-109)

I agree with Hasel's point (a). In regard to point (b) and (c) there are problems with his conclusion. In regard to (b), the Bible translators, as far as I understand it, did not think that they were translating a word that represented the plural of the numeral "seven" when they translated *šabû'im* as "sevens." An examination of the Bible versions referred to by Hasel "NKJV, MLB, etc." (p.106, note 4) would show whether in other places where the plural *šabû'im* / *šabû'ôt* is found, it is translated "sevens." If it is not, then it shows they understood that the plural in Dn9:24 meant something more than just "week" and they tried to bring this out with this rendering of the word.

In regard to (c), there are things here which can be agreed to and things to object to. Hasel has quoted authorities indicating that *šabû'ôt/im* is denominative from *šeba'*, indicating that the verbal forms are indeed denominative from the cardinal number "seven." This is in accord with nineteenth century writers quoted by me.

On the other hand, the nineteenth century attempts to try and align the words for *šaba'*-to swear an oath, and its derivatives, to the cardinal number "seven," is doubtful, and is omitted by BDB. From the outset it should be noted that major lexicons see "*šabû'a* -to swear" as being entirely unrelated to the homonym for "seven." The more modern version of Gesenius' Lexicon

<sup>82</sup> Hasel quotes Bauer and Leander's work of 1922 and Meyer's work of 1966, many decades after the 1848 comments of Benjamin Davidson.

There are others who have had more novel explanations. Consider the following by David Cooper: He argues that *šabû'a* is derived from the verbal form *šab'a* "to swear an oath," and sees *šabû'im* as the plural of *šeb'a*. The word [Heb: *šabû'im*] is derived from the verbal form [Heb: *šab'a*] the meaning of which is "to swear, to confirm with an oath." In the Semitic world the number seven was used to indicate completeness and perfection. Since the oath was considered as final for confirmation, it was natural that the word connected with *seven* should be used. The form of the expression occurring in Gabriel's message is [Heb: *šabû'im*], the plural of *šeb'a*. Hence it literally means *sevens*. (1941, p.19) Readers can notice the leap in the dark of Cooper's logic here. How the idea of "oath" is connected to *šabû'a* meaning "sevens" is not given to us. Yet we understand from his explanation that this provides us with an understanding of the correct meaning for *šabû'a*.

Davidson too, sees "*šab'a* -to swear" as denominative from "*šeb'a*" on different grounds. He says, "oaths were usually confirmed by seven victims) Eze 21.28." (*Ibid*, p.699)

by Brown, Driver and Briggs avoids this association. The two words may have the same consonantal form, but their association with each other ends there. This is probably just another instance of two homonyms, with entirely different origins in etymology.<sup>83</sup>

Konkel's article on *shabû'a* says

Attempts to link them ["seven and week" to the verb *šb*] (swear, take an oath) must be judged a failure; the Heb. does not connect the number seven with oaths, and other Sem. languages do not relate a vb. swear to seven even though the sacred number is important in covenants and rituals (*THAT*, 2:856). (1997, p.20)

FINISH DISCUSSING HASEL'S ARTICLE

LOOK AT SHEA'S DEFINITION AND THEN AGREE WITH HIM

SHOW HOW THE CHOICE FOR SEVENS IS BASED ON A WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF WEEK, IN THAT IT CAN REFER TO MORE THAN JUST A SEVEN-DAY WEEK.

Shea acknowledges that *šāḥûa'* is a denominative of 'seven:' "The Hebrew word for 'week,' *šāḥûa'*, was derived from the word for 'seven,' *šeba*." Furthermore, Shea's major argument defending the translation depends on the stability of the morphology of the word in every instance that the word occurs. This position augurs support for the *qatûl*-type morphology of the participle. (Shea, 1982, p.75) To all appearances, Shea's view aligns with all major lexicographers, seeing *šāḥûa'* as denominative from the number, and he has not denied that it is a *qatûl*-type pass participle /noun.

Conclusion

It is fair to say that the word *shabû'a* in Dn9:24 should be properly translated "weeks" in accord with the textual evidence, both biblically and with respect to intertestamental literature. Both Hasel and Shea are on the whole correct on this point. The problem comes however when the translator has to ask the question, "Should the word translated represent what contemporary readers would understand?" or should a translator choose a word for *shabû'im* as it would have been understood back in the days when it was written, regardless of its contemporary usage today? For instance, the word "week" for contemporary English readers means, and only means, an ordinary series of seven solar days. It is never used to represent the usage depicted in the intertestamental writings where we read of the lives of the patriarchs being measured in weeks of years. Similarly, with the translation of Greek and Latin writers who use *hebdomad* etc for groups of seven years. It would be an improper translation in my mind to use "week" in those instances, since we do not express that grouping of time in units of "weeks." It is just not common language. It is awkward and it is forced.

Now it is clear that Daniel is not talking about a literal period of a little over one year; all are agreed on that point.<sup>84</sup> Hasel refers to people translating *shabû'im* in Dn9 as depending on "the influence of backgrounds other than that which is based on the straightforward meaning of the Hebrew word in the text..." (Ibid, p.106). Konkel, who appreciated Hasel's input in the discussion on the morphology of this word concludes, "*šabu'im* can only be rendered 'weeks,' and the pl. should be understood as a single period..." (1997, article 8651, p.21) And this might be the more correct word to choose, but it means less to today's readers. The usage in Dn9:24 is not the same as where the word was used in contexts before the book of Daniel was written. And the instances of its usage in intertestamental literature indicates an application not attested in the Old Testament outside of the book of Daniel. In those texts, the concept of "weeks of years" is pervasive. The straightforward meaning of the text in Dn9:24, as it would have been read by the readers of the time, would have been "weeks." But its intended meaning is "weeks of years" in

<sup>83</sup> See James Barr, for many other examples of this.

<sup>84</sup> Hasel documents a few esoteric writers who took this position. (1993, p.

concert with the intertestamental usage, and the usage in Greek writings. Hence the reason why the translators of the Alexandrian Septuagint saw the need to clarify the word “weeks” to mean “weeks of years,” in concert with the common usage of the Greek word they chose to translate it and its concomitant ability to mean a group of seven periods longer than solar days – in this case a group of seven years. Charles has argued that although attested hundreds of times in intertestamental literature, this is the earliest occurrence in Jewish literature of *shabua’* being used for a sabbatical-year period. On this point I agree with him. The Alexandrian translators give us unequivocal evidence that we are to understand it that way, and lead us to believe that rather than a seven-day week, *shabû’a* here refers to a “septennate of years.”

The straightforward meaning for the readers of today is not “weeks,” since we do not express periods longer than a group of seven days in “weeks.” We do not talk in terms of “weeks of weeks,” “weeks of months,” or even “weeks of years,” as the ancients did. It was an idiom used in a specific time of history, and is no longer current today. Hence, translators of modern versions of our Bible, grappling with this issue, have chosen to render “week” in some form that is more in fitting with current usage. That “week” is the base idea is beyond dispute; what is at issue is a method of expressing it in the idiom of today. We do not have a current equivalent in our language, used by the populace. “Sevens” is a forced and unnatural result, and perhaps is no better than the older “weeks,” but at least its ambiguity makes it difficult for those who want to argue that Daniel is talking about a literal solar week, whether they be solar days, or symbolic days. The bottom line for the rendering of this word depends on the parameters of the translation exercise: is it to represent what was said in the words of the writers at that time, or is to represent what the writer wanted to say to the readers in today’s language? If it is the former, then “weeks” would be appropriate; but if it is the latter, then “sevens” is not inappropriate. Different Bible translations have different parameters and produce different results. SDA historicists haggle with this issue because they want to use the year-day principle here – a method not used before the Middle Ages. But even though the translation of “week” be admitted as appropriate if we are translating the text as the writer would have understood it, that does not indicate a “symbolic period” is here depicted, as statements from SDA writers clearly indicate. This is literal explanation, in their view, and the periods expressed here are also literal periods. Therefore, we accept the view that “weeks of years” are intended, in concert with the later intertestamental usage, with Greek and Latin writers, and also in concert with Early Christian writers, to whom we now turn.

### **Zöckler on “weeks” in the history of the interpretation of Dn9.**

In Lange’s *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical*, Zöckler appends a section to his commentary on Daniel, entitled “Relating to the history of the exposition of vs. 24-27. in this section Zöckler surveys the history of interpretation of these verses from the Intertestamental period up to the time of his printing in the nineteenth century.

This material impacts on a number of topics. Firstly, he shows how the Jews themselves believed in multiple fulfilments of Daniel 9, in that they endorsed the application of this prophecy to Antiochus, but by the times of Christ, they was a consensus that there was another interpretation as well, pointing to another fulfillment of the prophecy in the then-near future. This historical demonstration of the Jewish understanding of multiple fulfillments in Scripture contradicts the present position of SDA historicists, but the history of this phenomenon in Jewish literature cannot be denied, and we should take a lesson from it.

He also surveys the views of the early fathers and their differing approaches to the time period involved. One thing that can be gleaned from this impartial survey is the absence of any evidence for the use of the year-day principle. On the contrary, we are given definite, unequivocal

evidence for the use of the septennate scale, already widely used in common Greek and Roman literature available in the intertestamental and New Testament periods.

It is surprising that Froom, with his global parameters for surveying the views on the seventy weeks failed to follow the lead of Lange, a popular commentary used in Adventist colleges. The truth of the history of the interpretation was staring him in the face, in this section by Zöckler, but dissatisfied, Froom fabricates a history of the interpretation of the seventy weeks, based on his own peculiar and unsubstantiable assumption – that the year-day principle was used to determine the length of the seventy weeks.

1. *Jewish exposition* in pre-Christian times is united in referring this section [Dn9:24-27] to the Maccabean era of tribulation under Antiochus Epiphanes. This is established beyond controversy by the *βδέλυγμα ἐρομώσεως* of 1 Macc. 1. 54 which corresponds to [Heb: *shiqqûtsîm m'eshômêm*]-FB], v. 27 and in that place denotes the smaller idol-altar (*βωμός*, v. 59) erected by Antiochus Epiphanes on the altar of burnt offerings. It is no less clearly indicated by the manner in which the Sept. renders this paragraph, and supplements it with various additions that obviously relate to the Maccabean period. In this connection the mode of expressing the time indicated at the beginning of v. 26 is especially instructive. “And after threescore and two weeks,” reads in that version, “μετά ἑπτα και ἑβδομήκοντα και ἐξήκοντα δύο,” i.e., after 139 (67 + 62) years. This was doubtless intended to designate the year 139 of the æra of the Seleucidæ (B.C. 174) as the time at which began the apostasy of the Jews who had been seduced by Antiochus; cf. 1 Macc. 1:11 et seq; 2 Macc. 4:9 et seq. See also Weisler, *Die 70 Wochen*, etc, p. 201; Hävernicks, *Komment.*, p. 387 et seq. – several expressions in the New Test. appear to indicate that shortly before the advent of Christ the Jews again began to look for the fulfillment of the prophecy in question *in the future*; e.g., Luke ii. 38 (cf. v.24) *προσδεχόμενοι λιτρῶσιν Ἰερουσλήμ*, Matt xi.3 *ὁ ἐρχόμενος*, a designation of the Messiah that probably originated in a misunderstanding of [Heb: *hb'*]-FB] in v. 26 (cf. Weisler, p. 150); and also the allusions to the “abomination of desolation” v. 27 contained in the eschatological prophecies uttered by the Saviour (Matt xxiv. 15; Mark xiii, 14) and by St. Paul (2 Thess ii.3 et seq), which could only be understood by their contemporaries, in case of a Messianic character were assigned to the paragraph before us, and consequently in case its fulfillment were not exclusively looked for in the events of the Maccabean period. Josephus also bears witness that this Messianic eschatological interpretation was correct among the Jews of his day, in the repeated instances where he states, or at least implies, that the terrible incidents connected with the Jewish war and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was predicted by the prophet Daniel; e.g., *Ant.X.11.7*: “Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made utterly desolate by them (*ὅτι ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐρημωθήσεται*);” *Die Bell. Jud.* IV. 5. 2, where he applies the term “anointed one,” v. 26, and again the expression “anointed one and prince,” v. 25 to the high Priest Ananias whom the Idumæians murdered; and *De Bell.Jud.* VI. 5. 4, where the mysterious oracle “that when should their city be taken, when their temple should become four-square” seems to refer back to v. 27 (where they perhaps read [Heb-*rabû'a*]-FB] instead of [Heb-*shabu'a*]-FB], etc. It is less certain whether any direct reference to this section is contained in the celebrated passage, *De Bell Jud.*, VI, 5, 4, *ὥς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκεῖνον ἀπο τῆς χώρας τις αὐτῶν ἀρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης*. In that case the parallel records in Tacitus *Hist.*, V. 13 and Suet. *Vesp.* 4, must of course, be likewise rooted in the prophecy of Daniel that is before us. Concerning this question see Hävernicks, p. 390, who, however, probably finds too much in the passage, since he refers to the *ἀρξει τῆς οἰκουμένης* directly to the [Heb. *Nagîd*]-“prince”-FB] of v. 25 and 26.

2. The interpretation of Josephus, which applies the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and to Titus as the [Heb. *Nagîd habbar* – the coming prince-FB], v.26 seems to have been accepted, with scarcely an exception, by the *later Jews* of the Talmudic æra and the time immediately subsequent. The principal witness to this fact is Jerome (on v. 24 et seq.; *T.V.* 2 ed. Vallars, p. 694). The “Hebræi” of his day calculated the 490 years or seventy weeks of years from the first year of Darius or B.C. 539 indeed, but none the less assigned their conclusion to the age of Jesus, even finding his death predicted therein (probably in the [Heb. *Yikkareth Mashîach*]-“messiah shall be cut off” – FB], v. 26), since they held that “*non erit illius imperium, quod putabat se redempturum*” (as it should be read, instead of “*quod putabant se retenturos*,” which is a later emendation). They also found a prediction of the approach of the Roman army under Vespasian and Titus, in the same place. Several added even the rising under Barcocheba or the three years’ (three and a half years) war against Hadrian: “*Nec ignoramus, quosdam illorum dicere, quod una hebdomada, de qua scriptum est: confirmabit pactum multis hebdomada una, dividatur Vespasiano et Hadriano, quod juxta historiam Josephi Vespasianus et Titus tribus annis et sex mensibus pacem cum Judæis fecerint. Tres autem anni et sex menses sub Hadriano supputantur, quando Hierusalem ammino subversa est, et Judæorum gens catervatum cæsa, ita ut Judææ quoque finibus pellerentur.*” The two

Gemaras also refer this prophecy to the war against Vespasian; the Babylonian in *Nasir*, c. 5; *Sanhed.*, c. 11, and the Jerusalem in *Kelim*, c. 9; and several Talmudic and Rabbinical traditions are likewise based on that interpretation, e.g., that the Targumist had neglected to translate the Hagiographa, because it was taught in them that “the Messiah should be cut off” (v. 26, See Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.*, ad Luc xix. 11; Schöttgen, *Hor. Hebr.*, p. 211); and that the Messiah actually came at the time when Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple desolated, but as a sufferer and in disguise (Glæsener, *De gemin. Jud. Mess.*, p. 23ss; Corrodi, *Krit. Gesch. des Chiliasmus*, I. 284 et seq.). It was reserved for the later period of the middle ages to introduce several new and more independent explanations beside this variously modified Messianic interpretation of the prophecy; e.g., by referring the [Heb *Mashîach Nagîd* – “Messiah (the) Prince” –FB] to Cyrus (Saad, Gaom. Rashi, Jacchiad.), or to Nehemiah (Ibn-Ezra) or the high priest Joshua (Levi b. – Gers). Cf. Müller, *Judaism*, pp. 321, 432 et seq.’ Carpzov, in his ed. of Raymond Martini’s *Pugio fidei*, p. 233. – It was customary to follow the Seder Olam Rabba in reckoning the seventy weeks from the first destruction of the temple to the second; see Abendana, in the *Spicileg. ad Michl. Jophi*: “*Hebdomades hæ sept. sunt septimanæ annorum quadringentorum nonaginta, iidemque sine dubio a devastatione primi ad devastationem secundi templi, quia sept. anni fuere captivitatis Babylonicæ, et quadringenti viginti anni, guidus futura erit domus secunda in structura sua; atque sic majores nostri exposuere in Seder Olam.*” By this method of reckoning, the v.25 [Heb. *Motsa dabar* “going out of the word” –FB], v. 25, is accordingly made to apply to the period of Jeremiah’s prophecy respecting the seventy years’ exile or to the year B.C. 588. Ibn-Ezra alone departs from this method, by referring that expression concerning the going forth of the oracle (v.23) to *Daniel*, and consequently assigning the beginning of the 490 years to the year B.C. 539 and extending the first seven weeks of years belonging to that period, to Nehemiah, the restorer of the temple, or to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. Concerning these Rabbinical methods of reckoning, and at the same time, concerning their fundamental incorrectness and untenable character in a chronological point of view, cf. Chr. B. Michaelis, *Annot. uberior*, III, 320 et seq. Individual Rabbins in modern times were convinced of the incorrectness of this usual anti-Messianic interpretation, as appears from the noteworthy expression of the Venetian chief-Rabbin Simon Luzzato, concerning this passage, as recorded by Wolf in the *Biblio. Hebr.*, III, 1228. According to him, “the consequence of a too extended and profound investigation on the part of Jewish scholars would be that they would all become Christians; for it cannot be denied that according to Daniel’s limitation of the time, the Messiah must have already appeared. But that Jesus was the true Messiah he felt himself unable to accept as certain.

3. *The Christian expositors of the older times* regarded the directly Messianic bearing of the passage as generally incontrovertible, and especially the application of [Heb. *Yikkareth Mashîach* – “messiah shall be cut off” – FB] to Christ the crucified, as also the reference of the “restoring and rebuilding” of the city and temple in v. 25 to the establishment of the church of the New Covenant; cf., Barnabas, *Ep.*, c. 16; *ἡ ἐγγραπτα γὰρ καὶ ἐστὶν, ἑβδομάδες συντελουμένης, οἰκοδομηθήσεται ναὸς θεοῦ ἐνδοξῶς ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου, κτλ.* The different exegetes varied exceedingly however, in the mode of reckoning the years. Jerome, on this passage, already mentions nine different methods of explaining them: (1) that of Jul. Africanus, who reckoned the 490 years from Nehemiah, or the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes, to the death of Christ, but in connection with this committed the error of reckoning by Jewish lunar years (resulting in only 465 solar years); (2) Three different theories of Eusebius, who (a) dates the first sixty-nine weeks from the return of the Jews in the reign of Cyrus to the death of Alexander Jannæus, the high priest and king, and Pompey’s invasion (B.C. 536 – B.C. 64; thus in *Dem. Ev.*, VIII, 2, 55 et seq); or (b) from the second year of Darius *Hystaspis* (B.C. 520 to the birth of Christ (*ibid.*, and *Chronic.* Ol. 184); or, (c) regards the last week as a period of seventy years, and attempts to calculate from the resurrection of Christ; (3) That of Hippolytus, who counted sixty-nine mystical weeks (comprising more than seven years each) from the first year of Cyrus to the incarnation of Christ, and declared that the *last* mystical week denotes the future period of the antichrist, which is connected with the end of the world; (4) that of Apollinaris of Laodicea, who reckoned the 490 years from the birth of Christ (“*ab exitu Verbi*,” v. 25), and therefore expected the coming of the antichrist and the end of the world about a century after his day, in the “last week;” (5) that of Clemens Alex. who extended the seventy weeks of years, in the face of all chronology, from the first year of Cyrus to the second year of Vespasian (B.C. 560 – A.D. 70); (6) that of Origen, who denies the possibility of any more exact chronological estimate, and therefore assumes 4900 years instead of 490, reaching from Adam to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (not indeed in vol. X. of his *Stromata*, which Jerome cites, but in his *Tract. XXIV*, on Matthew c.24); (7) that of Tertullian (*adv. Judæos*, c.8), who reckons the 437½ years from the first year of Darius Nothus (whom he strangely identifies with Darius Medus) to the birth of Christ, and fifty-two and a half of them from that event to the destruction of Jerusalem, thus obtaining 490. – Jerome himself expresses no opinion respecting the mode of reckoning to be observed, but seems to favor that of Africanus, which he preferred to all the others, and probably not without reason. That method is

likewise adopted by Chrysostom, Theodoret, Isidore of Pelusium, Euthymius Zigabenus, and generally by a majority of expositors in the Oriental church, but few of whom assume an independent position. Among the latter are, e.g., Cyril of Jerusalem, (*Catech.* xii, 19), who attempts to extend the seventy weeks of years from the sixth year of Darius Medus to the birth of Christ but violates historical accuracy by identifying Darius Medus with Darius Hystaspis; Ephraem Syrus who places the restoration of Jerusalem in the beginning of the seventieth week and the destruction by Titus at its close, without entering on a more careful calculation in other respects; Polychronius, a brother of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who reckons the first seven weeks from Darius Medus to the ninth year of Darius Medus to the ninth year of Darius Hystaspis, when Zerubbabel's temple is said to have been completed, the sixty two weeks from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes to the birth of Christ, and the final week from that date to Titus, while the death of Christ falls in its central point; Basil of Seleucia (*Orat.*, 38 in t. 85 of Migne's *Patrol.*), who calculates the first sixty-nine weeks from the completion of the walls of Jerusalem in the twenty-eighth year of Xerxes (!) to the resurrection of Christ, and identifies the seventieth week with the first seven years after the resurrection, while he declares the abomination of desolation erected in the middle of that week to have been the familiar attempt of Caligula to erect his image in the temple. – Among the later expositors of the Latin church, Augustine, following the example of Jerome, avoids every independent and detailed calculation of the seventy weeks. He contents himself with finding a fulfillment of the leading features of the prophecy Dan. ix. 24 et seq., in the earthly work of Christ and in the judgment of Jerusalem, and expressly rejects (especially in *Ep.* 199 “*de fine sæculi*”) the opinion of those who looked for two periods of seventy weeks of years, the first of which should reach to Christ's advent in the flesh, and the second to the end of the world. This assumption of a double period of seventy weeks of years, or of an Old Test. antitypical fulfilment, was advocated as late as the sixth century by the unknown Arian author of the so-called *Opus imperfectum in Matthæum*. Sulpicius Severus (*Chron.* II, 21) extends the sixty-nine weeks from the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes I to Vespasian, or from the restoration of the temple to its second destruction. His contemporary, Julius Hilarianus, appears in his *Chronologia s. libellus de mundi duratione* (in Migne, t. 13, p. 1098) as the forerunner of the modern critical exposition, in consequence of his denial of the direct Messianic character of the prophecy, whose fulfilment he places in the age of Antiochus and the Maccabees; but he commits gross chronological blunder of assigning 434 years (=62 weeks) to the interval between the return of the Jews under Zerubbabel and the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, while the period between B.C. 536 and B.C. 175 really amounts to but 361 years! Prosper Aquitan in his *Chronicon* adopts the view advocated by Eusebius in the *Demonstr. Evangelicon* and the *Chron.* (see supra. No. 2b) and accordingly reckons the sixty-nine weeks from the building of the temple under Darius to Herod the Gr. and the birth of Christ. Finally, the venerable Bede adopts substantially the view of Julius Africanus (*Libell. de temporum ratione*, c. 7), as does also Thomas Aquinas (*Comm in Dan.*, in *Opp.*, t. XIII. ed. Antwerp). (1960, pp.205-207)

Zöckler traces out the transition of interpretation from the times of the early church up to the eighteenth century, from where we have records, and in none of those works cited, is the mention of any year-day principle. What is clear is that they interpret Daniel's seventy weeks in accordance with the secular meaning of the words they use – as seventy groups of seven years, without any year-day principle. And I have provided in the appendix of [Assumption 16](#), examples where we saw two lines of interpretation gradually developed: those who were ignorant of the history of interpretation outlined by Zöckler and used the year-day principle (since it yielded the same result); and those who understood the correct meaning of the word “*hebdomad*” and translated accordingly as “weeks of years.”

#### **2.4.6 The Occurrence of *Shabu'a* in other passages.**

It should be made clear in our usage of the word “week,” there are two ideas for week still in use in modern languages today. The first is the definition of the calendrical week, as to when it begins and when it stops. In the case of the Hebrews, it began on the “first of the Sabbath,” and finished on “the Sabbath.”

The second idea for the week is a set of seven days, beginning at any day, and finishing seven days later. In this case it does not begin with the beginning of the week proper, but could begin anywhere during the week. This continues today in any language, for example in the statement



“I’ll see you in a week,” means the person speaking will see the person listening in seven days time. In this case, the week is a heptad of days, and does mean they will meet sometime in the next calendrical week; it means they will meet in seven days time.

This difference is found also in Hebrew literature. The Old Testament usage of *shabua*’ unequivocally refers to a seven-day period. When we come to the New Testament, we see some changes. For instance, whereas in the Old Testament word for the seventh-day “Shabbath” referred to just the seventh day, in the New Testament however, it refers to the whole week (cf. Matt 23: “twice a week” = “twice in the Sabbath” in the Greek). And this is not the first usage. By the time the Septuagint was being written, this synecdochic<sup>85</sup> use of the word “Sabbath” was prevalent as well. We meet this again in the Church Fathers’ discussions on the Sabbath and the Lord’s day, and in discussions regarding Gnosticism, where the Sabbath is referred to as “the Hebdomad.” Thus even though it is only one day, it synecdochically symbolises a whole week, just as the 70 neglected sabbatical years referred to in Dn9:2 represents 70 lots of seven years. In the same way a part is used to represent the whole.

THERE NEEDS TO BE AN INTRODUCTION TO THESE TEXTS AS WELL AS AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHERE AND HOW THEY FIT INTO THE FLOW OF THE ARGUMENT. AT PRESENT THERE IS NOTHING OF VALUE IN THIS SECTION.

2 Chronicles 8:13 - as the duty of each day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses for the sabbaths, the new moons, and the three annual feasts--the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of **weeks**, and the feast of tabernacles.

Jeremiah 5:24 - They do not say in their hearts, 'Let us fear the LORD our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the **weeks** appointed for the harvest.'

Genesis 29:27 - Complete the **week** of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years."<sup>86</sup>

Genesis 29:28 - Jacob did so, and completed her **week**; then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to wife.

Exodus 34:22 - And you shall observe the feast of **weeks**, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

Leviticus 23:15 - "And you shall count from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full **weeks** shall they be,

Leviticus 25:8 - "And you shall count seven **weeks** of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven **weeks** of years shall be to you forty-nine years.

Numbers 28:26 - "On the day of the first fruits, when you offer a cereal offering of new grain to the LORD at your feast of **weeks**, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work,

<sup>85</sup> Using a part of something to indicate the whole or visa versa.

<sup>86</sup> This week of wedding festivities began whenever the wedding began. It could start from whenever to whenever. In this case, the week is really a heptad of seven days, not a week period starting from the “first of the Sabbath” etc.

Deuteronomy 16:9 - "You shall count seven **weeks**; begin to count the seven **weeks** from the time you first put the sickle to the standing grain."<sup>87</sup>

Deuteronomy 16:10 - Then you shall keep the feast of **weeks** to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you;

Deuteronomy 16:16 - "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place which he will choose: at the feast of unleavened bread, at the feast of **weeks**, and at the feast of booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed;

### **Ezekiel 45:21-23.**

WHAT IS THE INTRODUCTION TO THIS SECTION? WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE? HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE POINTS YOU ARE TRYING TO ESTABLISH?

In these texts Ezekiel refers to the ceremonies in the post-exilic temple services. He says:

**18.** Thus In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary.

**19** The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and the posts of the gate of the inner court.

**20** You shall do the same on the seventh day of the month for any one who has sinned through error or ignorance; so you shall make atonement for the temple.

**21** In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall celebrate the feast of the passover, and for **seven days** unleavened bread shall be eaten.

**22** On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a young bull for a sin offering.

**23** And on the seven days of the festival he shall provide as a burnt offering to the LORD seven young bulls and seven rams without blemish, on each of the seven days; and a he-goat daily for a sin offering.

**24** And he shall provide as a cereal offering an ephah for each bull, an ephah for each ram, and a hin of oil to each ephah.

**25** In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month and for the seven days of the feast, he shall make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, and cereal offerings, and for the oil.

One can glean from verse 23 that it is referring back to verse 21, leading us to believe that verse 21 means a feast that goes for a heptad of days. This text poses a problem in translation because of the similarity of the phrase in verse 21 translated as "the feast of the passover," since the phrase there is virtually the same here when compared to the "feast of weeks." The text is transliterated *hag sh<sup>e</sup>bu'ôth*. This phrase is found also in Ex. 34:22 and Deut. 16:10 but the pointing in our text is slightly different, rendering it *hag shabu'oth*. Commentators favoured linking the text in Eze 45 to these texts in Ex and Deut. Keil gives us a good round understanding of the logic of the commentators who favoured this connection. He then proposes two solutions to the problem, favouring either a plural of genus for an indefinite heptad of days, or a scribal error for *sh<sup>e</sup>bath*, a festival lasting a heptad of days. The Apparatus Criticus in BHS tends to support this second idea of Keil and suggests this for *sh<sup>e</sup>bu'ôth* with the comment "l c 2 Mss Vss *shib<sup>e</sup>'ath*." This means "L(ege) c(um) Mss Vss..." or "Read with other versions (and) manuscripts..."

Here then is Keil's excellent summary of the issue:

<sup>87</sup> Here again we get clear evidence that the week here is just a heptad of days, since the sickle could be put into the standing grain on any day of the week, rather than the first day of the week. Thus, the numbering the seven weeks from that time is the numbering of seven heptads.

There is considerable difficulty connected with the following words, [Heb: *hag shēbu'ôth yamîm* "feast of heptads days" –FB], which all the older translators have rendered "a feast of seven days." *Shabu'ôth* signifies periods of seven days or weeks. A feast of heptads of days, or weeks of days, cannot possibly mean a feast which lasted only seven days, or a week. [Heb: *hag shabu'ôth*-FB] is used elsewhere for the feast of weeks (Ex xxxiv. 22; Deut xvi.10), because they were to reckon seven weeks from the second day of the Passover, the day of the sheaf of first-fruits, and then to keep the feast of the loaves of firstfruits, or the feast of harvest (Deut xvi. 9). Kliefoth retains this well-established meaning of the words in this passage also, and gives the following explanation: If the words [Heb: *hag shabu'ôth*-FB] stood alone without *yamîm*, it would mean that in future the Passover was to be kept like the feast of seven weeks, as the feast of the loaves of first-fruits. But the addition of *yamîm*, which is to be taken in the same sense as in Dn x. 2, 3, Gen xxix. 14 etc., gives this turn to the thought, that in future the Passover is to be kept as a feast of seven weeks long, "a feast lasting seven weeks." According to this explanation, the meaning of the regulation is, "that in future not only the seven days of sweet loaves, but the whole of the seven weeks intervening between the feast of the wave-sheaf and the feast of the wave-loaves, was to be kept as a Passover, that the whole of the quinquagesima should be one Easter *hag* [Heb], and the feast of weeks be one with the Passover." To this there is appended the further regulation, that unleavened bread is to be eaten, not merely for the seven days therefore, but for the whole of the seven weeks, till the feast of the loaves of the first-fruits. This explanation is a very sagacious one, and answers to the Christian view of the Easter-tide. But it opens to objections which render it untenable. In the first place, that *yamîm*, when used in the sense of lasting for days, is not usually connected with the preceding noun in the construct state, but is attached as an adverbial accusative; compare [Heb. "*shēloshah shabu'im yamîm*" "three weeks days"-FB] in Dan x. 2,3, and [Heb. *shēnathayim yamîm* –FB] in Gen xli. 1; Jer xxviii. 3, 11 etc. But a still more important objection is the circumstance that the words [Heb. "*shib'ath yēmē hehag*" –"the seven days of the festival" FB] in ver. 23, unquestionably point back to [Heb: *hag shēbu'ôth yamîm*-FB] in verse 23 unquestionably point back to [Heb: *hag shēbu'ôth yamîm*-FB], as there is no other way in which the article in [Heb: "*hehag*"-FB] can be explained, just as [*bayôm hahû*' "in that day"-FB] in verse 22 points back to the fourteenth day mentioned in verse 21 as the time of the *pesach* feast. It follows from this, however, that [Heb *shebu'ôth yamîm* –FB] can only signify a seven days' feast. It is true that the plural [Heb *shēbu'ôth* –FB] appears irreconcilable with this; for Kimchi's opinion that [Heb *shēbu'ôth* –FB] is a singular, written with *Cholem* instead of *Patach*, is purely a result of perplexity, and the explanation given by Gussetius, that Ezekiel speaks in the plural of weeks, because the reference is "to the institution of the Passover as an annual festival to be celebrated many times in the series of times and ages," is no better. The plural [Heb *shēbu'ôth* –FB] must rather be taken as a plural of genus, as in [Heb: '*arê*- FB] Gen xiii. 12 and Judg xii.7; [Heb *bahen*-FB] in Gen xix 29; or [Heb *banîn* –FB], Gen xxi.7, Isa xxxvii. 3; so that Ezekiel speaks indefinitely of heptad of days, because he assumes that the fact is well known that the feast only lasted one heptad of days, as he expressly states in vers. 23. If this explanation of the plural does not commend itself, we must take [Heb *shēbu'ôth* –FB] as a copyists error for [Heb *shēbu'ath* –FB] a feast of a heptad of days, i.e., a feast lasting a full week, and attribute the origin of the copyist's error to the fact that [Heb *hag shēbu'ôth* –FB] naturally suggested the thought of of [Heb *shabu'ôth* –FB], the feast of weeks, or Pentecost, not merely because the feast of Pentecost is always mentioned in the Pentateuch along with the feasts of Passover and tabernacles, but also because the only singular form of [Heb *shabu'ôth* –FB] that we meet with elsewhere is [Heb *shabû'a*-FB] (Dan ix. 27), or in the construct state [Heb- *shēbu'a*-FB] (Gen xxix. 27), not [Heb *shēbu'ah*-FB] or [Heb: *shēbu'ath*-FB] (1978, Ezekiel, pp.336-337)

## Leviticus 23:15-22

**15** "And you shall count from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven full **weeks** shall they be,

**16** counting fifty days to the morrow after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a cereal offering of new grain to the LORD.

**17** You shall bring from your dwellings two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah; they shall be of fine flour, they shall be baked with leaven, as first fruits to the LORD.

**18** And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one young bull, and two rams; they shall be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their cereal offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

**19** And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings.

**20** And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs; they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

**21** And you shall make proclamation on the same day; you shall hold a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work: it is a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

**22** "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

Keil, (1978, Pentateuch, vol. 2, p.442)

THERE IS NO CONCLUSION TO THIS SECTION. YOU NEED TO PULL AL THESE THINGS TOGETHER AND FORM A CONCLUSION.

### **2.4.7 The History of the use of the word *Hebdomad*.**

Froom's theory of the the year-day principle being "hinted at" in the Alexandrian version of the book of Daniel is another prop used to defend the use of the year-day principle in Daniel 9. It has been espoused by leading figures in SDA historicism up to the present and nothing has been presented against it. I have examined this concept elsewhere (see Assumption 16), but for the convenience of readers I will summarise the results of those findings here.

Although the Septuagint was written in Greek, and the word we are examining there in Daniel 9:26 is a Greek one, the Greek and Latin form of this word are identical in meaning.

The outcome of this study is that this word is used in number of ways:

To describe the seven-day week, starting with the first day of the week and ending with the seventh day – the Sabbath;

To describe the seventh day, or in fact, the seventh item of anything;

To describe a collection of seven things, including any period of seven days, seven weeks, seven months, seven years, seven seven-year cycles, and even seven aeons of the history of the world. It is also used to describe a collection of seven items, or persons etc.

Just the number "seven."

Froom has mooted the idea that the translators of the Alexandrian Septuagint at Daniel 9:27 LXX, when they inserted "of years," into the statement "62 of years," - actually hinted that they come to this calculation using the year-day theory.

The upshot of this study however, shows that Froom's assertion concerning the "hinting" of the use of the year-day principle by the translators of Daniel 9:24 of the Alexandrian Septuagint is mere nonsense. The word used in this text must be defined by its context, which in this case, does not refer to the seven-day week, but to either a collection of seven things or more correctly, to either the seven years of the Sabbatical-year cycle or the seventh-year of the Sabbatical-year agricultural system in Leviticus 25.

### **Summary of the Research.**

Because the material following is extensive and can be daunting for some readers, I summarise the conclusions here so that an overview can be kept in mind when reading and this table can be referred back to to get a sense of context.

The following possibilities are countetted with the use of *hebdomad* in both Latin and Greek, since their meanings are identical:

The number "seven."

The seventh-day, or the Jewish Sabbath, or the seventh day of a lunar month, regardless on what day of the week it falls;

A group of seven days, regardless as to when they begin or end;

A group of seven weeks, as in the time between Passover and Pentecost;

A group of seven months, as in the first seven months up to the Day of Atonement, or the first seven months of a pregnancy;

A group of seven years, whether talking of a person's life, or a religious cycle like the sabbatical—year cycle;

A group of seven things, whether they be books, stars, planets, gods, etc.

A group of seven ages of the history of the world, with varying lengths;

The Creation Weekly cycle starting from the first day of the week and ending on the seventh

These categories will be represented by their numbers in the table and an **X** placed where the author uses this type of idea. References are not given. Readers need to look at the primary sources quoted, and read the comments there.

#### SUMMARY OF USAGE OF *HEBDOMAD* IN LATIN AND GREEK

WRITER	Centu ry	Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Comments
Various	Many B.C.										Schummel 's work on transcultural symbolic use of numbers
Babylon								X			Hehn- architecture and writing
Hesiod	8 <sup>th</sup> B.C.	Greek									
Solon	6 <sup>th</sup> B.C.	Greek									
Zoroaster	6 <sup>th</sup> B.C.	Persian									
Hippocrates	5 <sup>th</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> B.C.	Greek									
Pythagoras		Greek									
Aristotle	384- 322 B.C.	Greek									
Septuagint-both Theodotion & Alexandrian	3 <sup>rd</sup> B.C.										
Aristobulus	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> B.C.	Greek									
Varro	2 <sup>nd</sup> -1 <sup>st</sup> B.C.	Latin									
Philo	1 <sup>st</sup> B.C. .-1 A.D.	Greek									
Nicomachus of	c.245-	Greek									

SUMMARY OF USAGE OF *HEBDOMAD* IN LATIN AND GREEK

WRITER	Century	Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Comments
Gerasa	c.325 A.D.										
Theon of Smyrna	70-135 A.D.	Greek									
Clement of Alexandria	150-211 A.D.	Greek									
Censorinus	f. 3 <sup>rd</sup> A.D.	Latin									
Anatolius of Laodicea	?	Greek									
Calcidius	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> A.D.	Latin									
Macrobius	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> A.D.	Greek									
John Lydus	490-c552 A.D.	Greek									
Isidore of Seville	5 <sup>th</sup> A.D.	Latin									
Venerable Bede	7 <sup>th</sup> A.D.	Latin	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Glossa Ordinaria		Latin									
Gnostic Writings	Early A.D.	Greek									
Fathers Answer the Gnostics	Early A.D.	Greek/Latin									
Anglicus Galfridus	1440	Latin		X	X						
Robert Estienne	1549	Latin/French									
Thomas Cooper	1578	Latin/English									
Thomas Thomas	1592	Latin		X	X						
John Rider	1598	Latin/English			X		X	X		X	
Francis Holyoake	1633	Latin/English			X		X	X		X	
Francis Gouldman	1669	Latin/English			X			X			
Thomas Holyoake	1676-77	Latin/English			X		X	X		X	
Elisha Coles	1677	Latin/English			X						
Adam Littlejohn	1684	Latin/English	X		X			X			



SUMMARY OF USAGE OF *HEBDOMAD* IN LATIN AND GREEK

WRITER	Century	Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Comments
		sh									
Forcellini	1771	Latin									
Thesaurus Linguae Latinae	1900-2050	Latin									
Lewis & Short	current	Eng/Latin	X	X	X						

The following chart traces the ideas of meaning given to *shabu'a* in key Biblical texts, intertestamental literature, as well as in the Talmud.

SUMMARY OF USAGE OF *SHABU'A* IN HEBREW WRITINGS

WRITER	Century	Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Comments
Gen 37-Jacob's marriage festival			X								In this example we have a collection of any seven days.
Leviticus 25:1-8 Sabbatical-year cycle	?	Hebrew									In this example we have a collection of seven years.
Leviticus 25: Jubilee cycle	?	Hebrew									In this example we have a collection of seven groups of seven years.
Samuel Samuel's wedding feast	?										
Biblical use as a week.											
Book of Daniel											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Jubilees											
Book of Weeks.											
Tobit 1:21											
Sirach 43:7											
1 Macc 10:34											
2 Macc 12:3											
Apocalypse of Weeks – Enoch 91, 93											
Talmud											

SUMMARY OF USAGE OF <i>SHABU'A</i> IN HEBREW WRITINGS											
WRITER	Centu ry	Langua ge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Comments
Talmud											
Talmud											
Talmud											
Talmud											

With the many varieties of meanings laid out so simply, and seeing how they were all widely used, one can see that the word “*hebdomad*” in the Greek Septuagint could mean a variety of things, beside the normal week-day week. It can be clearly understood why scholars say it is imperative to glean the meaning of the word from its context.

My own opinion is that two options are available for a meaning of shabu ‘a or hebdomad in Daniel9:24-27.

It refers to a sabbatical year *cycle of seven years*.

It refers to the *seventh year* of each sabbatical cycle –the Sabbatical-year Sabbath, and the seventy years of exile in Babylon were seventy “shabu ‘as,” with one following the other consequetively, until all seventy were completed. And then God offered Israel another seventy hebdomads in Palestine. In offering the Sabbatical sabbaths to them, he was also offering the full 490 years of grace and mercy. There is late evidence for this view, but as to how early this concept was developed is still an open question. But it fits with the text and the prophecy and with later usage of the word. Its simplicity is compelling.

In both cases however, there is no need for the use of the year-day principle. Possibly the most telling argument against the use of the year-day principle in Daniel 9 is that provided by both Froom and the early church Fathers. Froom admits the testimony of the early church fathers is entirely silent on the year-day principle, even though they wrote a godd deal on the seventy weeks of Daniel 9. They calculated the 490-year (whether by solar or lunar modes) without as much as mentioning the year-day principle; simply by the mentioning of hebdomads. And then we come to the like of Isidore and Bede many hundreds of years later, who discussing the calculations of these early fathers, explain that the hebdomad is a curious beast, that can be takend for days, weeks, months, years, 7-year periods or even centuries!! If they were using a “prophetic principle” to interpret hebdomad, then it would have to be called “a day for a week, month, year, 7-year, centuries” principle!

## 2.5 Other prophetic passages and principles.

There are other prophetic texts in the Old Testament that use a different method of giving and interpreting time. We will examine these and see if we can gain a clear prophetic scale from these that can be generalised.

How should one decide that a Scriptural statement is a Biblical principle? Should we conclude one to occur where there is a clear statement where A equals B? Take the example, “the ten horns ...are ten kingdoms.” (Dn7:24) Is this a principle students can use to interpret other examples where there are horns on a visionary animal?

Consider the example below where explicit statements of principle are given. Are these principles we can apply generally?

### **2.5.1 Visionary Object Represents a Literal Day.**

In the book of Genesis, we read of the experience of Joseph, first as a receiver of dreams at home, then as an interpreter of dreams in the land of Egypt. In the dreams experienced by the Pharaoh's baker and the Pharaoh's wine taster, there is the clear principle that the three grape branches or three baskets of bread equalling a day in real time. This is not conjecture. It is a clear principle of prophecy.

The three branches are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand. Gen. 40: 12

Three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and hang you on a tree. And the birds will eat away your flesh. Gen. 40: 18

Clearly this was wisdom from God, and the interpretation of this dream was heaven inspired. Here is a principle straight from heaven, and so early in the history of Israel too. Following on from this we could develop a principle defining a specified object equalling a literal day. We could argue that certain things in a prophecy could equal a day. As Shea says:

[Gen 41:27] does not make a direct connection between days and years either, but it does provide another prophecy in which the time periods prophesied were grouped together in units of seven along the lines modelled by the Sabbatical week again. The prophetic symbols stood for 7 years of abundance and the 7 lean year were those of 7 fat and sleek cows that were followed by 7 lean and gaunt cows. What we have here then is an application of the Cow-for-a-year principle. (1980, pp.220f)

### **2.5.2 Visionary Object Represents a Literal Year.**

The dream of Pharaoh indicates that an ear of corn represents one literal year and one cow represents one literal year. This is explicit and is clearly in a prophetic context.

The seven good cows are seven years and the seven good ears of corn are seven years; it is one and the same dream. The seven lean, ugly cows that came up afterwards are seven years, and so are the seven worthless ears of corn scorched by the east wind; they are seven years of famine. Gen. 41:25.

Here again God sent a dream to Pharaoh so that Joseph could apply the wisdom given him of God regarding the interpretation of time periods in dreams and visions. Why cannot we then generalise these statements into a prophetic principle? They are clearly used as principles here in Gen. 41, even moreso than Numbers 14: 34 or Ezekiel 4:6. Yet, I have not read anything that indicates the SDA writers even consider Joseph's prophetic principles enunciated here. Why have they ignored this prophetic incident in Gen. 41 and not spelt out an explicit prophetic principle based on these texts? If they can just extrapolate Eze4: 6 and Numbers 14:34 and say they are prophetic principles, then surely one must do the same with these texts in Genesis 40 and 41 in order to be consistent? The context of the texts in Gn40 and 41 are clearly prophetic, clearly symbolic, and clearly dealing with prophetic time.

. Perhaps we could apply the principles in Gen. 41 to any anatomical part of the animals in Daniel 8 such as their four legs, and indicate or perhaps a double application to the horns so that they not only represent kingdoms but a time period too. The principles of Gen. 41 are very broad and can be applied in many ways.

Perhaps the ears of corn were symbolic of the harvest. Translating this would mean 7 good harvests and 7 bad harvests. But what would the fat cow represent? Did they only have slaughter sales once a year? Or perhaps it represented calving time? Perhaps they calved them once a year,

and so the fat cows represented cows in calf and the thin cows represented cows without calf.<sup>88</sup> In this way the time period of one year would be understood by Joseph and not any other time frame. Genesis 41 applies a *year* to an animal. The Bible also applies an animal to an *empire*. But historicists have applied *parts of an animal* to a kingdom as well. For example, consider following illustrations using the three ribs of an animal that are in the mouth of the beast in Dn7, or the two arms and legs of the image of Dn2.

### **2.5.3 The Three Ribs of Dn7:5**

Although there is no explanation in the vision that the ribs have any significance rather than just illustrating the ravenous nature of the beast, the theory has developed not only by historicists but by some Jewish commentators through the millennia, Smith, in his commentary of Dn7:5 interprets the three ribs of its slain in the mouth of the bear-like beast as three kingdoms. Note the text:

“And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised itself up on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.”

What are these three ribs? Smith says, “The three ribs doubtless signify the three provinces of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were especially oppressed by the Medo-Persia. The command, ‘Arise, devour much flesh,’ would naturally refer to the stimulus given by the overthrow of these provinces.” (1944, p.108)<sup>89</sup> Smith is not alone in seeing kingdoms in these three ribs. Historicists centuries before had a similar view. Here is the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton:

The second Beast was like a bear, and represents the Empire which reigned next after the Babylonians, that is, the Empire of the Persians. Thy kingdom is divided, or broken, saith Daniel to the last King of Babylon, and given to the Medes and Persians, Daniel 5:28. This Beast raised itself up on one side; the Persians being under the Medes at the fall of Babylon, but presently rising up above them. And it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it, to signify the kingdoms of Sardes, Babylon, and Egypt, which were conquered by it, but did not belong to its proper body. (1733, p.11)

This interpretation is also noted in the SDABC where it says: “These are not mentioned in the interpretation (vs 17-27), but many commentators have considered them a symbol of the three principal powers that were conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire – Lydia, Babylon and Egypt.” (Nichol, 1976, p.821)

And modern SDA historicists still repeat them. Notice Goldstein:

The second beast – the bear – symbolizes Media-Persia. Being lopsided (“it raised up itself on one side”) shows the imbalance of power between the two nations of that empire. The “three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it” (verse 5) are seen as Lydia, Babylon and Egypt – three nations crushed by the Media-Persian power. (1988, p.21)

This is the only time that ribs occur in the prophetic context. There is no interpretation given for it, and Smith is “*doubtless*” that it is to be interpreted as meaning three kingdoms. And the interpretation is credible enough for the SDABC to make mention of it. This is interesting. Here is a precedent for taking another body part – ribs – as representing a prophetic feature.

<sup>88</sup> Assumption here is that gestation period for cattle here is around 280 days as now. It should be noted that women still have the same gestation period as then. The thin cows represent drought-induced infertility, and this infertility continued on for 7 seasons. Perhaps they timed the production of the new stock as is done today for a certain time of the year.

<sup>89</sup> There is no interpretation of the symbol “ribs” in this chapter; and there is no explanation in Scripture; yet Smith is *without a doubt* that he is correct!!! SDA historicism par excellence!!

## **2.5.4 The Two Arms and Hands of the Image of Daniel 2**

This style of creative interpretation to the three ribs of Dn7:5, it is also used in relation to the hands of the great image of Daniel 2. Josephus, in discussing the experiences of Daniel in Babylon, refers to Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image and gives a view that would have been held by many even in his day, and given that Josephus was educated by the sect called the Pharisees till he was nineteen,<sup>90</sup> one would assume that his position on the image may also have been held by other Jewish teachers. In the words of Josephus, quoting Daniel's reply to King Nebuchadnezzar:

“Wherefore as thou in thy sleep was desirous was solicitous concerning those that should succeed the government of the whole world, God was desirous to show thee all those that should reign after thee and to that end, exhibited to thee the following dream. Thou seemedst to see a great image standing before thee, the head of which proved to be of gold, shoulders and arms of silver; and the belly and thighs of brass, but the legs and feet of iron; after which thou sawest a stone broken off from a mountain, which fell upon the image and threw it down, and brake it to pieces, and did not permit any part of it to remain whole; but the gold, the silver, the brass and the iron, became smaller than meal, which, upon the blast of a violent wind, was by force carried away, and scattered abroad; but the stone did increase to such a degree, that the whole earth beneath it seemed to be filled therewith. This is the dream which thou sawest, and its interpretation is as follows: The head of gold denotes thee, and the kings of Babylon that have been before thee; but the two hands and arms signify this, that your government shall be dissolved by two kings; but another king that shall come from the west, armed with brass, shall destroy that government; and another government, that shall be like unto iron, shall put an end to the power of the former, and shall have dominion over all the earth, on account of the nature of iron, which is stronger than that of gold, of silver and of brass.” (Josephus, Antiquities, book 10, 207-209 (Loeb Classical Library numbering reference), in [Josephus, 1987](#), p.280)

In Josephus' view, the arms and the hands of the image can quite justifiably be symbolic of “two kings.” This interpretation is not based on any interpretative statement by Daniel, but it seems that it was accepted as feasible, for it to be judged worthy to be included in his comments.

## **2.5.5 Two Legs of The Statue represent Rome and Turkey**

Manasseh Ben Israel (1604-1657), theologian, prolific writer, and statesman, and rabbi in Amsterdam is surveyed by Froom in his Prophetic Faith of our Fathers. He believed the two legs of the statue represented Romanism and Mohammedanism. (Froom, 1948, p. 235). In his treatise on the Glorious Stone, “continuing with the statue of Daniel, Manasseh declares: ‘Turkey and Rome are the two legs of the Statue, which comprise this last monarchy.’” (Ibid, p. 237)

Maxwell on the other hand talks of commentators who take the two legs as representing the Western and Eastern Roman Empire:

Some commentators, when writing about the multi-element image of Daniel 2, observe that the gold, silver, bronze, and iron are arranged in decreasing order of monetary value and increasing order of hardness. Then they try to draw meaning out of their observation. Some commentators also conjecture that the two legs of the image represent the famous eastern and western divisions of the Roman Empire....As for the legs, it makes no point of the fact that there were two. When it comes to *our* evaluation of the metals, we need to remember that whereas gold is very valuable for ornaments, iron is obviously more valuable for armaments. And what about the two legs? Well, what about the two eyes? The ten fingers? The twenty-four ribs? What about the navel? Are we to treat them all as symbols and develop extensive interpretations for each of them? Involved here is a vital principle for all prophetic interpretation. Sometimes context does compel us to attach meaning to a symbol when the meaning is not expressly applied by Scripture. Even in such cases we must be wary, lest we teach things that God never intended

<sup>90</sup> [Josephus, 1987](#), Introduction.

and thus unwittingly write our own Bible. “The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but the *things that are revealed* belong to us and to our children.” Deuteronomy 29:29. (1981, p.45)<sup>91</sup>

Josiah Litch, in his 1867 revision of earlier ideas on the book of Daniel, and the application of these prophecies to then-contemporary events in Europe, sees a place for interpreting the two legs of Daniel 2 as representing, not Rome and Turkey, but the “the East” and “the West”:

If asked the prophetic significance of passing events in Europe, the answer would be, that they indicate the passing away of the two great central powers of the Roman Empire, the Papal and Turkish Governments, and the development of ten distinct kingdoms representing the ten toes of the metallic image of Dan. 2d chapter. Five on the East and five on the West. (1867, p. 35)

Therefore, we see that some historicists want to see a unique interpretation of these items in the vision. After seeing these examples from Smith, Josephus, Jewish commentators, and Litch of their explanation of the historical significance of other unexplained anatomical parts, we can now consider the toes of the image of Dn2.<sup>92</sup>

### **2.5.6 The Ten Toes of Dn2-The Lord's Return in 2991 A.D. or 4076 A.D.**

Moving on from a consideration of these positions taken on the arms and legs of the man image of Dn2, or the three ribs in Dn7, we could advance further on from the prophecies of Gen 41 and apply the principle in Genesis 41 to the ten toes of the image of Daniel 2 and say that the ten toes represent a prophetic feature – ten years, which, *of course*, are “prophetic” years in the SDA historicists’ terminology. This is not so outrageous. In reading Dn2:41-43, if others consider the arms and the legs of the human image to represent kingdoms, we can rightly take the same liberty to say the toes are representative as well. SDA historicists take them to represent kingdoms, but they can be taken to be time integers as well. Remember, historicists take both the animal or a part of the animal to both represent a kingdom. By their logic we can take either a creature or a part of a creature as a year as well, on the explicit authority of Genesis 41. And further, the ten toes could be seen to be associated either with the fourth kingdom, or with the whole image. If the association of the toes with the *last part of the fourth kingdom* is meant, then this indicates that the last stage of the fourth kingdom will last for 10 “prophetic years” before stone smites it. If the toes are associated with the *whole image*, then this means that the whole image from the time of the Babylonian empire will last for 10 “prophetic” years before the stone smites the image.

Calculating this would yield 10 x 360 years or 3600 “prophetic” days or 3600 literal years. If the toes represented the time for the last phase of the fourth kingdom, this would mean that from the time of this last stage till the stone smashes the image we have to wait 3600 years. If we take the SDA time on this matter at around the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (or 476 to be exact), then we have to wait until 4076 A.D. (476+3600) until the kingdom of man will be destroyed by the kingdom represented by the stone. On the other hand, taking the ten toes as belonging to the *whole image*, we can count the 3600 years from the time that Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (“you are the head of gold” Dn2: 38) began. Taking his reign from around 609 BC, we can count to 2991 A.D. (3600-(609+1(for the 1BC to 1AD crossover))), and conclude with a reasonable degree of certainty that the stone kingdom will dash the toes of this kingdom of man in 2990 A.D. The certainty of this

<sup>91</sup> Following Maxwell’s ‘principle,’ we could apply the usage found in Joseph’s interpretations since they “are revealed.”

<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, Smith (1944) is prepared to allow the ten toes to represent the ten kingdoms of divided Rome, but he is not prepared to acknowledge that the two legs are symbolic of the Eastern and Western Roman Empire. Capricious is the only word that could describe such thinking. The toes are symbolic but the legs that hold the toes are not???



year is based on the records we have to establish a date for the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. (Nichol, 1976, p. 755)<sup>93</sup>

There is nothing in Scripture that indicates that the toes *cannot* represent years. There is no statement that says toes mean kingdoms. And most commentators endorse the assumptions that (a) the image has toes and (b) that he has all ten of them. (Nichol, 1976, p. 775) SDA historicists use comparison between Dn7 and Dn2 to say that the toes are ten kingdoms.<sup>94</sup> but this is only conjecture. It is never stated. Clearly from the principles taught in Genesis 41:25, the interpretation of toes to mean “years” has as much credence if not more, than the time prophecies taught by the SDA historicists based on the use of Numbers 14:34. There is no difference between using the symbols of a fat cow, a lean cow, fat corn or lean ear of corn as a year or accounting a toe as a year also in the image of Daniel 2. Insinuate into this calculation the historicist concept that a prophetic day in this 10-year period represents a year as the SDA historicists do in their process of calculation, and the result is the outcome using the SDA system of calculation. The argument that this interpretation cannot be accepted because it is novel and not promulgated by anyone else does not hold water. The same argument can be levelled against their promulgation of the 2300 days. It is novel and not promulgated by anyone else either, and was even repudiated by its major advocates – Miller and Litch and a host of other ministers – when they found their predictions failed to occur. But SDA historicists still maintain that the arguments are valid despite it being novel.

A person using the principles quoted above from Gen. 41 would have a field day in the book of Revelation. Needless to say, there is no enduring principle in these interpretations of Joseph that can be generalised to another situation. On the other hand, if SDA historicists say that Num 14: 34 can be made a general prophetic principle, then I assert that Gen 41:25 can also. In fact, Gen41: 25 has more qualification for being a prophetic hermeneutic than Numbers 14:34. It occurs in a prophetic setting. It delineates a clear principle, as is done in the visions of Dn7 and 8 with the interpretation of other prophetic items.

Although I do not believe the prophecies of Genesis 40 and 41 can be interpreted in this way, this exercise has been undertaken to highlight the futility of ascribing a general principle *even* from prophetic statements such as those of the “dreamer” Joseph. The same goes for the statement in Numbers 14: 34. There is no real principle in this one-off situation that can be extrapolated to another situation. If Num 14: 34 can be generalised, then so can any other prophetic principle in Scripture. This can include the year for a day principle in Eze 4: 6; the concepts of Joseph’s interpretation of objects in a dream / vision as time periods; and the other two principles that follow.

### **2.5.7 Applying the Year-Day Theory to Gen41: The Lord’s Coming in 3040 A.D.**

As an example of the application of the SDA process of interpreting prophecy with their “prophetic time” concept, and the dreams of Pharaoh, we could take these dreams in Genesis 41:

<sup>93</sup> If we were to take Josephus’ view that the statement “you are the head of gold” refers to the kings of Babylon, then we would date it from the first Babylonian king, Nabopolassar, when he and Cyaxares, the Median King, conquered the Assyrians in 612 B.C. (Nichol, 1957b, p.172) This would yield a date for the Second Advent at 2987 AD.

<sup>94</sup> See Smith, 1944, p.57-59: “The question therefore naturally arises, Do the ten toes of the image represent the ten final divisions of the Roman Empire? We answer, Yes. The image of Daniel 2 is exactly parallel with the four beasts in the vision of Daniel 7. The fourth beast represents the same kingdom as do the iron legs of the image. The ten horns of the beast correspond naturally to the ten toes of the image. These horns are plainly declared to be ten kings what should arise... The introduction of the weakness of the clay element, as we come to the feet, resulted in the division of the kingdom into ten parts, as represented by the ten toes; and this result, or division, is more than intimated in the sudden mention of a plurality of contemporaneous kings. Therefore, we find no evidence that the leg denotes division, but serious objection against such a view, we do find good reason for supposing that the toes denote division, as here claimed.”

25 and say they represent *prophetic* years. The seven ears of corn and the cows could then represent 2520 “*prophetic*” days or 2520 literal years.<sup>95</sup> This could involve a period of 2520 good times and a period of 2520 bad times. This could be a prophecy that the heathen world (symbolised by Egypt) would have 2520 years of grace followed by 2520 years of disfavour before the end would come. And this time period would begin from the time that Joseph is instituted as governor of Egypt. Therefore, the time for the end of disfavour of the Gentiles is still a long way off if we are adding 5040 years onto the time of Joseph. If we date Joseph about 1780 –1560 BC,<sup>96</sup> we would have the period of grace turning to the period of disfavour about 740-960 A.D., and we would have the end of the times of the heathen world occurring about 3040 A.D.

Why would this be incorrect? It uses a clearly explained prophetic situation. The context indicates that it is appropriate to apply a prophetic principle here. The designation of the years spelt out by Joseph could be explained as a type and what happened to the land of Egypt in *days* is going to happen to the world in *years* on a grander scale. Egypt is used in the Bible as a symbol, like Babylon, of an anti-God kingdom. (cf., Rev 11). Everything fits into the SDA system of interpretation. The only step we need to do now is to engage in the historicist’s favourite activity of trawling through history books to try and make history around 740 – 960 A.D. fit the theory.

Needless to say, SDA historicism is not interested in the context of Numbers 14: 34; it is only interested in extracting the phrase “a day for a year” from its context and using it however they will. Their application of the phrase has no bearing to the context of either Numbers 14: 34 or to Eze 4: 6. They are only interested in the phrase insofar as it expresses a ratio; a *scale* that they can apply in their idiosyncratic way. In the words of Maxwell: “In the symbolic prophecy of Ezekiel chapters 4 to 6, God expressly said to Ezekiel, ‘I assign you, a day for each year.’ Ezekiel 4: 6.” (1981, pp.131)

They describe a long tradition for the use of this proof-text method of using “a day for a year” but positions with as long a tradition are also denied by them when talking about other Biblical topics, such as Sunday worship or the state of the dead or the method of adult baptism. For every hoary tradition of supporters for a certain viewpoint, another tradition can be cited for an opposing viewpoint. Who is to say one hoary tradition is to be honoured and another one is not? Surely, the proper thing to do is to forget the hoary traditions and establish the facts based on a proper study of the texts concerned, *including* the context of those texts. This would be avoided by SDA historicists on this topic, because, as this paper addresses, there is no basis for the SDA position in the context of the verses to say that this phrase is being touted as a general prophetic principle for prophetic time periods. It will be shown shortly how neither of these texts even occurs in a predictive prophetic setting!!

### **2.5.8 Day for a thousand years (and visa-versa)**

There is another principle enunciated explicitly in Scripture that says a day with the Lord is as a thousand with us, and visa versa, a thousand years with the Lord is like a thousand years with us.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends. With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like a day.

Psalms 90:4 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

<sup>95</sup> 7(years) x 360(days in a year) = 2520

<sup>96</sup> See [Horn, 1960](#), Article on “Joseph,” pp. 599- 602; and “Egypt V. 6.” p. 292.

These verses hold two principles: first is a day equals a thousand years and the second is a thousand years equals one day. The key word here is “like.” This indicates that it is not a literal expression. This is a figurative expression. But being a figurative expression does not rule it out from being applicable as a principle for prophetic interpretation. The SDABC says statements regarding prophetic time can be either literal or figurative. (see [below](#)) There is just as much evidence for Ps 90:4 being used as there is for Numbers 14: 34. Without having recourse to the usual circular logic present in so much of the SDA literature – of using their conclusions on the prophecies to justify the principles used to arrive at those conclusions – how can this principle of one day is equal to a thousand years be ignored as worthy of less merit than Numbers 14:34, when the text is quite plain: it is comparing two measures of time and saying that one day with God is as a millennium with us and visa versa?<sup>97</sup> The same comparative style is present in Numbers 14: 34. It is the same as saying: for every day the scouts wandered Canaan, the whole nation will wander the desert – that is forty thousand years. The textual characteristics in both Ps 90: 4 and Numbers 14: 34 are for the purposes of extracting time principles, identical. If any comparative judgment were to be made on the two texts, the former text would excel as a purer statement of principle when compared to Numbers 14:34. The former statement cannot be rejected merely because it does not fit in with the SDA schema of historical fulfillment and the time frame that it uses. We cannot argue the inappropriateness of applying this principle merely because the time spans involved are too long. If we are going to assert that Numbers 14:34 holds a key for the calculation of figurative time statements, textual considerations force us to acknowledge the legitimacy also of the day for a millennium principle. Psalm 90: 4 holds as valid a key as does Numbers 14: 34. The SDA historicist’s exposition of the prophecies is no lodestone to judge the validity of a prophetic principle.

In fact, the use of “a day for a thousand years” principle has been a part of the historicists’ tradition for millennia. Froom documents early occurrences of this idea from the intertestamental period, the time period first mentioned in “The Secrets of Enoch” or “Slavonic Enoch”:

The most remarkable feature of this book, in respect to our quest, is that we find here, for the first time in Jewish literature, the equation that one day of creation corresponds to one thousand years of the world’s history – a theory which has played an important role in both ancient and modern chiliasm, and which, consciously or subconsciously, has been accepted by many exegetes who attempted to compute the time to the end of the world. It is certainly true that older documents, especially of Persian origin, mention one-thousand-year periods, but they are not connected with the creation week. This link was first formed by the writer of the Slavonic Enoch. There we find the following statements:

“And I blessed the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, on which he [Adam] rested from his works. And I appointed the eighth day also, that the eighth day should be the first created after my work, and that *the first seven* revolve in the form of the seventh thousand, and that at the beginning of the eighth thousand there should be a time of non-counting, endless, with neither years, nor months nor weeks nor days nor hours.”

Therewith the stage was set for speculation of a world-week of seven thousand years – six thousand years of labor and toil from creation to the judgment, followed by a millennium of rest and blessedness before the gates of eternity will open. We find Iranaeus taking up this subject later. ([Froom, 1950](#), pp.195) ALSO LOOK AT VOL1. PP.242-252

In summarising these points at the end of the chapter on the topic, Froom summarises this belief by saying, “They believed in a six-thousand-year duration of the earth, with the Messiah’s advent in the fifth millennium – a sort of prototype of the Christian millennial expectation to come.” ([Ibid](#), p. 204)

The early church fathers borrowed the Jewish concept of 6,000 yrs for the history of the earth and the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium for the establishment of the kingdom of God. This belief can be found as early as Iranaeus of Gaul, and was endorsed by respected Christian writers up to the eleventh

<sup>97</sup> Freely translated, What God can pack into a day, it would take us a millennium to do.

millennium. This concept had at its basis the days of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, where the first six days of creation related to the works of this present world and the seventh day related to the spiritual world of worship. This basic principle was then further developed by Jewish thinkers over time and caught the imagination of Christian writers. It worked on the basis of a day for a thousand years.<sup>98</sup>

This was one of the rubrics used by William Miller in his prophetic calculations. ( [Arasola, 1989](#), pp.88, 170)

Why is this principle not touted by SDA historicists today? It has as venerable a history as the year-day principle; nay, its tradition is more venerable as explicit evidence places it centuries before any use of the year-day principle. (See Froom, *PPF*, Vol.1.)

### **2.5.9 The Proper Principle for Interpreting Prophetic Time Periods**

Goldstein is right on the mark when he describes the prophetic time periods in Daniel as being expressed in unusual forms. In his view, it is these unusual forms that are symbolic:

We don't even need to get into the fact that the time prophecies in Daniel 7 and 8 – immersed as they are in prophetic symbols of goats and winged lions (themselves a hint that a literal interpretation of the time prophecies is not meant) – are expressed in uncommon ways of depicting literal time. For example, the phrase “2300 evenings and mornings” isn't how the Bible would normally depict a period of about six years and four months. Why? The reason could be that – coming amid symbolic prophecies – symbolic time, not literal time, was meant. ([2003](#), p.110)

The obvious response to this statement is that if the unusual periods are then converted to normal nomenclature, then we have done everything necessary to arrive at the literal time period intended. We do not need another step to convert it even further. Needless to say, the only safe way to interpret time in prophecy is to convert it to normal nomenclature and leave it at that. Anything more is unwarranted and unnecessary. What is normal nomenclature? The forms: Hour, Day, Week, Month, Year as standard temporal formats. The forms night, evening, morning sunrise, sunset are other forms of expressing literal time. Once a period is converted to its normal nomenclature, there is nothing more to do. We do not need to insinuate into the process another step as SDA historicists do saying that when we turn the period into normal nomenclature, that it is really “prophetic time!” That step has no justification at all. Three and ½ years is three and a half years, is three and a half years!!

### **2.5.10 Incidence of time periods in the “literal” explanations, not the “symbolic” visions.**

SDA historicists have a definite opinion as to what is explanation and what is vision in the book of Daniel. This is developed as one of the arguments to link Dn9:24-27 with the explanation of Dn8. To develop this dichotomy, they have the idea that the “vision” is always symbolic in language, whereas the explanation is given in more literal language. Consider the following examples explaining this dichotomy:

#### **Pfandl**

**Explanation.** The vision in Daniel 8:1-14 is the climax of the symbolic presentations in the book. What follows from Daniel 8:15 to the end of the book is supplementary to the vision of chapter 8. The end of chapter 8 tells us that Daniel did not understand (verse 27). In chapter 9, therefore, Daniel seeks further

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Froom, [1948](#), p.298.

understanding (verse 3), and the visiting angel admonishes him to “understand the vision,” saying, “I have now come forth to give you skill to understand” (see verses 22-25). (2004b, p.77)

## Shea

Four elements are found in Dan 7, the first of these prophetic messages: (1) an initial lengthy vision – vs2-14, (2) an initial intravisional explanation – vs17-18, (3) a lengthy prophetic inquiry - vs21,22, and (4) a second and more lengthy explanation – vs23-27. The second and more lengthy explanation deals particularly with the activity of the fourth beast and its most prominent horn, and the giving of the kingdom to the saints of the Most High as a result of the judgment. Already, then, in this first prophetic passage we see the principle of the elaboration, in more detail, of selected portions, not of all the elements, of the preceding comprehensive vision; and this elaboration directly involves the fate of God’s people (v27). When the component parts of Dan 7 are reduced to their main elements, what we see is (1) a vision, followed by (2) an intravisional explanation.

The pattern of the contents of Dan 8 differs somewhat from the pattern of the contents of Dan 7. In Dan 8 we have a lengthy vision (vs2-12) followed by a short intravisional explanation (vs13,14), which was followed in turn, for the first time recorded in the book, by a lengthy extravisional explanation (vs17-26). This extravisional explanation was given to Daniel personally by the heaven-sent interpreter and messenger, Gabriel, i.e., an angelophany. The return of Gabriel with more information for Daniel, as recorded in 9:21-27, continues the *third* element found in Dan 8 – an extravisional explanation.

It is important for our purposes here to note that Dan 9 is the only one of the four main prophetic sections found in the last half of the book of Daniel that does not have an immediate preceding vision directly connected with it.

The prophecy covering the last three chapters of Daniel (10-12) begins with the vision of God (10:5-9). This vision is followed by the most lengthy extravisional explanation of the book (10:10-12:13). Although the vision of God obviously was of great importance at the time, we may disregard it here because it applied to a local problem of the sixth century B.C., i.e., struggling with Cyrus over rebuilding the temple as Yahweh’s dwelling place, to which He wished to return. (Compare this picture with Yahweh’s departure from His temple at the beginning of the exile as described in Eze 10.) Thus what we have in Dan 11-12, where the more apocalyptic type of materials are presented, is – in essence – a lengthy extravisional explanation.

The larger picture of what has been described thus far can now be summarised, with some simplification, including the additional information of the dated when Daniel received these visions and explanations:

**Table 9. Vision and Explanation in Dn7 to 12**

Text	Date	Contents
Dan 7	1 <sup>st</sup> yr Belteshazzar	Vision & Explanation
Dan 8	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr Belteshazzar	Vision & Explanation
Dan 9	1 <sup>st</sup> yr Cyrus	Explanation only
Dan 10-12	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr Cyrus	Explanation only

At first glance it might appear that the second explanatory prophecy of Dan 11-12 is preceded by a vision in ch10, as is the case in chs7 and 8, where the structure of vision (explanation) is evident. The relationship of Dn11-12 to ch10 however, differs from the relationships evident in chs7 and 8. Daniel’s view of God in 10:5-7 was primarily connected with a contemporaneous issue, that of rebuilding God’s temple in Jerusalem; whereas, the lengthy prophecy which follows in chs11 and 12 deals with the course of history through the rise and fall of successive kings and their kingdoms.

A difference in technical prophetic terminology is also involved here in that Daniel’s view of God in 10:5-7 was described as a *mar’ê* (appearance); whereas, his view of the rise and fall of kingdoms was described as a *hazôn* (vision). The differences involved in the use of these terms is discussed below. Cf. pp.232-39.

With this qualification in mind it can be seen from the brief outline presented above that what we have here is a parallel pair of visions with their accompanying explanations given two years apart, followed by a decade or so later by another parallel pair of explanations also given two years apart.



Such a precise structure clearly links the latter parallel pair of explanatory prophecies with their earlier parallel pair of prophecies presented by way of visions because the two parallel pairs form a couplet. Thus an examination of the overall structure of the prophetic section of the book of Daniel underscores the importance of *both* Dan 9 and 10-12 as supplying more detailed explanations of the visions given previously in Dan 7 and 8.

The position the prophecy of Dan9 occupies in this overall structure is of some importance for our discussion here because it stands first in the latter, or explanatory, subdivision of the prophetic section of Daniel and as mentioned above, it is the only one of the four major lines of prophecy here that was not immediately preceded by a vision.

These two factors forge a strong link between the vision of Dan 8 and the continuation of its extravisional explanation by Gabriel between Dan 8 and 9. This continuity of explanation into the second subdivision of the prophetic section of Daniel is also indicated by the way in which the explanatory prophecies of Dan 9 and 11-12 were introduced by Gabriel. In the first instance, he commanded (Dan 9:23): “Consider the word [that I bring you] and understand the vision [that you have seen].” On the second occasion he informed Daniel, “I... came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come” (10:14).

The technical terms used for Daniel’s visions in these verses and elsewhere in the book are discussed in more detail in the next major section of this study. (1981, p.228-232)

This is the standard view of the texts in Daniel.

**Table 10. Vision and Explanation in Dn 7 to 12**

Chapter	Vision	Explanation	Time Verse
Daniel 7	Daniel 7:1--14	Daniel 7:15--28	7:25
Daniel 8-9	Daniel 8:1--12	Daniel 8:13--Dn9:27	8:14; 9:24-27
Daniel 10-12	Daniel 10:1--18	Daniel 11:1--12:13	12:7, 11, 13

**Daniel 7.** The categorisation of vision and explanation in Dn7 is fairly straightforward for the purpose of this exercise. We have verses 1-14 for the vision and verses 15-28 for the literal explanation. The time period “time, times and half a time” occurs in the literal explanation. Commenting on the change from figurative to literal under Dn7:15-28, Ford says, “As chapter 2 presented a series of symbols and then an interpretation, so it is here. Verse 17 begins the angelic commentary on verses 1-14.” (1978, p. 147)<sup>99</sup>

**Daniel 8–9.** The categorisation of this chapter is more controversial. SDA historicists want to see the “vision” end at verse 14. That enables them to say that the time period given was given during the vision. However, for the two holy ones to describe an entity called “the vision” we must have the beginning and the end of a vision *before* they embark on this discussion, otherwise they cannot refer to anything that could be called a “vision.” Therefore, the vision must have finished before they could discuss it and call it a “vision.” Given that they refer in verse 12 to elements in the question, and their conversation begins at verse 13, we can conclude that the “vision” finishes at verse 12, and the discussion between the two holy ones is not a part of the “vision” they are discussing. Therefore, we have “the vision” in verses 2-12 and the “literal

<sup>99</sup> I include verses 15-16 here because they are Daniel’s comments on himself after the vision: “15. I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me; 16. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.”



explanation” in verses 13-26; and then continued in Dn9:24-27, according to standard SDA historicism.

**Daniel 10–12.** Chapter 10 is clearly a vision. Chapter 11-12 are defined by SDA historicists as literal explanation. The time periods in this revelation occur in the literal explanation.

On the other hand, SDA historicists argue that since the time periods under discussion are found together with a symbolic vision or dream, they too must be symbolic time expressions. What they overlook is that *all* of the time periods used by SDA historicists occur, not in the symbolic “visions,” but in what they themselves call “literal” explanation.

### **Froom:**

Notice what Froom says in relation to the time periods being symbolic:

But prophecy that is written in symbolic language must be symbolically explained. And it follows with inescapable logic that time features thrust in among such symbols must similarly have symbolic time values. (1948, p.794)

Froom however, has overlooked in this generalisation that the dichotomy used by SDA historicists applies to the chapters where these visions are found, and that they occur in the “literal periods.” Froom is not alone. Many other SDA historicists take the same tack. Notice the following examples:<sup>100</sup>

### **Pfandl:**

Since the visions in Daniel 7 and 8 are largely symbolic, with a number of different beasts representing important historical empires (7:3-7; 8:3-5, 20, 21), the time periods (7:25; 8:14) should also be seen as symbolic. (2004a, p.65)

### **Maxwell:**

Daniel’s prophecy said that special prerogatives would be given to the little horn for “**time, two times, and half a time.**” In Revelation 13:5 this period is spoken of as 42 months, and in Revelation 12:6, as 1260 days.

We are dealing here with symbols. The Bible says that the four beasts are symbols of four kings or kingdoms, that the horns likewise symbolize kingdoms, and that the waters are symbolic of multitudes of peoples. The Bible also indicates that in symbolic prophecy days represent years.

You will recall that when Daniel lived in Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel lived at Nippur, not very far away .... In the symbolic prophecy of Ezekiel, chapters 4 to 6, God said expressly to Ezekiel, “I assign you, a day for each year.” Ezekiel 4:6.

The 1260 “days” or years (538-1798) of rising and declining influence of Roman Catholicism over the minds of men exactly fulfill the “**time, two times, and half a time**” of Daniel 7 and further confirm our understanding that the Roman Catholic Church is the fulfillment of the little horn. (1981, pp.130f)

### **Doukhan:**

Thus situated in time, the period takes on historical significance. Employing the information above, we can place it chronologically. There is, however, a contextual difference between the “times” of chapter 4 and the “times” of chapter 7. In chapter 4 the context was a historical one, while in chapter 7 we find ourselves in a prophetic context. The latter uses symbolic language that should not be taken literally. Evidences for such usage appear in the book of Ezekiel, a prophet contemporary to Daniel, and also in exile (Eze. 4:6). Traces of it are also present in the book of Daniel (see commentary on Daniel 9). We thus conclude that the expression “a time, times and half a time” signifies 1260 prophetic days, that is, 1260 years. (2000, pp.108f)

<sup>100</sup> Curiously, there are a few SDA historicists who consider both Dn9 and Dn11-12 vision as well; for example Pfandl (2004b, pp. 103, 105) Assumptions 10 and 19 highlight slips by Goldstein, Shea and others who likewise admit that Dn9, and Dn11-12 are also visions.

## Goldstein:

To begin, Daniel 2, Daniel 7, and Daniel 8 are chapters that consist of dreams, and/or visions followed by an interpretation of that dream or vision, though in Daniel 8 the interpretation was incomplete. In contrast, Daniel 9, unlike these other previous chapters, has no dreams or visions; it consists, after Daniel's prayer, only of an interpretation – the seventy-week prophecy given to him by Gabriel. (2003, p.75)

Notice too, that Daniel 2 consists of a dream/ vision and a complete interpretation of that dream/vision. Daniel 7 consists of a dream/vision and a complete interpretation of that dream/vision. Daniel 8, in contrast, has a dream/vision but only a partial explanation of that dream/vision; the *mareh* of the 2,300 days is the only part not explained. Daniel 9 has no dream, no vision, just an explanation – and, as we have seen above, it is an explanation of the *mareh*, the vision of the evenings, and mornings that Daniel doesn't interpret. (Ibid, p.111)

We don't even need to get into the fact that the time prophecies in Daniel 7 and 8 – immersed as they are in prophetic symbols of goats and winged lions (themselves a hint that a literal interpretation of the time prophecies is not meant) – are expressed in uncommon ways of depicting literal time. For example, the phrase "2300 evenings and mornings" isn't how the Bible would normally depict a period of about six years and four months. Why? The reason could be that – coming amid symbolic prophecies – symbolic time, not literal time, was meant. (2003, p.110)

As stated earlier, and is obvious to the readers, Froom's, Maxwell's, Pfandl's, Doukhan's, and Goldstein's mistake of course is that the time periods do *not* come *amid* symbolic prophecies; they come *after* symbolic prophecies in what SDA historicists call "literal explanation." What Froom and other SDA historicists, who use this line of logic fail to observe, is that the 3½ times, the 2300 evenings-mornings, and the seventy weeks all occur in what they themselves call, "explanatory" sections of the text, where SDA historicists say we should encounter *literal* language. In addition, the same can be said for the 1290-days and the 1335 days, all occurring in the section of Daniel *where these historicists assert there is no symbolism*. That section of the book of Daniel is Dn12:

**6** And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?

**7** And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for **a time, times, and an half**; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

**8** And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

**9** And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

**10** Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

**11** And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be **a thousand two hundred and ninety days**.

**12** Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

**13** But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

The argument is that symbolism in the book of Daniel ends with chapter 8: 14 [I argue it ends with 8:12] and from the explanation of Dn8, forward, there is only literal explanation (except of course for the vision of the heavenly beings in Dn10; but that is not a communication in the same sense as those visions of Dn7 and 8.

**Explanation.** The vision in Daniel 8:1-14 is the climax of the symbolic presentations in the book. What follows from Daniel 8:15 to the end of the book is supplementary to the vision of chapter 8. The end of chapter 8 tells us that Daniel did not understand (verse 27). In chapter 9, therefore, Daniel seeks further

understanding (verse 3), and the visiting angel admonishes him to “understand the vision,” saying, “I have now come forth to give you skill to understand” (see verses 22-25). (Pfandl, 2004b, p.77)

Said differently, the literal explanation begins at Dn8:15 and continues through to the end of chapter 12. This is the basis of the argument by Questions on Doctrine to conclude that the seventy weeks is *not* symbolic and is interpreted *without* the use of the year-day principle:

It has been noted ... that a characteristic feature of symbolic prophecy is to give the component time periods, not literally, but in symbolic form. And it has been further demonstrated that Daniel 9:24-27 is a continuation of the literal explanation of the symbolic vision that was begun in Daniel 8:19-26. Now, inasmuch as Daniel 9:24-27 is a portion of the literal explanation of the symbolic vision, we would logically expect the time elements likewise to be given in literal terms. Such is the case if *shabua'* is here given the obvious meaning of “seven years.” It is generally agreed among Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant scholars alike that if *shabua'* in Daniel 9:24 has the meaning “seven years,” then seventy *shabu'im* clearly indicates a period of 490 years. (Seventh-day Adventist, 1957, pp.276-278)

Notice also a similar conclusion in *Doctrinal Discussions*:

Through the years Adventists have used two periods of time in dealing with the question of when this pre-Advent judgment begins—that of the 2300 days (Daniel 8:14) and that of the 70 weeks (Daniel 9:25). The 2300-day period is connected with the symbolic prophecy of Daniel 8. This prophecy is in the form of four symbols—the ram, the he-goat, the little horn, and the 2300 days. If “day” is a symbol in prophecy, and the 70-week period is to be understood as a key to the understanding of the 2300-day prophecy, we should expect the 70-week period to be in literal language. In the light of this, it is interesting to note that a more correct translation of the Hebrew word *shabu'a*, rendered in the King James Version as “seventy weeks,” would be “seventy weeks of years,” as we find in the translations of Goodspeed, Rotherham, Moffatt, and the Revised Standard Version. (1961, p.23)

The fact that the angels in conversation in Dn8:13 refer to a previous “vision” indicate that the vision is finished. Therefore, the time period in Dn8:14 is not a part of a “vision,” but v.13-26 should be grouped as post-visionary material.

It follows then that these three time periods occurring as they do in the “literal explanation” in Dn12, should be understood as *literal periods and not symbolic periods*. Therefore we can conclude that since they appear as literal periods in the explanation period, they should *not* be understood as symbolic periods. *Consequently, we can extend this conclusion to say that since the 3½ times period in Dn7 is shown by the literal explanation in Dn12 to be a literal 3½ years, the presence of the same period in the explanation of the vision of Dn7 indicates that the period there is also literal. Therefore, symbolic visions can have literal periods associated with them. This leads us to the conclusion that the other time periods in the visions of Daniel do not have to be symbolic time periods. That is, 2300-evening-mornings does not have to be a symbolic period merely because it occurs in the explanation there.*

GET THE STATEMENT FROM DARCOM SERIES SAYING THE VISIONS END WITH DN8, THE REST OF THE CHAPTERS ARE EXPLANATION OF THE EARLIER VISIONS.

### **2.5.11 The “Season and a Time” in Dn7:12**

Not every period in the book of Daniel is treated consistently with the year-day principle, even in apocalyptic prophecy. As has been pointed out, the year-day principle is NOT applied to one time period in the book of Revelation – the millennium.<sup>101</sup> Nor has it been applied to the phrase “the hour of his judgment” in Revelation 14. If they applied Ezekiel 4: 6 to Revelation 20, the millennium would be reduced to a thousand days or 2.7 years. If they applied Numbers 14: 34 to the thousand years, the millennium would be symbolic of a period of 360,000 symbolic days or

<sup>101</sup>See Neufeld, 1979.

360,000 literal years. SDA historicists just assert that in the midst of symbolic prophecy there is a literal period which does not need the year-day principle to be applied to it. Yet if the SDA historicists decide that it is kosher to call one period literal, like the millennium, why not call another one literal? And so, the principle could be enlarged to *all* time periods in prophecies that have normal nomenclature associated with them.

Nor do they apply it to the statement in Dn7:12 where it says: “As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” This line of argument is not taken anywhere else with any other time period occurring in a prophetic context in Daniel and Revelation. In true historicist reasoning, this text should be understood to mean that the existence of these kingdoms would continue for a “season and a time” or a season plus 360 prophetic days, or 360 literal years. Their next step is to explain how much prophetic time there is in a “season” and add that to the 360 years, and that figure will give us the date for the fall/death of these three kingdoms. If we take the “season” as a quarter of the full round of “four seasons,” or 90 prophetic days/ 90 literal years, we have a cut-off date for the extension of life of each of these kingdoms. Or perhaps we should see “seasons” as representing a third of the year, or 120 ‘prophetic’ days, in accordance with the Egyptian custom?

Given that the book of Daniel refers to Babylonian chronology system – by employing the concept of an “hour,” a period of time entirely absent from earlier Old Testament literature (3:15)<sup>102</sup>, and the accession-year of the Babylonian king (cf., Dn2:1; 7:1; 8:1; 9:1; 10:1; 11:1; - reckoning by the Babylonian/ Median rulers) – we should take the Babylonian definition of “season” here rather than the Egyptian 3-season system,<sup>103</sup> and make it *two* seasons in the year. If we take for the moment the 360-prophetic year, this would make a prophetic “season” stand for 180 literal years. Therefore, the phrase “time and a season” would amount to 360 + 180 symbolic days or 540 literal years. SDA historicists, if they followed their own logic properly, could then say with certainty that each of the empires would only exist for 540 years after their downfall. At that point in time, we can look to the annihilation of each of the empires. And what does annihilation mean in this case? When we examine how SDA historicists define the “plucking out” of the three horns, we see them defining it not only as the “loss of control” but the decimation and obliteration of the people as an identifiable and distinct group of people in the world.<sup>104</sup> Do we find such events in history? In examining the SDABC for the dates of the overthrow of these empires, we are given the following: Babylon – 539 BC;<sup>105</sup> Medo-Persia – 331 BC<sup>106</sup>; Greece – may be dated from 168 BC even though it was a gradual process;<sup>107</sup> and pagan Rome – 476 A.D.

**Table 11. Dates for the End of the Four Empires**

EMPIRE	End	of	Predicted	Were they Annihilated?
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<sup>102</sup> A time unit also found in Egyptian chronology but not in Hebrew chronology until the exile.

<sup>103</sup> Horn and Wood, 1970, p.37. On the Egyptian seasons, we read: “The Egyptians had *anni certus modus* because their year was composed of days only. These 365 days were schemically grouped into four seasons, and twelve months plus five supplementary days (*ἐπαγόμεναι*). The days within the month were counted successively. The months were counted, from the first to the fourth, within each of the three agricultural seasons: ‘Inundation’ (when the Nile overflowed the fields), ‘Going out’ (from the Nile waters; time of agricultural work) and ‘Deficiency’ (the season of low water).” (Bickerman, 1968, p.40, see also Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_calendar))

On the Babylonian seasons, we read from Encyclopedia Britannica: “In Mesopotamia the solar year was divided into two seasons, the “summer,” which included the barley harvest in the second half of May or in the beginning of June, and the “winter,” which roughly corresponded to today’s fall–winter. Three seasons (Assyria) and four seasons (Anatolia) were counted in northerly countries, but in Mesopotamia the bipartition of the year seemed natural. As late as c. 1800 BC the prognoses for the welfare of the city of Mari, on the middle Euphrates, were taken for six months.” (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-60208/calendar>)

<sup>104</sup> Readers are referred to [Assumption 9](#) for more discussion on the “plucking out” of the three horns of the fourth beast in Daniel 7.

<sup>105</sup> SDABC 4:815.

<sup>106</sup> SDABC 4:821.

<sup>107</sup> SDABC 4:823.

	Empire	Annihilation (-510yrs)	
Babylon	539 B.C.	1 A.D.	275 B.C. All of the inhabitants were deported to Seleucia; by 141 B.C. when the Parthians took over Babylon it was in utter ruin. (Wikipedia)
Medo-Persia	331 B.C.	208 A.D.	Conquered between 643-650 A.D. Semi-independent Persian states arose with the Arab conquest and their capitals included Samarkand, Bukhara, Herat, Shiraz. Turks, Mongols controlled then assimilated with the Persian. In 1500-1722 the native Persian Safavid Empire ruled from Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and most of Afghanistan. With the collapse of the empire, Persia became dependent on European States economically for a while, but there was no annihilation of Persia as predicted.
Greece	168 B.C.	371 A.D.	People and Capital still exists today.
Rome (first phase)	476 A.D.	1016 A.D.	Never annihilated.

SDA historicists should be looking for spectacular events in 1 A.D., 208 A.D., 371 A.D., and 1016 A.D. with these four empires to substantiate the Lord's prediction in Dn7:12, thereby confirming the validity of the year-day principle. Of course, they do not do this, and they are embarrassed to find any evidence of these events stated clearly in Scripture as the prolonging of the lives of the beasts for only a "season and a time." They are circumspect in analysing the annihilation of the three horns that are plucked out of the fourth beast's head, but not so when it comes to dealing with an equally explicit statement concerning the annihilation of the beasts themselves.

How come SDA historicists are prepared to argue the accuracy of the 1260-year prophecy, yet they do not believe this same uncanny accuracy is present in this second time prediction in Dn7? Surely they have no choice in the matter but to apply the principle wherever apocalyptic prophecy uses it? If the Lord uses a time period – and he does in Dn7:12 – SDA historicists should be the first to rejoice in finding another opportunity of proving the year-day principle impregnable in its outworking in history.

In the introduction of volume III of *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, pages 11 and 12, Froom discusses how the application of the year-day principle came gradually, and then blossomed as time moved forward, with the increasing application of the year-day principle to more time

periods as an indication of a maturing of understanding of the principle. Which brings us to this phrase in Dn7 and the lack of any historicist application so far to the time period involved here. If SDA historicism is the perfection of all that has come before,<sup>108</sup> then their pursuit of perfection of this period in Dn7:12 would only involve the task of clarifying the meaning of the time period in “season” and showing us the historical event that marks the end of these kingdoms, with the same level of accuracy as they show of the 1260 years.<sup>109</sup>

But like other inconsistencies in applying the year-day principle, this temporal statement “time and a season” is ignored by SDA historicists, to their own embarrassment. There is no justification for such an omission. Josiah Litch, made a valid observation in his rules for interpreting prophecy, which SDA historicists have failed to follow:

Rule 1<sup>st</sup>. A symbol once divinely interpreted, that interpretation must never be departed from except by the same divine authority.

Rule 2. All interpretation of symbols are to be understood in their literal and grammatical sense.

Rule 3. Prophetic times are to be understood and interpreted by the same rule.’

If therefore, we have one clear case of the fulfillment of prophetic times, that constitutes the rule for the interpretation of all prophetic time, unless God shall please elsewhere to give a different direction. (1867, p.15)

SDA historicists have chosen to apply a rule to the three horns of the fourth beast, but have *failed to apply the same rule* to the delay of the annihilation of the empires by a “season and a time” with no justifiable reason. What has been their justification for that? The issue is entirely ignored. This time period is not even discussed.

The SDA Commentary avoids a discussion of the time period entirely in its comment. It does not even mention the phrase “season and a time”:

**12. Dominion taken away.** The territory of Babylon was made subject to Persia, yet the subjects of Babylon were allowed to live on. Similarly, when Macedonia conquered Persia and when Rome conquered Macedonia, the inhabitants of the conquered countries were not destroyed. With the final destruction of the little-horn power the whole world will be depopulated. (Nichol, 1976, p.829)

They have deliberately avoided the point of the Scripture that says “as concerning the rest of the beast, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.” Does the commentary want us to believe that the period “a season and a time” can be calculated to end “with the final destruction of the little-horn power” and only then will depopulation of each of the empires occur? And how do they explain that the “season and a time” begins at three different times with the overthrow of each of these three powers? By their own admission they see implicit in Dn7:12 an understanding that the “lives” of these beasts means the existence of the peoples of that empire and with the expiration of the “season and a

<sup>108</sup> Cf Typical of statements in this vein is the following from the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*: “The interpretation of 25 centuries show that our role, as Seventh-day Adventists, is that of recoverers and continuators of honored and orthodox prophetic expositions of the centuries, cumulatively developed and now restored, re-emphasized and **perfected** [emphasis mine] in these latter times. Our special emphasis today is appropriately, and logically, on those last-day segments of the prophecies not heretofore perceived or stressed. In the past the time had not yet come for their fulfillment, and consequent recognition, application and emphasis.

“All of our present-day basic interpretations, including all the great outline prophecies (such as the 1844 terminus of the 2300 years of Dan. 8:14, and their synchronous beginning with the 70 weeks of Dan. 9: 25), can consequently be traced back to former expositors of note. Thus we as Seventh-day Adventists simply stand in the line of sound expositors of the years, gratefully recognizing our indebtedness to the noble pathfinders. We are the inheritors of the prophetic truths of past expositors and the special heralds of last-day fulfillments.” (Nichol, 1976, p.43)

<sup>109</sup> Woollsley, like many other SDA writers, alludes to the *exact* fulfillment of the 1260 years: “In his vision Daniel learned that the little horn was to exercise power for a “time, two times, and a half a time.” This is more properly translated in the Revised Standard Version as “times, two times and half a time.” From Daniel 4:23 we understand that the Aramaic word translated “time” actually means a year. By comparing the verses in Daniel 7 with Revelation 12:14 and 6, and with Revelation 11:2 and 3, we discover that three and one-half “times,” or prophetic years, are equated with 1,260 prophetic days, which are equated with 42 prophetic months. Thus a prophetic year equals 360 prophetic days, or 12 30-day prophetic months. Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 illustrate that a prophetic day is equal to a literal year. And so the little horn’s “time and times and the dividing of time,” or three and one-half prophetic years, is 1,260 literal years. Counting from A.D 538, when Justinian’s decree on behalf of the pope became effective, 1,260 years extends to A.D. 1798 – *the very year when the French general Berthier, upon Napoleon’s orders, entered Rome with an army, arrested the pope, and carried him away to exile in France.*” (2001, p.36, Italics mine.)



time” will mean the annihilation of those people. That much is clear. They have chosen however to ignore this time period in Daniel without any justification.

Smith takes a similar line to the SDABC:

The life of the fourth beast is not prolonged after its dominion is gone, as were the lives of the preceding beasts. Their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season. The territory and subjects of the Babylonian kingdom still existed, though made subject to the Persians. So with the Persian kingdom in respect to Greece, and Greece in respect to Rome. (1944, p.114)

Smith indicates that we can understand the elements of the empires we can assume to be stayed from annihilation include “the territory and subjects.”

Haskell has an entirely different view, and is more creative. He sees the previous empires lingering on in the influence they had on the succeeding empire:

The angel had said to Daniel, “As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged.” [Notice here that Haskell does not have the courage to indicate that this extension is limited to a ‘season and a time.’ He conveniently leaves it out, because it contradicts his reasoning.-FB]

Each one, before being destroyed was merged into the succeeding one. The same truth was represented in chapter four when the tree representing Babylon was cut down, but the roots remained in the ground. The roots represented the foundation principles upon which Babylon was built, and they have remained in the earth ever since. When Medo-Persia fell, she left her principles of government, education, and religion still alive, transmitting them to her posterity, the nations of earth. Greece did likewise, and with each succeeding empire, those foundations principles which were so clearly portrayed in Babylon, which were placed there by the prince of the power of the air, instead of appearing in a weakened state, sprung into life with renewed vigor. So it was that when the fourth kingdom appeared, those principles which were the counterfeit of heaven’s underlying principles were so strong that no natural beast could symbolize even pagan Rome. Rome in religion renewed all the religious errors of Babylon, and in education she followed in the footsteps of her great mother. (1999, p.93)

As pointed out in the above quote, Haskell has to eliminate the time statement in the text to support his position. To allow the argument that each empire influenced the next succeeding empire in education, government, religion etc only for “a season and a time” contradicts what he wants to conclude with – that Rome has the characteristics of Babylon. That conclusion is more difficult to come to if he has to deal with the transitoriness of the temporal limits put on the delay of each empire’s demise indicated in the phrase “season and a time.”

The readers can see immediately the awkward position of SDA historicists who use the only tactic available to them in dealing with textual matters that contradict their view – avoid discussing them, or do not quote that part of the text. They know if they apply their reasoning to this time period they will be embarrassed, and so they cannot follow the self-evident rules of Litch cited above. So the time period is just ignored.

Clearly this inconsistency in applying the year-day principle to where they find some dates to fit their explanation, and yet ignoring those instances where they cannot find any credible explanations is a telling symptom of an invalid principle.

## **2.6 Long Time periods are needed**

Another argument to prove the year-day principle in the time periods of Dn7, Dn8 and Dn12 is the idea that long time periods are needed for the time span of the periods in the prophecies of Daniel due to the eras of time involved with the empires there depicted.

Says the Handbook of SDA Theology:

It is most reasonable, therefore, to assume that just as the short-lived creatures symbolize entities whose existence or dominion in history extended over long periods of time, so also the time elements associated with these symbolic creatures must signify extensive time intervals. (2000, p.798)<sup>110</sup>

Says Andreason:

These considerations will help us in our attempt to establish the meaning of the twenty-three hundred days of Daniel 8:14. *They occur in the midst of a prophecy dealing with a power that has existed longer than any other power on earth.* Since this is a part of a prophecy, doubtless prophetic time is here mentioned. If so, twenty-three hundred days stand for twenty-three hundred years, according to well-established prophetic interpretation. "I have appointed thee each day for a year." Eze. 4:6. (1969, p.289, Italics mine.)

Andreason leads us to the conclusion that because the vision dealt with a power that "existed longer than any power on earth," the time period should be likewise long.

Says Gordon:

The pioneers believed that Scripture strongly supports the year-day principle. Considering the concept essential to the unique Adventist belief regarding the sanctuary and its cleansing, they believed it to be explicitly stated in the symbolic instruction given to Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, and implied (1) in the symbolic nature of Daniel's vision, (2) *in the time lapse of the several kingdoms of the vision*, and (3) in the pragmatic tests of fulfillment. (Gordon, 1983, pp.61-62, Italics mine)

In this section, focus is brought to bear on the argument that the long duration of the empires in Dn2, 7, and 8 and the need to ensure the 2300 "evenings-mornings" and the 3½ "times" are also long.

The vision embraces Persia, Grecia, and Rome. And it is evident that twenty-three hundred days could not cover the duration of one of these kingdoms, much less all three of them. Hence, the days must be symbolic, a day for a year, even as the beasts and horns are shown to be symbols. And it is a fact that a symbolic, or prophetic day is one year. Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:5,6. Hence the period is twenty-three hundred years. (1972, p.136)

Attention will be given in the first section to the occurrence of the 3½ "times" in Dn7:25. Then secondly, I will focus on the 2300 evenings-mornings in Dn8:14.

### 2.6.1 The use of "times" in Daniel

Before we begin a discussion on this, I think it best to survey the incidence of this word in Daniel. 111 I provide readers with the following references. In the Aramaic section, the word used is *'iddan* whereas in the Hebrew sections, the word used is either *'eth/'itti'm* or *môed*:

#### **1 'Iddan in Daniel**

**Dn2:8** The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the *time*, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

**Dn2:9** But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, there is but one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the *time* be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

**Dn2:21** And he changeth the *times* and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

<sup>110</sup> It is worthy of noting that in this statement, the writers of the handbook are prepared to admit that *shabu'a* can rightly mean "seven" in the sense of a group of seven things.

<sup>111</sup> This discussion on "times" assumes for the present the validity of the conclusion that the time implied is one year, in concert with SDA historicists. The validity of the period to be chosen is not the topic under debate here.

**Dn3:5** That at what *time* ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up.<sup>112</sup>

**Dn3:15** Now if ye be ready that at what *time* ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

**Dn4:16** Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven *times* pass over him.

**Dn4:25** That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven *times* shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

**Dn7:12** As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and *time*.

In summary, there are a number of incidences in the book of Daniel where *'iddan* does not refer to a definite time period but is being used as a general expression. These include: Dn2:8, 9, 21; 3:5, 15; 7:12. The only incidence where a definite time is referred to is: Dn4:16, 25; 7:25.

The Hebrew equivalent for *'iddan* in the book of Daniel is *mô'ed* or *'eth*. These are the following incidences of this word in Daniel:

## 2 'Eth, 'Itti'm in Daniel

**Dn 8:17** o he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand O son of man: for at the *time* of the end shall be the vision.

**Dn9:21** Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the *time* of the evening oblation.

**Dn9:25** Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous *times*.

**Dn11:6** And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these *times*.

**Dn11:13** For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after *certain* years with a great army and with much riches.

**Dn11:14** And in those *times* there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

**Dn11:24** He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a *time*.

**Dn11:35** And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the *time* of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

<sup>112</sup> The phrase "at what *time*" probably is best translated "when..."

**Dn11:40** And at the *time* of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

**Dn12:1** And at that *time* shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people and there shall be a *time* of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same *time*: and at that *time* thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

**Dn12:4** But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the *time* of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

**Dn12:9** And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the *time* of the end.

**Dn12:11** And from the *time* that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

In summary, with the incidence of *‘eth/‘itt’im* we have:

- A point in the day: “time of the evening oblation” –Dn9:21; time “that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away” –Dn12:11;
- A period call “the time of the end”: Dn8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:1, 4, 9;
- An indefinite period: Dn9:25; 11:6, 13, 14, 24.

### 3 *Mô‘ed* in Daniel

**Dn8:19** 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.

**Dn11:27** And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at *the time appointed*.

**Dn11:29** At *the time appointed* he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

**Dn11:35** And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for *a time appointed*.

**Dn12:7** And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for *a time, times, and an half*; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

In summary, with the incidence of *mô‘ed* we have Dn8:19; 11:27, 29, 35 all referring to an undefined appointed point of time, and only Dn12:7 referring to a definite period of time.

### 4 The “seven times” in Daniel 4

Daniel 4 is the first place where we find the incidence of “times” in a vision in the book of Daniel. This word is used later in Dn7 to define the time of aggression by the little horn of the fourth beast. Dn4 gives us a lead that the time period is to be taken as literal:

**10:** Thus were **the visions of mine head in my bed**; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

**11:** The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

**12:** The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

**13: I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed**, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

**14:** He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

**15:** Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

**16:** Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and **let seven times pass over him**.

**17:** This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

**22:** It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

**23:** And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, **till seven times pass over him**;

**24:** This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

**25:** That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and **seven times shall pass over thee**, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

**26:** And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

**28:** All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

**29:** At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

**30:** The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

**31:** While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

**32:** And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and **seven times shall pass over thee**, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

**33 :** The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

**34:** And at **the end of the days** I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

We have a number of incidents in this chapter where the concept "times" is used. Does it mean 7 months, seven years or seven 2520 years? Says McCready Price on the incidence of "times" in Dn4:

"Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him." ... Seven times is probably seven years, that is, seven literal years. R. D. Wilson has pointed out that the word here used is not the ordinary word for "year," but a word which merely means a fixed or appointed time, long or short. If we had archaeological or other historical facts necessitating a shorter

period for the term of the king's affliction, making it, let us suppose, seven months, there would be no textual difficulty in so interpreting this statement. (1955, p.48)

Ford avoids committing a definite period of time to the "seven times" of Daniel for in his recent commentary on Daniel but confirms Wilson's view in an article in the appendix:

In Daniel 7:25 the Aramaic *iddan* literally means "an appointed time or season," and does not necessarily denominate a year. For example, it is found in the following passages in Daniel:

The king answered, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is sure that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the *times* change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me the interpretation." (Daniel 2:8, 9, RSV)

He changes *times* and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. (Daniel 2:21 RSV)

Now if you are ready *when* you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image which I have made, well and good; but if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace; and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands? (Daniel 3: 15, RSV)

Compare 3:5, which also uses *iddan*. ["That at *what time* ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up."-FB]

Let this mind be changed from a man's and let a beast's mind be given to him; and let seven *times* pass over him. (Daniel 4:16 RSV)

And whereas the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, "Hew down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field; and let him be wet with the dew of heaven; and let his lot be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; ...that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will." (Daniel 4: 23, 25, 32 RSV)

As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. (Daniel 7:12 RSV)

He shall speak great 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*, two *times*, and half a *time*. (Daniel 7:25 RSV)

In the majority of these instances, it is impossible to understand *iddan* as meaning a year.

When 7:12 affirms that the lives of the three beasts were prolonged for a time – neither a single year nor three-hundred-and-sixty years are intended. On what grounds then can we do otherwise in 7:25: Revelation turns the period into days, but to read this back into Daniel may be questionable exegesis in view of the way in which the New Testament often changes the original Old Testament meaning.

The Hebrew equivalent for the "times" of Daniel 7:25 is *moed*, found in 12:7. This term is translated in the KJV in the following ways: appointed feast, appointed season, appointed sign, appointed time, assembly, congregation (149 times), due season, feast, place of assembly, season, set feast, set time, solemn assembly, solemn day, solemn feast, solemnity, synagogue, time, time appointed, appointed, solemn.

*Moed* is never translated "year." *Shanah* is the usual Hebrew term for the latter. *Iddan* (Aramaic) can mean year, but is never thus translated – nor is year its usual meaning. (1996, pp.240-241)

Arguing for the interpretation of "time" as a year, we should consider his views on Dn4 here. Shea argues here that the word "time" here should be best viewed as a year, as it has been done probably before the times of Josephus.

3½ times – since we are particularly concerned with Daniel here, attention should be given to identifying "times" with which this time period is delimited to Daniel. These times have been interpreted as years and



there is a reasonable exegetical basis in Daniel for that interpretation.... the 7 times that were to pass over Nebuchadnezzar according to Dan 4 are best interpreted as years, in contrast to the months that are mentioned in the narrative with that prophecy (v. 28), and in contrast to the lack of significance other time periods would bring to that prophetic judgment. Interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's times as years goes back at least as early as Josephus, and taking those times as years there indicates the same word in Dan 7 should be interpreted the same way. (1980, p.270.)

In addition, the evidence from Daniel chapter 4 with the vision of the tree confirms that the period of 7 "times" given in a vision is an actual literal period and should not be interpreted any other way. This is the way many argue. Consider Litch's later position on the issue. Building up his rules for interpreting prophecy he uses Dan 4 as a basis to explain the meaning of "time." Litch argues against the year-day principle being used on the 3½ times in the following manner:

Rule 1<sup>st</sup>. A symbol once divinely interpreted, that interpretation must never be departed from except by the same divine authority.

Rule 2. All interpretation of symbols are to be understood in their literal and grammatical sense.

Rule 3. Prophetic times are to be understood and interpreted by the same rule.'

If therefore, we have one clear case of the fulfillment of prophetic times, that constitutes the rule for the interpretation of all prophetic time, unless God shall please elsewhere to give a different direction.

The first prophetic period in the book of Daniel, is found in the fourth chapter. It was the *Seven Times*, during which Nebuchadnezzar was to be, and was, driven from among men. It being fulfilled in the lifetime of that king, must have been fulfilled in seven literal years, not in 2520 years. *Literal time*, then, is the established rule.

This fulfillment constitutes a precedent for interpreting all prophetic periods, unless it can be shown that God has given another rule in some subsequent passage.

OBJECTIONS. The seventy weeks of Dn9:24, by that rule, must be interpreted as literal weeks. ANSWER. The week of years was with the Jews as literal as the week of days. Lev. 25. 8 "And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years, forty-nine years."

OBJECTION. "When God brought Israel from Egypt, and they searched the land forty days, he appointed them forty years to wander in the wilderness, a year for each day of search."

ANSWER. The days of search were appointed as types of the years of wandering by some special divine command. They were not symbols, nor appointed as a general rule, or a rule in any other case whatever. The same is true of Ezekiel's types, lying so many on his left side. Each day was by special command a type of a year during which the houses of Israel and Judah should bear their iniquity. Neither of these periods, therefore, affect the rule respecting prophetic time. The burden of proof, therefore, that some other rule has been given, falls on those who maintain the year-day theory, not on those who reject that theory. It is an easy matter to assume and assert a proposition, but quite another to prove it. (1867, pp.15, 16)

Contemporary SDA historicists present a variety of explanations when they come to Daniel 4. No one it seems has the correct view. And the reason is because of the implications of the incidence in Dn4 on its occurrence again in Dn7. For instance, notice the view of Doukhan. He argues that the case in Dn4 is a "historical" one, and as such should be treated as literal:

Thus situated in time, the period takes on historical significance. Employing the information above, we can place it chronologically. There is, however, a contextual difference between the "times" of chapter 4 and the "times" of chapter 7. In chapter 4 the context was a historical one, while in chapter 7 we find ourselves in a prophetic context. The latter uses symbolic language that should not be taken literally. Evidences for such usage appear in the book of Ezekiel, a prophet contemporary to Daniel, and also in exile (Eze. 4:6). Traces of it are also present in the book of Daniel (see commentary on Daniel 9). We thus conclude that the expression "a time, times and half a time" signifies 1260 prophetic days, that is, 1260 years. (2000, pp.108f)

What Doukhan has failed to say, even though it is obvious to all, is that even though the context and the following events were historical, the actual vision where the time period is given,

is highly symbolic, and as such, the *time in the symbolic vision is given as a literal period*. Doukhan has also failed to think through his dubious logic: look at the context in Dn10-12. We have a visionary/prophetic context here with visions of heavenly beings. But Doukhan treats Dn11-12 as a ‘historical-spiritual’ section, when by his own logic he should be treating it as a symbolic language.<sup>113</sup> Doukhan’s argument regarding the time period in Dn7 being symbolic is ridiculous. He argues from the symbolism in Dn7 to say that the time period must be symbolic as well. He has approached the topic incorrectly. We must take a lead from the *earlier* instances of the methods to guide us in our application to later revelations. We see in Dn4 a *symbolic vision* with a *time period* he acknowledges as *literal*. By his own admissions then, a symbolic vision in Dn7 with a time period in the explanation section should be treated in the same manner as the seven times in Dn4.

Goldstein is another case in point, who does not think too closely about the logic he applies to this incident in Dn4. He argues why the year-day theory cannot be applied in Dn4:

... Daniel 4:25 says that Nebuchadnezzar will be sick, living like an animal, until “seven times shall pass over thee.” Why didn’t it say until a time, and times, and times, and a time and a half a time and a half a time?” the day-year principle can’t be applied in this verse, or else the king would have to be almost 4,000 years old. Obviously, Daniel meant literal time concerning the length of the sickness, which was probably why he gave a normal number. (1988, p.78)

Goldstein should have noticed from his own conclusion how erratic and fickle the application of the year-day principle is applied by SDA historicists. He argues that a ‘normal’ number is given in Dan 4. Therefore the year-day principle is not needed. Using Goldstein’s logic, look at Dn9. “Seventy” is a ‘normal’ number yet Goldstein wants to apply the year-day principle to that time period as well. If he followed his own rules he should be saying that the “normal” numbers in Dn9 dictates at the year-day principle should not be applied to Dn9. And what shall we do with the numbers in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6? According to SDA historicists these are prophetic passages, and yet we find here ‘normal’ numbers and so we should not see the year-day principle operating in these texts, according to Goldstein’s logic.

Notice how Spangler contradicts Goldstein:

In keeping with the symbolic nature of the imagery, one would expect to find that the numerals in these prophecies are to be viewed symbolically, indicating prophetic time, not literally. It would be inconsistent to interpret some numbers literally and some symbolically. (1980, p.44)

That Spangler’s comment applies to Daniel 4, consider the symbolic nature of the imagery in the vision of Dn4, we see that it is a vision about a tree; and a symbolic one at that. According to Spangler’s parameters, it is quite consistent to expect that the numerals expressed there be symbolic as well. In fact Spangler says in these cases, the time periods “*must be interpreted as symbolical of prophetic time.*” (Ibid) Therefore Goldstein is constrained by the dictates of his historicist peers to conclude that Nebuchadnezzar endured this condition for 2520 years before recovering from his illness!! Perhaps he is still wandering Iraq somewhere now!!

Spangler’s logic therefore constrains us to consider the “times” of Dn7, and by extension, Dn4 to be symbolic time, and as such the year-day principle should be applied to decipher the length of the period of Nebuchadnezzar’s indisposition:

Although some commentators hold that this term is simply another word for “years,” there is no lexical evidence from either biblical or extra-biblical sources to support such a contention. The point is that a time

<sup>113</sup> Doukhan calls it “mere information about a war” , (1987, p.75). But note his caveat at p.84: “This feature of regularity and coincidence on the literary level, provides the key to the interpretation: Daniel 11:5-45 does not lend to a strict literal interpretation; historical events may well be implied here, yet the deciphering of those references must also take into account the “spiritual” dimension the author tries to introduce in his description. We are thus in the presence of a literary device, of a way of speaking destined to suggest happenings beyond the mere historical events as a philosophy of history. The point here is not so much the events *per se*, but the principle of a dramatic conflict between North and South.”

unit was used here [its occurrence in 7:25] which was intentionally symbolic, and those symbolic units must be interpreted to determine the actual time intended by the writer. (1982, p.62)

Smith sees the literal application of the seven times in Dn4 even though it occurs in the midst of prophetic vision:

Let *seven times* pass over him,” was the decree. This simple expression is evidently to be understood literally. But how long a period is denoted by the words “seven times”? This may be determined by ascertaining how long Nebuchadnezzar, in fulfillment of this prediction, was driven out to have his dwelling with the beasts of the field. This, Josephus informs us, was seven years. [Smith footnotes: “See Flavius Josephus, “Antiquities of the Jews,” book 10, chap. 10, sec. 6, *Works of Flavius Josephus*, p. 316”] A “time,” here, then, denotes one year.” (1944, pp.81-82)

Haskell just makes a passing comment, “The proud and powerful monarch no longer swayed the scepter. He became a maniac, and for seven years he was found with cattle, the companion of beasts, feeding as they fed.” (1904, p.58)

Maxwell likewise just makes a passing remark: “Daniel said that Nebuchadnezzar would remain in this condition until “**seven times**,” or seven years, had passed by.” (1981, 60)

Pfandl avoids discussing the “seven times” in Daniel 4 entirely in his commentary on Daniel (2004b, pp.39-45).

SDA historicists are embarrassed by the incidence of the word in this chapter because it provides a key to understand its other usage later in the chapter. As has been shown by the confusion of opinions expressed by SDA historicists, the incidence of the time period in a symbolic vision, yet being applied in a literal manner, gives us leave to do the same in its later occurrence. These same historicists argue against the application of the year-day principle in Dn4 as being impractical. Yet they defy the straight forward principle of interpretation outlined in this chapter and explained by Litch above: “It being fulfilled in the lifetime of that king, must have been fulfilled in seven literal years, not in 2520 years. *Literal time*, then, is the established rule. This fulfillment constitutes a precedent for interpreting all prophetic periods, unless it can be shown that God has given another rule in some subsequent passage.” (Ibid)

As we will see with its occurrence in Dn12, the same period of 3½ years occurs in a literal explanation section, giving us a solid basis to conclude that the same time period, found in the explanation section of Dn7, where the material is given in literal expression, is a literal period. The incidence in Dn4 of this word confirms this conclusion. In conclusion, the incidence of “times” in Daniel 4 does not stand in isolation from the incidence later in Daniel 7, and in fact, the period of Daniel 4, coming in the midst of a vision, and being interpreted literally shows us that time periods in a vision should be interpreted as they are given, in their most obvious sense.

### **2.6.2 3½ Times in Daniel 7- a long time period?**

We turn now to the 3½ “times” in chapters 7. Part of the text in the vision and explanation of Dn7 read thus:

**11** I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke: I beheld ever till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

**12** As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: **yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.**

**19** Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

**20** And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

**21** I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them

**22** Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

**23** Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from any kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

**24** And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

**25** And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand **until a time and times and the dividing of time**.

**26** But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

One of the time periods SDA historicists say cover a long period of history is the 3½ “times” in Dn7:25. This is due to the length of the associated empires in Dn7. They point to the empires of Persia, Greece (apparently on the scene at the time) and a future, unnamed, empire. The first two of the three are named so we have some idea of a time line involved here. It involves some years in the case of the supremacy of Babylon and Persia; Daniel would have understood that. He did not know how long the Greek empire would last, nor the duration of the last empire.

Smith says:

How long a time were they to be given into the hands of this power? A time, as we have seen from Daniel 4:23, is one year; times, the least that could be denoted by the plural, two years, and the dividing of time, or half a time, half a year. ... We thus have three years and a half for the continuance of this power.<sup>114</sup>

We must now consider that we are in the midst of symbolic prophecy; hence in this measurement the time is not literal, but symbolic. The inquiry then arises, How long a period is denoted by the three years and a half of prophetic time? The principle is given us in the Bible is, that when a day is used in symbolic prophecy, it stands for a year. (Ezekiel 4: 6; Numbers 14:34.) Under the Hebrew word for day... *yôm*,... Gesenius has this remark on its plural: “Sometimes, ... [*yamim*] marks a definite space of *time*; viz., *a year*; as also Syr. and Chald... [*iddan*] denotes both *time* and *year*; and as in English several words signifying time, weight, measure, are likewise used to denote certain specified times, weights, and measures.”

Bible students have recognized this principle though the ages.... The Bible year, which must be used as the basis of reckoning, contained three hundred and sixty days. .. Three years and a half contained twelve hundred and sixty days. As each day stands for a year, we have twelve hundred and sixty years for the continuation of the supremacy of the horn. (1944, pp. 143-146)

Smith says, “We must now consider that we are in the midst of symbolic prophecy; hence in this measurement the time is not literal, but symbolic” Of course Smith is incorrect. The time period does *not* come “in the midst of symbolic prophecy,” but rather *after* the symbolic prophecy, as SDA historicists divide up the revelations into symbolic prophecy and literal explanation. So this argument does not justify interposing the extra step of making the days “prophetic days.”

Historicists want us to believe that since this trans-empire scope shows us the length of the time frame of the vision, they are justified in seeing the time period in Dn7:25 as also covering a long period as well. This then becomes another argument to defend the year-day principle. However, this reasoning does not stand up. The time period in Dn7:25 does not cover the

<sup>114</sup> Smith does not seem to be aware that this is the dual in Dn7:25, not the plural.

existence of the first empire; it does not cover the existence of the second or third empire; it does not even cover the existence of the little horn; it is only for the *actions* of the little horn power for a *part* of its existence. The time period only describes the time period of his aggression against the people of God, and the “times and laws.” To generalise any more into the text is unwarranted.

The text says:

**25** And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand **until a time and times and the dividing of time.**

This text does not give any indication when, in the life of the little horn, his aggression of the little horn begins. It gives no indication how long the horn will live for after the end of this period of aggression. It only defines the length of the period of aggression – 3½ times.

To argue merely from the length of the kingdoms involved in the overall vision as justification for seeing 1260 years instead of 1260 days is nonsense. The following table summarises material from Froom, *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, volume 1, pp. 456-459, indicating the general belief in the early church up to the fourth century, that the 3½ times of Dn7:25 was a literal period of 42 months. Where some did not comment on Dn7:25, I have included the comment “not mentioned.” For others we can glean their understanding from their interpretation of the same “3½ times” period in Rev.12:

**Table 12. Froom's List of Early Christian Views on the length of the "3½ times"**

Name	Lived	Froom, <i>PPF</i>		Rev. 12	
		vol I page	Daniel 7	3 ½ times	3½ times
Justin Martyr	c.165	231	very short		
Irenaeus	c.202	244	3½ yrs		
Tertullian	c.240	255	3½ yrs	Literal	
Clement of Alexandria	c.220	265	literal		
Hippolytus	d.236	270	literal	Literal	
Julius Africanus	c.240	279	literal		
Sibyllines	3d cent	290	Not mentioned		
Second Edras	c.150	286	Not mentioned		
Origen	c.254	317	Not mentioned		
Porphry	c.304	328	Not mentioned		
Cyprian	c.258	333	Not mentioned		
Victorinus	c.304	338	Not mentioned	Literal	
Methodius	c.311	345	Not mentioned	Mystic	
Lactantius	c.330	354	42 mths		
Eusibius Pamphili	c.340	362	Not		

			mentioned
	325		Not
Council of Nicea	AD	367	mentioned
			Not
Eusebius (Later Views)	c.340	383	mentioned
			Not
Athanasius	373	393	mentioned
Aphrahat	c.350	403	10½ yrs
			Not
Ephraim	373	406	mentioned
			Not
Hilary	368	410	mentioned
Cyril	386	413	3½ yrs
			Not
Ambrose	397	420	mentioned
			Not
Chrysostom	407	426	mentioned
			Not
Polychronius	430	430	mentioned
			Not
Isidore of Pelasium	450	432	mentioned
			Not
Sulpicius Severus	c.420	435	mentioned
Jerome	420	441	3½ yrs
Theodoret	457	451	3½ yrs

The early church generally saw a literal period involved here, and there is nothing with the passing of time that needs to be changed from their original exegesis.

However, the SDA historicists' argument requires a number of leaps into the dark. Apart from the contentious explanations they give for the start and the end of the 3½ times, their identification of the little horn power, and the nature of the "times and laws" that are changed, it assumes that the little horn of the fourth kingdom has to exist for hundreds of years. There is nothing in the text to suggest that a long period of persecution is here set forth. We cannot read time periods from history back into the prophecy. It can be interpreted literally just as well as a symbolic interpretation. Remember, it is the last power before the day of Judgment. There is no reason why this power has to extend for over 1260 years. Indeed, as Froom is prepared to admit, a short persecution was all the early church understood.<sup>115</sup> This understanding was not a merciful delusion, sent to cover from the eyes of the church, the centuries of darkness and trouble that lay ahead, as historicists explain it away. That idea is anathema to Scripture.<sup>116</sup> Therefore we can conclude by saying there is nothing to justify the idea that a long time period is innate to the text

<sup>115</sup> Froom, 1950, p.247: "Irenaeus, like the other early church fathers who could not foresee the lapse of ages before the end of things, interpreted the three and one half 'times' of the Little Horn of Daniel 7 as three and one-half literal years, which would immediately precede Christ's second advent, identified with the lawless reign of Antichrist."

Froom has insinuated the idea "who could not foresee the lapse of ages before the end of things," into the idea, as though the lapse of ages before the end of things was an absolute predetermination. It was not the will of God that time should extend past the early church. This is historicism reading its own perspective into the facts of history. Viewing Irenaeus' understanding of the 3½ times at face value, we can just say, the early church understood the time of the Antichrists' persecution would be 3½ literal years. This was a correct interpretation. It still is.

<sup>116</sup> As though God's method of helping people through traumatic times is to send them a delusion, so that they believe a lie!!



of Dn7:25. The text does not demand it and the early church for centuries did not believe it. It is only an explanation provided by historicists from the Middle Ages to justify the extension of time from the first advent of Christ.

We have looked before at the argument that “times” in Dn4 is treated by SDA historicists as a literal period, even though the time period in that chapter occurs in the midst of the symbolic prophecy. Here in Dn7, the time period occurs in the explanation of the vision, and therefore has more reason to be seen as a literal period, even by SDA historicists’ own definition of explanation as being literal. We shall see shortly that the 3½ times occurs in the same format in Dn12 – a section called “literal explanation” by historicists, indicating that the period is a literal period of 3.5 solar years. Since the same format occurs in Dn7 as that in the literal explanation in Dn12, 3½ times in Dn7, is a literal period of 3.5 years.

### **2.6.3 Daniel 11-12 - 3½ Times and other of time periods -long time periods?**

The incidences of “time” in Daniel 11 and 12 are used to prove that “years” are understood in the 3½ times, and then they argue that these “years” are symbolic ones needing to be converted to literal years by multiplying them by 360. This allows the incidences of these words in Dn11 and 12 to reinforce the year-day principle.

The instances where *‘eth/‘itti’m* occurs in Dn 11 and 12 include the following:

**Dn11:6** And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these *times*.

**Dn11:13** For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after *certain* years with a great army and with much riches.

**Dn11:14** And in those *times* there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

**Dn11:24** He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a *time*.

**Dn11:35** And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the *time* of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

**Dn11:40** And at the *time* of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

**Dn12:1** AND at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people and there shall be a *time* of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same *time*: and at that *time* thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

**Dn12:4** But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the *time* of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

**Dn12:9** And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the *time* of the end.

**Dn12:11** And from the *time* that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

The instances where *mô'ed* occurs in Dn 11 and 12 include the following:

**Dn11:27** And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at *the time appointed*.

**Dn11:29** At *the time appointed* he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

**Dn11:35** And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for *a time appointed*.

**Dn12:7** And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for *a time, times, and an half*; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Pertinent in this section is also the references in Dn11 to the use of the word “years.” We will be looking at Spangler’s views shortly on this matter, so here are the relevant texts:

**Dn11:6** And in the *end of years* they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in these times.

**Dn11:8** And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold, and he shall continue *more years* than the king of the north.

**Dn11:13** For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after *certain years* with a great army and with much riches.

### Dan11-12 – Literal Explanation, Literal Periods.

We have earlier looked at the concept of “literal” verses “symbolic” time in the “visions” and “explanations” of Daniel. We also noted that the 3½ times period is given in a section of the book that SDA historicists say we should expect to find only literal explanation. Therefore, this is evidence enough that the 3½ times is a literal period. Furthermore, this is the way the early church understood it for centuries, so there is no reason to change position on that view.

Shea says that the Dn10 –12 revelation is best defined as “further explanation” on Dn8. (cf. [1981a](#), p.240) Thus, being explanation, the time periods in ch. 12 would be given in literal terms, not “prophetic” terms.

Dn12:7 is not given, in the SDA view, as a vision. Therefore, this is not to be considered prophetic or symbolic material, but literal explanation. With the exception of the vision in Dn10, all of the material in Dn9-12 according to SDA historicists is literal material, and is definitely not vision. This means that the time period *'iddan* is not a figurative period or a prophetic period, but rather a literal period.

GET THE STATEMENT FROM DARCOM SERIES SAYING THE VISIONS END WITH DN8, THE REST OF THE CHAPTERS ARE EXPLANATION OF THE EARLIER VISIONS.

Daniel 11:13 is considered an indefinite term, but Spangler takes a different view in his article in the *Ministry*.

We have looked at the necessity of 3½ times being a long period in Dn7. The same period 3½ *'iddan* surfaces again in chapter 12, but this time it is much easier to deal with claims of SDA historicists since by their own claims regarding the nature of this type of text, their ability to invoke the year-day principle is ham-strung.

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be **for a time, times,**

**and an half;** and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Notice this statement from Spangler:

Although Daniel 8 and 11 parallel each other, there are some basic distinctions. One is that Daniel 8 records an apocalyptic vision seen by Daniel, which ends with verse 14, according to the remark in verse 15, and is followed by the interpretation given by Gabriel in verses 16 to 26. On the other hand, Daniel 11 does not record an apocalyptic vision, but rather an interpretation by the angel visitor (probably Gabriel) of a previous vision (10:13, 14). Chapter 11 then is in narrative form, and its language should be viewed more literally than symbolically, while chapter 8 should be seen as more symbolical than literal... Since the narrative in chapter 11 is best interpreted as primarily literal, then the years described in that chapter are literal years. (1980, p.45)

Since, according to Spangler, the narrative form and its language should be view more literally than symbolically in chapter 12 (since ch.12 is the continuation of ch.11), the 3½ “times,” the 1290 and the 1335 days are best interpreted as literal, and the “days” are best described in this chapter as literal days.

Shea says that the Dn10 –12 revelation is best defined as “further explanation” on Dn8. (cf. 1981a, p.240) Thus, being explanation, the time periods in ch. 12 would be given in literal terms, not “prophetic” terms.

The following material on the 3½ “times” comes from the paper Shea volunteered for the Glacier View conference, entitled *Daniel and the Judgment*. He argues here that the association of the 3½ years with the word “year” in Dn 11:13 leads us to see the association between “time” and “year.” He also admits the “times” in Dn4 are best seen as “years,” on the basis of Josephus’ comment. He further argues that this relationship, given to us by Josephus, helps us to understand “times” in Dn11:14 to be “years” as it is “juxtaposed to Dn11:13. He also suggests an arithmetic progression from smaller to larger numbers in Dn12 with the 3½ times, 1290- and the 1335-days in Dn12, lending weight to the conclusion that 3½ times represents 1260 days:

The Hebrew word for “times” is then directly juxtaposed to the word for year in Dan 11:13 which also suggests their prophetic equivalence. In Dan 12 the 1290 and 1335 days of verses 11 and 12 follow the 3½ “appointed times” of verse 7, which suggests that an arithmetical progression was involved here. This connection is made all the more direct when it is seen that the event connected with the 1290 days is one of the things that the little horn was supposed to do according to Dan 8. Since we have earlier equated the little horns of Dan 7 and 8, the time periods for these two activities of that power may be expected to correspond to a reasonably close degree. Reducing the 1290 days to the nearest large time period divisible by 3½ yields 1260 days for its length. Thus within Daniel there are three major indicators that the “times” of the little horn in Dan 7 should be interpreted as years; the use of this period in Dan 4, its connection with years in Dan 11, and the connection of this time period with those that occur at the end of Dan 12. (1980, p.270.)

Shea does it again. “The Hebrew word for “times” is then directly juxtaposed to the word for year in Dan 11:13 which also suggests their prophetic equivalence.” He takes one incidence where there is an association between two words and wants to argue for a “prophetic equivalence.” This is not a prophetic equivalence. This is nonsense. He is merely clouding a plain statement. The juxtaposition of “*eth*” with a temporal expression is widely attested in non-prophetic literature.

Consider 2 Kings 4:16, where it represents the term of a pregnancy:

16. And he said, About this season, according to the **time of life**, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid.

17. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the **time of life**.

In this text, the phrase “this season, that season” is juxtapose to the phrase “the time of life” meaning the time of bearing a life or gestation –9 months. (See also Gen 18:10, 14)

Or 1Chr20:1:

And it came to pass after the year had expired, at the **time that kings go out to battle**, Joab led forth the power of army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it.

In this text, the clause, “kings go out to battle” is juxtaposed to “time” which in this case is an annual event at springtime, but need not be so.

Neh10:34 says:

And we cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at **times appointed year by year**, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law.

There are many occasions in the use of this word in the Old Testament where this word is associated with “years.” In 2Chr21:19, this term represents a period of *two* years:

And it came to pass, that in the process of **time, after the end of two years**, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.

In other places it can mean mere days, like “tomorrow”:

1Kgs 19:2,

Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by **to-morrow about this time**.

1Kgs 20:6:

Yet I will send my servants unto thee **to-morrow about this time**, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away.

1 Sam9:16:

**Tomorrow about this time** I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people because their cry is come unto me.

1Chr12:22:

For at that **time day by day** there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.

Or it is even applied to a time within the same day, such as sunset:

2 Sam11:2

And it came to pass in an **eventide** [literally, “time evening”], that David arose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king’s house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

Josh 8:29:

And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until **eventide**: [literally, “time evening”] and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, that remaineth unto this day.

Or it could mean once a week, on the Sabbath:  
Neh 13:21.

Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. **From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath.**

The same construction found in Dn11:13 with “times years” [literally] is also mirrored in other parts of Scripture, in entirely different ways. For instance, in Gn8:11, the text literally reads “time evening” when the dove came back to Noah.

And the dove came in to him in the **evening** ; and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

See also Zech 14:7:

But it shall be one day which shall be known unto the Lord, not day,: but it shall come to pass, that at **evening time** it shall be light.

Should we argue for a “prophetic equivalence” in these texts? Clearly not. And even if we wanted to, what scale would we include and which ones would be excluded? A day for 9 months? A day for 7 days? A day for 2 years? A day for 2 days? A day for a season? We have an array of scales here to choose from.

We can agree that the apposition in Dn11:13 qualifies the word “times” to indicate that these “times” involve “years,” but the ratio is not given. Should we take the example of 2 Chr 21:19 where the ratio is more than one year per “time”? Probably not, but the matter should be left as indefinite. McCready Price says: “R. D. Wilson has pointed out that the word here used is not the ordinary word for “year,” but a word which merely means a fixed or appointed time, long or short. (1955, p.48) The incidence of the same appositional structure with “time/times” to mean “evening” or “day” indicates that nothing can be drawn from this appositional structure in Dn11:13. Shea is desperately trying to find some association where there is none.

The conclusion of this section we have looked at in his 1980 paper was “thus within Daniel there are three main indicators that the “times” of the little horn in Dan 7 should be interpreted as years; the use of this word in Dan 4, its connection with years in Dan 11, and the connection of this time period with those that occur at the end of Dan 12.” (1980, p. 271) These conclusions are probably correct but they do not endorse the use of the year-day principle. On the contrary, we can add that these three incidents also prove that if “times” is to be taken as years, then the 3½ “times-years” in Dan 7 are literal years, as they are in Dan 4; as they are in Dan 11; and, coming in the literal section of Dan 12, they are literal there also.

Shea says: “In Dan 12 the 1290 and 1335 days of verses 11 and 12 follow the 3½ “appointed times” of verse 7, which suggests that an arithmetical progression was involved here.” Shea wants to argue that it *looks like* the numbers go up in value as we progress through Dn12. This is because the 1290 days comes *before* the 1335 days. On this astute (!) observation, Shea concludes that 1260 days for the 3½ times fits the “arithmetic progression” sequence, proving his theory. Therefore we can conclude that 3½ “times” is 1260 days. This may be true, it may not be, but in the end nothing can be dogmatic, if we are going to base a conclusion on such flighty evidence as an “arithmetic sequence.”

Moving back to the main thrust of this section, we are looking at the incidence of the use of *mô'ed* in Dn12, which is clearly different to the other usage of the word previous in the same revelation. But the angel's use of this word in Dn 11 helps us to understand the 3½ “times” in Dn12. In all the other incidents the text refers to a specific pre-set point in time, whether it be the end of the world or the movement of a certain king. And we are lead to believe, though it is unstated, it is God's providence that sets these “appointed” or “set” times.

There is no incidence with the usage of these two terms for “times” in Dn11 and 12 that indicate that we are to take them symbolically. We can accept that the usage in Dn12 is a literal one. If SDA historicists want to argue for a symbolic meaning of the word there then other incidences of the words in Dn11-12 need to be explained as well. For instance, the “time of the end.” Is this time a symbolic year, meaning it will last for 360 years from the time it began? If we take the SDA historicists’ view on its start in 1798 A.D. and add 360 years to it, we get the time when Michael will stand up at 2158 A.D.

Take another example, that of Dn11:24:

“He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers’ fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: yea, and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a *time*.”

Do we argue here that it stated that this “time” will occur for one symbolic time/year, which converts to 360 solar years? No SDA historicist would argue that, so to press for a symbolic meaning of “time” in one place and not apply it in others where it could rightly fit textually is incongruous. Like Litch has argued, constancy in the application of interpretation could carry the day.<sup>117</sup> And in such a literal section of Daniel, periods should be literally understood.

We can conclude this section with the observations that the “times” in the book of Daniel are to be understood as literal periods and not symbolic periods. This leads us to the conclusion held universally by the early church, that the 3½ “times” represents a 3.5 solar year period of persecution before the day of the Lord. Therefore, Dn11 and Dn12 do not provide any evidence to support the idea that long time periods are understood in the time periods of Dn7 or Dn8, and thus do not furnish any support for the year-day principle.<sup>118</sup>

## **2.6.4 2300 'ereb bôqer in Daniel 8:14 – a long time period?**

Having examined the use of the 3½ times to argue for long periods needed in the prophecies of Daniel, I turn to the second period – the 2300 evenings-mornings of Dn8:14 – and examine whether this time period can be used to show that a long period of 2300 years is needed to cover the scope of its parameters.<sup>119</sup> One of the arguments put forward by SDA historicists for the application of the 2300 days as 2300 years is the idea that the time period has to be long to cover all the kingdoms depicted in the whole vision.

James White says:

The vision embraces Persia, Grecia, and Rome. And it is evident that twenty-three hundred days could not cover the duration of one of these kingdoms, much less all three of them. Hence, the days must be symbolic, a day for a year, even as the beasts and horns are shown to be symbols. And it is a fact that a symbolic, or prophetic day is one year. Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:5,6. Hence the period is twenty-three hundred years. (1972, p.136)

And consider this statement from Spangler:

Each successive vision in Daniel expands the meaning of a previous vision or dream. The silver breast and arms of the image (2:32, 39) are identified with the bear (7:5) and the two-horned ram (8:3,4), all of which refer to Medo-Persia and are identified as such by Gabriel (8:20). The bronze thighs (2:32, 39) are parallel to the leopard (7:6) and the he-goat (8:5-8), the goat being interpreted as Greece (8:21). If the period of the 2300 days includes the time for the rise and fall of the Medo-Persian and Greek empires, then

<sup>117</sup> Litch, 1867, pp. 15, 16)

<sup>118</sup> For Further Study Look at other commentary’s comments on this word and its incidence. The commentaries you have. Also collect lexical statements. Any journal articles on the topic?

<sup>119</sup> In this discussion, I work with the SDA position of seeing the period as 2300 days.



it would be impossible for the days to be interpreted as literal days. The two empires lasted many times longer than approximately six and one-third years of the 2300 days (if Dan. 8:14 is viewed as literal time). The internal evidence in chapter 8 strongly suggests that symbolic time is being used and that the year-day principle is at work. (1980, p.44)

The reason for seeing the 2300 evenings-mornings as being long is that they say the question in Dn8: 13 covers the whole vision. And the only way that SDA historicists can apply the question of v.13 to the *whole vision* is to either explain away the obvious apposition in the question which limits the scope of the word “vision” in Dn8: 13, or do violence to the text and emend it to suit their purposes. Notice this statement again from the SDA Ministerial Association:

From Daniel 8 it is clear that the 2300 days have to cover a long span of years. The question is asked, “How long will the *vision* be?” (Dan. 8: 13). The term “vision” is the same in verses 1,2. So when the question “How long is the vision?” is raised by the heavenly angel, he is expecting an answer that covers the entire vision from the first animal symbol through the second animal symbol through the horn symbol to the end of time as is indicated in verses 17 and 19 of Daniel 8. That the 2300 evenings and mornings answers this question indicates rather clearly that they must cover the period from the Medo-Persian empire to the end of time, implying that they represent years. (1988, pp. 330f.)

By the misleading and deceptive tactic of eliminating the clauses qualifying the meaning of the word “vision” in verse 13, they continue their explanation of their position without any justification for the emendation of the text. The question the Ministerial Association quotes *is not the question asked in Daniel 8:13*. The question finishes at the end of the verse, *not* with the word “vision.” They merely quote what they *want* the text to say, not what the text says. This is a crass deception. Imagine a SDA minister announcing from the pulpit on the basis of John 8:11 in the KJV: “Go and sin!” is Jesus’ command to his followers.” Problematic?? He has omitted the last two words in the text which change the meaning entirely. Jesus said “Go and sin *no more*” to the woman caught in adultery. They would object to one of their fraternity preaching such a doctrine with total disregard to the context. Yet the SDA Ministerial Association have immortalised their stubborn determination to follow the proof-text method and do violence to the text. They have amputated half the question in Dn8:13, considering the second half of the question unworthy of consideration. It is easier to prove their point if they just drop out the rest of the question. But there is more to the question than what they have quoted and the unquoted section changes the meaning of the question entirely.<sup>120</sup>

So the first question should be: What event should the 2300 evenings-mornings cover? And it is right here that problems occur? Assumption 2 looked at the assertion of SDA historicists that the scope of the question in Dn8:13 covered the entire vision. It concluded that this assumption is not based on evidence but a misunderstanding of the question, and in fact, arguments brought forward by Shea, Hasel and others to defend applying the time period to the whole vision of Dn8:3-12 were unjustifiable. The text is clear that the question applies to the scope of the activities of vs. 9-12. Therefore the argument that the time period has to be long enough to cover the span of empires is not valid. Readers are directed to that paper to see the arguments there. The time period does not cover the time of the empires of Media-Persia and Greece. The time

<sup>120</sup> They are not alone. There is a venerable history in the SDA church literature for *misquoting* Dn8:13, 14. Examples could be multiplied. Here is one: “The question was, ‘How long the vision?’ The question certainly covers almost the whole, if not the whole, duration of the vision; and that, as we have seen, extends over a period of over twenty-four hundred years.” (Smith, 1898, p.320) From James White, he says, “How beautifully grand the scene! The Son of God and the angel Gabriel in conversation! One inquires of the other, ‘How long the vision’ concerning Persia, Grecia, and Rome? The other directs the answer to the prophet, ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ The vision relates to what the prophet saw respecting Media and Persia, Grecia, and Rome, as recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel...Referring to the same [vision] in verse 13, the question is asked, ‘How long shall be the vision?’ The Son of God in verse 16, commands Gabriel to make Daniel ‘understand the vision.’ (J. White, 1970, pp.120f.) When discussing Daniel 8: 14 in *The Great Controversy*, Ellen White omits even mentioning the question, as though the relation between the question in v.13 and the answer in v.14 is totally irrelevant. (White, 1950, pp. 324, 409) Read on this topic an article by G. M Price in Ford, 1980, pp A66-A68. and also comments by Ford at pp.216-219. Yet in spite of these men pointing out the error of ignoring the context, the SDA Ministerial Association repeat a worse error than what they accuse Ford of by completely and flagrantly violating Scripture to justify their position. Clearly no amount of evidence will change the practice of these institutions!

period does not even cover the rulership of the horn power. The correct understanding is that the 2300 evenings mornings only cover the period of aggression by the horn power against the people of God, and in particular the desecration of the sanctuary and its desolation until the proper functioning of the sanctuary is restored.

It is important to notice both the question and the answer referring to the 2300 *'ereb-bôqer* are not given in the vision, but are part of the explanation of the vision. The angel asks a question in verse 13 that would naturally be a question in Daniel's mind, and the answer is given in verse 14. That answer is not figurative in itself, but should be taken at face value – an explanation of the details outlined by the question, which refers us to the activities of the little horn only and not to the full vision. The style and situation of this explanation of the activities of the little horn by this angel is identical in location and situation to the explanation of the other material a few minutes later by Gabriel. Therefore, we should apply the same principles to the explanation in verse 14 by one heavenly being as we do to the explanation of other heavenly being who is given a directive to unravel the revelation for Daniel – Gabriel. Is the time unit in Dn8: 14 literal or figurative? Because it is given in an explanatory section of the vision, according to the SDA demand of literalism in the explanations of the prophecies, we should expect it to be a literal period.

The 2300 days in Dn8 is also not included in the vision proper. In verse 13, the angel refers to "the vision," as something they are NOT a part of. They talk of it as a thing separate from themselves – something that is already finished and completed. The vision that the 2300 days refer to is the revelation occurring before this discussion in verses 13 and 14, since verse 13 and 14 are not a part of the two beings they are talking about. Therefore, the answer to the question in verse 14 is clearly a literal explanation. Even Shea lists Dn8: 14 as an explanation. He calls it an intravisional explanation. He tries to cover the nature of this text by the clouded term "intravisional," but he has still has to admit it is explanation. (1981a, p. 237) But similar to the issue in Dn 8 is the issue in Dn7: The explanation of the time period in verse 13, and 14 come *after* the vision that the angel refers to. Therefore, being *explanation*, we can expect the time period to be a *literal* period, even if it has unusual time units.

So in summary, we have looked at the 2300 evenings mornings as a period that must be a long one because of the length of the empires included in the vision. The answer was two-fold. This argument is false firstly because the question does not cover the whole vision but only a group of activities within that vision. Secondly, the argument is invalid because the time period is given in the *explanatory* part of the vision, classified by SDA historicists as *literal*.

## **2.6.5 Summary**

The argument that long time periods are needed when looking at the visions in Daniel was examined and found to be without foundation. The use of "time" in Daniel 4 indicates a literal period; the time periods in Dn7 and 8 are found in the explanation sections of the visions, which, by SDA historicists' own definition should be expected to be literal periods. There is nothing in Dn7 that demands a long time period. There is nothing there that dictates that the period of persecution by the Antichrist be longer than 3.5 years – the period understood by the church to be correct for hundreds of years after Christ.

There is nothing in Dn8 that dictates that the 2300 days be long. The question in Dn8:13 relates to the activities of the vision in vs.9-12. That does not have to cover the span of the entire vision in vs.3-12. Therefore, the argument for the necessity of having 2300 years is invalid.

There is nothing in Dn 11-12 that demands that the time periods mentioned there be long. Being literal by SDA historicists' own definition, literal time periods would be anticipated in those chapters and understood that way. Furthermore, the fact that the same time period in Dn7:25 occurs in the same format amongst literal explanation in Dn12, proves the point that literal time is also understood in Daniel 7:25.

## 2.7 The Use of "day" in OT

I wish to turn now to the arguments developed initially by Shea and repeated by other writers after him in regard to the usage of the word "day" in literary, poetic and legislative writings of the OT. This argument developed by Shea in his volume *Selected Studies in Prophetic Interpretation*, includes the interchange between the words *days* when in fact, *year(s)* are meant. Good examples are readily available in the Old Testament writings.

As demonstrated earlier, Shea has abandoned the traditional explanation of the year-day principle in trying to defend it. In admitting the anomalies of both Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6, he faces the daunting task of trying to yet salvage some respectability for the year-day principle. He discovers that this can be done if he reduces the phenomenon in both texts to its lowest common factor – a conversion of time. In so doing he does not understand the significance of his logic against the year-day principle. He then proceeds to find this idea of time conversion throughout Scripture. He finds them mostly from shorter to longer or days to years, although he does come up with an example of longer to shorter – years to days. He uses these examples to defend his theory of time conversion, thinking that in the process of using these he is actually demonstrating the presence of the year-day analogy in OT culture and literature. But he fails. He is merely showing us that the Hebrews used time comparisons in their language. This is not the year-day principle. It is merely time conversion. And time conversion is not the year-day principle; not the year-day principle as used by SDA historicists in converting time periods in apocalyptic prophecy. Shea's defence of the year-day principle is not a defence – it is a mockery of the idea itself.

Rodríguez indicated a listing of at least 850 texts where *day* is used in place of *year*. (see below) These arguments were subsequently embraced by apologists for SDA historicism, as evidenced in the following examples:<sup>121</sup>

### 2.7.1 Use of Day in historical OT prose

The following examples from current apologists for historicism give us an idea of the rationale involved:

#### William Shea.

In his 1982 publication, he introduces many texts from non-prophetic genres of Old Testament literature, and argues a connection between the words for *day* and *year*. His argument is that usage of this association is a literary basis for the development of a principle in prophetic interpretation when the time factor is symbolic. He says:

There is in the historical narratives of the OT a recognition of a particular kind of relationship between "days" and "years" that transcends the mere idea that the latter were made up of the former. In these instances the word "days" (always in the plural form) was actually used to stand for "years." This usage occurs in three general ways:

<sup>121</sup> Rodríguez (2002), p.20.

The term “days” was used to stand for a “year,” when an annual or yearly event was referred to. For example, the Passover was to be kept, literally, “from days to days,” that is, from year to year, or yearly (Exod 13:10). A yearly sacrifice was spoken of as the “sacrifice of the days” (1 Sam 20:6). Hannah took the garments she had made from Samuel once each year (literally, “from days to days,” (1 Sam 2:19). She took them at the same time her husband Elkanah went to Shiloh to offer “his sacrifice of the days,” that is, his “yearly sacrifice” (1 Sam 1:21).

Judges 11:40 tells about the service of mourning which was held for Jephthah’s daughter “from days to days,” that is, yearly. This passage is particularly instructive since it also states that the mourning was held for four days each year (*shanah*). Hence, the equation between “days” (“from days to days”) and “year” (*shanah*) is made directly through the terms employed in this verse.

B. The term “days” was used at times to directly specify a period of time equivalent to a year. For example, it is stated (in literal terms) that David and his men dwelt in the land of the Philistines “days and four months” (1 Sam 27:7). That is a period of *a year and four months* is intended is evident and that is the way translators of the Bible have generally handled this phrase.

Numbers 9:22 is part of a passage that discusses Israel’s wilderness journeying. The tribes moved only when the pillar of cloud lifted from the tabernacle. Otherwise they remained encamped, “whether it was two days [Hebrew dual form], or a month (singular), or [days].” The logical progression of time units described here should proceed from days to a month to a year. Thus the second occurrence of the word for “days” in this verse (as usual in the plural form) should be taken as standing for a year, which is the way the versions generally render it.

C. The term “days” is often used in equation with the “years” of an individual’s life. For example, 1 Kgs 1:1 states that “King David was old and advanced in years” (literally, in the days”).

It is especially in the book of Genesis that we find this kind of time statement in its fullest form. For example, Jacob makes the following statement to Pharaoh: “The days of the years of my sojourning are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning” (Gen 47:9).

This kind of thought pattern appears to find its roots in the generation of Gen 5. The formula that is repeated ten times over for the antediluvians, God said: “My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh, but his *days* shall be a hundred and twenty *years*” (Gen 6:3, italics mine).

The time mentioned here conveys a prophecy about a future probationary period. During this time Noah would preach and endeavor to persuade that sinful generation to accept God’s offer of mercy while probation lingered. Already in Gen 6, therefore we find a prophecy about a sharply delimited amount of future time. And this *first time prophecy* of Scripture the terms “days” and “years” are linked directly together.

It can be seen from the above brief survey that the relationship that came to be established between the terms for “day” and “year” forms the general linguistic usage and thought pattern from which a later, more specific quantitative relationship in prophetic texts will spring. It is evident that the year-day principle did not crop up suddenly in prophecy *sui generis*. When it came upon a scene of action, it was drawn from a more general relationship that was already a part of Hebrew thought. (1982, pp.66-67)

## Roy Gane

There is however, solid evidence for “days” representing literal years in the symbolic time prophecies of Daniel – a principle of interpretation that is crucial for the historical/historicist (as opposed to the preterist or futurist) approach to Daniel.

1. To begin with, the Hebrew word *yom*, “day,” can be used for a period of time other than a day of twenty-four hours. Scholars have recognized verses in which the plural of *yom* means “year.” Here are some examples:

“The man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the Lord the *yearly sacrifice*” – literally, “*sacrifice of the days*” (1 Samuel, 1:21, emphasis supplied; compare 2:19; 20:6).

“Dwell with me and be a father and a priest to me, and I will give you then pieces of silver *a year*” – literally, “*for the days*” (Judges 17:10, emphasis supplied).

“And the number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was *a year* and four months” – literally, “*days* and four months” (1 Samuel 27:7, emphasis supplied). (2006, pp.68-72)

## Clifford Goldstein

Though these texts hint at the day-year principle, what other evidence exists?

The Old Testament has long recognized a relationship between days and years, and, in some cases, though the word *year* is meant in the text, the literal Hebrew word has been *days*. The Passover feast, for example, was kept once a year. See Exodus 13:10. The text in the KJV is translated: “Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year for [sic] year.” Yet the original Hebrew reads literally “from days to days,” even though it meant from year to year...

There is a common Hebrew word for year, *shanah*, but in these verses “days” is used instead, thus showing a link between year and day in the Bible. Other examples of this type can be found. See 1 Sam. 2:19; 1 Sam. 1:21; 1 Kings 1:1. Nevertheless, even if these and other verses help prove the idea of the day-year relationship, can we be sure that we should apply it to the time prophecies of Daniel 7, 8 and 9? (1988, pp.74-79; cf. also 2003, pp.104-111)

## 2.7.2 Use of “day” in poetic literature

Shea examines the poetic literature and makes the following observations in favour of the year-day principle:

The poetic literature of the OT does not provide us with a year-for-a-day principle with which to interpret time periods in prophecy. It does, however, provide us with instances (like those in the historical prose narratives cited above) in which these two units of time are used side by side in a particularly close relationship.

In this kind of literature the relationship arises from the poet’s employment of a literary device known as parallelism. Thus Hebrew poetry provides us with further examples of the thought patterns out of which the year-day principle naturally developed.<sup>122</sup>

The book of Job provides several examples in which “days” and “years” occur as a poetic pair:

Are they days as the days of man  
or thy years as man’s years? (Job 10:5)

The wicked man writhes in pain all his days,  
through all the years that are laid up for the ruthless (Job 15:20).

I said “Let days speak,  
and many years teach wisdom” (Job 32:7).

If they hearken and serve him,  
they complete their days in prosperity  
and their years in pleasantness (Job 36:11).

The “covenant lawsuit” poem of Deut 32 provides another example of Hebrew parallelism which links these two time units together:

<sup>122</sup> If it is a natural development of the language, how is it that even Jewish readers of the time periods did not use the principle until the middle ages? And why wasn’t there any demonstration of the use of the year-day principle in action in Bible times? All are done literally. We would expect to find it in use elsewhere, but no examples are forthcoming.



Remember the days of old,  
 consider the years of many generations;  
 ask your father, and he will show you;  
 your elders, and they will tell you (Deut 32:7)

A couple of examples may be cited from the Psalms:

I consider the days of old,  
 I remember the years long ago (Ps77:5)

For all our days pass away under thy wrath,  
 Our years come to an end like a sigh.  
 The years of our life [literally, “the days of our years”]  
 Are threescore and ten,  
 Or if by reason of strength fourscore;  
 Yet their span is but toil and trouble;

They are soon gone, and we fly away (Ps 90:9-10)

The list of texts is not cited as an exhaustive catalog of such occurrences; it is merely illustrative. The parallelism presented in these instances does not employ “days” to refer to short periods of time and “years” to long periods. The term refers to the same periods but are calibrated in shorter and longer units. This is the same manner of thinking that is encountered in time prophecies, but there the equivalence has been made more numerically specific.

In every case cited above, “days” is always the A-word that occurs first, and “years” is always the B-word that appears in second position. These words probably follow that order because of the logical progression in thought from “days” to “years.” When we come to the occurrence of the word “days” in the time prophecies, therefore, an ancient Semite whose mind is steeped in this parallelistic type of thought would naturally have made the association of “years” with the days found in a symbolic context, just as he naturally would have identified “years” as the B-word that would follow the A-word “days” in its occurrences as part of a well-known parallel pair.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Does that mean any parallelism we find can be used to build a principle from? Are not these parallelism just momentary word associations for the purpose of the poet’s intentions?

On the issue of ancient Semites, immersed in their literature ‘naturally’ making this association between “days” and “years,” consider the following excerpt from Doukhan’s booklet *The Mystery of Israel*, where he there argues that the majority of Jews in the first three centuries were Christians. Here then is Doukhan’s comments for consideration: “we do not need to allude to the fact that early Christianity was Jewish. Not only the Messiah but also His disciples, initial followers, and the first missionaries were Jewish. Christianity arose from within Israel. In addition, we should also remember that according to the testimony of the Gospels, the majority of the Jewish population (from the beginning to the end of Jesus’ ministry) gladly received the Christian message. Furthermore, recent scholarship [Doukhan footnotes: “See especially Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996). Cf. Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1972), pp. 52, 53; David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Tübingen; Mohr-Siebeck, 2000), p.244.”] has demonstrated that, contrary to popular thought, the Christian mission to the Jews was highly successful in the beginning. On the basis of the book of Acts (Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 9:35; 21:20), sociological and statistical analysis, archaeological evidence, and the testimony of Ethiopian tradition, it has been established that many Jews – and in some cases almost all of them – accepted Jesus as their Messiah. We now have reason to believe that in spite of some tensions, the majority of the Jewish population reached by the early Jewish Christians were convinced by their testimony. It may even be suggested that the trend was such that one might fear that the whole people of Israel were in the process of accepting Christ....If so many Jews accepted Jesus in the early days of the church, what changed the direction of history? The fact that “Jews continued as a significant source of Christian converts until...as late as the fourth century,” [Doukhan footnotes: “Stark, p.49.”] a period historically associated with the formal rejection of the law of God [Doukhan footnotes: “...*the Great Controversy*, pp.49, 50”] and more particularly of the Sabbath, suggest that the Jewish resistance to the Christian message was essentially because of the Christian rejection of the law. As Jewish historian Jules Isaac puts it: “The Jewish rejection of Christ was triggered by the Christian rejection of the Law.” [Doukhan footnotes: “J. Isaac, *Genèse de l’Antisémitisme*, p. 147.”] Or in the words of church historian Marcel Simon: “The rejection of Israel [by the church] is the inevitable corollary of the abrogation of the law.” [Doukhan footnotes: “Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel: A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire, 135-425*. trans. H. McKeating, (Oxford University Press, 1986), p.169.”] (2004, pp.78-79)

This begs the question, If Shea thinks it would be so ‘natural’ for a literate Jew to see the year-day principle in the prophetic time periods of Daniel, how come in the first three centuries, when apparently, according to Doukhan, there were so many Jewish Christians, there is no evidence, as admitted by Froom, for an understanding of the year-day principle? “... the first thousand years of the Christian Era did not produce



The close and particular relationship between “days” and “years” that is found both in the prose and poetry of the OT provides a background for the more specific application of this type of thought in apocalyptic time prophecies.

The poetic statement of Isa 61:2 presents an uncommon example of the reverse order of the “day” and “year” time elements. The “year of the Lords’ favor” is followed by “the day of vengeance of our God.” The specific concept from which this use of the word “day” derives is the “day of the Lord,” an expression used throughout the prophets to depict a final time of judgment of Israel or Judah, or for nations round about God’s people, or for kingdoms and peoples seen in prophecy as arising in the future. Thus there is a particular theological reason why the more common order [day-year] has been inverted here. It is the exception for that reason, and not the rule. (1982, pp.68-69)

Rodríguez wrote a standard historicist presentation of SDA beliefs on 8 prophecies under the title, *Future Glory*. In the section on “Interpreting Apocalyptic Prophecies,” he says on the year-day principle:

Apocalyptic prophecies often include references to specific prophetic period. In those cases the term *day* represents or stands for a *year*. The Old Testament uses the term *days* as an idiom *year* more than 850 times. For instance, 1 Samuel 27:7 declares that “David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months,” but in Hebrew it says “days and four months.” In 1 Samuel 29:3 we find the phrase “over a year,” which in Hebrew is “these days or these year,” possibly meaning “a year or two.” This usage of the term *days* for *years* “may have originated in the notion of the return of the individual days of a year in the following year, so that the ‘days (of the year)’ could represent the year itself.” [Rodríguez footnotes: “Enst Jenni, ‘Yom Day’ in Enst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1997), vol. 2, p.536.”] The sabbatical laws employ the name of a day, the Sabbath, to refer to a whole year (Lev 25:2), and in the law of jubilee God said to the Israelites that “to you the days of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty-nine years” (see verse 8). The same idea appears in the prophecies of judgment in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 (cf. Gen. 6:3).

The Hebrew mind employed the term *day* and *year* interchangeably. Therefore, the Lord used what was natural to the Israelites to express symbolically long prophetic time periods. (2002, p.20)

Goldstein regurgitates Shea’s material in his publications:

Is the day-year principle legitimate, and if so, why apply it to those three chapters in Daniel? ...What is the biblical evidence? We are all familiar with Numbers 14:34: “After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year.” And Ezekiel 4:4-6: “According to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it... I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Though these texts hint at the day-year principle, what other evidence exists? <sup>124</sup>

The Old Testament has long recognized a relationship between days and years, and, in some cases, though the word *year* is meant in the text, the literal Hebrew word has been *days*. The Passover feast, for example, was kept once a year. See Exodus 13:10. The text in the KJV is translated: “Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year for [sic] year.” Yet the original Hebrew reads literally “from days to days,” even though it meant from year to year...

There is a common Hebrew word for year, *shanah*, but in these verses “days” is used instead, thus showing a link between year and day in the Bible. Other examples of this type can be found. See 1 Sam. 2:19; 1 Sam. 1:21; 1 Kings 1:1. Nevertheless, even if these and other verses help prove the idea of the day-year relationship, can we be sure that we should apply it to the time prophecies of Daniel 7, 8 and 9?

[Goldstein then looks at the fulfillment of the 70 weeks, the 3½ times, the 2300 days and concludes],....Clearly, much evidence exists for the day-year principle in Daniel 7, 8, and 9. They make no sense without it. (1988, pp.74-79; cf. also 2003, pp.104-111)

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any further applications [apart from the seventy weeks of Daniel 9] of the principle, among Christian writers, save one or two glimpses of the “ten days” of Revelation 2:10 as ten years of persecution, and the three and a half days of Revelation 11 as three and a half years. Now Joachim for the first time applied the year-day principle to the 1260-day prophecy....” (cf. Froom, 1950, pp.700f. but I have shown in Assumption 16 extant Greek evidence for an alternate explanation Froom has not discounted.)

<sup>124</sup> This is a change in stance. Now the two texts that SDA historicists have reiterated as *teaching* the year-day principle, now just “hint at the year-day principle.” Is Goldstein shying away from using these texts as the evidence *par excellence* for the year-day principle.

### **2.7.3 The use of “day” as an idiom.**

It is a pity that Shea, Rodríguez, and other populist SDA writers like Goldstein resort to such primitive argumentation to find evidence for the year-day principle. In referring to the use of day in literary, poetic, legislative and historical literature, they have built up a battery of arguments and examples in support of their position. But what is the value of their arguments and examples? When one consults with standard lexicons and grammars, their argumentation just disappears like the morning dew.

Taking the texts cited above: Ex 13:10; Lev 25: 2, 1-8; 1 Sam. 2:19; 1 Sam. 1:21; 27:7; 29:3; 1 Kings 1:1;

#### **Tregelles, Gesenius Lexicon**

For instance, taking Tregelles' Gesenius' Lexicon first, we look under *yôm* (day) and find he lists a number of categories of meaning for this word:

“the day”

The day of anyone especially:

in a good sense, the festival day of anyone;

in a bad sense, a fatal day, the day of one's destruction;

Hence – the day of battle and slaughter

“the day of Jehovah;” i.e., the day of the judgment which God will hold on the wicked.

“time” like *ἡμέρα*, a day.

With the article and prepositions prefixed –

The article plus infinitive: *in this day, today*;

With prep *b<sup>e</sup>*: in the day in which,

With prep *b<sup>e</sup>*: *by the day, in the daytime*, i.e., at once, presently;

With prep *k<sup>e</sup>*: *in this day, at this time*, now, before that, at this time, before that, then

Ditto: today, at this time, now, then,

With prep *m<sup>e</sup>*: from the time when;

With prep *kol*: (*α*) in all days, everyday, daily, (*β*) all the day, (*γ*) in all time, perpetually.

In the plural form, it carries the meaning:

1. “days,” “some time, for a *while*.”

2. “time” without any reference to days.

a. Specially is it the time of life, lifetime.

b. “Sometimes *yamîm* is put in the acc. pleonastically after words denoting a certain space of time, as ...*two years of time* [lit. “two years, days”]-FB]

3. The signification of time is limited *to a certain space of time*, namely *a year*, as in Syr and Chaldee.

As we can see from the entries by this lexicon, it recognises some entries where the convention is to use “year” where “days” are given, but in other cases the generally term of “time” etc. should be understood. In many cases where Shea cites the use of *day*, the sense of the word is understood as an indefinite reference “*the time of ....*” For example, in Lev 25:8: “You shall count seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times, and to you the days of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty nine years,” we can replace the word *day* with *time, or period* and it conveys a better sense of the use of *day*. The text is saying that by counting seven sabbaths of years, or seven lots of seven years, you will get a period of forty nine years. “and to you the period of the seven sabbaths shall be forty-nine years.” The use of “days” here is being used

indefinitely to indicate a “period.” It is not indicating a day for a year idea, it is just using the septennate of the week on another scale, just as the seventh month was sanctified as well.<sup>125</sup>

And so it is the case for so many of these occurrences.

### **Brown, Driver and Briggs Gesenius Lexicon**

BDB categorises the word *yôm* differently than Tregelles’ version of Gesenius. their categorisation is as follows:

1. day, as an opposite to Night
2. Day, as a division of time, i.e., 24 hours.
3. day of Jehovah
4. Pl. Days of anyone
5. Days, indefinite or long time
6. time.
7. Phases with/without preps

Again with the BDB, the use of day covers such a wide spectrum, that we can see that this is one of the common words that can have many shades. To argue for a principle from these generalised applications of the word is a misuse of the idiom being used.

### **2.7.4 The Use of “Hour” as an idiom.**

The use of “day” as an idiomatic word in languages in general, and Biblical languages in particular has another companion – the use of the word “hour” as an indefinite expression of time. The Hebrew has no instance of this in the OT. The English translation “hour” from the Aramaic is as follows:

B.A. *Sha‘ah*:

**Dn 3:6**

And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same *hour* be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

**Dn3:15**

Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same *hour* into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

**Dn4:19**

Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for one *hour*, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

, **Dn4:33**

The same *hour* was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

**Dn5:5**

In the same *hour* came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

Reading the following texts we can classify all of the texts referring to the hour as roughly a small period of time, in much the same way as we use hour. But that changes when we travel forward to New Testament times, where we find many references to “hour” as a generic time to an “era.”

<sup>125</sup> Shea’s failure to recognise this failure in the texts he has quoted is a fatal weakness in his theory.

All translated as “hour.” This probably reflects Babylonian custom of breaking the day into hours in a similar fashion to the Egyptian, but is noticeably absent from Hebrew texts, maybe due to the fact that they operated under a different chronological system to the Babylonians and Egyptians.

The question I raise is whether the period is called an “hour” should be treated in the same manner that Shea and others have treated “day” and “year”? When we get the terms “the hour of his judgment” in an apocalyptic statement in Revelation, should we not, using Shea’s paradigm, translate that into a period of one twenty-fourth of a solar year, or 15 days? This would give us 15 days for the Investigative Judgment starting in October 22, 1844, and finishing 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1844. One only needs to see how Miller and Litch endorsed conversion of “hour” in the sixth trumpet of Revelation 9 into a fifteen day period. Why cannot the same be done elsewhere? Take another example, this time from Revelation 18:8. The usual explanation of this phrase “therefore shall her plagues come in one day” is that this text indicates the time period for the falling of the seven last plagues will be one year, when the year-day principle is applied to this text, as is done by SDA historicists. Therefore there is no reason why this same reasoning should not be applied to Rev. 14: 6, 7, and see a 15-day investigative judgment depicted there.

### **2.7.5 The Use of “day” in Sabbatical Year and Jubilee Legislation**

#### **The Text of Leviticus 25:1-8**

#### **BHS**

25 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי לֵאמֹר: 2 דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי כְנָעַן  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם  
 וּשְׁבַתָּה הָאָרֶץ שְׁבַת לַיהוָה: 3 שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים תִּזְרַע שָׂדֶךְ וּשְׁשׁ שָׁנִים  
 תִּזְמַר כְּרֶמֶךָ וְאָסַפְתָּ אֶת־תְּבוּאָתָהּ: 4 וּבַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית שְׁבַת שְׁבַתוֹן  
 יִהְיֶה לָאָרֶץ שְׁבַת לַיהוָה שָׂדֶךְ לֹא תִזְרַע וְכְרֶמְךָ לֹא תִזְמַר: 5 אֵת  
 סְפִיחֶיךָ קְצִירְךָ לֹא תִקְצֹר וְאֶת־עֲנָבֶיךָ וְזֵיתְךָ לֹא תִבְצֹר שְׁנַת שְׁבַתוֹן  
 יִהְיֶה לָאָרֶץ: 6 וְהָיְתָה שְׁבַת הָאָרֶץ לָכֶם לֶאֱכֹלָה לָךְ וּלְעַבְדְּךָ<sup>a</sup>

**KJV**

- 1.And the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,
- 2.Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord.
3. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;
4. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, or prune thy vineyard.
5. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither garner the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.
- 6.And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you: for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee.
7. And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat.
- 8.And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.
9. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.
10. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family.
11. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.
12. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.
13. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession.

**NIV**

And the Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai,  
“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the Lord.  
For six years sow your fields, and for six year prune your vineyards and gather their crops.  
But in the seventh year, the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards.  
Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest.  
Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you – for yourself, your manservant, and maidservant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. What the land produces may be eaten.  
Count off seven sabbaths of years – seven times seven years – so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years.  
Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land.  
Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each one to his own clan.  
The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines.

For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you, eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

## 1. Early Examples of Historicists' Application of the Jubilee in Leviticus 25

The use of the texts in Lev 25 did not originate with Shea. Froom documents some of the colourful applications historicists have made with the legislation in Leviticus 25.

### Nicholaus of Cusa (1400? –1464)

Cusa was a “theologian, mathematician, scientist, and scholar...studied law, as well as Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy, and in later years, Arabic.” (Froom, 1948, p.125) He studied law becoming a Doctor of Laws, but his interest in theology lead him to become a Doctor of Theology, holding such offices as archdeacon of Liège at the Council of Basel. He was a prolific and influential writer. In one work, “*Coniectura Domini Nicolai de Cusa, de Novissimis Diebus* (Conjecture Concerning the Last Days)” he discusses the Jubilee:

“All time is unrolled in periods of seven, as seven days, seven years, seven times seven years, which are forty-nine. Hence the fiftieth year is after a wearisome revolution of time, a sabbathkeeping in which all slavery ceases and returns to liberty.” [Froom footnotes: “Translated from *Coniectura*, in *Opera*, p.933).”]

As fifty years of the church comprise a jubilee, so one year of our Lord’s life may represent a jubilee period. Because Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, and the church is the follower of Him, so one “solar revolution,” or year, so to speak, in the life of our Lord, may correspond to “one revolution in the journeying of the church.” Thus “more than fifty jubilees lead to the resurrection of the church.” Such was Cusa’s “Conjecture” as he calls it. In 1452, when he wrote it, he states that there were already twenty-nine jubilees in the past. (So, on the basis of this speculation, the end-time would come about 2502)

On the basis of this analogy of the history of the church with the symbolic years of Christ’s life – and with the final events of Christ’s life paralleled in the life of the church – Cusa applies his theory of the thirty-fourth jubilee as perhaps falling between 1700 and 1734... (Ibid, pp.131-132)

Froom notes that Cusa cites “Philo on the flood of water coming in the thirty-fourth jubilee after the first Adam, Cusa conjectures the end of sin about 34 jubilees after Christ, and 2300 years from Daniel.” (Froom, Ibid, p.135)

### Homan and Nolan

Various interpretations of the jubilee thrived through the centuries. Two more documented by Froom in the advent awakening at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries include those of a littleknown Mr. Homan, published in *The Morning Watch*, and that of a similarly unknown Scottish cleric, Frederick Nolan.

Homan cited a number of prophecies that he thought would terminate in 1843:

(1) the seven times, or 2520 years, from the captivity of Israel by Esarhaddon, in the reign of Manasseh in 677 B.C., which “will be found to terminate in A.D. 1843”; (2) the 2300 days to the cleansing of the sanctuary, from “the decree for restoring the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews,” from the seventh year of Artaxerxes, A.D. 457; “consequently, the 2300 days, reckoned from this, terminate in A.D. 1843”; (3) restoration of Israel will take place in the Jubilee, and according to the computations of many chronologers, the next Jubilee will occur in 1843 or 1844; (4) the 391 years of the Ottoman power – an hour, day, month, and year, from the capture of Constantinople in 1453 to 1844. (Froom, 1946, p.502)

Apparently the alignment of the next Jubilee with his calculation of the other time periods was enough for him to conclude that the impending Jubilee was going to be the beginning of that event to which the real antitypical Jubilee pointed.

Frederick Nolan, spoke of the relation between the Jubilee, the seven trumpets, the day of Atonement, and the Millennium:



Noting also the system of septenaries, with the sabbath of days, of weeks, and of months, the Jews also had their sabbaths of years, and a great sabbath of the septennial period termed the Jubilee. This commenced on the Day of Atonement and was ushered in with the sound of trumpets. This was considered “a type of that great sabbatism to which we give the name of the Millennium.” Such is the “exact correspondence” between the earthly and the heavenly services of the tabernacle...

The opening of the seventh seal then indicates the opening of the millennium, and the Jubilee. And these transcendent events “are alike represented to commence with the great Day of Atonement, and the Jubilee. (Ibid, p.610)

Froom notes however, that Nolan changed his views before his 1837 publication, which expresses a different view on the 2300 days, 666 and 1260 years. (Ibid) Readers should note that these writers are very obscure and should not be considered as being influential. They are just two samples that Froom is able to find.

### William Miller

William Miller had his own brand of interpretation of this chapter not often discussed by Adventists, but just as colourful as many of the other versions of the Jubilee down through the centuries. Arasola has brought it back into the consciousness of Adventist thinkers in his recent publication, *The End of Historicism*. Arasola calls it “one of Miller’s most imaginative interpretations” (1989, p.113). Arasola explains Miller’s reasoning:

As seven days constitute a sabbath, so seven kinds of sabbath form a complete round of sabbaths, and carry us up to the perfect sabbath in heaven. The seven Sabbaths Miller found were 1) the seventh-day Sabbath; 2) the fiftieth-day sabbath (Lev 23:15, 16); 3) the seventh week sabbath (Deut 16:9, 10), 4) the seventh month sabbath (Lev 23: 24, 25), 5) the seventh year sabbath (Lev 25:3-5), 6) “the year fiftieth Jubilee” (Lev 25:8-13), and 7) the fiftieth Jubilee, which he designated the antitype of all sabbaths. The Jews kept but six Sabbaths; if they had kept the seventh they would have been made perfect without us; but they broke the seventh. “Therefore there remains a keeping of the Sabbath to the people of God.” (Heb 4:9).

The symbolism of the Jubilees was interpreted in a forthright manner. The Jubilee was thought to mean consummation and restoration, deliverance “from bondage and corruption” and the time to be “introduced into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” The method of counting the time was uncomplicated. It included no device for manipulating the time from days to years. “How long,” writes Miller, “is a Jubilee of Jubilees? Ans. 49 times 50 years = 2450 years. (pp.114-115)

Arasola then explains Millers reasoning for choosing 607 B.C. for his starting point for counting the 2450 years. He then unpacks Millers logic for us, showing his calculation terminated in 1843 A.D. No surprises here!! What *is* surprising is Miller’s logic. Arasola explains:

Miller’s argument is somewhat baffling. One may appreciate the Jubilee signifying freedom from slavery and return of ownership on the land. These features made the Jubilee a frequently acclaimed symbol of the second advent in Miller’s time. Yet the idea of a prophetic Jubilee appears somewhat out of place. Miller’s arguments are normally replete with Biblical texts. For obvious reasons he is not able to find a single text pointing to the fiftieth Jubilee. The whole idea is based more on a desire to find mathematical order within the Scriptures than on the usual multitude of proof texts.

Even within historicist ideals Miller should have seen that in his list of seven Sabbaths the second and the third sabbath were one and the same festival, the feast of weeks or the Pentecost. This must be so within Miller’s own biblicist method which is characterized by harmonization. There is another point that Miller does not discuss. Contemporary scholars found no agreement upon whether 49 or 50 years should be counted. Mathematical harmony appears to have been more important for him than a critical look at his own theories and agreement even with the conservative Biblical scholarship of the time.(pp.116-117)<sup>126</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Arasola’s work has copious footnotes. Readers are referred there for them.

## 2. Contemporary SDA explanations of the Jubilee.

Contemporary SDA writers have had their incursions into explanations on the jubilee.

### Spangler

*Ministry* editor Robert Spangler comments on Lev 25 in the special Glacier View:

*The year-day principle is upheld in the narrative portions of the Old Testament as well. (a) Leviticus 25:8 uses the expression “seven sabbaths of years” according to the Hebrew, and translated as “seven weeks of years” according to the R.S.V. in speaking of the jubilee year. Here terminology for a one-week or seven day period is applied to a seven-year period. This is the day-for-a-year reckoning. (1980, p.46)*

Spangler shows his ignorance here since the text actually explains the time units involved is explained and no year-day principle is being used here. It is literal language. The text actually says, “seven weeks of years.” There is nothing covert in this explanation. It is seven weeks of years. That is, seven lots of seven years or 49 years. Nothing is missing in what is said that needs to be supplied to get to 49 years. When we look at the texts in Daniel where SDA historicists say the year-day principle is present, we do not get the same literal language as we have here in Leviticus 25. We have to assume something to get to the desired numerical result. We have to supply something to the 3 ½ times to make it 1260 years; we have to supply something to 2300 evenings and mornings to make it 2300 years; and we have to supply something to 1290- and 1335-days to get to 1290 or 1335 years. It is not innate to the text; something needs to be supplied. This is entirely different than what we have in Leviticus 25.

If the mere mention of a grouping of seven is the key Spangler sees linking the two together, then we must see the year-day principle in the multiplicity of things included in the instructions given to Israel that use seven as its numerical value. If the link is the relation between the word week and the “sabbath of years,” then on the contrary, this shows that Israel thought in groups of seven years, *without* the year-day principle, and this text proves that the interpretation of the 70 weeks of Dn9 as weeks of years, without the year-day principle is upheld. The association between the seven-day week, and the seven-year cycle with its common septennate scale does not prove a year-day principle. The presence of the septennate scale in the sanctuary system paraphernalia confirms a wider context of this scale, wider than its presence in the seven-day week. The intertestamental literature shows how common this septennate scale- weeks of years – had become by the third century B.C.

### Shea

#### Shea –Year Day Principle in Leviticus 25:1-7?

Shea uses Lev. 25:1-7 as *prima facie* evidence for the year day principle, because in his view, this is the earliest use of the year-day interchange. In his words:

This is the earliest biblical text in which the year-day principle is reflected. <sup>127</sup>In this piece of Levitical legislation an institution which has come to be designated as the sabbatical year was established for the Israelite agricultural economy. For six years the Israelite farmer was instructed to sow his fields, prune his vineyards, and gather the harvest into his barns and storehouses. But in the seventh year he was instructed to leave the land to lie fallow and the vineyards and orchards pruned. What grew of itself could be eaten as food by anyone – the alien, the poor, the slave, as well as by the owner; but it was not to be harvested and stored.

The sabbatical year was marked off as the last or seventh year in a period of seven years. The legislation was introduced with these words: “When you come into land which I give you, *the land shall keep a sabbath to the Lord* [italics mine]” (v.2). The “sabbath” referred to in this instance, however, was not the

<sup>127</sup> Does Daniel 9:2 indicate that we were to consider the year-day principle in the sabbatical-year system? Does 2Chronicles?

weekly seventh-day Sabbath but the “sabbath” of every seventh year. A literal translation of the phrase would read, “the land shall sabbathize a sabbath to Yahweh.”

When the command is repeated again in v.4, it is stated in a slightly different manner: the seventh year was to be “a sabbath ...for the land, a sabbath to the Lord.” The comment was also added that it was to be a “sabbath of solemn rest (*shabbat shabbatôn*).”<sup>128</sup> When this latter phrase is repeated in v.5, the word for “year” occurs in the same position as the word for “sabbath.” Thus the two statements read, The seventh year:

“shall be a *sabbath* of solemn rest for the land” (v.4).

“shall be a *year* of solemn rest for the land” (v.5).

The grammatical parallelism emphasizes again the identification of that year as a sabbath for the land to Yahweh.

*Shabbatôn* (solemn rest), the second Hebrew root which occurs in these phrases, obviously derives from the root for sabbath (*shabbat*). It is commonly translated “solemn rest” or a similar expression. Andreason has found this word “to describe that which really characterized the Sabbath, or any other day which has Sabbath qualities. In that sense it has been therefore, that *shabbatôn* describes the content of the Sabbath, i.e., it is an abstraction of ‘keeping Sabbath,’...[Shea footnotes: “Niels-Erik A.Andreasion, *The Old Testament Sabbaths*, Society of Biblical Literature, Dissertation Series, No. 7 (Missoula, 1972), p.113”]

The word *shabbatôn* only occurs in Exodus and Leviticus, and those books it occurs in ten passages. It is applied to the weekly Sabbath (Exod 16:23; 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3), the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:31; 23:32), the Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:34), and to the first and last days of the Feast of Booths (Lev 23:39), in addition to its two instances in connection with the sabbatical year considered above (Lev 25:4, 5).

Since the festival days (Feast of Trumpets; Day of Atonement; first and last day of Feast of Booths) could fall on days other than the seventh day of the week, it is evident that the word *shabbatôn* could also be used for days other than the weekly sabbath. However, it is evident that the weekly Sabbath has been the pattern and that its special significance has been extended to those festival days. It is their Sabbath-day quality that makes them sabbaths of solemn rest.<sup>129</sup>

More important for the present discussion is the evidence that *shabbatôn* (outside our passage in Lev. 25:1-7) is never applied to more than one day at a time. The day of the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement were individual days which fell on the first and tenth days of the seventh month. It was not the whole Feast of Booths that was a *shabbat shabbatôn*, but only the first and the eighth days of that festival that qualified for that particular designation. **Thus the other usages of this word refer to single or individual days. In like manner, in Lev 25:4, 5 the word has been taken over and applied to single or individual years. In this manner a word with more specific connections to individual days has been applied by analogy in Lev 25 to individual years.**

It is clearly implied in Lev 25:1-7 that the sabbatical year is modeled from the sabbatical day, that is, from the weekly Sabbath. Six days of labor were followed by the seventh day of Sabbath rest; six years of farming were to be followed by a seventh year of sabbath rest for the land. The seventh year, the sabbatical year, was likewise to be a sabbath of “solemn rest” for the land (Lev 25:4,5).

Thus there is a direct relationship between the “day” and the “year” since the same terminology was applied to both, and the latter sabbatical year was patterned after the former sabbatical day. (Shea, 1982, pp.69-71)<sup>130</sup>

<sup>128</sup> My transcription here is a little different than Shea's.

<sup>129</sup> Yet Shea is not prepared here to assert any time relationship between these festivals, as he does for the sabbatical year, yet on these days they indulge in the same activity as that engaged in during the sabbatical year – solemn rest. If the significant thing is the *shabbatôn* –the keeping of solemn year, in the case of the sabbatical year, it is the land that keeps *shabbatôn* – then it is not the time period that is the focus, but the activity. That this is not computed in a day for a year principle method, is clear in regard to the next discussion on the Jubilee year. This is not computed on a day for a year, but a day for seven years. If Shea sees the sabbatical year as the first incidence of a prophetic time principle, then perhaps we can also take the same for the year of the Jubilee, and calculate the time period on a day-for-seven-years principle!

<sup>130</sup> Interestingly, the same logic can be applied to the day-for-a-millennium principle, in that the history of the world from creation is seen as the six days, and the seventh day of eternal rest from the labours of this world represent the Sabbath of “solemn rest” in eternity. Cf. Keil, 1978, *Genesis*, (pp.69f): “... the Sabbath of God has no evening, and that the *σαββατισμος*, to which the creature is to attain at the end of his course, will be bounded by no evening, but last for ever...this day of rest of the newly created world, which the forefathers of our race observed in paradise, as long as they continued in a state of innocence and lived in blessed peace with their God and Creator, was the beginning and type of the rest to which the creation, after it had fallen from fellowship with God through the sin of man, received a promise that it should once more be restored

## Rebuttal to Shea's ideas on the Sabbatical Year –Leviticus 25:1-7

Before we examine Shea's ideas, we should look at the text under review:

1. And the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,
2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord.
3. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;
4. But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, or prune thy vineyard.
5. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither garner the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.
6. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you: for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee.
7. And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat.

It is not hard to notice that the seven-year cycle for the Sabbatical Year for the Land, it based on the weekly cycle. One could not help but notice both have a septenate scale.

The cycle for the work of a persons work is one day. The cycle for the land's 'labour' is one year. The land's cycle goes from the first bud in the spring until it buds again the following spring. That is the *smallest* unit of a cycle for the land. That is when it repeats the process. It completes one unit of work when the second begins. The resurrection of life each year, the growth, harvest and death at the end of the season, with the coming dormant period during winter – a cycle embedded in the fertility cults – completes a single cycle for the land. The Sabbatical year cycle gave six units of harvested production for the land, and one cycle to cease from harvested production. We repeat our process of work every day. We work from dawn until dusk and revitalise ourselves with sleep for the next day's work. Our cycle is complete in twenty-four hours. A full septenate cycle for us humans and beast of burden, was six units for work and one to cease work.

For people, the Sabbath is a 24-hour day because our cycle is from sunset until the next sunset, (not that modern Western society reckons from this point in the day). The seven-year cycle is for the land. Different subjects, different cycles. Both people and land keep one unit out of seven in a cycle as a period of rest. For people it is a 24-hour period. For the land it is a one year period. This is not a year-day correspondence. There is a vast scope of difference in the subjects working and resting in either model. In the weekly model, it is man, beast and visitor. In the seven-yearly, it is the land. This is a "day-man year-land" principle.

If we are to argue a year-day principle here then it should only apply to prophecies about land, not about people, as this text only applies this extended 7-year cycle to agricultural production. But all the time prophecies in Daniel relate to people: bad people against good people, or better, God's people. Therefore, any analogy for the year-day principle used later in Scripture, must consider this important difference.

The pattern is what had been designated "a holy day" has this quality of *shabbatôn* attached to it. It is not "seventh-day" qualities that make them thus; it is what was given to the seventh-day, is also given to them (i.e., to non-seventh-day Sabbaths). It is the "holy day" quality that is attached to them, as it was attached to the Sabbath. One must remember that the base idea of the

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through redemption, as its final consummation." The day-for-a-millennium principle was a principle that Miller employed, and based on Shea's ideas, its basis in the weekly sabbath is good reason to retain it as a valid principle. (Not that Shea endorses that principle; it is just the logical extension of his reasoning.)

Sabbath is to “cease.” This is the verbal idea associated with the root verb from which Sabbath is associated.

The reason the Sabbath of years has attached *shabbatôn* to it, is because it is not a 7-year sabbath for the people; it is a 7<sup>th</sup>-year sabbath for the land. As Shea has pointed out, the *shabbatôn* quality can be attached to days other than the seventh-day of the week. In the festivals that fell on days other than the Sabbath, this same quality was attached to them by the command of God. As Jastrow points out, *shabbatôn* is very Babylonian and has its idea in the concept of fear and dread, and was associated with the middle of the month – not the seventh day of the week. (1914, Chapter 3) Thus *shabbatôn* need not necessarily be associated with the seventh-day sanctification in itself, but has much older roots in the cults and religions of Mesopotamia, and on days not associated with the seventh-day.

### Shea –Year Day Principle in Leviticus 25:8?

Shea uses the statements in Leviticus on the Jubilee to further his justification of the day for a year principle.<sup>131</sup> His arguments are:

The day-year principle operates in legislative passages;

A “sabbath of years” = a period of seven years.

The term “sabbath” here is used for the seventh year.

The day-year principle is at work here.

Leviticus 25:8 Even though this is a legislative passage, the day-year operates in the same way here as it does in Daniel – the use of days (extended into the future) to mark off the “years” of the future.

The passage is concerned with instruction for observance of the jubilee year. A literal translation of the opening clause of Lev 25:8 reads:

“You shall count seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times, and to you the days of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty nine years.”

The explanation of the first numerical expression, as given in the second phrase of the same clause, indicates that a “sabbath of years” is to be understood as a *period* of seven years. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week. In this passage the seventh day has been taken to stand for a *seventh year*. As the seventh and concluding day of the week, the Sabbath has been taken over here to stand for the *seventh year* of a period of seven years. Thus *each day* of the “weeks” which end with these “sabbaths” in the jubilee cycle stand for *one year*.<sup>132</sup>

If he is arguing about the relationship between the sabbatical years and the weekly sabbath, then of course his conclusion is correct. The pattern the sabbatical year *was* modeled on was the weekly cycle. It is a day for a year. But the scale for the Jubilee and the weekly cycle, on which it too is based, according to Shea, is one day for seven years. The groupings of the seven years

<sup>131</sup> Shea has not noticed that the grouping of seven in the jubilee is that each unit of the seven is a seven-year unit. That is to say we have a day-for-seven-years principle, since by his admission the jubilee is being modeled on the weekly cycle.

<sup>132</sup> Consider Jastrow’s work on the meaning of *shabbaton* in Babylonian and Assyrian literature. (1914, pp. 143-195) It was a quality that was attached to a certain day. From that we get that it is not that the Sabbath was the pattern for the *shabbaton*; it was given to the Sabbath and well as to other days. It was the separation of that day for a special purpose that endowed that day with *shabbaton*. In the Jewish model it was the word of God, or better the command of God that invested that day with “solemn rest.” Not because it was modeled on the Sabbath, but because the worshipper had the peace of knowing they were honouring God as God had instructed. And this peace and harmony with the will of God facilitated that rest that remained for the people of God in those feast days, though they did not fall on the Sabbath day.

Shea has commented on the week as the individual unit of each “sabbath of years,” but he has failed to comment on the combination of the seven of those “sabbaths of years” as making up a week as well, with each unit being a “sabbath of years.” The jubilee is a Sabbath of “sabbath of years.” It works on the principle of the six periods being seven years long each and the seventh being only one year (instead of seven, like all the six “sabbaths of years” before it). That the fiftieth year is the Jubilee and not the forty-ninth is argued well by Keil: “This year of grace was proclaimed and began with the day of atonement of every seventh sabbatical year, to show that it was only with the full forgiveness of sins that the blessed liberty of the children of God could possibly commence. This grand year of grace was to return after seven times seven years; i.e., as is expressly stated in ver.10, every fiftieth year was to be sanctified as a year of jubilee. By the regulation of time, the view held by R. Jehuda, and the chronologists and antiquarians who have followed him, that every seventh sabbatical year, i.e., the 49<sup>th</sup> year, was to be kept as the year of jubilee, is proved to be at variance with the text, and the fiftieth year is shown to be the year of rest, in which the sabbatical idea attained its fullest realization, and reached its temporal close.” (1978, *Pentateuch*, pp.458f)

represented one day on the weekly cycle. He has avoided this point. One day equals seven years. He only discusses the year-day coincidence of the weekly cycle with the sabbatical year cycle. He does not discuss the coincidence of the weekly cycle with the Jubilee, even though he acknowledges the relationship between the weekly cycle and the Jubilee:

Thus the Sabbath day and the six days that preceded it came to be used as the model by which the occurrence of the jubilee year was calculated according to divine directions. Each of these year-days was to extend into the future from the beginning of those cycles to measure off the coming of the jubilee year.

In prophecy this use of the year-day principle is paralleled most directly by Dan 9:24-27. A different word (*shabû'a*) is used in that prophecy, but it means the same thing that the "sabbaths" mean in Lev 25:8, that is, "weeks." **The applicability of the year-day principle to the time periods in Dan 9:24-27 is especially evident, therefore, from the parallel construction of the Levitical instruction on the jubilee year. One could almost say that the time period involved in Dan 9:24-27 was modeled after the jubilee legislation.**

Since it is legitimate to apply the year-day principle to the days of the weeks of Lev 25 to reckon time into the future to the next Jubilee, it is also legitimate to apply that same year-day principle to the days of the weeks of Dan 9 to reckon time into the future from the beginning of their cycle. By extension, this same principle can be reasonably applied also to the "days" of the other time prophecies in Daniel. (1982, pp.71-72)<sup>133</sup>

### Rebuttal to Shea's ideas on the Jubilee –Leviticus 25:8ff.

Again, here is the text under discussion:

8.And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

9. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

10. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family.

11. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.

12. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.

13. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession.

First, there are some similarities and dissimilarities between the weekly cycle and the jubilee cycle. Although the Jubilee uses a septenate scale, the Jubilee is not fully based on the weekly cycle. With the weekly cycle, six parts are devoted to the normal round of activities and the seventh part is set apart from the previous six parts for other activities, in Israel's case, religious activities. If the Jubilee followed the weekly cycle pattern, then for 42 years (six lots of seven years) there would be the normal loss and gain of land, slaves, and personal freedom, and for the last seven years would be the celebration of the Jubilee. With the biblical Jubilee however, the

<sup>133</sup> That the "sabbath" terminology was intended furthermore to stand for "weeks" is evident from parallel phraseology given two chapter earlier. Reference is made there to the Festival of Weeks or Pentecost being celebrated after seven "full weeks," literally, "seven Sabbaths, full ones" (*shabbatôt t'mîmot*, Lev 23:15). Since one must count more than full sabbath "days" to get to the fiftieth day designated for the celebration of Pentecost, it is evident that "sabbaths" means "weeks" here, just as it is commonly translated in the various translations of the Bible. This parallel phraseology pertaining to Pentecost indicates that the "sabbaths" referred to in Lev 25:8 with reference to the jubilee must also be "weeks."



full *seven* parts are devoted to the normal round of activities in changing, buying and selling land, slaves etc and an *eighth* period is appended to the previous seven parts. But the eighth part is not the same length as the previous seven – it only goes for a maximum one year (depending on whether there was a 49-year Jubilee cycle or a 50-year cycle). And then the next set of the seven sets of seven begin. Even if we count the forty-ninth year as a Jubilee, the same dissimilarity between the two cycles is evident.

Second, the other thing Shea has overlooked here is that if he wants to base the Jubilee on the concept of the Sabbath, then it is a principle of *1 day equaling 7 years*. The sabbatical year period is a group of seven, a “sabbath of year” or a week of years. This is symbolic of one day in the weekly cycle for the Jubilee cycle. Shea says, “Thus the Sabbath day and the six days that preceded it came to be used as the model by which the occurrence of the jubilee year was calculated according to divine directions.” In the sabbatical-year cycle, we have a scale of one Sabbath period (or week, or seven days) equals seven years. With the jubilee however, if it is based on the weekly Sabbath, as Shea suggests it is, then one Sabbath period (of 7 days) equals 49 years, or each day symbolising 7 years each. So if Shea wants to see the year-day principle at work here, he has now *two time scales* to work with; the *1-year for every day* scale in the sabbatical-year cycle, and the *7-year for every day* scale in the Jubilee cycle. If we count the fiftieth year in the Jubilee cycle, then it is worse – one day equals  $7 \frac{1}{7}$  years. He cannot say that the year-day cycle is working with the sabbatical-year cycle because if we have to apply the year-day principle to the years as Shea does in the book of Daniel the figures would be ridiculous ( $7 \times 360$ -i.e., one sabbatical year cycle)  $\times 7$  would give us a jubilee period using the year-day principle. This computes to 17, 640 years.

Needless to say, Shea is incorrect. The proper way to see this is a septenate scale; that is to say, things are grouped together in groups of seven. We see the seven concept used frequently in the Jewish culture established in the Torah. It is pervasive, and it is not limited to periodisation of time. CITE SOME EXAMPLES HERE, eg., seven candlesticks,

To say that all the groupings of seven are based on the Sabbath is naïve and ignores this overarching penchant in the Lord’s dealing with Israel. He wanted them to know something about the significance of seven. There is abundant evidence from Mesopotamia about the significance of the number seven in that culture. Just how much of that significance the Hebrews incorporated into their own culture is not an easy question to answer. We see a similarity between the quantity of the week, the “week of years” and the week of “Week of years,” or the Jubilee. They are quantified in sevens, as is so much else in the culture outlined in the Torah. It is more basic than the Sabbath. And it is this that dictates the choice for the unit of seven in the various aspects of their culture.<sup>134</sup> The text in Leviticus teaches neither a year-day principle nor a 7-year-day principle. It does teach however, “weeks of year” without any year-day principle. So when Jews come to Dn9, they have no difficulty understanding the ‘week of years’ concept taught implicitly in their cyclic festivals.

That being said, however, Shea is correct in saying, “One could almost say that the time period involved in Dan 9:24-27 was modeled after the jubilee legislation.” (1982, p. 72) The jubilee legislation is not developed using the year-day principle because it states quite explicitly that we must consider the units of seven to be “of years.” Thus we do not have to apply any scale to decipher the exact quantity involved. It is laid out before us. And Dan 9:24 does exactly the same thing, except for the addition “of years.” The specific word in Daniel however, being used to indicate a group of seven, whether of days or years, depending on the context, demands years in this context, and that is what translators have supplied down through the centuries; but without

<sup>134</sup> For instance, what guided Jacob to choose seven years to work for Rachel? What principle was in place that made him nominate that period? Why did he choose seven years both times? Why not seven years for Rachael whom he adored, and say, five, for Leah, whom he got tricked into marrying but had no feelings for.

using any year-day principle. Furthermore, the relationship between Dn9:2 and Dn9:24 leads us automatically to these verses in Leviticus, where the original model is used, and where we are given the understanding that the “sevens,” like in the Jubilee calculations, are “of years.” And furthermore, Shea is correct in noticing the usage of “sabbath” to indicate a week or grouping of seven. But the sabbath of years means a group of seven years, and that grouping represented one unit on the weekly scale. Now if Shea is wanting to find the year-day principle here, then he should be comparing the weekly scale to the Jubilees scale; but that yields a scale of one day representing seven years. So he is faced with a dilemma: the Sabbatical year system when compared with the weekly cycle gives a scale of one day represents a year. The Jubilee system when compared with the weekly cycle gives a scale of one day represents seven years. The comparison of the Sabbatical year system with the Jubilee system gives a scale of one year represents seven years – a scale totally unrelated to the year-day principle.

If Shea wants to depend on Leviticus 25 for a demonstration of the year-day principle, he has the same problem here as he has in the reversal situation we find in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6. Which scale can be chosen? Which is to be ignored? Perhaps we should adopt Shea’s novel proposal and accept them all as long as there is a conversion of time; it is all a part of the *continuum* of applying the year-day principle. He does not stop to ponder the illogical position he has placed himself in. He now has four different ways the year day principle can be applied in four different texts. And each one of them does not correspond with how the SDA historicists apply the year-day principle. One would be forgiven for thinking that Shea is stuck between a rock and a hard place here.

Third, Shea says, “Leviticus 25:8 Even though this is a legislative passage, the day-year operates in the same way here as it does in Daniel – the use of days (extended into the future) to mark off the ‘years’ of the future.” (Ibid) Or again, “Each of these year-days was to extend into the future from the beginning of those cycles to measure off the coming of the jubilee year.” (Ibid) It is true this refers to legislation about how to regulate future time periods. But this is not a prophetic piece of literature, nor is the year-day principle occurring here. There are no future “days” used in this text. It merely asks the Israelites to count off “...seven sabbaths of years, seven years seven times, and to you the days of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty nine years.” There is no mention of them counting of seven single days or even counting off forty-nine single days. It does not exist in this legislation. Shea is reading into the text. They are told to count *seven sets of seven years finishing with the sabbatical year each time*, not individual days, or even sets of individual days. To try and argue that point from “the *days* of the seven sabbaths of year shall be forty-nine years” is pointless and just undermines any credibility that Shea may salvage from this appalling piece of writing. The word *day* here as a plural without a preceding number is indicative of just an indefinite period, and is best translated as “*time*,” or “*period*.” That particular phrase should read in modern English “the *time* of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty-nine years.” Furthermore, Shea says Leviticus 25 operates in the same way “as it does here in Daniel.” By that he means we can find “the use of days (extended into the future) to mark off the ‘years’ of the future.” In Daniel, for instance we read of “time, times and a half.” There is no mention of the phrase “of years.” It is just understood to mean 1260 days some time in the future. By using the year-day principle, Shea can mark off 1260 years in the future, a much longer period than the 1260 days. In Leviticus 25 we do not get a mention of a short period in verse 8 at all. And the longer period is *expressed, and it is expressed as being in years*. There is nothing to be converted, nothing to be understood by invoking the year-day principle. It is all spelt out. There is no similarity between Leviticus 25:8 and Daniel’s time periods.

Shea says, “the day-year operates in the same way here as it does in Daniel.” If the year-day principle is in operation in Dn9 then we should see the same style of use of the year-day

principle here as we see in the other places in Daniel – symbolic time, with no explicit explanation that they mean something else.

Daniel 9 says, “seventy-weeks are determined...” In the SDA process of reasoning, there is no explicit explanation here that we are to understand “of years,” but the concept of “week” has the innate idea of seven “days,” therefore we are to assume that each “day” of those seventy weeks is a year, making 490 years in all. Thus, readers can see that in the text there is nothing explicit – if we use SDA reasoning – that leads us to 490 years. It is only by applying this exterior year-day principle that we get this figure.

Applying this to Leviticus 25:8, the text should read, “you shall count seven sabbaths, seven times seven, and to you the days (i.e., time) of the seven sabbaths shall be 49 sabbaths.” This would give evidence of the year-day principle at work, because we have to use it to get to 49 years, rather than 49 weeks.

But the text in Leviticus specifically says, “of years,” defining the period for us. It does not give us a “coded” period like 70 weeks, 2300 evening-mornings, 3½ times, 1290 and 1335 days, all meaning the equivalent quantity in years, in SDA reasoning. According to their reasoning, *the years are not expressed* where the year-day principle *is* operating. The corollary of such reasoning is that *years are expressed* where the year-day principle *is not* operating. Therefore, we should expect the text to be expressed only in “days” or “sabbaths” if the year-day principle is active in Leviticus 25. *The text is expressed in years; therefore either it is talking about 17,640 years (49 years of 360 symbolic/prophetic days) or the year-day principle is not in operation in Leviticus 25.*

CONCLUSION ON SHEA’S WORK ON Jubilee / sabbathical year.

### 3. Spangler’s Link Between Dn 8:14 and Dn 11:13

#### INTRODUCTION TO SPANGLERS ARGUMENT NEEDED.

The desperate use dubious arguments to buttress the year-day principle do not stop. Consider yet another inventive attempt by Spangler. The following texts are used by Spangler to create a very curious link proving the 2300 days to be years:

Daniel 8: 13, 14

**13** Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

**14** And he said unto me, **Unto two thousand and three hundred days;** then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Daniel 11:13

**11** And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

**12** And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down many ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened by it.

**13** For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after **certain years** with a great army and with much riches.

**14** And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

Here then is Spangler’s logic:

The year-day principle is also found in the relationship between Daniel 8 and 11. The 2300 days of Daniel 8 is described in terms of days (literally, “evenings-mornings” cf. Gen. 1:5), while Daniel 11 describes the same period of time in terms of years. Scholars have long recognized that Daniel 11 is an

expansion of some aspects of Daniel 8, just as Daniel 8 is a fuller description of some of the aspects of chapter 7, and chapter 7 is a fuller description of chapter 2. ...The only time period in the Daniel 8 vision is the 2300 days (verse 14), and the only time reference in chapter 11 is that of years (verses 6, 8, 13). Although Daniel 8 and 11 parallel each other, there are some basic distinctions. One is that Daniel 8 records an apocalyptic vision seen by Daniel, which ends with verse 14, according to the remark in verse 15, and is followed by the interpretation given by Gabriel in verses 16 to 26. On the other hand, Daniel 11 then is in narrative form, and its language should be viewed more literally than symbolically, while chapter 8 should be seen as more symbolical than literal. The terms “mighty king” (11:3), “the daughter of the king of the south” (11:6), “Egypt” (11:8), “molten images” (11:8), “great army” (11:13), “exactor of tribute” (11:20), are generally interpreted literally. Daniel 11 has no reference to “days,” “weeks,” or “months,” thus the three references to “years” in that chapter must be seen as the only parallel to the 2300 days, but he designated the whole vision as pertaining to “the appointed time of the end” and to a period “many days hence” (8:19, 26). We would expect more, then, to be said specifically about this specific time period later in the book. And it is so. The angel visitor introduces his interpretation found in chapter 11 in the following words: “I ...came to make you understand what is to befall your people in the latter days” (10: 13, 14). This is a repeat of Gabriel’s words in Daniel 8:17: “Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end.” In both cases the interpreter’s mission was divinely ordained (8:16; 10:11); thus we would expect that his interpretation likewise has a divine origin. The interpretation is simply this: the 2300 prophetic days of chapter 8 must cover the same period as that designated by the phrase “some years” in chapter 11, and this is possible only if one day in chapter 8 equals one year in chapter 11. Since the narrative of chapter 11 is best interpreted as primarily literal, then the years described there in that chapter are literal years. Here we come across the remarkable discovery that the year-day principle can be unveiled in Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 are wedded together! “What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” (1980, pp.44-45)

What is Spangler asserting?

“Day” can mean more than just a 24-hour period;

Dn11:13 refers to “some years;”

Dn8:14 must cover the same time period as Dn11 since they both are said to refer to the “time of the end” (Dn8:16; 10:11);

Since the reference in Dn11:13 talks of “years,” the days of Dn8:14 must also be years;

This “remarkable discovery” in Dn11:13 weds the references in Dn11:13 and Dn8:14 together and unveils the year-day principle in both chapters!

Readers must forgive the humour of the writer here but one would expect a bit better from the editor of the *Ministry* magazine. To say that “some years” is actually referring to “2300 years” is stretching the goodwill of his readers *just a tad!!* One could have a real field day with this reasoning from Spangler.

For instance, he says that each subsequent vision is an elaboration of the revelation given in a previous chapter. Thus the information in Dn11 elaborates on the information in Dn8, and the time period in Dn8 clarifies the time period in Dn7. Look for a minute at the 3½ “times” in Dn7. No start is given for the period. Using Spangler’s logic, we would expect then a later time period to clarify this for us. Lo and behold! We do get another time period in Dn8. His rationale means that the time period in Dn8 clarifies the 3½ times in Dn7. If we can find the beginning for the start of the time period in Dn8, we can also find the start point for the time period in Dn7. (Using SDA historicist logic here, of course,) Dn9:24 provides the beginning for the 2300 days in Dn8, therefore we can use the start of that period for the start of the 3½ times in Dn7!!!

Secondly, Spangler says: “Since the narrative of chapter 11 is best interpreted as primarily literal, then the years described there in that chapter are literal years.” The verses in Dn12 are the same part-and-parcel of the same monologue in chapter 11, so whatever Spangler says for chapter 11 holds true for chapter 12. Spangler thus confirms that we are to take the periods in Dn11-12 literally; thereby indicating that the 1290- and the 1335-days in Dn12 and the 3½ times are *literal periods!!!*

His argument is that since the details in chapter 11 cover “some years” it has to be 2300 years. He has made two mistakes. First, he has assumed the 2300-days cover the whole vision and not vs. 9-12. His second mistake is that he does not notice the context of Dn11:13. In regard to the first mistake, I show in my paper on Assumption 2, the full extent of the first mistake. In that paper, I examined the five arguments proposed by Shea as the only defence against not applying the 2300 days to Dn8: 9-12, that is, to the activities of the little horn, instead of verses 3-12, that is, to the whole vision. His five reasons were faulty, and failed examination. We *are* justified in seeing the time period apply *not to the full vision in Dn8:3- 12 but to a smaller period*. He has further assumed all the other assumptions listed thereafter. The 2300 days are related to the appositioned items to the word “vision” in the question in Dn8:14.

The second mistake Spalding makes is that he asserts the 2300 days covers the time of the vision of Dn8 from some time in the Persian empire up to the end of time. We could examine at length his exegesis of Dn11:13 and show the absolute flagrant violation of basic principles of Biblical interpretation and embarrass him with quote upon quote from reputable scholars, both Adventist and non, and show how he is so far out on a limb here, but one observation will suffice.

When we look at the text in Daniel 11, it says, “For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after **certain years** with a great army and with much riches.” These “years” referred to, do not begin in the times of the Persian empire, but some time in the times of these Grecian Seleucid kings which are seen to be later than the demise of the Persian empire – see verses 3,4. Therefore either his theory fails, or he needs a starting point for the 2300 days much later, forcing the 1844 date to be revised!! Notice what Spangler says again:

“The interpretation is simply this: the 2300 prophetic days of chapter 8 must cover the same period as that designated by the phrase “some years” in chapter 11, and this is possible only if one day in chapter 8 equals one year in chapter 11.”

Spangler has thereby placed himself outside the SDA interpretation of the 2300 days since he is now proposing a start of the 2300 days some time later than the Persian empire, when the king of the north is on the warpath.

But the bottom line is that Spangler has no case at all to say “*some years*” in Dn11 actually means 2300 of them. The language is specifically indefinite; and if the explanation of Dn11 is supposed to clarify the 2300 days, we would expect at least a reference to the time period, as we get in Dn12, where the previous time period of 3½ times is repeated, and is repeated in the same format. Therefore, using the precedent set with the 3½ times, we can reject Spangler’s fanciful incorrect exegesis of Dn11. One might see such reasoning in a term paper of a first year student in college, but to find such atrocious scholarship in a magazine that was distributed to all and sundry in the church after Glacier View gives the reader some idea of the desperation of the church to redeem a dying rationale for the year-day principle.

As the readers will see shortly with the topic of Genesis 29 and the story of Jacob and Laban’s intrigue, Spangler ignores the very same material presented to delegates at the Glacier View Conference. He does it with Genesis 29 and he does it here with this text in Daniel 11:13. One of the documents that Spalding was given for the conference was the unpublished manuscript *Daniel and the Judgment*, volunteered by Shea for the conference. Shea has something relevant to say on this topic, which Spangler should have taken heed of, but failed to do so:

One series of references to time in Daniel’s prophecies that has not been mentioned previously is the three occurrences of the word for years in verses 6, 8, and 13 of chapter 11. At first glance these references might appear to be going against the grain of the general principle that was enunciated earlier; symbolic prophecy: symbolic time: literal persons in prophecy: literal times in prophecy. Actually this is an example

of the second of these two pairs, not the first. This application depends upon one's understanding of the nature of the prophecy in Dan 11. The explanatory nature of Dan 11 should be emphasized here. What formerly was presented in the symbols of metals and beasts in chapters 2, 7, 8 are now presented in a relatively straightforward description of human political affairs here in Dan 11. This can especially be demonstrated in the earlier portions of this prophecy where its historical fulfillment can be followed most easily.

This is the case with all three of these passages. In this chapter the actual machinations of the literal kings who made up the symbols of the preceding prophecies are described in considerable detail. With actual human personages being described here it is not surprising that actual time units within which they lived and operated are referred to. They are not numbered so this prophecy does not tell us what each king did for so many years, but their activities are set in the natural but general chronological framework of "years."

The commentaries are generally agreed upon who the personages involved in these verses of Dan 11 are, so there are no great problems here in terms of historical application. The Seleucid king in Dan 11:6 has been taken to be Antiochus II Theos and his contemporary rival in Egypt has been identified as Ptolemy II Philadelphus. The later married his daughter Bernice to the former to cement their ties by treaty and this action appears to be referred to in this verse. The Egyptian king in verse 8 is taken as Ptolemy III Euergetes, the brother of Bernice, and his Syrian rival was Seleucus II Callinicus. Finally, in verse 13 where the third reference to years occurred, it is generally agreed that Antiochus (III) the Great was the Seleucid king involved there and his rivals in Egypt were first Ptolemy IV Philopater and later Ptolemy V Epiphanes. The events referred to in these three passages span about half a century, from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. in the first instance, to the middle of the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in the second instance, to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in the third instance.

These events, their dates, and the persons involved in them are generally well agreed upon by most commentators as the more difficult passages in the chapter only begin after the third of these three references. The time that passed during their reigns was measured here in this prophecy in terms of years. Now these interpretations of these passages may be compared with the preceding prophecies of Daniel to see which of them come closest to what we have here. These kings involved in one of the metals of the great image in chapter 2, but not specific time elements occur in that prophecy so it does not provide much illumination for us here. The same thing can be said of the prophecy in Dan 7. There these kings were part of the four divisions of the third beast, but those divisions were not calibrated in terms of prophetic time. It is evident that the 70 weeks of Dan 9 spanned the period during which these Ptolemies and Seleucids were active, but in terms of actual history presented there, this period is a historical vacuum. It is to Dan 8 that we must turn for the closest relations of the events in this passage of this prophecy that are connected with time units. The break up of the great horn of the Grecian goat into the four horns is depicted in Dan 8, and these kings through this passage of Dan 11 were representative of two out of four of those horns. There is, therefore, a historico-prophetic correspondence between these two passages in these two chapters. Then there is the matter of time. A period of time is given in Dan 8, the 2,300 evenings – mornings or days of verse 14. As was just noted in the preceding section, those 2,300 days covered the period of the vision there, not just the period of activity of the little horn. Thus the 2,300 days of Dan 8 start in the Persian period.

Since those 2,300 days extend quite a way along the line of history in that prophecy, it is evident that those days cover all of the historical time represented by the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. Thus some of the 2,300 evenings – mornings or days of Dan 8:14 span the history of these kingdoms and their individual kings, even the six or seven that have been mentioned above from the interpretation of Dan 11. Some of the events that occurred during their reigns are referred to there in terms of years. Since Dan 8 gives the prophetic time units that cover this time period as days applied to the symbols of a goat and its horns, and since Dan 11 gives the prophetic time units that cover this time period in terms of years of the reigns of literal kings, the correlation is thus made for us that the evening-mornings or days of Dan 8:14 equal the years of Dan 11:6, 8, and 13.

As far as time is concerned, therefore, the framework for the working out of these activities among these Hellenistic kings represented in these verses of Dan 11 have already been circumscribed chronologically by the 2,300 days of Dan 8. One does not have to go outside of the book of Daniel to derive this principle of prophetic interpretation, the prophet himself has made it for us through the correlations available between these two of his prophecies. The correlation between Dan 8:10-13 and Dan 11:31 that have been discussed in terms of events in chapter two only make this correlation between these two chapters all the more direct and thus secure this principle of interpretation even more firmly. (1980a, pp.212-216)



Spangler says, “the 2300 prophetic days of chapter 8 must cover the same period as that designated by the phrase “some years” in chapter 11” yet Shea says that this period relates to the activities of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings. Clearly someone is wrong. The weight of opinion is with Shea on this matter, and Spangler is incorrect. SDA historicists do not argue that Dn 11:13 is the 2,300 days. They do not say the 2,300 days covers the same period “as that designated by the phrase ‘some years’ in chapter 11.” Spangler is out of step with the SDA church and with commentators in general. We should point out that Spangler was chairman of the Response committee at the Glacier View conference, so one would assume he would have been familiar with the material under deliberation, both from Ford as well as that being put forward by the church. To then go ahead and write a summary and in-depth analysis of the thoughts and issues with a defense of the traditional church position, he would need to have at least read the material. Ford deserved at least that amount of courtesy. But it appears Spangler never had the time to read Shea’s material, or he would not have written the naïve things he wrote. Then again, he may have read Shea’s material and stubbornly went ahead printing his ignorance for the world to behold. Whatever the story, the evidence is clear, that any plausible argumentation to defend the year-day principle is published regardless of its intrinsic truthfulness.

#### 4. Spangler and “Days” in Dn8:14 and Dn9:24-27

Spangler must at least be seen to be determined to defend the year-day principle, even if it does mean resorting to dubious methods of logic to accomplish it. Yet another one of those can be found in his special edition on the Glacier View Conference, concerning the view that “days” are to be understood in both Dn8:14 and Dn9:24. This argument is listed separately here as it does not fit well with any of the themes we have looked at previously. The intention of this argument is to reinforce the idea that the year-day principle is working in both Dn8:14 and Dn9:24. And of course, SDA historicists need the presence of a “symbolic day” in the text in order to do their conversions. Hence the need to find “days” in both the 2300 “evening-mornings” and the “70 weeks.” We must acknowledge from the outset that the word “day” appears in Dn 12 with the two time periods – the 1290- and the 1335- day periods. But all sorts of arguments come out of this fact. Consider the ingenious argument of Spangler. He tells us that although the use of “day” does not occur in Dn8, with the 2300 ‘evening-mornings’ or with the 70 weeks of Dn9, because the use of day occurs with these two time periods in ch.12, scholarship that sees ‘days’ in both Dn8 and Dn9 “stands firm”:

The year-day principle is found in the relationship between Daniel 8 and Daniel 9. A dismissal of Daniel 8:14 and 9:24 as nonapplicable to a year-day equation simply because the Hebrew word for “day” (*yom*) does not appear in either is superficial reasoning. It is like saying that if an item in the store is marked as costing 50 cents, then one cannot purchase it for half a dollar, or if it is marked as half a dollar, one cannot purchase use 50 pennies in purchasing it. The concept of “days” is implicit in both Daniel 8:14 and 9:24, and the finest scholarship stands firm for this position... Even if one were to deny that the concept of “days” is inherent to both these texts, one is still faced with the fact that the Hebrew word *yom* is connected with the two other lengthy time periods, the 1290 days and the 1335 days (Daniel 12:11, 12), and its properly translated there as “days.” (1980, p.44)

Just how we are to make a leap in the dark and use the occurrence in Dn12 of *yôm* to believe that it should be understood “days” as being present in both Dn8:14 and Dn9:24 is an enigmatic exercise to all except those who like Spangler are reading a certain script between the lines that no-one else can see. As discussed earlier, SDA historicists see Dn12 as literal explanation, so we should understand the reference there to “days” to be a literal explanation, and the 70-weeks in Dn9 is also classified as literal explanation, meaning the 70 weeks there are best seen as “weeks of years” as admitted by the 1961 SDA Ministerial Association, and a host of SDA historicists.

And Dn8:14 comes after the vision that Daniel and the holy ones see, so the 2300 evening-mornings are best seen as literal explanation there as well. So getting from Dn 12 to “symbolic days” is getting more impossible than first appears. If there had been some explanation in Dn12 that used evening-mornings in connection with days, or if there had been some comment in Dn12 that used *shabu’a* in connection with days, we might be able to make that leap of faith with Spangler, but no such connection is present. They are literal statements one and all, and should be taken as that.

## 2.8 The Problem of Misunderstanding the Idiom of Repetition in Hebrew

Moving on from a discussion of the attempt by SDA historicist to find justification for their year-day principle in such areas as the narrative and poetic writings of the OT, and the Jubilee legislation, we must look at the actual format of the wording of the phrase *yom lashshanah yom lashshanah* (lit. “day for the year, day for the year”), because it is this phrase that is the centre of the issues in this paper. SDA historicists have spent an inordinate amount of argumentation building up some rationale around *this* phrase, but they have not dealt with the grammatical phenomenon of this phrase at all.

One of the phenomenon with this phrase in both instances in Num.14 and Eze 4 is the *double repetition*. Why say it twice? What is the significance of the double repetition? Is it this that indicates God is saying to use that it is a “principle”? Looking at this grammatical structure and its usage across other examples in the OT will dissipate any question as to the meaning of the phrase and its double repetition in both Numbers 14 and Ezekiel 4. I will quote from Kautzsch and Cowley’s Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar, since Gesenius highlights the syntax issues pertinent to this phrase. The transliterations in parentheses I have added since it is in Hebrew text in Gesenius. (The preposition under examination here is *l’*)

§123. The Representation of Plural Ideas by Means of Collectives, and by the Repetition of Words.

...The repetition of single words, and even of a whole group of words, especially to express entirety, or in a distributive sense. The following cases are more particularly to be noticed:

The repetition of one or more words to express the idea of *every, all* as [*yom yom*] Gen39<sup>10</sup>, &c., *day by day, every day*; [*shanah shanah*] *year by year*, Dt 14<sup>22</sup>, [*ish ish*] *every man*, Ex 36<sup>4</sup>, with *b<sup>e</sup>* before each, as [*babboqer babboqer*] Ex 16<sup>21</sup> *every morning* (and similarly before a group of words, Lv248), for which the *distributive* [*i<sup>e</sup>*] is also used, [*labboqer labboqer*] 1 Ch9<sup>27</sup>, and with *one* plural [*labb<sup>e</sup> qarim*] Ps 73<sup>14</sup>, [*libb<sup>e</sup> qarim*] Jb 7<sup>18</sup> parallel with [*lirr<sup>e</sup> ga’im*] *every moment*. Somewhat different are the instances with [*b<sup>e</sup>*] before the second word only, e.g., [*yom b<sup>e</sup> yom*] *day by day*, 1 Ch12<sup>22(23)</sup>; [*shanah b<sup>e</sup> shanah*] *year by year*, Dt 15<sup>20</sup>, 1 Sm 1<sup>7</sup> (but in verse 3 [*miyyamim yamimah*] “from day to day” -FB), [[*k<sup>e</sup> pa’am k<sup>e</sup> pa’am*] Nu24<sup>1</sup>, Ju16<sup>20</sup>, 20<sup>30f</sup>, 1 S 3<sup>10</sup> *as at other times*.. Also with the two words united by means of a *waw copulative* [*ish w<sup>e</sup> ish*] Ps 87<sup>5</sup>, or [*ish w<sup>a</sup> ish*] Est 1<sup>8</sup>; [*dôr w<sup>a</sup> dôr*] *all generations*, Dt 32<sup>7</sup>; [*yom w<sup>a</sup> yom*] Esr. 3<sup>4</sup>; cf. Est. 8<sup>9</sup>, Ezr 10<sup>14</sup>, 1Ch 26<sup>13</sup> and often (cf. Cheyne,...according to whom the use of the [waw] copulative with the second word is especially common in Ch and Est, and therefore belongs to the latter language; Driver, *Introd.*<sup>6</sup>, p. 538, No. 35); sometimes ( but with exceptions of Ps 45<sup>18</sup> only in very late passage) with a pleonastic [*kal-*] preceding, Ps 145<sup>13</sup>, Est. 2<sup>11</sup>, 9<sup>28</sup>, 2 Ch 11<sup>12</sup>, &c..

Repetition of words in an expressly *distributive* sense [he inserts footnote here “Cf., in the New Testament St. Mark 6<sup>39</sup> συμποσια συμποσια, πρασιτοι πρασιτοι” -FB] (which may be to some extent be noticed in the examples under c) equivalent to *one each* &c., e.g., Nu 14<sup>34</sup> *forty days* [*lashshanah yom lashshanah*] *counting for each day a year*; cf., Ez 24<sup>6</sup>, Ex 28<sup>34</sup> (three words repeated); also with the addition of [*i<sup>e</sup> bad*] *apart*, [*eder eder l<sup>e</sup> badô*] *every drove by himself*, Gn 32<sup>17</sup>; Zc 12<sup>12</sup>. Most frequently with the addition of a numeral (for the simple repetition of numerals for the same purpose cf., §134, *q*), and with the words not only in groups of two (Lv24<sup>8</sup>, Nu 13<sup>2</sup>, 31<sup>4</sup>) or three (Nu 7<sup>11</sup>, 17<sup>21</sup>), but even of six (Ex 26<sup>3</sup>) or seven (Ex 25<sup>33</sup>, 26<sup>19,21,25</sup>); in Ex 25<sup>35</sup> five words even three times repeated. [He includes a footnote here “These repetitions of larger groups of words belong entirely to the *Priestly Code* in the Pentateuch, and are unquestionably indications of a late period of the language. Of quite a different kind are such examples as

Ez16<sup>6</sup>, where the repetition of four words serves to give greater solemnity to the promise, unless here, as certainly in 1<sup>20</sup>, it is a mere dittography; the LXX omit the repetition in both passages.” –FB]

Repetition to express an exceptional or at least a superfine quality; e.g., 2 Kg 25<sup>15</sup> which were of gold, gold, gold of silver, silver, i.e., made of pure gold and pure silver;

Repetition with the copula to express *of more than one kind*; thus Dt 25<sup>13</sup> (Pro 20<sup>10</sup>) [*eben w<sup>a</sup>eben*] *a weight and a weight*, i.e., two kinds of weights (hence the addition *great and small*)... (Kautzsch, 1982, pp. 395f.)

One of the observations from these comments is that the repetition of the phrase in Numbers 14:34 is to be rendered “each day for a year.” That is to say, the double use of the phrase in effect means, ‘a year for this day; a year for that day etc.,’ and so the sequence continues until every year has been allotted a day.’ Gesenius points out in the comment at this text that the preposition *l<sup>e</sup>* “for” is to be understood in a *distributive sense* of counting out a year for *each and every* day.

The implication of this argument is that the author is emphasising the point that for every day the spies performed their task *would* be allocated one year for the whole nation to remain in the wilderness – no question; it *will* be allocated. There will be no deviation from this distribution of retribution. It will eventuate exactly as calculated. The phrase counters any thought in the mind of those rebellious Israelites who wandered aimlessly in the desert for those 40 years that the Lord would cut short the time allotted. As surely as 40 days were spent to spy out the land, so surely would the full 40 years be allotted for their desert exile. It will be doled out a year for every day spent searching out the land; no more, no less.

The 40 days are not symbolic of the 40 years; it is just the measure used to determine the punishment. It is no more symbolic than the other scales used to meet out punishment or reward. (e.g., David’s punishment; JONATHAN’S SHOOTING THE ARROW; HEZEKIAH.

Obviously there is no room in this understanding of the phrase for any ‘prophetic principle’ or ‘scale.’ It is entirely foreign to the text. The principle involved in the use of the preposition and the grammatical repetition here is to highlight the concept of distribution, not prophetic interpretation.

### 2.8.1 Examples of Distributive Sense of Repetition Cited in Gesenius.

Consider some of the many examples of repetition with the idea of distribution for the use of the preposition *l<sup>e</sup>* that Cowley refers to in Gesenius’ Grammar. The following examples clarify this *distributive sense* referred to by Cowley, and readers can see this distributive sense applied to many situations and various themes:

#### **1. Repetition of words to indicate *each* and *all*.**

Basic to the idea of repetition is the idea of singling out certain items. When we get to the concept of repetition to indicate distribution, we get this basic idea extended, in the sense of each item having some distributed to it – *to each and every one*. But in this first section we focus just on the instances where a single word is used repeatedly to illustrate how the Hebrew conveys the sense of “each” and “every.”

#### **2 Chr 11:12**

And in every **several city** he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side. KJV

He put shields and spears in **all the cities**, and made them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin were his.  
NIV

The repetition in this verse is “city and city” to indicate, as the KJV has tried to convey “every several city.” The Hebrew literally reads “and in all/every city and city,” which tries to show that in *each and every city*, as the NIV has tried to convey it: “in all the cities.”

### Est 9:28

And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout **every generation, every family, every province, and every city**; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

The words repeated here are “generation generation, family family, province province, city city.” The sense is clearly *each and every* one of these named groupings.

### Est 2:11

And Mordecai walked **every day** before the court of the woman’s house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

Literally “day and day” and we could freely translate it “day by day.” We are to visualise Mordecai walking there every single day.

### Ps 145:13

Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout **all generations**.

Literally, “generation and generation.” This text asks us to visualise each generation as they arise and know that for each God dominion endures even throughout their lifetime.

### Ps 45:17 (18)

I will make thy name to be remembered in **all generations**: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

Literally, “generation and generation.” Similarly with this text. We are led to visualise each and every one of these generations coming on this earth, and knowing that among each of these generations will be preserved God’s name.

### 1 Chr 26:13

And they cast lots, as well as the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for **every gate**.

Literally, “gate and gate.” We are led to visualise every family dwelling, every gate to that dwelling, and see each and every one of them casting lots, both the important and the not-so-important families.

### Ezr 10:14

Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of **every city**, and the judges thereof, until fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

Literally, “city and city.” Here we visualise the elders from each and every city coming with the judges coming at the appointed times in obedience to the request..

### Est 8:9

Then were the king’s scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month of Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which are from India unto

Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto **every province** according to the writing thereof, and unto **every people** after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, according to their language.

Literally, “province and province;” “people and people.” Here we visualise each and every province and the people within each of these provinces to whom the correspondence is sent. There was a limited number and people close to the task had that list of people and provinces needing this document clear in their mind as they organised the despatches of the postmen.

### Est 3:4

Now it came to pass, when they spake **daily** unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai’s matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew.

Literally, “day and day.” We led here to visualise them having the same conversation each day, asking for the same information, seeking the answer they sought.

### Deut 32:7

Remember the days of old, consider the years of **many generations**: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

Literally, “generation and generation.” We are led here to think about the multitude of generations that come and go on the earth in their own time, and the knowledge they built up from their experience while alive.

### Est 1:8

And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to **every man’s** pleasure.

Literally, “man and man.” We are led to see each man doing his own thing during the festivities; each one’s behaviour reflecting the type of person he was, and the type of behaviour he usually displayed at such an occasion.

### Ps 87:5

And of Zion it shall be said, **This and that man** was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

Literally, “man and man.” This text gets us to visualise a limited number of people who do Zion proud and establish her credibility as a worthy city. We are led to think perhaps the writer had specific people or role models before his mind’s eye when he was penning this psalm.

### 1 Sam 3:10

And the Lord came, and stood, and called **as at other times**, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

Literally, “*k<sup>e</sup>* time *b<sup>e</sup>* time – as time to time.” This text gets us to visualise all the times that the Lord stands before Samuel.

### Jdg 20:30ff

And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, **as at other times**.

And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, **as at other times**, in the highways, of which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men in Israel.

Literally, “ $k^e$  time  $b^e$  time – as time to/by time.” The writer of the book of Judges leads us to visualise each of the times that the children of Benjamin arrayed themselves against Gibeah, as the writer does with each of the occasions in his memory.

### Jdg 16:20

And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Sampson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out **as at other times** before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.

Literally, “ $k^e$  time  $b^e$  time – as time to/by time.” Sampson leads us to remember each of the other times when he went out and shook himself.

### Num 24:1

And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, **as at other times**, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

Literally, “ $k^e$  time  $b^e$  time – as time to time. The writer of Numbers wants us to see in our mind’s eye the many times that Balaam went to seek for enchantments in a situation like this, This particular time, he did not, but rather, he set his face instead toward the wilderness.

### 1 Sam 1:3,7

3. And this man went up out of his city **yearly** to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there.

Literally, “from days to days.” The writer of Samuel leads us to visualise this man coming to Shiloh on the “days” of the event; i.e., annually, or when these festive “days” returned each time.<sup>135</sup>

7. And as he did so **year by year**, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

Literally, “year to/by year.” He are led to visualise here the torment between the two women – Hannah and Peninah – each and every year that the feast came around again. We see Hannah’s tormenter harassing her without mercy year in, year out, and for Hannah, there is no escaping this ordeal each year. She can only seek God’s strength to live above it.

<sup>135</sup> This usage of the term *days for years* “may have originated in the notion of the return of the individual days of a year in the following year, so that the ‘days (of the year)’ could represent the year itself.” [Rodríguez footnotes: “Enst Jenni, ‘Yom Day’ in Enst Jenni and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub., 1997), vol. 2, p.536.”] See Rodríguez, (2002, p.20) The comparative phrase occurs in English usage; where we talk about “from Christmas to Christmas;” from Independence day to Independence Day, “from birthday to birthday,” “from anniversary to anniversary.” The return of this particular day signifies the passing of a year, but that does not mean we are signifying a ratio of days for years. It is like a Indie 500 race where they talk about “from lap to lap;” with each lap counted by passing a marker on the circuit – in this case the starting judges / flagman. These particular “days” are the markers, just like the flag in a car race, used to indicate the passing of years, but it in no way indicative of a year-day interchange – it is just another literary method to indicate the passing of years – with the passing of significant “days.” To put it another way, “from Christmas to Christmas we come here,” is the same as saying “Every Christmas we come here.” The phrases “from Independence Day to Independence Day,” “from birthday to birthday,” “from anniversary to anniversary,” all can be replaced in a sentence with “every Independence Day ...etc.” So the phrase “from days to days,” carries the idea expressed more fully, “from (these festive) days to (the next set of the same festive) days.”



**Deut 15:20**

Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God **year by year** in the place which the Lord shall choose, thou and thy household.

Literally, “year to/by year.” This phrase wants us to visualise the passing of years and with their passing, the faithful return of the tribes of Israel to eat before the Lord.

**1 Chr 12:22(23)**

For at that time **day by day** there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God.

Literally, “day to/by day.” In this text, the Chronicler wants us to visualise each day with support trickling in for David, until this support became a great host.

**1 Chr9:27**

And they lodged round about the house of God, because the charge was upon them, and the opening thereof **every morning** pertained to them. KJV

They would spend the night stationed around the house of God because they had to guard it; and they had charge of the key for opening it each morning.

The repetition in this verse is “according to the morning – according to the morning.” In this verse we have the prepositional prefix *l<sup>e</sup>* added with the definite article to both repeated words. The sense of the repetition here is to highlight the crucial nature of the guards’ task *each and every morning* to open the house of God.

**Exodus 16:21**

And they gathered it **every morning**, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. KJV

Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. NIV

The repetition in this verse is literally “by/on the morning –by/on the morning.” The prepositional prefix *b<sup>e</sup>* is added with the definite article to each repeated item. The purpose of the repetition here is designed to give the sense of the repetitive task of going out *each and every morning* when the manna fell to collect it.

**Exodus 36:4**

And all the wise men, that wrought all the works of the sanctuary, came **every man** from his work which they made...KJV

So all the skilled craftsmen who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left their work...NIV

The repetition in this verse is “man man.” This is correctly conveyed in the KJV “*every man*.” It points out *each* man as he leaves his working area and comes over to Moses. Notice that although it is only mentioned twice, it does not carry the sense that only two men came. The idea understood is that it is an ellided formula for saying “man man man man man man...etc” until all the men are singled out.

**Deut 14:22**

Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth **year by year**. KJV

Be sure to set aside a tenth of all your fields produce each year. NIV.

Here the repetition is literally “year year.” Both the KJV and the NIV give the correct sense of *each year*.

## Genesis 39:10

And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph **day by day**, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. KJV

And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. NIV

The repetition here is “day day.” It gives the concept of her persistence; of *each and every day* she hounded him, badgering him to “hit the sack” with her. Again, the full form would have been “day, day, day, day, day, day, etc” until each and every day had been itemised.

## 2. Repetition examples caused by dittography

### Eze 1:20; 16:6

1:20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, **thither was their spirit to go**; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

1:20 Where ever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. NIV.

16:6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee *when thou wast* in thy blood, Live: **yea I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.**

16:6 “Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, “Live!” NIV

The Criticus Apparatus in BHS for Eze 1:20 says, “dl (dtg)” that is to say “dele dittographice”; “delete, (caused by) dittography.” At Eze 16:6, the Criticus Apparatus also says, “dl (dtg).” Repetition in these examples (in bold type) called dittography, and are the result of a loss of concentration of the scribe repeating the same phrase as previously written, without paying enough attention to the script he is copying from. In the first example in ch1:20, “thither was their spirit to go” is repeated inadvertently; and the NIV corrects this by omitting the repetition, as it also does in Eze 16:6 with the phrase “and I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.”

## 3. Repetition to express a superfine quality.

### 2 Kgs 25:15

And the firepans, and the bowls, *and* such things as were of gold, *in* gold and of silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took away.

The commander of the imperial guard took away the censers and sprinkling bowls – all that were made of pure gold and silver. NIV.

Repetition here is used for another purpose in this text. The KJV translates the repetition of the words “gold gold” as *in* gold and for the repetition “silver silver” as *in* silver. The repetition here is not to indicate the different pieces of gold or silver but the quality of the metal used. To express it awkwardly, the idea is that “the gold (is) gold” and “the silver (is) silver.” The NIV brings this out by the use of the word *pure* gold and silver. Both translations convey the correct sense of the repetition.

## 4. Repetition of Words to indicate *more than one kind*.

### Deut 25:13, 14

13. Thou shalt not have in thine bag divers weights, a great and a small.

14. Thou shalt not have in thine house diver measures, a great and a small.

13. Do not have two differing weights in your bag – one heavy, one light. NIV

14. Do not have two differing measures in your house – one large, one small. NIV

Verse 13 has the phrase “weight and weight”: the same word to indicate different objects, which are then clarified by the apposition “great and small. Verse 14 has the same statement with the variation of “house,” instead of “bag.”

### Pro 20:10

Divers weights, *and* divers measures, both of them *are* alike abomination to the Lord

The text literally says here “a weight and a weight; measure and a measure...” The repetition of the words here are a device to point to two different items of the same category, even though the words for “weight” and “measure” are the same in both the first and the second repetition of them.

## 5. Repetition to convey the *distributive* sense

It is this use of repetition that directly relates to the form we find in both Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6.

### Ezekiel 24:6

Wherefore thus saith the Lord God: Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! Bring it out **piece by piece**; let no lot fall upon it. KJV

This is what the Sovereign Lord says: “ ‘Woe to the city of bloodshed, to the pot now encrusted, whose deposit will not go away! Empty it piece by piece without casting lots for them. NIV

The observation here is the repetition “piece piece” is used to indicate *each* piece emptied out of the pot. The repetition has the prepositional *l<sup>e</sup>* in front of both words with the sense of “according to” and has the suffix “its” added to both as well. This gives the idea of “according to this piece, according to that piece” shall lots not be cast. That is, for *each and every piece* that comes out of the pot, there will not be any lots cast.

Keil: The *l<sup>e</sup>* before the two-fold *n<sup>e</sup>thachêah* [“its piece”-FB] is, no doubt to be taken distributively: according to its several pieces, i.e., piece by piece, bring it out. (1978, Ezekiel, p.343)

### Ex. 28:34

A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon a hem of the robe round about.

This is a description of the ornamentation around the bottom of the priest’s garment. However, like the year-day statement in Numbers 14 and Eze 4 it is not a general principle that every priestly garment has to have this ornamentation, but just this particular garment. It is only those robes that had to have this ornamentation that were given this instruction. In the same way, it is only those periods to which the “day for the year” statement that had any distributive application done to them.

### Gen 32:16 (32:17 BHS)

And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves (lit. “drove drove by itself/separate”); and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove (lit. “**between drove and between drove**”).

In this text we are given a view of the droves that were sent ahead of Jacob as presents to appease Esau, and the sense of the construction is that even though only two droves are spoken of here, it is implied that for every drove coming behind another drove there will be the appropriate space, and this will occur for as long as there are droves to come. Thus we picture, in

our mind's eye, these droves of stock moving up the track; one a good distance from the other and so on, until this unusual procession is complete.

### **Zech 12:12**

And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart; and their wives apart.

This statement describes a period of national repentance. This does not teach however a general principle that this occurs on a continuing basis at all times. But we are given the impression from this lengthy phrase being repeated twice, that mourning is required from every house, every family. This phrase would have been repeated for as many families as there are in the nation, but even though it is ellided, it is understood. This implication that this phrase is ellided, comes from the previous clause, "every family apart," since both the house of David and the house of Nathan are included in the word "every;" but to ensure those of the more notable families should mourn too, they are mentioned explicitly. So for as many families as there are in the nation, this phrase applies to them too, just as for every day that the spies sought out their report in Canaan, so a year would be given for that day, until all the days had been atoned for in punishment.

### **Lev. 24:8**

**Every Sabbath** (lit. "**on the day of the Sabbath; on the day of the Sabbath**") he shall set it in order before the Lord continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.

The repetition of the phrase "on the day of the Sabbath," is not just for two Sabbaths, but for all Sabbaths. The repetition is a literary device to imply all Sabbath days, even though all the other statements for every other Sabbath has been ellided. This translation "every Sabbath" is a correct translation even though he has only mentioned two of those Sabbaths. A historicist may use this one to justify the generalisation of the year-day principle, but there is a problem in doing that. This statement "on the day of the Sabbath" repeated twice indicates for every Sabbath day. That occurs every week, so it has a continuing, open-ended scope. The difference of "on the day of the Sabbath" with the statement "day for the year" is that the latter is only referring to the periods being used as a reference – 40 days in the case of Numbers 14 and 430 years in the case of Eze 4. It has a limited scope, limited by the quantity – the 40 or the 430 –involved in either context.

### **Num 13:2**

Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel; of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a **man** (lit. "**man one, man one**"), **every one** a ruler among them.

This text wants us to visualise one man from each tribe leaving the tent area of his family and relatives and coming to the appointed gathering point. We visualise twelve of these men doing this. And so, this is further indication that the repetition of just two incidence of "man one," in fact is an ellision of the phrase being repeated twelve times.

### **6. Num.31:4**

Of **every tribe a thousand** (lit. "**a thousand to the tribe, a thousand to the tribe**"), throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war.

As with the text before we are presented with a couplet, just as with the "day for the year" phrase, and we are to understand it is an ellision to apply to every tribe, until all twelve tribes have sent a thousand men.

## Num.7:11

And the Lord said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, **each prince on his day** (lit. “**a prince one for/according to the day; a prince one for/according to the day**”), for the dedicating of the altar.

The pertinent phrase in this verse is only repeated twice, but the content of the phrase leaves no doubt that it applies to a limited number of cases, in fact to as many as there are princes, they will bring their offering until all have performed their duty.

This text cannot be generalised to mean that every time the princes are to make their offerings, they can only come one per day. It is an instruction that applies only to this situation. In the same manner, the application of the statement “day for the year” only occurs where the statement occurs. There are prophecies cited further down where the “day for a year” statement is *not* applied by historicists because the statement does not occur there. This is how it should be done. It is not a general principle.<sup>136</sup>

Num. 17:6 (17:21 BHS)

And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece (lit. “**a rod for a prince one; a rod for a prince one**”), for each prince one, according to their fathers’ houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.

This text also cannot be generalised since there are only twelve princes, and it stops with the twelfth one. This text has important bearings on our understanding because it shows that the phrase should be repeated for each prince, until “even twelve rods” were distributed. The clarification in the text “for each prince one, according to their father’s houses, even twelve rods” indicates we should understand “a rod for a prince one” being repeated twelve times in the full unellided form.

On this analogy, the phrase in Num. 14:34 we would find the full unellided form repeating the phrase “day for the year” forty times until a full distribution of punishment had been meted out for each day of spying.

## Ex.26:3

The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and *other* five curtains shall be coupled one to another.

This phrase covers every set of five curtains in the design (see vs1,2), since there were only two sets of five curtains involved here. In this case the double repetition has covered every instance and does not represent an ellided form. The statement here cannot be generalised to every set of curtains made for the sanctuary or for any home. It is limited to these five curtains. In the same manner, the statement “day for the year” only applies to the 40 days and the 430 years because they are the only periods in the Bible that have this statement attached to them.

<sup>136</sup> Are there other periods of wandering in the wilderness that according to SDA historicists’ reading of Num. 14:34 as prophecy would likewise fall into the category of prophecy, but are not treated by them as such? Take for example, the following: Three day prophecy of invasion –Josh 1:11; three year prophecy of destruction of Moab –Isa 16:14; Isaiah’s three year naked prophecy for Egypt and Ethiopia –Isa 20:3-6; Ephraim broken in 65 year prophecy – Isa 7:8; four hundred year prophecy –Gen 15:13; (cf. Ex 12:41); Joseph predicts there is still five years of famine to go –Gen 45:6; Gen 7:4 – the prediction that the Flood would begin in seven days; (cf. v10); Gen18: 10the prediction that Sarah would have a baby in a *môed*, (“appointed time” as in Daniel; which in prophetic terms would be 30x9=270 days/years); 2Sa 24:13 – the offer of three punishments to David. One was seven years of famine; a second was three months of defeat by the enemies in battle; and the third was three days pestilence in the land. In every case there was a future time period of retribution involved, as was in the case of Num. 14:34. SDA historicists must therefore apply the year-day principle to all three of these time periods, according to their logic in Num. 14:34. 2 Kings 8: 1 (cf. v3-finished in three years) Elisha predicts a famine to take hold of the land for seven years. Here is predictive prophecy. SDA historicists must apply the year-day principle to this in order to be consistent with Num. 14:34. Eze. 39:9 Ezekiel here predicts the burning of the weapons of war for a prophetic period of seven years (or 2520 years, applying the year-day principle). Isa 23:15, 17 – Isaiah gives a predictive prophecy concerning the fate of Tyre involving a seven year period, which applying the year-day principle yields 2520 years. In this category we must also put Jeremiah’s seventy-year prophecy for the exile – Jer. 25:11ff; Num 11:18-20 the prediction by God that the Israelites would eat quail for a whole month- 29-30 yrs using the year-day principle; Gen 6:3 –the prediction that the extent of man’s lifespan would be 120 years, panning out to 120x30=3600 years using the year-day principle; Isa 65:20 this is a prediction, involving lifespan of 100 years, which, applying the year-day principle, would be 3600 years.

**Ex. 25:33**

Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls make like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick.

One should notice that the text here has specifically indicated that we should read the repetition of the phrase twice so to be for all six branches; and that only for the sake of economy has the phrase not been repeated six times.

This statement describes how to mould the pattern on the candlestick. It is not however, a design that can be generalised to *every* candlestick holder. It is limited just to this specific candelabra for the sanctuary. In the like manner, the “day for the year” statement in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 is not to be generalised to every time period used in the Bible, but only to which it is explicitly applied – the 40 days and the 430 years, because it is only to these two periods is the phrase attached.

Keil:

On each one of these branches (the repetition of the same words expresses the distributive sense) there were to be “*three cups in the form of an almond-flower, (with) knop and flower,*”.... (1978, Pentateuch, p.172)

**Ex. 26: 19. 21. 25**

19. And thou shall make forty sockets of silver unto the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons.

21. And their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

25. And there shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

In this example, as in the majority of texts sampled in this section, the repetition is given twice, as the intent is clear by the use of just two repetitions. That it applies to all of the boards goes without saying.

This statement applied just to the boards for the sanctuary. It does not mean that this constructional design has to be followed every time similar type of boards are made. In the same manner with the “day for the year” statement – it only applies where it is stated, in this case, the limit is given by the number of boards to be designed in this manner.

Keil: Sixteen sockets were to be made for these eight boards, two for each. ( 1978, Pentateuch, p.180) Keil here uses the best explanation of the distributive idea – “for each.” For *each* board there would be two sockets. Applying the same logic to “day for a year” – “for *each* day there will be a year.” The repetition of the phrase represents distribution, not a prophetic principle.

**Ex. 25:35**

And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick.

This text is another excellent example showing that the ellision is implied in the text. We have here, not two, but three repetitions of the pertinent phrase, indicating the distribution of the particular design, and it explicitly indicates with the word “according to” that we are to understand the same procedure for all “six branches that proceed out of the candlestick.” Thus there is ellision of only three of these phrases, since the third has already been mentioned. In the like manner to the description of the design in verse 33, this statement is not a generalised design



for all candelabras, and that the Israelites can only make the stems of candelabras using this pattern. This design is specific to this particular candelabra. In like manner, the statement “day for the year” only applies where it is stated. As

Having surveyed a number of examples given by Cowley on this topic, readers should be familiar now with the phenomenon of the use of repetition as we see it in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:4-6. This technique is a simple grammatical device to indicate distribution: to each and every one of the items that is due to do something or receive something, that thing is done or received. The repetition focuses on each item in the collection referred to even though it does not repeat the phrase for every item in the collection. There are times duly noted where the repetition is repeated more than twice, and this just clarifies the point that the phrase is really an ellided form of saying the same thing for each of the items in the collection being referred to.

What I would like to do now it make it easier for readers to see this device together with the occurrence of “day for the year, day for the year” so that they can see how correctly this device stands in this grammatical classification. The purpose of this exercise is to clarify the point that we are not dealing with a saying that is a unique feature of this bogus “year-day principle” but is really a regular feature of the language to highlight the sense of distribution.

**Table 13. Texts Highlighting Repetitive Hebrew Phrases**

Reference	Phrase	No of Repetitions
Ezekiel 24:6	piece by piece	2
Ex. 28:34	between drove and between drove	2
Zech 12:12	the family of the house of ..... apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of ..... apart, and their wives apart	2
Lev. 24:8	on the day of the Sabbath; on the day of the Sabbath	2
Num 13:2	man one, man one	2
Num.31:4	a thousand to the tribe; a thousand to the tribe	2
Num.7:11	a prince one for/according to the day; a prince one for/according to the day	2
Num. 17:6 (17:21 BHS)	a rod for a prince one; a rod for a prince one	2
Ex.26:3	The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and <i>other</i> five curtains shall be coupled one to another	2
Num. 13:34, Eze 4:6	Day for the year; day for the year.	2
Ex. 25:33	Three bowls made like	2

Reference	Phrase	No of Repetitions
	unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls make like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower:	
Ex. 26: 19	two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons	2
Ex. 26: 21	two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.	2
Ex. 26:25	two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.	2
Ex. 25:35	knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same,	3

It cannot be helped but noticed when the repetitions are lined up in this manner that the repetition used in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 is a grammatical phenomenon identical to the other samples given here, and is used to convey the idea that to *each and every one of the time units* involved in the reference time frame (days in Num.; and years in Eze.) will be associated another time period in the second group of time units (years in the case of Numbers 14 and days in the case of Ezekiel 4). That is the extent of the presence of this statement in Numbers 14 and Ezekiel 4. There is no other “principle” involved here. It is merely stating that the time period chosen was based on a pre-existing time period on a scale of a day for a year, depending on the scale that occurred in the reference time group.

If we are to argue that the phrase in Num. 14:34 or Eze. 4:6 teaches a principle, then we must also conclude that these texts cited also teach principles as well, that can be generalise to all other pertinent situations.

### **2.8.2 Some Examples of Similar Time Prophecies by God**

Can the application of the principle SDA historicists tell us exists for predictive prophecy be generalised to other situations? If it is a principle, then what is what one would be expected to do with valid results. Let us consider some other time statements of the Lord. Assuming for the moment that SDA historicists are correct in seeing Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6 as predictive prophecy, how do we apply the same logic to the following examples? Let us see what we come up with when we apply this to other similar statements in Scripture in similar circumstances where God specifies a certain time period for some event or action:

**Gen 7:4**

For yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty night...

This is a prophecy about a future event; therefore we should apply the year-day formula, on the same basis as it is applied in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6.

**Ex 13:6**

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast unto the Lord

Shea asserts the right to see the year-day principle operating in Leviticus 25 as the period referring there to a future event. This incident here in Ex 16 is a future event; therefore we should be justified in applying the year-day principle here as well.

**Ex 16:4**

Behold I rain bread from heaven for you: and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day...on the sixth days they shall prepare that which they bring in..

Is this statement of a future action? Then it is just as much a prophecy as Num. 14:34, and we should be justified in applying the year-day principle here.

**2 Kgs 20:5**

Thus saith the Lord God, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go unto the house of the Lord.

(cf., verse 8) What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?

This is definitely a prophecy about a future event. Therefore, we need to apply the year-day principle.

**1 Chr 21:9-12**

Thus saith the Lord, Choose thee either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes...or else three days the sword of the Lord, even the pestilence in the land....

This is a choice of three prophetic future punishments identical to that of Num. 14:34. We should follow the rule here and apply the year-day principle.

**Jonah 3:4**

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

Jonah is here referring to a future event, occurring forty days from the time he proclaimed it. From Jonah's behaviour after his proclamation, we can deduce that he meant forty days and not forty years. If he had meant forty years, he probably would have built a house rather than being content to living under a vine. But he was content to wait under a new growing vine, indicating the short period involved.

THE OTHER PROPHECIES FROM THE ARTICLE AT THE END OF THE PAPER. AND FOOTNOTE ON PAGE 173.

An obvious answer to the question as to why these periods are not converted using the year-day principle, occurring in contexts that SDA historicists would have admit are prophetic and in a similar context as Numbers 14:34 and Eze 4:6 (that is, in their view, a prophetic one), is simply that the statement "year for a day, year for a day" is absent from these examples. And that is

quite correct. If the statement were there, then we could convert these periods to a larger or smaller scale, depending on the primary reference period.

The upshot of this conclusion is that *it is only in contexts where the statement “year for a day, year for a day” is made that conversion takes place.* The statements in Leviticus 25 specify the unit “of years” explicitly, so there is no conversion there. Therefore, where we do not find the statement “year for the day, year for the day, we do not convert. That is a simple principle. Following on then, since we do not find that statement in the book of Daniel, we do not convert. Daniel 9 is in a different category to these examples given. In fact, it is basically identical to what we find in Leviticus 25. The actual period is given in literal language. Daniel 9 does not offer any contradiction here because it is parceled out in units of ‘seven.’ This term depends on the context, and the context in Dn9 is “of years.” There is no year-day principle here.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, we can abide by the clear maxim: *where the statement is made “day for a year, day for a year,” a conversion is made; where the statement does not occur, the conversion does not take place. One should also note that the statement “day for a year, day for a year” does not mean the conversion is consistent. It just means that conversion is carried out. The conversion process – whether years to days, or days to years, is dependent on the period being converted.*

Shea is correct in seeing the only common principle in both Num. 14:34 and Eze 4:6 is a conversion of one period to another. And that surely is nothing like what the SDA historicists want to hear about those texts.

### **2.8.3 Summary**

We have looked at four different ways the Hebrew language uses repetition: first, to indicate *each* and *all*; second, to indicate a *distributive* sense of *each*; third, to indicate a superfine quality; and fourthly, to indicate *more than one of a kind*. We saw in the second category, selections of examples of repetition similar to Numbers 14:34 and Eze 4: 6. These are by no means exhaustive. Even a superficial reading of these examples is totally enlightening when comparing them with the repetition in Num14:34 and Eze 4:6 of “day for the year, day for the year.” In these two texts the phrase has only been repeated twice and then finished. In the example in Ex 25:33 above, it repeats the relevant idea three out of the six times it could have been used, since there were six branches in the candlestick and it only described detail for three of them. The unwritten but intended message from this style of language is to give you the impression that this same pattern will occur on the other three branches as well. It has taken branch by branch and repeated the same formula for each branch; with the rest being left for readers to fill in themselves.

Thus it is with “day for a year, day for a year” in Num. 14: 34. The phrase only addresses the first two samples involved out of the forty, with the unwritten but understood rule that readers will fill in the fact that this same phrase applies to each and every day involved in the quantity involved. Had the phrase not been ellided, in Num. 14:34 it would have just repeated the phrase “day for a year, day for a year” forty times, indicating each of the days of spying was to have allocated to it one year of wandering in the wilderness. The same applies with Eze 4:6. The phrase only addresses the first two of the 430 years involved in the national rebellion, but it implies that all of these years is going to have a day distributed to them. Had there been no ellision there, Ezekiel would have repeated that phrase 430 times to indicate that each and every year of the 430 years of rebellion would have a day attached to them for Ezekiel to endure in his dramatical enactment of the siege.

<sup>137</sup> Readers can follow my reasons why in [Assumption 16](#).

This has been discussed more fully in the paper but the important point to note here is that regardless as to whether years are going to be replaced with days (as in Ezekiel) or days are going to be replaced with years (as in the case in Numbers), the phrase is still expressed identically, rather than in a different sequence or ratio. This confirms the idea that it was not what was being transformed into what, it only confirmed that the distribution of a conversion of a time factor was involved. That is to say, for each and every day or year involved, a conversion would take place. The repetition of the phrase here indicates the distribution of this conversion to “each and every” period involved. The phrase was just stating the scale of that transformation. But even in acknowledging this scale, no place is given to the bogus idea that these phrases are an intimation of a ‘prophetic scale.’

Says the *SDABC*:

In these statements [referring to Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6-FB] are found the first intimations of the prophetic scale which later was to figure so largely in the interpretation of the great time prophecies, such as the “time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan. 7:25), and the “two thousand and three hundred days” (Dan. 8:14). ([Nichol, 1976](#), p.590)

This paper has thoroughly negated the validity of such an idea being extracted from either of the texts used by SDA historicists. They cannot use either text to bolster their ‘prophetic principle.’

In conclusion, there is nothing in the repetition of the phrase “day for a year, day for a year” in either Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 that indicates anything more than a distribution of a penal retribution. There is certainly no innate idea here that gives us a hint of a ‘prophetic scale’ being intimated. The small snippet of samples of similar usage from other texts examined above from Gesenius’ grammar merely verify the *distributive* concept of the phrase.

In addition, there is definitely nothing explicit in this phrase that indicates if “days” are to be symbolic or literal; or whether the “years” are to be symbolic or literal. If that cannot be gained from this phrase, then it has to be gained from the context. But unfortunately, the context in both Numbers and Ezekiel do not support the SDA historicists’ position.

The devastating evidence that this is not a general principle for apocalyptic prophecies is that even if we admit the crooked thinking of SDA historicists that Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 are predictive prophecy, they do not follow thought then apply it to predictive prophecies. There are many predictive prophecies cited from the Old Testament involving a time period, and none of them are interpreted by SDA historicists with the ‘principle’ they find in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 for predictive prophecies. Perhaps it is not a principle then? If it was, it would behoove them to follow their own reasoning. Therefore, by their own failure to apply it to predictive time prophecies, SDA historicists admit that it is not a ‘principle’ and it is not to be generalised to other predictive time prophecies.

Secondly they have failed to make any connection between Num. 14:34, Eze 4:6 and apocalyptic prophecy. They have made a leap in the dark. They have not classified these texts as apocalyptic prophecies, so they cannot be used as examples to establish a ‘principle’ for apocalyptic time periods.

So what are we left with? We are left with SDA historicists arguing that Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 are predictive prophecies, teaching a year-day principle, which they do not then apply to *any* of the predictive time prophecies outside Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6. Yet on the other hand, they want to apply it to *every* apocalyptic time period, even though they have not established any link between *apocalyptic* time periods and the so-called ‘*predictive*’ time prophecies of Num. 14:34 and Eze 4:6.

## 2.9 Astronomical Significance of the Danielic time periods

In the novel work of Jean Philippe Loys de Chéseaux on the relation between astronomical cycles and the time periods in the book of Daniel, published post-humously in 1754, we have an entirely new argument for the necessity of seeing these periods in years.

De Chéseaux was a wealthy Swiss landowner near Lausanne, and also an able mathematician and astronomer. He is famous for his observations of comets and nebulae, which was read by Reaumur, his grandfather, at a meeting of the French Academy of Sciences in Paris on August 6, 1746 and mentioned by Le Gentil (1759), but then stayed unpublished and forgotten until Bigourdan recovered and published it in 1884. De Chéseaux was also among the first to formulate *Olber's paradox*. De Chéseaux died a young man in 1751 aged only 33. His work was published posthumously by his family.<sup>138</sup>

Though his work on the astronomical significance of the time periods in the book of Daniel remained largely unnoticed until nineteenth century, historicists Cunninghame, Birks and Grattan Guinness brought his research to light again.<sup>139</sup> When he first did his research on the soli-lunar cycles for the time periods in Daniel, M. de Chéseaux sent his findings to two eminent astronomers in Paris for independent verification. Messrs. Mairan and Cassini from the Royal Academy of Science of Paris confirmed the validity of his work.

In 1946, M. de Chéseaux's work was revisited in a M. A. thesis by [Walter Sydney Ridgway](#) at the University of British Columbia. This however, was not a dissertation by an astronomer. It was a thesis submitted for an M.A in the department of Classics, and its title was "Soli-Lunar Cycles in Greek Research and Jewish Revelation."<sup>140</sup>

Nineteenth century historicists, not of Seventh-day Adventist persuasion, advanced these views, and apart from Froom's endorsement of these ideas, SDA historicists have generally not used these arguments to defend their position. Many reasons have been proposed as to the reason for the unusual periods mentioned in the book of Daniel. These time periods are expressed in odd amounts: 2300, 1290, 1335, and 3½ times. Most of these reasons proposed to date have been less than satisfactory and leave the reader unconvinced as to the validity of the reasons proposed. M. de Chéseaux however argued there was astronomical significance in the time periods in the book of Daniel. He related this significance to soli-lunar cycles. One of the implications of this reasoning naturally involved the importance of seeing the time periods in Daniel in terms of years instead of days. The astronomical significance of these time periods was only confirmed when the period were considered as years. Historicists took this as a confirmation of their method of interpretation. Cunninghame, Birks and Guinness were all Protestant historicists who argued thus.

Froom says concerning de Chéseaux's findings:

M. de Chéseaux had been pondering a possible relationship between the prophetic periods of the 1260 and 2300 years, as the duration of certain predicted epochs, and the facts of astronomy—that is, the cyclical periods measuring the planetary revolutions in the heavens. To his amazement and delight he discovered that these periods comprise lunisolar cycles of remarkable perfection and occurrence, whose existence had been unknown to astronomers. He found that they are of one and the same character. He found, moreover, that the difference between these two periods, which is 1040 years—and which he called the "Daniel Cycle"—is the most accurate lunisolar cycle thus far discovered, harmonizing the revolutions of sun and moon. This he wrote out in "Remarques historiques, chronologiques, et astronomiques, sur quelques

<sup>138</sup> Credit is given here to the biographical information provided at the site for Students for Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS) @: <http://www.seds.org/messier/xtra/Bios/decheseaux.html>. Guinness also provides some biographical information on him.

A pdf French copy of his 1754 work can be found [here](#).

<sup>139</sup> The work of Guinness is explored further in the section [Drue Cressener, Henry Grattan Guinness and the Proof by Advance Prediction](#).

<sup>140</sup> A copy of this 100 pp. thesis can be found at <http://www.historicism.com/Ridgway/ridgway-slc.pdf>



endroits du livre du Daniel.” (“Historical, Chronological, and Astronomical Remarks on Certain Parts of the Book of Daniel”) [From footnotes: “*Mémoires posthumes de Monsieur Jean Philippe Loys de Chéseaux, sur divers sujets, d’astronomie et de mathématiques avec de nouvelles tables très exactes des moyens mouvemens du Soleil, & de la Lune.*”], which was edited and published by his sons in 1754.

M. de Chéseaux here explains four kinds of cycles. Those—

1. Harmonizing the solar day and solar year.
2. Harmonizing the solar year and lunar month.
3. Harmonizing the solar day and lunar month.
4. Harmonizing all three—day, month, and year.

It had been almost impossible to find a cycle for this fourth class. But the 1260 years is such a cycle, with a remarkably small error. Then he found that the 2300 years is even more perfect—the kind of cycle that had long been unsuccessfully sought by astronomers, a cycle “thirty times longer than the Period of Calippus,” and having only “a seventeenth part of the error of that” ancient cycle, which error was “8h 12.” [From footnotes: “*Ibid*, p.25”] The exact similarity of the slight error of these two cycles made de Chéseaux conclude that the difference between them—1040 years—out to be a perfect cycle, free from error; and all the more remarkable as uniting all three kinds of cycles and “furnishing consequently a cycle of that fourth kind so long sought in vane.” It proved to be even so. Then he says:

“This period of 1040 years, indicated indirectly by the Holy Ghost, is a cycle at once solar, lunar, and diurnal or terrestrial of the most perfect accuracy. I subsequently discovered two singular confirmations of this fact, which I will explain presently, when I have adduced all my purely astronomic proofs; may I in the meantime be permitted to give to this new cycle, the name of the DANIEL CYCLE.” [From footnotes: “*Ibid*, pp. 26, 27; translated freely in H. G. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 403.”]

When de Chéseaux discovered the astronomical nature of this period, he regarded it as unmistakable proof of the inspiration of the book of Daniel. Such a cycle would never have been chosen by accident. And since it was not accidental, it must have been chosen by Him who timed the movements of the sun and moons in their orbits. [From footnotes: “De Chéseaux’s results were checked at the time by Messrs. Mairan and Cassini, celebrated astronomers of the Royal Academy of Science of Paris, who declared them in harmony with astronomical fact.”]

M. de Chéseaux makes this further impressive statement:

“For several ages [centuries] the book of Daniel, and especially these passages of it, have been quoted and commented on by numerous and varied authors, so that it is impossible for a moment to call in question their antiquity. Who can have taught their author the marvellous relation of the periods he selected with soli-lunar revolutions? Is it possible, considering all these points, to fail to recognize in the author of the book of Daniel the Creator of the heavens and of their hosts, of the earth and the things that are therein?” [From footnotes: “*Ibid*, pp. 49-51; abridged in Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, pp. 288, 289.”] (Froom, 1946, pp. 381-384)

Froom then goes on to summarise Cuninghame’s conclusions :

To Cuninghame these discoveries appeared as conclusive evidence that these prophetic numbers in Daniel are not literal days but prophetic days signifying literal years. (*Ibid*, p. 385)

Further, not only does these astronomical points confirm the “prophetic numbers” in Daniel to be years, he goes on to say that these periods are “engraved on the very system of the material universe:”

He felt that, in order to impress the church with their importance in measuring the epochs of the enemies of the church, they were not only announced to the church and confirmed by Gabriel with an oath, in the name of Him that liveth for ever and ever (Dan. 12:7), but are engraved on the very system of the material universe, being “measures of the great revolutions of the diurnal, and lunar and solar periods of the heavens, these two numbers being, according to M. de Chéseaux, the only round numbers that are cyclical, and their difference 1040, a perfect circle.” [From footnotes: “See T. R. Birks, *First Elements of Prophecy*, p. 372; H. G. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, pp. 399, 406; *History of Unveiling Prophecy*, pp. 404, 405.”] (*Ibid*, p. 384)

What both Guinness, Cuninghame, Birk and Froom have overlooked here is that de Chéseaux proved, not that these time periods in Daniel were ‘prophetic’ periods, but that they were ‘astronomical’ periods. The mere fact that there is correspondence between the numbers used in Daniel and the astronomical calculations of de Chéseaux does not prove the point that there is anything ‘prophetic’ about these periods. If anything, there is a closer relation between true Babylonian astrology and the use of these time periods by historicists.

For instance, Guinness extended the research done by de Chéseaux and provided some remarkably accurate predictions of future world events based on the application of these solunar cycles to the movements of the planets. All Guinness’ dates begin from Feb. 26, 747 B.C. since that year, the Nabonassar era was used by Ptolemy as an astronomical epoch. Using 1260 sidereal revolutions of Mercury, he arrives at B.C. 444 and the Decree to Restore and Build Jerusalem. Using 1260 sidereal revolutions of Venus, he arrives at A.D. 29 as the crucifixion of Christ. Using 1260 lunar years, he arrives at 476 A.D. with the Fall of the Roman Empire. And using 1260 synodic revolutions of Mars, he comes to 1945 A.D. as a significant time for the Jews. (cf. [Ridgway](#), [Ibid](#), p. 79).<sup>141</sup>

These predictions are verified by history. A prediction based on the movements of the sun, moon, and the major planets was the daily fare for the astrologers of Babylon in the employ of the king. Guinness has insusceptibly jumped tracks by using the numbers of Daniel in their application to the planetary movements from Biblical exegesis to classical Babylonian astrology. It was done by astrologers alongside liver divination to ascertain the mind of the gods in reference to the king.<sup>142</sup>

In recent years however, the reliability of De Chéseaux’s conclusion have been questioned by specialists in the field of astronomy.

## **De Cheseaux and Adventism.**

In 1981, Dr. Jean Zurcher, then Secretary of the Euro-Africa Division of Seventh-day Adventists, submitted a series of three articles in *Adventist Review* as a result of a request from the Sanctuary Review Committee. They wanted to expose his ideas to others and get feedback.<sup>143</sup>

The argument of the first of his three articles was that although the year-day principle is, admittedly, not an explicit principle in Scripture, it is still a valid one. He admits the two texts – Num. 14:34 and Eze 46 present the concept in reversal. He then points out that Gen. 29:27 teaches a week for seven years concept. He then goes further and highlights how the prophecies of Joseph enunciate a “each individual symbol represents a year” concept. These, in his mind, all prove that “a principle of calculation” was invoked to get to a year-day, a day-year or even a

<sup>141</sup> A Sidereal Revolution is an orbit around the Sun relative to the stars. A Lunar Year: “Since there are about twelve lunations (synodic months) in a solar year, this period (354.37 days) is sometimes referred to as **lunar year**, corresponding to thirteen sidereal months (355.18 days).” ( Wikipedia “Lunar Calendar” @ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar\\_calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_calendar)) A Synodic Revolution is the planet’s return to the same position in the sky in relation to the Sun as seen from the Earth (see Encyclopedia Britannica on “Calendar.”; Wikipedia on “Orbital Period” @ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synodic>)

Guinness also used the now-discounted period of 2520 years based on the “seven times” of Daniel 4, a very popular time period for fertile historicist minds in the nineteenth century. Ridgway documents how this period was used in Guinness’ prediction of events in 1917 A.D. and 1923 A.D. in relation to the Jews. On October 16, 1917, the year of the Hegira 1335 came to an end, and two weeks later Beersheba fell to British forces under Allenby. Lord Balfour made a declaration establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. In 1923, The League of Nations approved of the Palestine mandate for the Jews’ new home and came into operation in September, 29, 1923. Guinness also predicted 1933-34 as a significant time for the Jews, using the 1335-year period, applying it to the start of the capture of Zedekiah in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. It was in the period predicted that Hitler first came to power. He did this in 1908. (Ridgway, [Ibid](#), pp. 72-91)

<sup>142</sup> See [Jastrow](#), 1914, 1915.

<sup>143</sup> The three articles occurred in the January 29, February 2, and February 9, 1981 issues. They can be found online at <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH1981-05/index.djvu>; <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH1981-06/index.djvu> ; <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH1981-07/index.djvu> ; The objection to those articles can be found in the May 7 issue online at <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/RH/RH1981-19/index.djvu>

week-7-year relationship. In his thinking it is valid then to say that “a day in prophecy stands for a year.”

In his second article, he asserts that the proper understanding of the time period in Daniel 9:24 “reveals the Biblical principle of calculation.” Yet when we read of his explanation of Dn9:24, he explains that it is understood to be a heptad of “years” not as an example of the year-day principle. He also shows how the Jubilee motif can be used to come to the same conclusion as using the heptad method with the seventy weeks. He explicitly states that Daniel 9 is to be interpreted without the year-day principle. And even the 70 years of captivity mentioned in Dan. 9:2 are calculated, in his view, on a year for every sabbatical year, indicating the 70 years of captivity represented 490 years of rebellion.

In his third article, he quotes the research of M. Loys de Cheseaux as proof of the divine nature of the numbers involved in the prophecies of Daniel. These numbers were not only proved to be extraordinary numbers, but the timeliness of M. de Cheseaux’s findings being published at what the historicist’s saw as the end of the 1260 years made it even more significant. Zurcher points out how other scholars, such as T.R. Birks and Grattan Guinness, in the nineteenth century cited the work of M. de Cheseaux, and his research confirms the view that the year-day principle is on “a solid foundation.”

In the May 7 issue of *Adventist Review* however, four replies to the series were published and questions were raised concerning the value of using M. de Cheseaux’s faulty assertions. Evidence was presented to show up his naive numerology, and this evidence fatally destroyed the assertions made by Zurcher in regard to the value of de Cheseaux’s contribution to the topic. The editors to *Adventist Review* also pointed out some of the errors Froom had made in supplying this material. The editors were satisfied that Zurcher’s arguments regarding M. de Cheseaux’s work was ill-founded. As readers will notice in the extract that follows, the editor of the *Adventist Review* said:

Readers should keep in mind that in introducing this three-part series the editors stated that the concepts contained in these articles “were presented briefly at Glacier View to the Sanctuary Review Committee. We asked the author to write them out for closer examination and study.” The response received from readers in the letters that follow reflects the “closer examination and study” we were seeking.

A full examination of the arguments of Zurcher may be found in the Appendix.

The failings of Zurcher’s additional support for the year-day principle had been adequately answered by the information contained in the replies from professionals in their field.

After reading the article we are left with the following admissions:

The Bible uses day-year and year-day in reverse in the two text – Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6;

The Bible uses “week- 7 year” (Gen29:27); “a year = 7-year” system (Dn9:2); and a “symbol represents a year” system (Gen 41);

Dan9:24 does not use the year-day principle; it uses either the heptad model or a jubilee calculation;

Astronomy proves the numbers in Daniel had “the Creator’s seal,” and that Daniel knew “years” were implied in Dn8:14 because he understood 2300 was an astronomically-significant number, and would *only* be reckoned in years.

Without even considering the rebuttal’s by Adventist scientists to Zurcher’s articles, we are left without any confirmation of the validity of using the year-day principle. In fact, he confirms all my positions:

1. There is a choice as to whether you want a day for a year or a year for a day; if both are correct and both have a precedent, either of them can be used, and they can be

used for more than just prophetic periods! (Readers will recall my section on this point earlier)

2. There is a precedent for the “symbol represents a year” principle found in the story of Joseph; (Readers will recall my discussion on this point earlier as well)
3. *Shabu’a* in Dn9:24 does not need the year-day principle; in fact, Zurcher presents *shabu’a* in exactly the same way as the Greeks and Latins present *hebdomad*.
4. The Church Fathers used *hebdomad* to calculate the seventy weeks, without the year-day principle.
5. Zurcher’s position on Gen 29 is dealt with in the next section of this paper. The use of the story of Jacob and Laban as an incident where the year-day principle is being demonstrated can be discounted on the basis of misunderstanding of the text –there is no correspondence between the week of wedding festivities and the seven years of service yet to come; but rather, the seven years of service are textually linked with the previous seven years of service by Laban. Only the most uninformed Bible reader would see the year-day principle in Gen 29.

Unwittingly, Zurcher’s series of articles did more to discredit the year-day principle than he did to provide support for it. Louis Kunz was correct when he said: “Jean Zurcher’s three-part defense of the year-day principle has to be a case of undoing by overdoing.... efforts by Dr. Zurcher to add integrity to the principle only weaken it.” On the other hand, credit should be given to the editors of *Adventist Review* for their candidness in printing letters pointing out the errors of Froom’s work reduplicated in Zurcher’s arguments. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of editors G. E. Garne and R. W. Taylor of the *Australasian Record*. When Zurcher’s articles were reprinted in that country (*Australasian Record*, April 27, May 4, and 11, 1981), they were *not* accompanied with the follow-up letters from qualified Adventist scientists highlighting the worthlessness of de Cheseaux’s, Zurcher’s (and Froom’s) argumentation. One can only wonder what was in these Australian editors’ minds to decide this crucial information was not needed in Australia.

Here are the letters of objection sent into the *Adventist Review*, and published in the May 7 issue.

ZURCHER THEN REPLIED IN MAY OR JUNE TO THE ADVENT REVIEW AFTER THESE LETTERS WERE PUBLISHED. GET HIS REPLY AND PUBLISH IT AND COMMENT.

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## TAKING EXCEPTION

## “Astronomical evidence” questioned

Re “The Year-Day Principle,” January 29-February 12, 1981. I found Dr. Zurcher’s series thrilling beyond words, although I had to read it over three times before I began to understand what I read.

Two questions stood out after the third time through. 1. Does astronomy confirm that the 1260 years and 2300 years began at the beginning of a 315-year cycle? Because unless they did, the ends of these time periods would not come at the end of a 315-year cycle. 2. Since De Cheseaux discovered the Daniel theory before 1811—and he lived until 1851—I cannot understand why he did not also figure out the rest of the story. It appears that such a genius as he would have had no trouble figuring out from history when the time periods began, and therefore when they would end. I wonder what a biography on De Cheseaux’s

life would turn up? Did he some way get involved in the Millerite controversy, and was he thereafter fearful to reveal his views? Or did he, after 1844, perhaps decide that his whole theory must have been erroneous?

ROBERTA SHARLEY  
Spanaway, Washington

► 1. Because 315 is not a divisor of 2300, there is no way that the 2300 years could begin with and come at the end of a series of 315-year cycles. 2. M. Loys de Cheseaux most likely lived from 1718 to 1751, not from 1781 to 1851 as incorrectly stated in the article (see the following letter). Readers should keep in mind that in introducing this three-part series the editors stated that the concepts contained in these articles “were presented briefly at Glacier View to the Sanctuary Review Committee. We asked the author to write them out for closer examination and

study.” The response received from readers in the letters that follow reflects the “closer examination and study” we were seeking.

It must be pointed out that serious errors exist in Dr. Zurcher’s third article. Some of these errors also exist in and were taken from volume 3 of LeRoy E. Froom’s *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*.

The astronomical evidence put forth is incorrect, and the language used to describe it is self-contradictory concerning the facts, and overly optimistic regarding the applications and conclusions. M. Loys de Cheseaux (1718-1751) was not an astronomer of note, but was a Swiss physician and numerologist who died at the age of 33 and whose main works were edited and published posthumously as memoirs by his sons. The dates given in the REVIEW article have him born after his published work and living 70 years.

It is a contradiction of terms and manifestly impossible to have the sun return to the same position on the ecliptic (the exact path of the sun in the sky and the approximate path of the planets and the line through the constellations of the zodiac) in either 1260 Julian years or 2300 Gregorian years. Both of these units of time take precession of

the equinoxes (the change of seasons) into consideration, and this amounts to 7.9 degrees and 31.4 degrees, respectively. The proper astronomical unit of time to use would be the sidereal year. As far as the location of the moon is concerned, assuming the sun and moon started from the same point, 1260 Julian years later, the moon would be 125.6 degrees away from the sun, and this angle is equivalent to about ten days away from the nearest lunation (new moon). At the end of 2300 Gregorian years the separation would be 13.2 degrees, which is one day away from the nearest lunation.

The terms *Julian* and *Gregorian* have an exact meaning in astronomy and the civil calendar. The Julian and Gregorian years are exactly 365.25 days and 365.2425 days, respectively, and are both practical approximations to the more precise tropical year of 365.24219878 days. The sidereal year is 365.25636042 days (epoch of 1900). The proper lunar month to use is the synodical month of 29.53058912 days.

The mixing of Julian and Gregorian units of time is improper. The 1260 Julian years are equal to 460,215 days. The 2300 Gregorian years are 840,057.75 days. The differ-

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ence is 379,842.75 days. This time interval falls short of 1040 Julian or Gregorian years by 17.25 days or 9.45 days, respectively. If we divide the days by 1040 years, we get an average year of 365.2334135 days. This is a meaningless number and does not correspond to any year interval. It is joked about in elementary math that you cannot mix apples and oranges. Apparently, if one subtracts apples from oranges astronomically, one ends up with a lemon.

The Chaldeans and Hebrews were aware of the Metonic cycle of 19 years for calculating new moons (lunations) and the saros cycle of 18 years and 11 days for calculating eclipses. They were probably also aware of the Callippic cycle of 76 Julian years. These were sufficient for their contemporary needs.

There are literally scores of other lunar-solar cycles that come to light when using modern values of the astronomical constants involved that are much more accurate and useful than the 315, 1040, 1260, and 2300 years mentioned in the article. It takes no higher mathematical concept than arithmetic to verify the results. It is difficult to believe that the Holy Spirit would mix astronomical units of time (Julian and Gregorian) when giving us prophetic

time intervals. It is probably a good thing that these facts have been brought to light at this time. Apparently, Cuninghame and H. Grattan Guinness are responsible for spreading these false scientific ideas, which were repeated by Froom in his book.

JOHN A. EISELE  
Hillcrest Heights  
Maryland

It should be pointed out that the evidence reported in the February 12 article provides no support for the important year-day principle. The eighteenth-century mathematician quoted in the article, M. de Cheseaux, claimed Biblical significance for the time interval of 2300 years because he had calculated that the sun and moon would return to their same relative positions after that time to within one degree of error.

M. de Cheseaux was a numerologist, and even if one subscribed to this superstition, an error of one degree hardly would be sufficiently exact to attach any uniqueness to 2300. There are several time periods that are better solar-lunar cycles than this. Even De Cheseaux noted that 1040 years is a much more exact solar-lunar-diurnal cycle, but the only way he could tie this to Scripture was to indicate that both 2300 days and

1260 days are mentioned in the Bible and 1040 is the difference between these figures. This seems to be carrying numerology a bit far!

With the aid of a computer, I have repeated M. de Cheseaux's calculations, using both his eighteenth-century data and more accurate modern data on the length of the year and the synodical month. One can reproduce his results, including his 1040 solar-lunar-diurnal cycle. But even with the old data, the computer shows there are several solar-lunar cycles better than the relatively inexact 2300-year cycle. With modern data neither the 1040- nor the 2300-year cycles are particularly significant.

DOWELL MARTZ  
Angwin, California

Jean Zurcher's three-part defense of the year-day principle has to be a case of undoing by overdoing. I am well aware that the year-day relationship is not explicitly identified as a principle of prophetic interpretation, but such efforts by Dr. Zurcher to add integrity to the principle only weaken it.

The use of Genesis 29:27 in the first article is to grasp at a straw, as a reading of the context and page 388 of *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 1, shows.

The second article's use of the jubilee method assumes a 49-year period, but the *SDA Bible Dictionary* indicates that it may be 49 or 50 years (pp. 606, 607). Common usage of the word *jubilee* is 50 years.

The third article has a 1260-year lunar cycle and a 2300-year solar cycle. The lunar cycle is not the equivalent of the solar cycle. Is it unfair to assume that, if God intended us to use the year-day principle, He would use a consistent unit of time for all prophecies? As a church we have traditionally used the solar cycle, not the lunar cycle, for the 1260-year time period. The article equates "1260 Julian years," to the "1260-year lunar cycle," but a quick look at a dictionary or encyclopedia indicates that the Julian year is a solar year (365 days, 6 hours) not a lunar year (354 days, 9 hours). This is a serious error that in effect negates the author's thesis.

LOUIS KUNTZ  
Hayden, Alabama

► A scientist, competent in both astronomy and physics, replies: "Mr. Kuntz misses the point badly as regards the 1260-year lunar cycle. This deals with the number of times a lunar month divides into the Julian year of 365.25 days. The lunar year of 354.75 days definitely was not implied in Dr. Zurcher's article."

In conclusion, the editors put Zurcher's ideas out to the readers of the *Adventist Review* to find out whether the ideas were solid. They were looking for a response from some specialists in this area to respond to the letters. They got what they were fishing for.

Dr. John A. Eisele, quantum scientist and Seventh-day Adventist, said "Apparently Cuninghame and H. Grattan Guinness are responsible for spreading these false scientific ideas, which were repeated by Froom in his book."<sup>144</sup> And Dr. Dowell Martz, Chairman of the Physics Department at Pacific Union College, said "It should be pointed out that the evidence reported in the February article provides no support for the important year-day principle." The reasons cited by these two Adventist scientists for the failure of M. de Cheseaux's ideas were sufficient for the editors. Zurcher's (and Froom's) argument using astronomy to confirm the divine character of the numbers themselves in the prophetic periods were doomed arguments. They could not be used.

<sup>144</sup> According to a few sources on the Net, astronomer Dr. John A. Eisele was a researcher for the Naval Research Office, Department of the Navy, in Washington, DC, during the 1960s and 70s. Some research papers include this one on a related topic: <http://www.stormingmedia.us/77/7704/A770410.html> He was also a member of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (1970) <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/full/1970PASP...82..778>. Authored many books and articles on quantum physics. In 1961 he was researching at Southern Illinois University "Nuclear Spectroscopy of Rare Earth Radioactive Isotopes." [http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1961/annualreports/ar\\_1961\\_appendix\\_c.pdf](http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1961/annualreports/ar_1961_appendix_c.pdf)

Dr. Dowell Martz was, at the time of writing, a physics professor and Chairman of Physics at Pacific Union College <http://www.angwinreporter.com/pastPages/47-print.html>. He was also Napa Country Committee Chairman for Geothermal Research Information and Planning Services <http://www.osti.gov/bridge/servlets/purl/6254627-amDMCX/6254627.PDF> and; formerly a weapons delivery systems analyst for the United States Navy. <http://209.85.141.104/search?q=cache:hRa8nNaPZC4J:www.adultsundayschool.com/my-conversion.htm+%22dowell+martz+%22&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=14&client=opera>



## 2.10 Cressener, Guinness and the Proof by Advance Prediction

Another argument put up by historicists in favour of the validity of the year-day principle, beside all the other arguments canvassed previously, and one cited by Shea is the advance prediction of Drue Cressener, an English prophetic interpreter, using this method of interpretation. We are told he pinpointed within a couple of years, the time when historicists would say the end of the 1260 years of Revelation would occur. He did this in 1689 A.D. Says Shea:

Thus Cressener's specification of the year for that event, and it was given in approximate terms, came within two years of the time it actually happened. This he predicted more than a century before by applying the year-day principle to the time period of this prophecy. Considering the time when this interpretation was set forth, this was a remarkable perceptive prediction. The extraordinary chronological accuracy with which Cressener's prediction met its fulfillment lends support to the idea that he had indeed employed the correct hermeneutical tool with which to interpret this time prophecy, the year-day principle. (1982, p.85)

Shea argues that it was "the correct hermeneutical tool" that led Cressener to have such "extraordinary chronological accuracy." Shea is not alone in referring to Cressener. Others have taken the cue from Shea and also quote this man's statement in proof of the "uncanny" accuracy of the year-day principle. Note Mansell for example:

In 1689, more than a century before the end of the 1,260 years, Drue Cressener, an Anglican cleric and student of Bible prophecy, on the basis of the prophecies of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13, made the following "uncanny" prediction: "The first appearance of the beast was at Justinian's recovery of the Western Empire, from which time to about the year 1800 will be about 1260 years."

On the next page of his book, Cressener is even more precise. He says that the period will end "a little before the year 1800." *It ended in late February, 1798 – exactly 1,260 years from the time since the Ostrogothic horn was laid low and driven from the city of Rome in March 538.* (2002, p.36)

One has to smile as such hollow rhetoric here. Using the words of Goldstein, "Is this the best they can do?" Does the approximate accuracy of Cressener's prediction confirm the correctness of the year-day principle? If so, Shea's reading of Froom is *just a little selective* here!! Had he been searching Froom's work with a little wider focus, instead of just finding something to confirm his point, he would have noticed that there would be many other dates for the end of the 1260 day prophecy, scattered over the six hundred years before Cressener, all failing to eventuate. And even and after Cressener, there were many more, all using the year-day principle, who failed to accurately predict the event correctly. Cressener was one of hundreds of writers who fired off predictions using the 1260 days and the year-day principle. With nothing more than sheer probability, it had to be that one of them would strike somewhere near a mark that later historicists would call the fulfillment. It is like grapeshot. One out of hundreds might hit the target.

Just taking the chapter in *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*, Vol. II, that deals with Drue Cressener – chapter 26, "Approaching End of Papal Period Predated," and the following one "German expositors Parallel British Positions," we have documented a number of writers who made a variety of predictions, all using the year-day principle.

**Table 14. A Variety of False Dates for 1260 Day Terminus**

Writer	1260 day Terminus	Page in <i>PFF</i>
Beverley (1670-1701)	1697	pp.581-586
Burnet (1635-1715)	No date	pp.586-588
Nicolai (1556-1608)	1670	pp.600-601
Alsted (1588-1638)	Started when Constantine removed	p.610-611

	Rome to Constantinople in 330 A.D. This would terminate it in 1590 A.D.	
Comenius (1592-1670)	1655	p.617

Many others in these chapters were non-committal as regards a date for the 1260 days according to Froom's choice of information given. But clearly, if we are to be ruthlessly honest as a historicist, we must assess the validity of the principle these men of God used to get to their conclusions. And it is the same-the year-day principle. So any praise given to Cressener's 'accuracy' must also be tempered by the errant attempts of his contemporaries, also using the year-day principle. One must ask the question, why select Cressener and ignore the other writers who predicted false events? Are they not also a significant informational input for the *lack of* validity of the year-day principle?

Another point to consider is this. Shea remarks on the uncanny prediction of Cressener based on the century and a half time lag between when Cressener predicted the event and when the 'event' occurred. Yet Froom's work is rife with other long-term forecasts of historicists whose prediction, using the same principles as Cressener, failed miserably. If one collated them in a table, it would be a total embarrassment to Shea.<sup>145</sup>

Ford makes a pertinent comment on this issue, in his perusal of the Library of Congress:

I gave some attention to each of the hundreds of books in that great library on the book of Revelation and found to my great interest that writers in the seventeenth century had interpreted the prophecies so as to have them end in the seventeenth century, and that writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did similarly. (1996, p.297)

And this observation is true, not only for those centuries mentioned by Ford, but a casual perusal of Froom's *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* yields the same conclusion across the many centuries that Froom surveyed, as shown in the example of Cressener's peers.

Notice LaRondelle's comments on this point:

The assertion that Bible prophecy contains secret information that tells us *exactly where in time* we are in the stream of history, tends to overstate the truth of progressive revelation. Ironically, since the first century *each* generation in church history has claimed with confidence to be the *last* generation before the second advent. Apparently, prophecy is not so clear in its chronological precision to the saints. The certainty of truthfulness in Froom's historicist analysis is further obscured by the fact that many interpreters assumed the role of prophets themselves, asserting with overconfidence a present or imminent *fulfillment* of prophecy. Such public declarations have brought prophecy into ill repute because of premature expectations of imminency. (2005, p.7)

This leads us to the question then, what do we say of those who used the year-day principle but who produced a date that accounts for nothing in history? Should we paraphrase the conclusion from Shea's assertion above:

This they predicted *incorrectly for more than eight centuries* by applying the year-day principle to the 1260-day prophecy. The *extraordinary chronological inaccuracy* with which these historicists' predictions *failed to meet their fulfillment* lends support to the idea that they had indeed employed the *incorrect* hermeneutical tool with which to interpret this time prophecy, the year-day principle.

Haganu's comments on the year-day principle is relevant here:

The 'principle' is applied where it fits, and it not applied where it doesn't fit. The fact that it seems to fit to certain texts is claimed to be evidence that the 'principle' has passed the 'pragmatic test'. The contrary is

<sup>145</sup> One can read such a table at <http://www.abhota.info/end1.htm> Click on the six time frames given in the table at the top of the page and see the predictions down through the ages. Historicism features in the times since the Middle Ages. This site does not use Froom as a source. It is entirely independent to him, and indeed to historicism.

never stated, that is, that the fact that the 'principle' fails to fit in an overwhelming number of instances, would be evidence that the 'principle' has no empirical validity. <http://www.atoday.com/160.0.html>

If Cressener was indeed “applying the correct hermeneutical tool” as asserted by Shea, then we would expect it to be applied by him elsewhere, with just as uncanny accuracy. Cressener applied his method of interpretation to the time period of the woes in the Apocalypse, and produced a date for the downfall of Turkey in 1697, along with Brightman and Lloyd.<sup>146</sup> This *false* prediction failed to materialise, but Shea neglects to inform us of the incorrect application of Cressener’s own method. Strange that!!<sup>147</sup>

To his credit, a significant proportion of Froom’s work documents *false* predictions by historicists using the year-day principle down through the centuries. Should we just ignore these as attempts of learning how the principle works, and only when we get an example where the prediction is close to where the historicist paradigm indicates a fulfillment do we say this is an example of the year-day principle at work? How does Froom himself justify the abundance of evidence against the reliability of the year-day principle. Summarising his evidence in volume II, he says:

It is likewise to be noted that all the great time periods of prophecy have been progressively discerned. They have always been recognized during the process of contemporary fulfillment...in the early centuries of the Christian Era the 1260 days were believed to center on a still future Antichrist. But until its actual appearance, and the long extent of its duration came to be recognized, the year-day principle was not extended to include this period. From Joachim (1190) onward, however, the 1260 prophetic days, as symbolizing years, were increasingly recognized by Jew as well as Christian, and by Catholic and non-Catholic alike....Although ...there was a variety of timing in the attempt to locate the 1260 years, the unanimity of conviction concerning this rapidly expiring segment in the career of the Papacy was most significant....many began to look forward, endeavoring to compute the approaching end of the 1260 years. The story has been unfolded of how sizeable number proclaimed the ending of the time in the aftermath of the French Revolution, and declared the capture of the pope in 1798 the exact counterpart of the prophetic demand. Clearly another epoch had been fulfilled in the sweep of prophecy, and was contemporarily recognized and declared. (1946, pp.790-791)

Froom explains away the multiplicities of predictions using the year-day principle for the 1260-day period by saying “many began to look forward, endeavoring to compute the approaching end of the 1260 years.” The errors of these predictors are nothing more than a collective exercise in trying to get it right. So they just kept on predicting new dates through the centuries until they found an event that fitted what they “declared” was the fulfillment. In Froom’s view, the false predictions are not to be treated as such, but rather as developing methods for getting a correct prediction.<sup>148</sup> Says LaRondelle on this introspective interpretation of historical events by historicists:

What is Froom’s biblical key or theological norm by which he measures a “progressive and continuous fulfillment”... ? Unfortunately, Froom does not define his hermeneutical guideline that determines his theological evaluation of fulfillment, except to state: “*history is the true and final interpreter of prophecy.*” Does he mean secular history or the history of salvation?

Froom offers his classification of the historicist interpretations “as an aid to sound investigation of this important phase of Holy Writ.” The critical issue is, however, *what* is his criterion of a credible “fulfillment” in history? Is it his notion of self-evidence of a secular event, or is it the majority opinion of historicist interpretations? Froom’s oversight to define his theological hermeneutic reveals a serious

<sup>146</sup> Froom, 1948 (II), pp. 674-675.

<sup>147</sup> Notice in the Appendix a statement from a nineteenth century publication on Cressener’s prediction regarding the downfall of Turkey.

<sup>148</sup> Notice also, it is not a secular view of historical events that independently confirms a prediction; it is the historicists in print who decide that 1798 was the event.

omission, but this defect does not discredit his monumental contribution to the collection and classification of the records of past interpreters. (2005, p.3)<sup>149</sup>

We have a mentality in Froom's perspective that does not see error as error per se, but rather, it is a growing educational process, where they are "endeavoring to compute" the correct date. This false-date setting continued for hundreds of years among Protestants, getting it wrong all the time. But this is not seen as error in Froom's view. He sees these erroneous attempts as just another voice in the "chorus" of voices using the year-day principle.

To justify this Froom says:

Emphasis upon the obvious soundness of the main positions of the Historical School of Interpretation should not be construed as commendation of the many conflicting and often incongruous details of various expositions. Rather, endorsement is confined to those basic features only – those clear, major aspects upon which there was unity....Mark it: these conclusions were reached progressively – first in anticipation, then in contemporary recognition, and finally in the retrospective conviction that the historical counterpart had clearly matched the inspired prediction...The consensus of competent, reverent scholarship may then be well conceded as having established the soundness of the exposition. Such essentials for the heart and essence of prophetic interpretation. (Ibid, pp.791-792)

So Froom tells us we are to ignore the differences, just hold to the main principles, and forget the erroneous predictions of hundreds of historicists, because they were just a part of a long process of illumination? The question remains now, which "competent, reverent scholarship" does Froom refer to, since "competent, reverent scholarship" today does not endorse Froom's view on the fulfillment of events in 1798? Arasola (1989) shows how a sympathy for this flavour of prophetic interpretation died with the false prophecy of the Millerites in the 1840s. Does Froom only refer to SDA historicists when he refers to "competent, reverent scholarship"?

Another point on the false predictions of historicists using the year-day principle, consider the assertion of SDA historicists in regard to the fulfillment of the fall of Turkey in 1840. J.N. Andrews, in his book, *Three Messages of Revelation 14* correctly states the belief of SDA historicists back then:

The prophetic period connected with the second woe terminated with the political power of the Ottoman Empire, Aug. 11, 1840....We firmly believe that this proclamation [of Rev14-FB] has been made, and that the preaching of the immediate advent of our Lord has been in fulfillment in this prophecy[Rev14-FB]. Prior to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1840, [note: Andrews adheres to the belief that the *fall* of the Ottoman Empire occurred in 1840-FB] it had been shown by those who were preaching the immediate advent of Christ, that the hour, day, month, and year of Ottoman supremacy would expire on 11<sup>th</sup> of August, 1840. [Note how Andrews now turns the *fall* into a *loss of supremacy*!!-FB] When the event verified the truthfulness of this calculation, the way was prepared for the advent message to go with mighty power. The prophecies were not only unsealed, but, in the providence of God, a demonstration of the truthfulness of the mode of calculation respecting the prophetic times was given to the world. (1970, pp.26.28)

SDA historicism now shuns this position, and like Spangler, are looking for an entirely different interpretation, even though Ellen White endorsed Litch's original view, affirmed here by Andrews.<sup>150</sup> We can turn Andrew's statement on its head to now say what history has confirmed – 1840 was a non-event. Paraphrasing Andrews we get:

<sup>149</sup> Another criticism of LaRondelle in this paper is this point: "A second point of concern to be taken seriously is the possible *misuse* of earlier historicist traditions when these are appealed to as the *final* interpreter of prophecies. If we profess the *sola Scriptura* principle that the Bible interprets itself, how can we at the same time claim that 'history' as such 'is the true and final interpreter'?"

<sup>150</sup> Spangler, (1980, p.46) has quietly changed tracks and now proclaims 1453 A.D. to 1844 A.D., with no reference to Turkey at all. "The sixth trumpet can be linked from the fall of Constantinople in A.D. 1453 to 1844, so here is another pragmatic confirmation of the validity of the date 1844 and the workability of the year-day principle." This view is not new. Froom documents for instance, Habershon, (1789-1852) English architect and lay writer on prophecy proclaimed these dates for the fall of Turkey, and set the Fall of Turkey at June, 1844: "it is not extravagant to believe, that the fall may take place at the termination of the period, as set forth in this prophecy; and which termination, reckoning 391 years ('the hour, and the day, and the month, and the year,') from the fall of Constantinople on the 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1453, will happen in June, 1844." (Froom, 1946, p.637). Charles Buck (1771-1815) published similar views in the New World, again with the termination of the Turk as the concluding event. (Ibid, p.337) Spangler has ignored the Turkey part of this exposition and just related the 1844 dating to the Day of Atonement, beginning

When the event *failed to verify* the truthfulness of this calculation, the way was prepared for the advent message to *fail* with mighty power. The prophecies were not only *made a mockery of*, but, in the providence of God, a demonstration of the *untruthfulness of the mode of calculation respecting the prophetic times was given to the world*.

Andrews tells us that it was in the providence of God that we were given a test to measure the year-day principle and the historicists' method of prophetic interpretation. Well, according to this divine providence, God has directed us away from using this method of interpretation. This testimony against the year-day principle also has another 'pragmatic confirmation' of its error, in that SDA historicists' themselves are shopping around for another interpretation to fit the time period for the 391 days of Rev 9:15.<sup>151</sup> SDA historicists' actions are a testimony against the very principle they tout!!

How is it that scholars like Shea are content to portray one side of an argument, knowing full well the other side, yet failing to address the issue in his deliberations on the topic? Surely this is a sign of ineptitude? It is certainly a failure of trust to his readership, in that he fails to portray the complete picture of the matter under consideration thereby biasing the education (or better, the mis-education) he passes on to readers. It is indeed a sad event that being in such a influential position as that occupied by Shea, he fails to acquit himself of his stewardship in a responsible manner. True, he may be a "yes-man" for this present bureaucracy in the SDA church, but his scholarship will always be found to be wanting by those not directed by the parameters dictated by "traditional SDA teachings" by rather just by a full understanding of the issue.

## 1. Dr. Henry Grattan Guinness

A very illuminating exercise can be undertaken using the predictions of Protestant Historicist Dr. H. Grattan Guinness.<sup>152</sup> Historicist T. Birks, noted in his works on *First Elements of Prophecy*, the calculations of 18<sup>th</sup> century Swiss astronomer M. de Chéseaux, proving that 315 years (a quarter of 1260 years) is a soli-lunar cycle; and that the 2300 years is also a astronomical cyclical period. Guinness, upon reading Birks book soon after 1870, discovered that the 2300 years was indeed "not only a soli-lunar cycle, but a soli-lunar-anomalistic cycle."<sup>153</sup> Guinness says:

About the middle of last century a remarkable fact was discovered by a Swiss astronomer M. de Chéseaux, a fact which is full of the deepest interest to the Christian mind, and which has never received either at the hands of the Church or of the world, the attention that it merits.

The prophetic periods of 1260 years and 2300 years, assigned in the Book of Daniel and in the Apocalypse, as the duration of certain predicted events, are such soli-lunar cycles, cycles of remarkable

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in October 22, 1844!! And he has ignored the historical interpretation that included Turkey in the equation. If he looked at how others interpreted the 1453 to 1844 dating, he would be far from asserting another pragmatic confirmation for the year-day principle. The fall of Turkey in June, 1844 as a pragmatic fulfillment??? One could be forgiven to thinking of these SDA historicists' antic as similar to line dancing – all doing a certain routine to their favourite tune – "The Fall of Turkey on Aug 11, 1840;" – and then the M.C. for the evening's dance, Mr. Lack of Fulfillment, comes along and changes the music for them, so that they cannot do the same routine anymore. But they keep on dancing, this time with a new routine, after a quick reshuffle and a lead from one of the dancers; dancing to the tune "391 days points to the Day of Atonement in October, 1844" and everyone is happy again. And so they go from one routine to another not realizing the significance of the changes along the way. As long as they can keep up the dance routine with the music and not lose position in the group of lines, every one is satisfied. And so the boot-scooting continues and the explanations that cover up the cracks in the interpretation just keep changing.

As an aside, Habershon argues for the divine "design of this time period, pointing out the 'preciseness and minuteness' with which the period of its continuance is made" indicated by "the very omission of a week in the formula." (Ibid) This idea is echoed in recent attempts by Shea noting the absence of "year" in the symbolic time periods in Daniel as an evidence that the "days" must be taken as symbolic of the unmentioned "years."

<sup>151</sup> "Competent, reverent scholarship," demonstrated in the multitude of commentaries on Revelation available today, does not see such a period in this text at all!!

<sup>152</sup> I am grateful for the following material provided at historicism.com on [www.lastdays.ca](http://www.lastdays.ca) by Joe Haynes, of Hague, Saskatchewan, Canada.

<sup>153</sup> Grattan Guinness, *Created Centred in Christ*, vol. 1, p. 328, in *Ridgeway, 1946*, p.66. Ridgeway's thesis is found at Hayes' site at <http://www.lastdays.ca/Ridgeway/ridgeway-slc.pdf>



perfection and accuracy, but whose existence was entirely unknown to astronomers, until, guided by sacred Scripture, M. de Chéseaux discovered and demonstrated them to be such. And further, the difference between these two periods, which is 1040 years, is the largest accurate soli-lunar cycle known.

<http://www.lastdays.ca/Guinness/Approaching/aeota16.htm>

Guinness then quoted from de Chéseaux, since his book, by that time, was hard to procure:

M. de Chéseaux then describes the process by which he was led to the discovery that 315 years is such a soli-lunar cycle, ten times more exact than the nineteen years Metonic cycle in use by the ancients; the sun and moon coming after a lapse of that period, to within three hours twenty-four seconds of absolute agreement: and he proceeds, - "I had no sooner discovered this cycle, than I observed that it was a quarter of the 1260 years of Daniel and the Apocalypse, and that consequently, this period is itself a soli-lunar cycle;" after which the sun and moon return, within less than half a degree, to the same point of the ecliptic precisely, and that within an hour of each other.

"The relation of this period, assigned by the Holy Spirit as the limit of certain political events, to the most notable movements of the heavenly bodies, made me think it might be the same with the 2300 years. By the aid of the astronomic tables I examined this latter, and found that at the end of 2300 Gregorian years, minus six hours fourteen seconds, the sun and the moon return to within half a degree of the place from which they started, and that an hour later the sun has reached its exact starting point on the ecliptic: whence it follows that the prophetic period of 2300 years, is a cyclical period (also remarkable for the number of its aliquot parts, and for containing a complete number of cycles) and one so perfect, that though it is thirty times longer than the celebrated cycle of Calippus, it has an error of only thirteen hours, a seventeenth part of the error of that ancient cycle.

"The exact similarity of the error of these two cycles of 1260 and 2300 years, made me soon conclude that the difference between them, 1040 years, ought to be a perfect cycle, free from all error; and all the more remarkable as uniting the three kinds of cycles, and furnishing consequently a cycle of that fourth kind, so long sought in vain, and finally concluded to be chimerical, impossible to find.

"On examination of this period of 1040 years by the best modern astronomic tables I found that it was even so. Its error is absolutely imperceptible, in so long a period, and may indeed be accounted for by errors in the tables themselves, owing to the inaccuracy of some of the ancient observations on which they are founded.

"This period of 1040 years, indicated indirectly by the Holy Ghost, is a cycle at once solar, lunar, and diurnal or terrestrial of the most perfect accuracy. I subsequently discovered two singular confirmations of this fact, which I will explain presently, when I have adduced all my purely astronomic proofs; may I in the meantime be- permitted to give to this new cycle, the name of THE DANIEL CYCLE."

<http://www.lastdays.ca/Guinness/Approaching/aeota16.htm>

In fact, Guinness attached a lot of significance to many astronomical cycles and periods mentioned in Scripture. Armed with these cycles, and using the base date of the canon of Ptolemy – the first year of Nabonassar, Feb. 26, B.C. 747, Guinness rightly predicted events in 1917, 1923, and 1934 which were fulfilled. He did this in 1887.<sup>154</sup> In addition, using the soli-lunar cycles, from the first year of Nabonassar, he was able to calculate 1260 sidereal revolutions of Mercury to the fulfillment of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 444 BC; using 1260 sidereal revolutions of Venus he was able to calculate the crucifixion of Christ A.D. 29; using 1260 lunar years he calculated A.D. 476 –the fall of the Roman Empire; and using 1260 synodic revolutions of Mars, he calculated the significant date of A.D. 1945. He says of this prediction, "this date as probably one of great importance in relation to the duration of the four Empires, and the down-treading of the Jewish people and 'Sanctuary'"...This was written in 1908.<sup>155</sup>

We could match Guinness' accuracy of prediction against Cressener's and argue that the use of *astronomical* calculations rather than the *year-day principle* are the correct method of interpreting the time periods of Daniel. There is much in its favour – the Babylonian world was

<sup>154</sup> See Ridgeway, pp.72ff;

<sup>155</sup> Ridgeway, Ibid, p.79, 87.



steeped in astronomical calculations and astronomical observations, as well as the concept of luni-solar cycles.

What is interesting here is that like SDA historicists wresting the phrase “year for a day, year for a day” out of context in Num 14:34, and Eze 4:6, so Guinness wrests the time periods out of context in Dn7, 8, and 12, and just applies them where-ever his fanciful calculations would apply them. Guinness has imperceptibly moved his historicism under the umbrella of classical Babylonian astrology, divining future events from the movements of the stars.

Admittedly, he has transposed days for years, but he has gone further – there is no Biblical context at all. He now applies them to the movements of the major planets that comprised the Babylonian planetary pantheon. Guinness has taken historicism to its natural outcome – a hermeneutic that disregards the textual concept of the time period entirely. That Guinness must talk in terms of years instead of days is natural because he is talking about the periods of a heavenly body returning to its same place in relation to the fixed stars. These must be calculated in years, not days. At one point, he confirms the date 1945 A.D. by calculating the 2300 years from the birth of Alexander the Great.<sup>156</sup> This illustrates just how far we are from the original context of Dn8:14. But Shea should be promoting these theories as well, since they illustrate the validity of the year-day principle! And history verified the ‘uncanny accuracy’ of his calculations, despite the fact that he took the time period out of context. Perhaps we can argue that Guinness’ efforts just highlight the astronomical/astrological significance of the numbers in Daniel to trained minds in Babylon, and that the unusual quantity of these periods are to explained in this astronomical framework. But that leaves the problem of the periods still being wrested from their context. Just how all these calculations can illuminate the meaning where we find these time periods is far from obvious. But if the fulfillment confirmed the prediction, then it behooves Shea to promote the work of historicist Guinness as he does with Cressener. We can say of Guinness as Shea says of Cressener,

Considering the time when this interpretation was set forth, this was a remarkable perceptive prediction. The extraordinary chronological accuracy with which [Guinness’] prediction met its fulfillment lends support to the idea that he had indeed employed the correct hermeneutical tool...

Shea, by his own criteria, must concur with this judgment of Guinness’ work, despite slight errors in a few of the earlier dates. This is no greater error than that of Cressener’s. Therefore, SDA historicists, as true historicists, should be promoting the astronomical use of the year-day principle with the prophetic periods of Daniel and Revelation in applying them to the soli-lunar cycles of the planets in the Babylonian pantheon to gain greater insight into the things of the future. They should be carrying forward the work of the historicist champion Dr. H. Grattan Guinness.

Froom was not backward in promoting Guinness and de Chéseaux as being real champions for Protestant historicism:

In his *On the Jubilean Chronology of the Seventh Trumpet of the Apocalypse*, Cuninghame [1776-1849], brought to the fore a unique line of evidence in confirmation of the year-day principle. The background was this: Nearly a century before, a Swiss astronomer M. Jean Philippe Loys de Chéseaux—correspondent of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, foreign associate of the Academy at Göttingen, and author of various astronomical and mathematical works and tables—had been engaged in chronological research. And in order to fix the certainty of the date of the crucifixion, he was led to examine the book of Daniel.

M. de Chéseaux had been pondering a possible relationship between the prophetic periods of the 1260 and 2300 years, as the duration of certain predicted epochs, and the facts of astronomy—that is, the cyclical periods measuring the planetary revolutions in the heavens. To his amazement and delight he discovered that these periods comprise lunisolar cycles of remarkable perfection and occurrence, whose existence had been unknown to astronomers. He found that they are of one and the same character. He found, moreover,

<sup>156</sup> Ridgeway, *Ibid*, p.85.

that the difference between these two periods, which is 1040 years—and which he called the "Daniel Cycle"—is the most accurate lunisolar cycle thus far discovered, harmonizing the revolutions of sun and moon. This he wrote out in "Remarques historiques, chronologiques, et astronomiques, sur quelques endroits du livre du Daniel." ("Historical, Chronological, and Astronomical Remarks on Certain Parts of the Book of Daniel") [From footnotes: "*Mémoires posthumes de Monsieur Jean Philippe Loys de Chéseaux, sur divers sujets, d'astronomie et de mathématiques avec de nouvelles tables très exactes des moyens mouvemens du Soleil, & de la Lune.*"], which was edited and published by his sons in 1754.

M. de Chéseaux here explains four kinds of cycles. Those—

1. Harmonizing the solar day and solar year.
2. Harmonizing the solar year and lunar month.
3. Harmonizing the solar day and lunar month.
4. Harmonizing all three—day, month, and year.

It had been almost impossible to find a cycle for this fourth class. But the 1260 years is such a cycle, with a remarkably small error. Then he found that the 2300 years is even more perfect—the kind of cycle that had long been unsuccessfully sought by astronomers, a cycle "thirty times longer than the Period of Calippus," and having only "a seventeenth part of the error of that" ancient cycle, which error was "8h 12'." [From footnotes: "*Ibid*, p.25"] The exact similarity of the slight error of these two cycles made de Chéseaux conclude that the difference between them—1040 years—out to be a perfect cycle, free from error; and all the more remarkable as uniting all three kinds of cycles and "furnishing consequently a cycle of that fourth kind so long sought in vane." It proved to be even so. Then he says:

"This period of 1040 years, indicated indirectly by the Holy Ghost, is a cycle at once solar, lunar, and diurnal or terrestrial of the most perfect accuracy. I subsequently discovered two singular confirmations of this fact, which I will explain presently, when I have adduced all my purely astronomic proofs; may I in the meantime be permitted to give to this new cycle, the name of the DANIEL CYCLE." [From footnotes: "*Ibid*, pp. 26, 27; translated freely in H. G. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age*, p. 403."]

When de Chéseaux discovered the astronomical nature of this period, he regarded it as unmistakable proof of the inspiration of the book of Daniel. Such a cycle would never have been chosen by accident. And since it was not accidental, it must have been chosen by Him who timed the movements of the sun and moons in their orbits. [From footnotes: "De Chéseaux's results were checked at the time by Messrs. Mairan and Cassini, celebrated astronomers of the Royal Academy of Science of Paris, who declared them in harmony with astronomical fact."]

M. de Chéseaux makes this further impressive statement:

"For several ages [centuries] the book of Daniel, and especially these passages of it, have been quoted and commented on by numerous and varied authors, so that it is impossible for a moment to call in question their antiquity. Who can have taught their author the marvelous relation of the periods he selected with solilunar revolutions? Is it possible, considering all these points, to fail to recognize in the author of the book of Daniel the Creator of the heavens and of their hosts, of the earth and the things that are therein?" [From footnotes: "*Ibid*, pp. 49-51; abridged in Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, pp. 288, 289."]

To Cuninghame these discoveries appeared as conclusive evidence that these prophetic numbers in Daniel are not literal days but prophetic days signifying literal years. Further, he believed that the 1260 years are a component part of the 2300 years. He felt that, in order to impress the church with their importance in measuring the epochs of the enemies of the church, they were not only announced to the church and confirmed by Gabriel with an oath, in the name of Him that liveth forever and ever (Dan. 12:7), but are engraved on the very system of the material universe, being "measures of the great revolutions of the diurnal, and lunar and solar periods of the heavens, these two numbers being, according to M. de Chéseaux, the only round numbers that are cyclical, and their difference 1040, a perfect cycle." This was an impressive argument. (Froom, 1946, pp.381-385.)

## **2. Robert Fleming**

Another example that Irishman Henry Grattan Guinness provides concerning the accuracy of advance prediction is the prediction of Robert Fleming that the demise of the Papacy would be in 1794 and 1848. :

Since then that expositors of chronologic prophecy have proved over and over again, that they are on the right track, even though they may have erred in the application of certain principles, or in the selection of certain data, on which to base their calculations. And it is evident that even when they had rightly accepted the year-day system, and when they had correctly apprehended the meaning of the symbols employed, and duly applied them to the events intended, they were by no means secure from minor errors. The very fact that all the prophetic periods have double, and some of them triple and even fourfold eras of commencement and conclusion, coincident with definite stages of development and decay in the Powers symbolised, leaves room for such errors, and accounts for them, without detracting from the value of the system employed. And if such false anticipations are noted, correct ones should in all fairness be remembered also. One of the earliest and most remarkable of these is that of ROBERT FLEMING, who in his work on the "Rise and Fall of Rome Papal," published in the year 1701 (a hundred and seventy-eight year ago [Guinness writes in 1879]), anticipated the years 1794 and 1848, as critical years in the downfall of the papacy; he added "yet we are not to imagine that these events will totally destroy the papacy, although they will exceedingly weaken it, for we find that it is still in being and alive, when the next vial is poured out." Is it not proof that this expositor was working on right lines, and had seized the true clue, that he should have fixed nearly a century beforehand, on the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as the commencement of the era of Divine vengeance on the Papal power, and have pointed out within a single year, the very central period of that signal judgment? The year 1793 was that of the Reign of Terror, and of the temporary suspension of the public profession of Christianity in France, the first of the Papal kingdoms; and five years later the Papal government in Italy was overthrown, and the Pope carried to Sienna. (1879, Section III, chapter VI, last paragraph.)

Guinness demonstrates perfectly for us the crooked logic that made historicism so appealing. This logic provides caveats for every scenario. If the prediction is correct, it proves the accuracy of the year-day system; if the prediction is not correct, then it is either because the method was right and the selection of the data was wrong, or the application of the principles produced minor errors. Even incorrect dates do not disprove the system. The unwritten assumption is that the method is correct if only it was applied correctly every time. The idea that the method itself could be wrong is not even considered.

Froom gives us more information on Robert Fleming's schema. Fleming's association with 1794 is in relation to the seven plagues:

Fleming begins the outpouring of the seven vials in the time of the Reformation, with the fifth upon the seat of the Beast. "This judgment will probably begin about the year 1794, and expire about A.D. 1848; so that the duration of it upon this supposition, will be for the space of 54 years. For I do suppose, that seeing the *Pope* received the title of *Supreme Bishop* no sooner than An. 606, he cannot be supposed to have any Vial poured on his seat until the year 1848." [Froom footnotes: "*Apocalyptic Key* (1793 ed), p. 59. 'A.C.' is 'after-Christ,' or A.D." Froom has type-error "An" in text instead of "A.C.")

The basis for fixing upon the year 1794 follows:

"But as to the Expiration of this [4<sup>th</sup> ] Vial, I do fear it will not be until the Year 1794. The Reason of which conjecture is this: that I find the Pope got a new Foundation of Exaltation, when *Justinian*, upon his conquest of *Italy*, left it in great measure to the *Pope's Management*, being willing to eclipse his own Authority, to advance that of this haughty *Prelate*."

Anticipating 1848 to be an evil year for the Papacy ...However, instead of extending the 1260 years from 606 to 1866, Fleming unjustifiably uses but 360 days to a year in fulfillment rather than a Julian year – casting away eighteen years in order to bring what he believes to be the exact measurement, which he sets forth as 1848. [Froom footnotes: "*Ibid*," (1701 ed.) pp xxvi, xxvii (1793 ed., p.22)."]

Fleming looks for the end of the Papal Kingdom and its destruction in the year 2000, at the coming of Christ, when the world enters upon that glorious *sabbatical millenary for a thousand years more*. (Froom, 1948, pp.643-646.)

Consider for a minute the context of Fleming's predictions. He not only has the seven last plagues falling at the wrong time; historicists want to proclaim his accuracy for the time period but not the event he foretells. He is saying the seven last plagues have been falling since the times of the Reformation – with the concomitant conclusion that the time for repentance has closed since the times of Luther, since, in the SDA historicist's scheme of last-day events, it is only those who have the mark of the beast who taste of the seven last plagues (Rev 13, 14), and these plagues are not unveiled until all the servants of God have received the seal of God (Rev 7:1). So if the plagues have been falling, that means all those who are going to receive the seal of God, received it before the times of Luther. Surely, if historicists want to proclaim the accuracy of the 1794 date of Fleming, they should be also proclaiming that the fifth plague started falling in 1794 and ended 54 years later in 1848!! It is inconsistent to marvel at the accuracy of the date of the prediction without marvelling also at and proclaiming the event he predicted – the progressive falling of the plagues.

Consider his method of getting to 1848 – by miscalculation. He uses 360-day years instead of 365.25-day years to get to 1848. Froom calls it “unjustifiable.” Yet people raved over his uncanny foresight. Surely this is another example of grapeshot hitting the target by default. He uses the wrong method; predicting an event that modern scholars deny (the falling of the fifth plague); and using a beginning date that is incorrect.<sup>157</sup>

Consider also the other dates he predicted by the same schema: that the end of the Papal Kingdom and the coming of Christ was to occur in 2000. What do we do with this prediction? Ignore it? Put it down as just human error? Surely this is not also a product of the historicist's scheme. Are we not to judge Fleming's work by this prediction as well? Are we not to be as impartial in judging this date as the other dates he provides?

Examples could be multiplied of false predictions by historicists. One more will suffice however. This time it is the case of Cusa and those like him who used the Jubilee Year paradigm. Froom quotes one historicists on the topic:

“All time is unrolled in periods of seven, as seven days, seven years, seven times seven years, which are forty-nine. Hence the fiftieth year is after a wearisome revolution of time, a sabbathkeeping in which all slavery ceases and returns to liberty.” [Froom footnotes: “Translated from *Coniectura*, in *Opera*, p.933”]

As fifty years of the church comprise a jubilee, so one year of our Lord's life may represent a jubilee period. Because Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, and the church is the follower of Him, so one “solar revolution,” or year, so to speak, in the life of our Lord, may correspond to “one revolution in the journeying of the church.” Thus “more than fifty jubilees lead to the resurrection of the church.” Such was Cusa's “Conjecture” as he calls it. In 1452, when he wrote it, he states that there were already twenty-nine jubilees in the past. (So, on the basis of this speculation, the end-time would come about 2502)

On the basis of this analogy of the history of the church with the symbolic years of Christ's life – and with the final events of Christ's life paralleled in the life of the church – Cusa applies his theory of the thirty-fourth jubilee as perhaps falling between 1700 and 1734... (Ibid, pp.131-132)

Of course this turned out to be a false prediction, like the bulk of other predictions by historicists. The evidence of the validity of a system is in its *wholesale* application, not just the *isolated* case here and there. SDA historicists would protest of my use of Cusa's false prediction, just as I protest at their use of Cressener's prediction. The principle must be judged by the

<sup>157</sup> See Assumption 9. The pope did not have control over Italy from 606. In fact, this was one of the lowest periods of papal pride; the papacy was also being taxed by Justinian; and controlled by the exarch of Ravenna. Papal succession had to be approved by the Emperor for the succession process to continue. Nothing could proceed until his word was given. It was Constantinople that literally held the keys to the city of Rome at this time, not the bishop of Rome. There is nothing in these facts which smacks of autonomy. Fleming did not do his homework.

wholesale assessment of the bulk of its predictions down through the centuries. In examining the bulk of predictions by historicists through the centuries, *the invalidity of the system of interpretation is the highlight that recurs continually and consistently.*

## 2.11 Gen 29 Jacob and Rachel-The Year-Day Principle Here?

This text has been used since the fourteenth century as a basis for the year-day principle, so some consideration must be given to its examination.

14 And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

15. And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?

18. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

19. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.

20. And Jacob served seven *years* for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had unto her.

21. And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her.

22. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

23. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her.

24. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid.

25. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

26. And Laban said, It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.

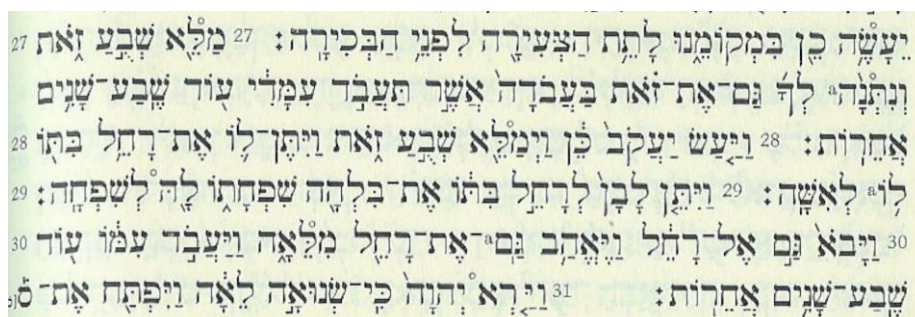
27. Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet another seven other years.

28. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

29. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.

30. And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

### BHS



This text recounts the story of Laban arranging a deal with Jacob for the hand in marriage of Rachel, Laban's younger daughter. Jacob acquits himself properly of the seven-year deal and



asks Laban to honour his word. Laban uses the opportunity to relieve himself of the less attractive older daughter and deceives Jacob. He complains to Laban of the deception and the deal concerning Rachel's hand in marriage, to which Laban agrees to honour after the wedding festivities for Leah are over. Jacob is pacified, waits the week, marries Rachel and serves Laban for another seven years for the second of Laban's daughters.

The text is clear here. But an understanding of this text has not always been as clear as it is now. There was a time when the text was viewed differently.

Wyclif, in the fourteenth century, cited this text in support of the year-day principle, as noted by Froom:

After discussing the relationship of the lunar and solar years, concerning which there is "varied exposition," Wyclif clearly sets forth the year-day principle (a prophetic day equals a year) for prophetic time, citing the experience of Laban and Jacob in Genesis 29." (1948, p.57)

Apparently, there are a number of allusions here that Wyclif could have had in mind. Although the reasoning is not spelt out here, we must assume that after the initial 7-year work contract was fulfilled between Jacob and Laban, we are to make the link between the "served seven *years*" and the "my *days* are fulfilled" indicating a relationship between "days" and "years." That the *general indefinite* concept of "time" for the meaning of "days" is not considered, which is the obvious sense of the text: "Give me my wife, for my *time* is fulfilled..." In addition, when Laban asks Jacob to "fulfill her week," and he does, we are supposedly to assume the week is symbolic of the next seven years of labour for the second of Laban's daughters. This text has been in use since the inception of the year-day when the Medieval method of interpreting scripture was the menu of the day.

One can see the reasoning extrapolating a 'year-day' principle out of this chapter is unwarranted. This style of reasoning is certainly fitting with the methods of reasoning in Wyclif's time, but not ours. The week referred to here was Leah's wedding festivities, which lasted seven days. Jacob is told to be patient for a week then he will get what Laban promised – Rachel's hand in marriage.

The second seven-year period is not based on the wedding festival week for Leah, but on the "other" seven years, that is, the first seven-year period. The word "other" in verse 30 or "another" in verse 27 indicates we look back, not to the wedding week, but to the "other" seven-year period—that is to say, his first seven years of service for the first of Laban's daughters.

Laban wants Jacob to work the same time for one daughter as he did for the other.

As Keil succinctly puts it:

But to satisfy Jacob, he promised him that in a week he would give him the younger also, if he would serve him seven years longer for her. — Verse 27. "*Fulfill her week;*" i.e., let Leah's marriage week pass over. The wedding feast generally lasted a week (cf. Judg xiv.12; Job xi. 19). After this week had passed, he received Rachel also: two wives in eight days. (1978, *Pentateuch*, vol. I, p.287)<sup>158</sup>

Another example of reasoning to get the seven years out of the "week" in Gen 29, is from David Cooper:

According to verse 27 Laban insisted that Jacob fulfil the week of Rachel and then concluded his statement with an explanation of what he meant by *week* namely, "seven other years." From verse 28 we see that "Jacob fulfilled her week." This last sentence of verse 30 states that Jacob "served yet with him

<sup>158</sup> Judges 14:11 have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Phillistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. ...10. So his father went down unto the woman; and Sampson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do... 12. And Sampson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you; if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments."

The second of Keil's reference, Job 11. 19, is an incorrect reference, as far as I can establish.



seven other years.” It is evident from this testimony that *week* in this connection indicates seven years. Let the reader note carefully that the idea of year is not inherent in the word *week*, but is expressed by the word [Heb: “*shanîm*”-years] used in apposition with *week*. (1941, 20)

Readers can see the fallacy of Cooper’s reasoning, when they consider the comments of Freeman and Keil. The fulfilling of the week was not the servitude for another seven years, but the completion of the wedding festivities. We must ask, how was the first seven years calculated? In Gen 29:14 we read: “And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month. And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?... And Jacob loved Rachel and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.” We are given no clue as to how this term of service was calculated. (Shea’s statement next postulates some theories as to the basis of the seven-year period proffered by Jacob.) Yet Jacob remains a period of time with Laban, then he spends seven years under contract to wed Laban’s daughter Rachel. If Spangler wants to argue that the seven-day wedding celebration is used as the scale for the seven years of labour for Rachel second time around, then one must also conclude that we must relate the month of the initial visit to the first seven years of labour Jacob contracted with Laban for Rachel. This is a scale of 30 days to seven years or a *4 and 1/7-days-for-one-year principle*!! Hardly a conclusion that Spangler would want to embrace. Needless to say however, that the second period of time was calculated on the first period of service, not the period of the wedding festivities.

William Miller used the same text and the same reasoning as that 500 years previous to him, to prove the year-day principle as well:

“We will also show that it was so called [i.e., days for years] in the days of Jacob, when he served for Rachel, Gen xxix.27, “Fulfil her week (seven days) and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet other seven years.” Nothing now remains to make it certain, that our vision is to be so understood, but to prove that Daniel has followed this rule [the year-day principle].” (1836, p.47)

Apparently, Miller’s thinking here is that the seven *days* that were “fulfilled” represented the seven *years* of service Jacob was about to perform for Rachel. But Miller does not spelt this out; one has to fill in the gaps here. Spalding’s comment on Gen 29 supports Miller’s view, even though Spalding has the benefit of 150 years of scholarship added to commentaries on Genesis 29 since the times of Miller:

“*The year-day principle is upheld in the narrative portions of the Old Testament as well...* Genesis 29:27 indicates that Jacob’s period of service to Laban in return for his coveted bride Rachel must have been computed on the year-day principle. Quoting the words of Laban, this verse reads: “‘Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years.’” (1980, p.46)

A century before Spalding publicised his views on the text, Freeman, states in his *Manners and Customs of the Bible*:

[Gen] XXIX, 22 Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast.

The usual duration of a marriage feast was a week. Thus, “Fulfil her week,” in verse 27, means, “Wait until the week’s festivities are over.” This was the duration of Sampson’s marriage feast. Judges xiv, 12. (1972, p.37)

Freeman is correct, and there is no evidence for the year-day principle in the story of Rachel and Jacob. This is a fallacious vestige of Middle Age thinking. Spangler has ignored that the week here is the wedding feast of the first marriage, - a feast lasting seven days – as Judges 14 clearly spells out. At the end of the week, he married Rachel and served again for another seven years for the second daughter. The seven years was not modelled on the wedding feast, but on the first seven years of service for Rachel.

Had he spent the time to consult the text more closely Spalding would have seen two crucial words in verses 27 and 30: “yet” and “another.”

Verse 27:

**27.** Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me **yet** another seven **other** years.

Verse 30:

**30.** And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him **yet** seven **other** years.

They occur in exactly the same format with exactly the same sentence structure in both verses. The texts literally say: “yet/yet again seven years another.” Tregelles’ edition of Gesenius’ lexicon, says of “another”: “adj properly, *following*, *another*, specially one who follows a first, second (from the idea of following [compare *secundus a sequendo* ]).”(1952, p.32) The concept of a sequence is innate in the wording of the text. This seven-year period is *another* one in a sequence. Well then, what is the first one in this sequence? The week of festivities? Hardly. The text forces us to conclude it is referring to a previous seven-year period. Let me repeat this again for SDA historicists who seem to be very hard of hearing the plain facts – the words referring to the second seven-year period hark back, not to the “week” referred to earlier in verse 27, but to the “other” seven-year period, viz., the first seven years of service for the first daughter. Medieval reasoning was used to invoke such an analogy by Wyclif and others – a method of interpretation long since discarded by the serious bible student. We invite Spangler likewise, to unshackle himself from medieval reasoning and focus on the true meaning of the text.

It is strange that Spangler and other historicists have overlooked an extremely significant process of events in vs 28 to 30 that overthrow any idea that “fulfill her week could apply to the seven years of servitude for the second wife. Notice the text again:

**28.** And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

**29.** And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid.

**30.** And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

Here are the sequence of events as listed in this text:

Jacob fulfilled her week

Laban gave him Rachel to wife;

He also gave Jacob Bilhah for Rachel’s handmaid

Jacob consummated the marriage to Rachel;

He found he loved Rachel more than Leah;

He served Laban yet another seven years.

It is clear when the text is laid out as it is stated, that the “fulfilling” of Leah’s week was completed, before he received Rachel as a bride which occurred immediately after Leah’s wedding feast. Therefore the “fulfilling the week” was something that Jacob had completed *before* he began the seven years’ servitude for the second bride, regardless as to whether the second period is for Rachel or Leah. The tense of the verb for “fulfilled” in verse 28 (אִלְמִי) clearly indicates a completed action, and that it is a completed action *before* he took Rachel as wife; which, in turn, occurred *before* he began the seven years of servitude for the second wife. There is no room to manoeuvre here – that is the sequence of the text. The statement “fulfil her week” can only refer to the wedding festivities.

It is not insignificant that Shea, in his 1982 study on the year-day principle, has chosen not to draw on this story of Jacob and Rachel as a support for the year-day principle. When he made comment on it in his 1980 paper *Daniel and the Judgment*, he had this to say:

This text is of only passing interest in this connection as it does not make a specific and direct connection between days and years in time periods. Jacob served Laban for 7 years in order to marry Rachel, but Laban tricked him and married Leah off to him instead. When Jacob complained that he had been deceived Laban told him that this was only according to custom, that the older daughter should be married off first. (Laban is suspect here since no such custom is known from ancient Near Eastern texts outside of the Bible.) To assuage Jacob's hurt feelings, however Laban offered, "complete the week (sh<sup>e</sup>bu'a) of this one (Leah), and we will give you the other (Rachel) in return for serving me another seven years." The word week here apparently refers to the "bridal" week or the week that was dedicated to festivities connected with the wedding ceremony.

No direct connection is made between the 7 days of the bridal week and the 7 years that Jacob had served for Leah or that he was to serve for Rachel. There is however, a general correspondence in that both of these time periods were demarcated in terms of units of seven and those units happen to differ in length by the difference of days versus years. If the bridal week ended on a Sabbath then those festivities connected with the wedding concluded with the day of rest, just as Jacob's 7-year period of labor had now come to their conclusion. Since slaves were to be released in later Israel at the time of the Sabbatical year (Ex. 21:1-11) Jacob's period of labor and its conclusion bears a resemblance to that later institution. In addition, creditors were to forgive their debtors at the time of the Sabbatical year (Dt 15:1-11) which also bears a resemblance to the relationship between Laban and Jacob. Not only is the 7-day week attested here, therefore, but the application of that time period to the Sabbatical year might be implied here.

The reason why this practice is of particular interest in the region where and at the early time when this took place has to do with relations with the contents of some of the texts now known from Ebla. This incident in Jacob's life occurred at Haran which was located on the Balikh River, a tributary of the Upper Euphrates. This also occurred some time around 2000 B.C., in the patriarchal period. The fact that a 7-day week and possibly a Sabbatical year were known this early in this northern location bears an interesting relationship to the 7-year terms of elective kingship that we now know were practised at Ebla. The tablets which refer to this practice date to the third millennium B.C. and come from a site in northern Syria that is located only about 100 miles west of Haran. This biblical passage suggests that the Sabbatical week and the Sabbatical-type year were known in this area around that time and these texts from Ebla presently provide some evidence that points in the same direction. (1980, pp.219-220.)<sup>159</sup>

Shea's material ably negates the assertions of Spangler, that this text can be used to defend the year-day principle, leaving Spangler with one less argument in favour of the year-day principle. Spangler's exegesis from medieval times is long past needing a permanent burial. Shea has done that. What is even more interesting is the relation between Shea's linking the story of Jacob and Laban's deal in Haran, with the findings at Ebla.<sup>160</sup> Unwittingly, Shea has also provided a link to the custom among the Greeks and Etruscans who also used a seven-year period as a measure of counting, perhaps indicating the same custom at Ebla. This evidence does not confirm the year-day principle, as readers will see in [Assumption 16](#). Quite the opposite, it shows that this type of periodisation in groups of seven years has been found wider than expected, and was found as a part of cultures unacquainted with Jewish literature, and definitely unacquainted with Jewish apocalyptic prophecy, and year-day principles!!

What is telling about Spangler's style, when he was prepared to make his statement quoted above in the special issue of the *Ministry*, is that Spangler had Shea's material long before he

<sup>159</sup> Cyrus Gordon, specialist in this area, says "Ebla shows that its region had been intellectually Sumerianized. The Early Bronze Age archives of Ebla in Sumerian script indicate that the local scribes were schooled in the intricacies of Sumerology. This points to a Sumerian lingua franca, antedating the Amarna Age by a millennium, by which time Babylonian had become the international language of the Near East." (1968, p.157) If this be the case, the assumption that the seven-year cycle of Ebla existed in Sumerian customs becomes tantalisingly feasible, especially when it is coupled with studies in the origins of Gnosticism (and its attendant hebdomadic deity worship) which is pushing its estimates back earlier and earlier.

Jesse Benedicter Carter, (1972) talks of the Etruscan's slow emigration through Babylon, Greece and on to Rome (pp.16-19).

<sup>160</sup> Notice that Isa. 23:15 refers to "the days of one king" as being seventy years in Tyre, as well. This still works with the septenate scale, if such a one was used at Ebla.

published the special edition on the Glacier View Conference. He should have had time to peruse Shea's document. Spangler himself was chairman for the Response Committee,<sup>161</sup> whose responsibility it was for the Consensus Statement of that conference, and also for the ten-point statement, used after the conference to place an ultimatum on Ford (Spangler, 1980, pp.8-10), so one would expect it would have been necessary to at least understand the material being deliberated. And yet, in spite of the clarification that Shea gives on the meaning of the phrase "fulfill her week," Spangler ignores the information and prints false reasoning from the Middle Ages. It seems to the casual observer that anything that smacks of the slightest defence of the year-day principle gets copy, regardless of its abiding value.

## 2.12 The Quantification of the Time Period

Moving on from the experience of Jacob and Laban, we now consider the quantification of the prophetic time periods in Daniel. Scholars argue that the actual number associated with the unit of time is unusual.

For instance, notice these comments from Goldstein:

We don't even need to get into the fact that the time prophecies in Daniel 7 and 8 – immersed as they are in prophetic symbols of goats and winged lions (themselves a hint that a literal interpretation of the time prophecies is not meant) – are expressed in uncommon ways of depicting literal time. For example, the phrase "2300 evenings and mornings" isn't how the Bible would normally depict a period of about six years and four months. Why? The reason could be that – coming amid symbolic prophecies – symbolic time, not literal time, was meant. (2003, p.110)

Or these from Shea:

Even if one accepts the exceptional "evening-mornings" of Dan 8:14 as a standard unit with which to measure time, 2300 of them still is not the normal way in which to quantify them. One should rather have referred to the period as 6 years, 3 months, and 20 days rather than 2300 days. The same is true of the 70 weeks of Dan 9 which would make up one year and 4½ months on a literal basis.

The normal way to have given the 1290 days of Dan 12:11 would have been as 3 years and 7 months; the 1335 days in the next verse would have come out as a corresponding longer period (cf. Jesus' and James' expression of time – Luke 4:25; Jas 5:17). The three and a half times is not a normal numbering of time either, since the expression reads literally as, "a time, two times, and one-half time."

Thus, not one of the time periods in Daniel's prophecies is expressed the way it would have been if it had been used to express literal time in the normal manner. The unusual way in which these prophetic periods are expressed, both with regard to units of time and the numerals used with them, suggests once again that symbolic rather than literal time is involved here.<sup>162</sup>

In contrast to statements about time in classical prophecies, apocalyptic employs symbolic numbers with symbolic time units in symbolic contexts. The factors converge to indicate that these references should be understood as standing for symbolic not literal time. (1982, p.62)

What they have not considered is that it is because the time unit chosen dictates a different quantification than if another choice of time unit had been used.

There is nothing less "symbolic" in the quantification of 2300 days or 2300 years. The unit "years" does not make the "2300" any less "symbolic." The number is still the same. Therefore, 2300 years is no less symbolic merely because of the change of days to years. Surely 2300 years should be expressed differently than this to be "normal" in Shea's definition of current convention. It should be expressed as two millennia, 3 centuries. Yet we do not express time this way. Although we have larger units of calibration, it is not normal convention to use them in

<sup>161</sup> Spangler, 1980, p.25.

<sup>162</sup> Notice the unusual format for the expression of the fourteen days of the festival Solomon held before the Lord: "seven days and seven days, even fourteen days." 1 Kings 8:65. And then it expresses in the next verse, the fifteenth day as "the eighth day" –of the second set of seven apparently.

expressing large units of time. Therefore, we will talk up to millions in years, not in millennia. Similarly with the 1260 days or 1260 years. The unit “years” does not make the 1260 any less “symbolic.” We could express it as one millennium, two centuries and sixty years, but we refrain of invoking the larger units because that is not the convention. The same could be said for the other time periods – 1290 and 1335. And Shea has forgotten the most telling issue – who decides what is conventional? Different literary styles demand different techniques. Consider the examples further down where the expression of long periods of time with a small unit of time has been employed as a literary technique. Why does the writer of Genesis talk in terms of forty days and forty nights for the flood when it should have been more correct to say, following Shea’s technique, 1 month 10 days?

The unusual quantification of time is sometimes used in specific places. The same phenomenon occurs in our own language today when referring to specific incidents that lend itself to that type of quantification.<sup>163</sup> For instance in the Guinness Book of Records, many events are recorded in conventional time units. However other times the time periods are recorded in unusual conventions. For example,

For a conventional expression we have:

Identical twins Nick and Alistair Benbow (UK) set a three-legged running record in the London Marathon, London, UK, with a time of 3hr, 40min, 16 sec on 26 April 1998.” (Folkard, 2003, p.35)

For an “unconventional” expression we have:

Suresh Joachim broke the Guinness world record for the **longest time** spent watching TV. He finished Friday with 69 **hours** and 48 minutes. [Why didn’t they express this in days, hours and minutes?]

Here we see that this type of experience is best expressed in hours, even though it is unconventional. Sometimes the quantity intensifies an understanding the experience endured.

Consider this example where the time on a speedway track is expressed in seconds:

Male-female power duo Julian Klymochko and Lindsey Redding had only **500 seconds** in a limousine traveling on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway to pitch their business plan to a panel of venture capitalists. The competition also included a formal presentation, a Q & A, and another **500-second pitch** in the speedway’s pit. Klymochko and Redding beat out 11 teams, all from American universities. Their prize included \$10,000, a quart of milk, trophies, and a 100-mph victory lap in the Indy 500 pace car.

Cell-phone companies talk in minutes:

Only 13% of consumers use their cell phones more than **1000 minutes** per month. 68% of users say camera is favorite cell phone feature...

This example, from NASA talks of a flash of light enduring for 200 seconds:

The most distant explosion ever detected occurred deep deep deep in the constellation Pisces. The explosion -- a gamma-ray burst, likely from a very early star explosion -- occurred nearly 13 billion years ago, when the Universe was about 6% its current age. The light passed by the Earth on September 4, 2005. A brilliant flash of gamma rays, detected by NASA's Swift satellite, **lasted for about 200 seconds**.

Another example we commonly use with flying times. For long flights internationally, or even long trips by rail, boat or car, the quantification is unconventional. Consider this statement:

A CFM56-3C engine holds the all-time world record for initial time on wing. In September 2003, the engine was removed after reaching **40,728 hours** and 17,504 cycles without a single shop visit, surpassing the previous record of **40,531 hours** set in 2000.... The CFM56-3-powered 737s in service have logged a total of **130 million flight hours** and 93 million cycles since the first airplanes were delivered in 1984. [Why not say this in days, months or years?]

<sup>163</sup> Do any of the classical writings use unusual units or quantification of time in a literary manner?



We do not talk of any other calibration in millions of hours as we find in aviation science. It is metalanguage specific to that field. But within that genre of writings it is entirely normal to refer to duration of time in that unit of time, and quantification.

Lindbergh chose to fly solo, although this was not a requirement of the prize and required him to be at the controls for more than **30 hours**. [Why not say this in days?]

This not Williams' only achievement; she is also the record-holder for most hours outside a spacecraft by a female by completing four spacewalks during Expedition 14 with a total time of **29 hours, 17 minutes**. [why not express this in days, and hours?]

A South Auckland man whose two pit-bull-cross dogs attacked three people has been sentenced to **150 hours** community work... [why not express this in 8-hour days of work or days of 24 hours?]

**4200 miles in 75 hours** - In August I drove from Toronto, Ontario to Edmonton, Alberta, via Buffalo, Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Fargo, and Regina. That's about 2300 miles, and I did it by myself in under 48 hours, including roughly 5 hours of visiting with friends along the way, and 4 hours of sleep. When I arrived in Edmonton, I hopped into a different car with two friends and drove to Phoenix, Arizona via Salt Lake City, in about 27 hours. That's about 1900 miles. In total, I went 4200 miles in **75 consecutive hours**, with me driving for 60 of these hours. A new record? [Why not express this in days and hours?]

The following story gives a graphic story of a rescue and a survival and the intensity of that experience is recorded in hours.

How nine miners survived 75 hours in a watery tomb

By Caroline Overington, Herald Correspondent in New York

July 29 2002

One by one, they emerged from the bowels of the earth, with faces so black that all you could see was teeth. Their clothes were soaked and their hands looked blue but, against tremendous odds, they were alive.

Nine miners were rescued yesterday from what many assumed was a watery grave, 72 metres below the surface.

They had been trapped for **75 hours** in a cave reportedly no more than 1.2 metres high. They had no heat, no light, and no food.

Their survival was immediately called a miracle.

The miners' ordeal, which transfixed America, began in Somerset, Pennsylvania, last Wednesday, when they accidentally drilled into an abandoned mineshaft next to the one where they were working.

Water that had been accumulating in the old mine burst into the new one, forcing the nine miners to scramble into a dark corner where they found an air pocket.

Nine fellow miners who made it to the surface used maps to determine where their workmates might have gone, then quickly drilled a 15-centimetre hole, inserting a thin tube through which they hoped to pump air.

On the first try, they hit the chamber where their workmates were huddled, and got a frantic response - nine short taps on the probe told them that somebody had survived.

But what to do? A rescue operation of any kind would be dangerous. The air pocket could easily be punctured by workers trying to get them out.

Still, if doing anything was difficult, then doing nothing was impossible, so workers ordered in a massive drill. It had to come from Virginia, which meant an **initial delay of 20 hours**. Then, a day after the drilling finally began, the drill bit broke against hard rock and had to be repaired.

As the clock ticked, doubt began to creep into the minds of the men on the surface. They had not heard from the miners for **36 hours**, but they clung to the hope that the noisy drill was drowning out signs of life.

They were right. Shortly before midnight last night, the repaired bit broke through the cave ceiling.



Rescuers then lowered a telephone into the chamber. There was a brief moment of intense anxiety among the hard-hats on the surface, before lots of thumbs went up. A wave of joy swept over workers. Somebody was alive, clearly, but who?

The Pennsylvania Governor, Mark Schweiker, broke the news.

"All nine are alive," he told reporters, swaying with jubilation.

"All nine are alive and we think all nine are in pretty good shape."

On hearing the news at the site, the governor had "high-tailed it" to a nearby fire station, where anxious relatives were waiting for news.

But word travelled even faster and, before he got there, the wives of the trapped men had dissolved into grateful tears.

"The hugs, the embracing, the hollering, I'll never forget it," he said.

Ecstatic family members wanted to know what the miners had said, but Schweiker could barely remember.

"I think it was, we've been waiting for you," he said.

What else?

"They said 'we're hungry'."

It was, he said later, the best news he had been able to deliver in his life.

It also seemed incredible. The men had been trapped for more **than 75 hours**, breathing air that rescuers pumped to them through the tube. This injection also served to keep the air-bubble intact.

Immediately after contact was made, the assistant secretary for mine safety, Dave Lauriski, said: "We're on an emotional high, but we can't lose focus. We don't want to move so fast that we make a mistake."

There were no mistakes. Once the recovery operation was under way, it was sure and swift. Rescuers removed the drill and then settled on a plan to send a small yellow capsule down the tunnel, in the hope that the men would be able to climb inside and be pulled to the surface.

It was technology that had not been used for 30 years and the only capsule available was 2.4 metres tall, to hold a standing man, but the hole in which the men were trapped was only 1.2 metres high.

Asked how the miners would get inside, Schweiker said: "I imagine they will manage it."

They did.

Shortly before 1am, a heavy iron hook swung over the hole. Rescuers hung the capsule on it, stuffed it with blankets and some food and then, wishing it Godspeed, gently lowered it.

Less than 15 minutes later, it brought back a man - Randy Fogel, a 43-year-old father of three who had been complaining of chest pains, stepped out of the capsule and, to the amazement of doctors standing by with a stretcher, was able to stand and shake hands with rescuers.

Once it became clear that the capsule and the pulleys were up to the task, the rescuers set a cracking pace.

Fifteen minutes later, up came Harry Mayhugh, and then the supervisor, Tom Foy, 52, and so on, every 15 minutes, until two were left.

Rescuers said they agreed between them who would stay in the shaft alone.

Mark Popernack, a young father of two, carried that burden. He stayed in the semi-dark for 15 minutes, before the yellow capsule came for him.

On reaching the surface, he practically fell into the arms of rescuers. A wave of applause broke over the site. Popernack gave the thumbs up, before being carried away.

A little later, his cousin, Randy Popernack, told reporters: "I knew he'd be last. He's like that."

Like what?

"He's a miner. His father was a miner. I'm a miner. Our grandfather and great-grandfather were miners.

"So I was pretty confident. Actually, I was upbeat the whole time."

Back on the site, Lauriski spoke to the rescuers who had toiled on heavy machinery and by hand for more than three days.

As he stepped up to address them, they applauded.

"No, no," he said, waving them into silence. "I applaud you. Now go home and get some rest."

The examples used in this article of the choice of quantification of time in this article of the ordeal of the miners (75 hours instead of 3 days, 3 hours; 36 hours instead of one and a half days) show that it is used as a literary device to intensify the appreciation of the ordeal undergone by those who experience it.

In some situations, hours, minutes, or even seconds are the conventional way of quantification, rather than some other measure.

The writer of the book of Genesis heightens the intensity of the rain that produced the Flood by saying that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. As a reader, one thinks of experiencing a whole night of rain while you are lying in bed, and then experiencing a full day watching it pour outside constantly throughout the day. And then the reader has to try and comprehend multiplying that experience by forty, and think of how it would be to have rain like that for the entire forty days.

There is good reason why the holocaust to come upon the people of God as depicted in Dn8: 9-14, should be quantified in small units as well, in order to intensify the appreciation of how terrible it will be and to provide a measure by which to count down that goes faster than it would if a larger unit of measure was used, e.g., years instead of days, for 2300 evening-mornings; days instead of months or years for the 1290- and 1335-days. The 3½ times may not fit into this reasoning however; except that it is transformed later in chapter 12, and also in the book of Revelation into a period of short units, of 1260 days. Daniel's choice of quantification is internally consistent with itself, and all of these periods are association with terrible times being foisted on the people of God.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Shea's and other SDA historicists' arguments defending the 2300 evening-mornings as applying to the whole vision, rather than the desecration of the sanctuary were found to be invalid (Assumption 1, 2) leading us to conclude that this period covers the terrible ordeal describes in Dn8: 9-12, rather than the full vision of vs. 3-12.

### 3. The Conclusion

#### **The assignment of ‘figurative/symbolic’ and ‘literal’ labels to the different time periods are incorrect.**

In regard to this flaw, it is *the 40 days sortie* in Num 14:34 that determines the unit of *years* to be used for the banishment to the desert. The *40-days* is the literal unit in this text. In Eze 4: 6 it is *the years of rebellion* that determines the unit of *days* to be used for the siege enactment by Ezekiel. These are the literal unit in this text. If we say on the other hand however, that the literal period is the *consequence* of the first period, and the first period being used as a symbolic determinant, then in Num 14:34, it is the *40 years of banishment* that is the literal period, and in Eze 4: 6, it is *the days of the siege-enactment* that are the literal period here. Therefore, regardless of whichever way you define figurative and literal here, you end up with different time units in either text being called literal. If you choose the first definition above, then your *symbolic* unit is days in Num 14: 34 and years in Eze 4: 6, but if you choose the second option, then your *symbolic* unit in Num 14: 34 is years and in Eze 4: 6, it is days. This means that one cannot argue that there is only the “day for a year” principle acting in both texts. The usage of the dictum “day for a year” is opposite in either text. And regardless of your definition of symbolic or literal, you still come out with opposite units of time.

#### **The Year Day Principle in Number 14: 34**

Numbers 14:34 is not a prophetic text. The year day concept is *not* taught in Numbers 14: 34. It is not “days” that are symbolic in this text but “years.” The forty *days* are the historical or literal period used in this text. This has significant ramifications since SDAs argue that it is the “days” that are symbolic here. In their view, it is the historic days that are converted into symbolic years. SDA historicists want their principle to say symbolic days are converted into literal years. This cannot work using Numbers 14:34.

#### **The Year-Day Principle in Ezekiel 4:6**

The historical or literal period used in this text are in *years*. The “days” in this text are symbolic but SDA historicists do *not* use the ratio outlined in this text to calculate their time periods. Symbolic days are not turned into literal years. Literal or historic years are converted into symbolic days. If they used the principle taught in this text, the time periods would be even shorter than if taken literally from the text. If Ezekiel 4 is a prophetic text, it creates problems for the year-day principle. If it is not a prophetic text, then it is not teaching a year-day principle. Either way the outcome is negative for the year-day principle.

#### **Proof of Principle from the long scope of the visions**

I examined the argument concerning the necessity of seeing the periods mentioned in the prophecies as being long ones because the visions cover the span of empires. My conclusion was that this is unnecessary because in neither Daniel 7, Daniel 8 or Dn11-12 do we read of the time period covering the length of the empires mentioned in the visions.

#### **The Year-Day Principle in Daniel 9: 24-27**

Historically these texts were used to prove the validity of using the year-day principle, since it is seventy “of weeks.” Thus, 70 weeks can only compute to the necessary 490 years if each day is reckoned as a year. But this argument is found to be without foundation as the seventy weeks should be calculated *without* the use of the year day principle. The first millennium of Christian history interpreted the seventy weeks correctly without the use of the year-day principle. That

this principle yielded the same results in calculations, only misled those who were unfamiliar with the correct method of calculating the period, who assumed the method they were using was the original and correct method. They show their ignorance of the proper method and its venerable history. In short, there is no evidence from Dn9 to support a year-day principle. Important primary evidence from Roman writers Marcus Varro and Censorinus, as well as the Greek writings of Aristotle, show that the concept of using a “*hebdomad*” to represent a group of days or years without any “year-day principle” is extant, proving that the concept of periods of seven years was known in the times of the early Christians.<sup>165</sup>

### **Proof of Year-Day Principle from Historical Prose and Poetic OT literature.**

The only thing that can be proved from the historical prose and poetic writings of the OT was that the periods ‘days’ and ‘years’ could be used interchangeably. This has no correspondence with the method SDA historicists want to convert the periods in the prophecies of Daniel. It certainly does not prove a year-day principle.

### **Proof of the Year-Day Principle from the Sabbatical year Legislation (Lev25)**

The scale of the Sabbatical year legislation is clearly a septennate scale and can be compared to the weekly cycle. This would give a ratio of one day for a year when comparing the weekly cycle to the sabbatical year cycle. However the year-day principle is not being used in this legislation because the explanation is given in literal language, spelling out the number “of years,” and calling them “years.” Had the year-day principle been at work here as it is in Daniel, we would only expect a symbolic expression of the sabbatical cycle, without the mention of years, as we see it in Daniel 9. Therefore, the presence of literal language augurs against the conclusion that the year-day principle is operating in Leviticus 25:1-7.

### **Proof of the Year-Day Principle from Jubilee Legislation (Lev 25)**

The year day principle is not operating in the explanation of the legislation regarding the Jubilee in Leviticus 25:8. The period is spelt out in literal language using the phrase “of years” so that all can understand. There is no symbolic language as SDA historicists see it in Daniel, where the phrase “of years” is missing. We do not need to invoke the year-day principle to calculate the forty-nine years of the Jubilee.

Moreover, if the Jubilee was based on the weekly cycle, as Shea suggests it is, then the ratio of days to years would be *one day for seven years*- a scale not embraced by SDA historicists..

Another factor mitigating against a straight comparison between the Sabbatical year system, the weekly cycle, and the Jubilee, is in the difference of what occurs on the seventh period of each cycle. In the weekly and sabbatical-year cycles, it was *the entirety of the seventh period* that was set apart from the other six; whereas in the Jubilee cycle, the seventh period was just the same as the other six, and only at *the end of the seventh period* was special time set apart from the previous *seven* cycles. *This eighth period* was small in comparison with the rest of the other seven periods, but sufficient time to accomplish those things decreed in the legislation. Whether this time was limited to the few months remaining of the forty-ninth year or twelve months to the seventh month of the fiftieth year is still a matter of debate.

### **Proof of Year-Day Principle from Predictions by Historicists**

The argument that historicists like Cressener made accurate predictions about the future hundreds of years before the event using the historicist method, was found to be an invalid argument since for every prediction that came close to an event tagged by historicists as being

<sup>165</sup> Readers are referred to Assumption 16 for more material on this topic.

significant, more predictions can be shown to be absolutely incorrect. The classic example of the prediction of Turkey's fall is a case in point, broadcast as a showpiece of the year-day principle to unbelievers. The converse of their argument was that the failure of the prediction proved the invalidity of the year-day principle. Hence the false prediction of the downfall of Turkey will forever stand as a showpiece of the year-day principle's falsehood to both believers and unbelievers. Litch followed what he asserted and gave up the year-day principle when he saw that the events did not match the prophecy. The SDA church has quietly buried that embarrassment for the year-day principle and is presently in the process of acquiring a new interpretation. One of those is the dates 1453 to 1844. This is done in spite of Ellen White's endorsement of Litch's erroneous view.

The future predictions of historicists were about as accurate as a coin-tossing exercise, with each century of historicists predicting the fulfillment of the prophecies within or close to their own time. Do we only credit those historicists who threw out a wild prediction far into the future to a date that present-day historicists endorse and discount every other historicist's prediction that did not eventuate? How can this exercise be called scholarly or even truthful?

The conclusion of this paper is that SDA historicists cannot use either of the two texts proffered as support for the 'year-day principle.' In Numbers 14:34, where days are computed into years to represent a penal judgment, it is *not the days that are symbolic, but the years*. Likewise, they cannot use Ezekiel 4:6 as a sample of SDA historicists' computation since Ezekiel demands that the *literal* period is in *years* and the *symbolic* period is converted into a shorter scale of *days*. Furthermore, they cannot use Ezekiel because although the shorter period of *days* is *symbolic*, it is *calculated from the years period, not the years period being calculated from the symbolic days period as dictated by historicists' method*. That is to say, historicists normally use the symbolic days period to calculate the literal years period. But in Ezekiel, the literal years period is used as the means of calculating the symbolic days period. The process is in reverse and cannot be said to be the same as the historicists' method.

Similarly, they cannot use Numbers 14: 34 as their model since it is the *years* of their banishment that are *symbolic*, not the *literal days* of spying. Consequently, they have no text to use as a model to support their method of calculation. The only basis they have for their "year-day principle" is the proof-text tradition of extracting the phrase "a day for a year" from these two texts *without considering the context* in which they are used, and just applying it however they will to the time periods they want to convert. As explicitly stated by the SDABC, it is the statement of *scale* they are interested in when they consider Numbers 14: 34 and Ezekiel 4:6, not the *context*.

### **The Repetition of the phrase "day for the year; day for the year" in Num.14:34 and Eze 4:6.**

The repetition of this phrase in both these texts has nothing to do with a 'prophetic principle' but rather, and as attested frequently throughout the Scriptures, it is a common idiom used to express the *distribution* of an allocated item (in this case, a period of time) *to each and every one* of the recipients (in this case, the corresponding unit of time). There is no prophetic principle being invoked here.

### **The use of "times" in Daniel for 3½ times**

The 3½ times of Dn7 are a literal period, coming in the explanatory "literal" section of the chapter. Dn4 confirms that the 3½ times should be interpreted literally, as also does the 3½ times

in Dn12. Indeed the 3½ time period in Dn12 comes in a section SDA historicists called literal explanation, so we are justified in counting it as literal time, in exactly the same manner as it is done in Daniel 4 (even though the time period in Dn4 comes in the vision, but is still considered literal). The length of the period for the empires included in this vision are irrelevant to the 3½ times because this period just deals with a period of persecution by the last power; it does not define the period of his existence etc.

Historically, the early church taught and believed that the 1260 days, the 42 months and the 3½ times were a solar period of 3½ years. This was the case for a millennium. It was only after different methods of trying to rationalise the time periods to fit the outworking of history, that such principles as “a century for a day” or “a year for a day” started to be promulgated as a rubric to interpret time periods. But there is no need to deviate from what the early church believed. The period is to be correctly understood as 3½ solar years.

Therefore, there is no evidence in Daniel 7 that a long period of time is referred to here, justifying the need for a year-day principle.

### **Proof of Year-Day Principle from Dn8:14**

The argument that the 2300 days of Dn8:14 must be 2300 years to cover the events mentioned in the vision misunderstands the question and the answer in Dn8:13, 14. The question asks about the events in vs. 9-11, and the answer is given concerning these things. The question is not about the full vision in vs. 3-12. And so the 2300 days do not have to cover the entire empires mentioned in the vision. Assumption 2 deals with this argument in greater detail and readers are referred there.

The time period in Dn8:14 comes after the vision, because the angel asks about the “vision,” indicating the vision had been completed by the time the question was asked. Whatever the meaning of verse 15, nothing interferes with this understanding that the vision the angel was questioning about was finished by v.13. Therefore, the explanation of verse 14 is just that – an explanation. And as explanation, it is literal, not symbolic. Therefore this time period does not have to be converted to symbolic days then to literal years. All that needs to be done is to convert the time unit into the appropriate unit of measurement, and the scope of the answer is understood.

Therefore, there is no evidence in Daniel 8 that a long period of time is referred to here, justifying the need for a year-day principle.

### **The time periods are “converted” one step too many.**

To understand the final length of the symbolic periods of time given in the prophetic books in general and the book of Daniel in particular, they should be converted to normal nomenclature. When that is done, it should be left, since this represents the *literal solar* time involved. SDA historicists go one step too many and assume that *normal* nomenclature is also symbolic/figurative and in need of being “converted again.” This is unwarranted. The *figurative/idiomatic* names for time include “evenings-mornings,” “times” and “weeks (of years).” These are converted to the *literal* names “day,” “year” and “seven years” respectively. There is no more converting to be done.

Therefore, in weighing up the arguments presented above, I assert that the year-day principle invoked by SDA historicists is a dubious principle based firstly, on the antiquated proof-text method used in past centuries where the phrase is extracted from the context and quoted without regard to its original setting. Secondly, when the context of the texts are examined, the year-day principle is shown to be based on a collection of assumptions that have been shown to be incorrect. Thirdly, the actual Hebrew format of the wording used “day for the year; day for the year” has been shown to be a normal format for the expression of the idea of distribution, and



expresses the idea of each and every unit of time being allotted a designated consequence (i.e., for *each and every* day of spying, there will be a *year* of retribution;), in much the same way as other examples given from the Biblical text where this same grammatical structure is used. Fourthly, all the other methods attempting to give some credence for the year-day principle from Gen 29, Leviticus 25, Dn11:13, Dn 9: 24-27, the poetic and narrative passages of Scripture have all failed to stand up to examination. Fifth, the evidence for presence of the year-day principle in Dn9:24-27 has failed to consider another interpretation, using the standard “sabbath of years” approach. Sixth, Shea’s examination of the basis for a common theme throughout all the texts related to the year-day principle makes a mockery of the pioneer’s understanding, since, in Shea’s view, wherever there is a conversion of days to years, regardless which way it goes, the year-day principle is being used. This allows anyone to use any of the four configurations found in Scripture to interpret the apocalyptic time periods. This leads to more problems than Shea is trying to solve.

### **Spalding’s Proof from Dan 11:13 and Dn12.**

Spalding’s efforts to try and see “years” in Dn11:13 to mean the 2300 days, thus proving it to be years, is fatally flawed. So also is his argument that the use of “days” in Dn12 indicates that “days” should be understood for “evenings-mornings” in Dn8:14 and for “weeks” in Dn9:24-27.

### **Proof of the Year-Day principle from Genesis 29.**

There is no evidence in Genesis 29 that can be linked with the year-day principle. This is an argument from an era of Bible understanding far removed from ours and deserves a graceful burial, together with all other Medieval exegetical methods. Those like Spangler who persist in resurrecting this argument only expose their ignorance. The statement to “fulfill her week” means to complete the marriage festivities, and has no reference to the following seven year period Laban serves for the second daughter.

### **Final Word**

At the beginning of this paper, Horn and Wood commented on the errors of historicist commentators in previous centuries due to their lack of understanding of the Jewish calendar, and its relation to the prophetic periods in Daniel and Revelation. Their comment there was:

The idea of a 365¼ day Jewish year reflects the opinion of earlier authorities, such as Scaliger (1583) and Funck (1570), from an age when knowledge of ancient chronology and calendation was still rudimentary. Usher (1650) retains this view, but Prideaux (1719) dissents, holding that the Jews exchanged this type of year (which he attributes erroneously to the Chaldean and Persians) for a lunar form with an intercalary month.

The confusion of a prophetic year with a nonexistent Jewish year illustrates the danger of following outmoded authorities. (1970, p.51-52)

The idea of the year-day principle also came from an era of ignorance, and we do well to take heed to Horn and Wood’s advice concerning the “danger of following outmoded authorities.” Though they do not make that comment in regard to the year-day principle, I so apply it. To follow the SDA historicist habit and trust in the tradition of former commentators and treatises and appeal to them for endorsement is folly, as Horn and Wood illustrate.

Robert Spangler, Editor of the *Ministry* during the 1980’s, and major contributor to the special Glacier View edition of that same magazine criticised Ford’s proposal of an apotelesmatic principle as a prophetic tool by saying, “It is clear that the apotelesmatic principle has no built-in control mechanism to prevent abundant speculation, making it impractical as an exegetical tool.” (1980, p.32) As a result he rejects Ford’s proposed principle.

So now, we level the same criticism at the year-day principle – it has no built in control mechanism to prevent abundant speculation (a plethora of which is documented in Froom’s *Prophetic Faith of our Fathers*), making it impractical as an exegetical tool. Therefore, unless someone can successfully deal with the objections raised in this paper concerning the validity of the year-day principle, as surely as the SDA church has rejected Ford’s apotelesmatic principle, we reject the year-day principle, and on the same grounds.

The final word should be left to Norman Douty, who penned the following words, quoted in the Glacier View document of Dr Ford, concerning the year-day principle:

It was not until medieval times that Jewish and Christian teachers actually advanced year-dayism (cf. 260, 310 [of Douty’s book]). It was first set forth by the former group [Jewish teachers-FB] in the ninth century, and by the latter [Christian teachers-FB] three centuries later. Joachim of Floris, Italy, at the close of the twelfth century, applied it to the 1260 days of Rev. 12. Shortly after him, other writers applied it as well to the 1290, 1335 and 2300 days found in Daniel. Joachim was one “whose object it was to exalt the Papacy on the ruins of the episcopacy” (Jas. H. Todd on Antichrist, p. 453). The writers who immediately followed him were defenders of extreme authority for the Pope.

These historical facts are very damaging to this system of interpretation. Sober men are not likely to favor a principle that “was altogether unknown by the Jewish Church before the Christian era, by the Apostles of our Lord, by the Primitive Church, by the Fathers – in short, that no one ever thought of....during...the first twelve centuries of Christianity” (S. R. Maitland in *Second Enquiry respecting the prophetic period of Daniel and St. John*, p. 77). Moreover, such men will not have their reservations removed by observing that it originated in apostate Judaism and was developed by the Church of Rome. These considerations give strong reasons for suspecting the validity of the theory.

It is true that most, if not all, of the Reformers, from Wycliffe down, applied the year-day principle to the interpretation of prophecy, but it is plain that they derived it from Rome. The remarks of John Robinson, at the departure of the Mayflower Pilgrims from Holland in 1620, is appropriate here: “It is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick antichristian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.” It is plain therefore, that “completing the work of the Reformation” involves discarding the year-day theory. Yet Seventh-day Adventism, which claims to be so divinely called to this work of completion, had this very theory as its bed-rock foundation, so that to discard it would be to destroy itself. (N. F. Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids, 1962, pp. 93-95, in [Ford, 1980](#), pp.214f.)

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## 5. Links

Mike Blume's Site on the Year-Day principle: <http://mikeblume.com/yearday.htm>

## 6 . Appendix

### Opinions contrary to the Standard SDA historicist view.

#### Des Ford

When writing as an Adventist employee, Ford includes a five-page appendix defending the year-day principle. The points in this were taken mainly from a two-part series published in the *Ministry* magazine, June and July, 1964 and reprinted in the Glacier View document *Daniel 8:14: The Day of Atonement and the Investigative Judgment*. He acknowledges his indebtedness to Rev. T.R. Birks and his publication *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy*. This article is still often used by writers (e.g., Pfandl, 2004b, p.60).

In the Glacier View document, he says:

Let us return now to the basic pillars of Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6.. [quotes these texts] In neither case is it declared that the Lord is setting forth a principle that is to govern all symbolic time prophecies. In Num. 14, it is only said that as the spies on their mission of unbelief had searched the land forty days, so that many years would the people wander in unbelief. *The prophetic part of the verse uses years for years.* They are literal, and not the symbol of anything else. If we were to apply the year-day principle to Num. 14:34 the result would be an anticipated fourteen-thousand-four-hundred years of wandering, not forty. But nobody makes that mistake, for the words are clear. So, in this instance, literal years answer to literal days and then days to years, as we do with Dan. 7:25. There is no parallel here to our usage elsewhere, and neither is there a principle intended to govern passages elsewhere.

In Ezekiel's experience, the days he is told to lie on his side mean actual days and not years. What we have here is not a symbolic prophecy at all, but a symbolic action. If here a day stands for a year, then we would anticipate that Ezekiel would need to lie on his left side three-hundred-and-ninety years, and on his right side forty years. Nobody has ever applied the passage in that manner for obvious reasons. The prophet is clearly told that each day of his future activity is a symbol of a year *in the past*. Note, this is the reverse to the usual (SDA) application of the relationship between days and years for prophecies. The period ahead is smaller, not greater, for Ezekiel – real days ahead image real years in the past – not visa versa.

So in both of these instances, there is no possibility of misunderstanding the significance of the instruction, unless we add to what we have in Scripture, and imagine that the Lord is here making a statement that henceforth is to govern the interpretation of symbolic apocalyptic prophecies. Such an assumption is purely gratuitous.

It should be obvious to us that even in Daniel and Revelation we are not consistent. Seven “times” pass over Nebuchadnezzar, but we do not translate these “times” (same word as in Dan. 7:25) into days, and call them years, yet they also are in connection with a symbolic dream...

Many who are reluctant to rely on Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 for the year-day principle, look to Dan 9:24 as the bastion for beliefs in this area. Things are said about the prophecy which are, sadly, not correct. For example, it is said that here days are used for years, whereas the Hebrew *yamin* (days) is not to be found, as is the case also in the time periods of Dan. 7 and 8. It is claimed that believers from the first centuries or our era used the year-day principle to interpret this prophecy. This also is not true. Early Christians read the “weeks” as weeks of years, without taking the step of transposition assumed necessary by those who look on the time reference as symbolic. The year-day principle did not become widely accepted until about a thousand years later.

Thirdly, it is affirmed that the Hebrew term *shabuim* translated “weeks” means of necessity periods of seven days. This also is not correct. The plural form is never used for the seven day week., though its root *is* commonly so applied. The root merely means a period of seven somethings, and seven days is appropriate, though seven months or seven years would be equally valid if the context demanded such. When the plural for weeks of days is found in Scripture outside of Daniel, the feminine termination is present, whereas in Dn9:24 we have the masculine. While in Dan. 10:3 we read of three *shabuim* of days, the fact that the last two words are added testifies that the preceding term does not necessarily convey the meaning of “days....”

We have already referred to our lack of consistency in Daniel and Revelation in applying chronological terms. Even where we do apply them according to the year-day principle, we remain in difficulty historically. (1980, pp.200, 202, 209)

Later in his life, when not in Adventist employment, a new publication on Daniel, *Daniel and the Coming King*, says virtually the same as the Glacier View document (1996, see Appendix Fourteen, pp.239-242)

In *Crisis*, his commentary on the book of Revelation, , he says concerning the 3½ years time period:

The great bulk of Protestant interpreters since the Reformation till the twentieth century have invoked the year-day principle, and have seen the forty-two months, or 1260 days as extending over the twelve centuries of persecution by the historical Antichrist. But to John, who never contemplated centuries of delay, its ultimate meaning is the final conflict between the Beast and the Lamb, and their forces, when the mark of the beast is urged upon those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Such an application is implied in Daniel’s closing prophecy where he foretells an eschatological attack on the worshippers of the sanctuary before the falling of God’s vindictory judgments. See Dan. 12:7ff. However, to apply the prophecy to the persecutions of the Middle Ages is a legitimate apotelesmatic application. (1982, vol. II, p.490.)

## Questions on Doctrine

Commenting on the year/day principle in the context of the 2300 days of Dn8, QOD says:

On the consistency and propriety of applying the year-day principle to the 2300 days of verse 14, we would say; In all symbolic outline prophecies it would appear entirely proper to consider the accompanying time periods as also *symbolic*. And a symbol invariably stands for something other than itself. In the chapter under scrutiny, the prophetic symbols of nations – portrayed in Daniel 8 by a “ram” and a “goat” – do not stand for a literal ram and goat, but for the Medo-Persian Empire and the Grecian kingdom respectively, as declared to Daniel by the angel in his interpretation. To apply these two obvious symbols to literal animals would be palpable denial and repudiation of their symbolic character, and of the interpretation given by the angel.

Similarly, we believe that in the symbolic time period given in connection therewith, the 2300 “days” cannot mean 2300 *literal* days. They must represent some other time unit in fulfillment. To apply them to the same number of days – or half days, as some seek to do – would likewise be to violate and negate their fundamentally symbolic character. Nor are we left in uncertainty as to the intent of this time feature. The principle to be followed in interpreting symbolic time is “I [the Lord] have given thee a day for a year” (compare Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6). We therefore believe, in harmony with many eminent scholars through the years, that the 2300 prophetic “days” indicate 2300 literal years in fulfillment, and that anything else, and anything less, would be contrary to the basic principle of time symbolism. (1957, pp.259f)

When it came to commenting on the presence of the year-day principle in Dn9, QOD says:

It has been noted (see Question 24) that a characteristic feature of *symbolic* prophecy is to give the component time periods, not literally, but in symbolic form. And it has been further demonstrated that Daniel 9:24-27 is a continuation of the literal explanation of the symbolic vision that was begun in Daniel 8:19-26. Now, inasmuch as Daniel 9:24-27 is a portion of the *literal explanation* of the symbolic vision, we would logically expect the time elements likewise to be given in literal terms. Such is the case is *shabua* ‘ is here given the obvious meaning of “seven years.” It is generally agreed among Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant scholars alike that if *shabua* ‘ in Daniel 9:24 has the meaning “seven years,” then seventy *shabu'im* clearly indicates a period of 490 years. (Ibid, pp.277f)

Interestingly, the editor of the new annotated version of *Questions on Doctrine*, Dr. George Knight, leaves no doubt as to his assessment of statements like this from QOD: “*Questions on Doctrine* easily qualifies as the most divisive book in Seventh-day Adventist history.” (2003, p.xiii)

### Hans LaRondelle

Against the assertions of SDA historicists who want to defend the application of the year-day principle being applied in Dn9, we have the testimony of Dr. LaRondelle, supporting the position of QOD:

“Seventy ‘sevens’” were decreed, or determined, by God as a final probationary period for Jerusalem and the Jewish people after the seventy years of the Babylonian exile had terminated (see Daniel 9:24). There can be no doubt about the duration of this period: seventy times seven “years,” or 490 years (see RSV). No day-for-a-year symbolism needs to be supposed here because Gabriel uses no symbols in his detailed chronological explanation. G. F. Hasel observes, “There is virtually unanimous agreement among interpreters of all schools of thought that the phrase ‘seventy weeks’ or literally ‘sevens seventy’ ...means 490 years.” [LaRondelle footnotes: “G.F. Hasel, “The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24-27,” Insert D, *Ministry*, May 1976, p.5. The two contextual observations corroborate this conclusion: (1) Daniel was thinking about time in terms of *years* only (chap. 9:2); (2) In chapter 10:2 Daniel adds to the expression “three weeks” the words “of days” (in Hebrew) to distinguish these three weeks as ordinary weeks, in apparent contrast with the year-weeks of chapter 9.”] (1983, pp.171f)

### Proving the Year Day principle from Luke 13

I came across an article on the web by a Herb Frizell Snr at website [http://www.endtimeinsights.com/site/v2\\_3/content/view/94/63/](http://www.endtimeinsights.com/site/v2_3/content/view/94/63/) who made these observations concerning the demonstration of the year-day principle from Luke 13; a text never used by SDA historicists as far as I can recall. I do not subscribe to his view, but it highlights the point that there are no controls over the eisegesis of the year-day principle into scripture. Here is an extract from that article:

In Luke 13, moreover, we find a crux of both approaches for Jesus uses both methods of interpretation when speaking about both literal time and figurative time. Jesus uses both literal “years” and symbolic “days” in Luke 13. Let’s take a look. In one case, Jesus speaks of a certain fig tree – and he mentions 3 literal years having to do with it:

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. Luke 13:6-9

Jesus is plainly speaking here of literal years, for he says very clearly: “these three years”. Not too esoteric at all. Fairly simple. This fig tree parable refers to the length of his 3-year ministry among Jewry in Judea from his first Passover to his last Passover when he was cultivating the Jews and looking for some fruit on their fig tree. But in this same Luke 13 passage, the other case several verses later, shows Jesus speaking again of his 3-year ministry in Judea. But this time, he uses a contrast to his previous literal use of 3 years; for he now expresses this same 3-year time frame of his ministry not in plain, simple, indicative years as previously with the fig tree, but now rather in mysterious “symbolism” reminiscent of how Revelation 11:8 uses the word “spiritually”. Something new is added “in a figure”. A deeper mystery emerges. Something hidden comes to light. The implied 3 “years” of his ministry (the same time frame as the 3 years for the fig tree to fructify) are represented, not literally this time, but rather symbolically – and, you guessed it, the 3 “years” are signified, symbolized, and discerned “spiritually” by Jesus’ use of a unique form or expression of the 3 “days”. Both the literal 3 years of cultivating the fig tree and the symbolic 3 “years” represented by the 3 “days” speak to the same time frame - which is the last 3 years of Jesus’ ministry, the time wherein he ministered among the fig-tree Jews in Judea. Note carefully here how Jesus symbolically uses “days” for “years” – and the “days” word order, or the order of the syntax of the words, is repeated twice over in this case, providing the double-witness required by Old Testament law:

...I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to day and to morrow, and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. Luke 13:32,33

Notice that when Jesus speaks of these 3 “days” which represent 3 “years”, he repeats the 3 “days” word order for special emphasis. It is thus rendered as a two-fold witness which the Bible requires to establish any matter, for, actually, it is a type of “verily, verily” showing a major emphasis on what is being said. Although using the context of 3 “days” – “to day and to morrow, and the third day” - Jesus really means something much greater than merely 3, literal 24-hour days. He is speaking “spiritually” concerning the last 3 years of his life and ministry – the 3 “days” or 3 “years” wherein that old “fox” Herod couldn’t get a hold of him. Note that these “days” in Luke 13:32 also provide a parallelism of sorts. The words “to day, to morrow, and third day” are twice-repeated with a slight modification of the last term (changed the second time it is spoken from “third day” to the “day following”). The context of this saying, therefore, has to do with his up-coming death at the end of the “third day” (the third year of his ministry), when Jesus said he would be “perfected” at his death:

...for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. Luke 13:33

These “3 years”, therefore, lead up to Jesus’ crucifixion in Jerusalem. So here days are used by Jesus to represent years! The time frame is given in terms of “days” - “spiritually” discerned of course - which figuratively is the same as “years”. This follows after the pattern of 1 Day = 1 Year, or what is known as the Day-Year Principle. Thus, in Luke 13, we find Jesus speaking both literally and also symbolically about this subject of the last 3 years of his ministry – knowing how to differentiate between the two ways of expressing it. One parable of the fig tree is given in quite literal years (the 3 years of the fig tree’s dunging); while the other parable or saying is speaking somewhat obliquely of 3 years in a round-about parabolic symbolic fashion, twice over repeated, using 3 “days” to represent 3 “years” – all according to the scale of 1 Day = 1 Year, which is the Day-Year Principle. Note the repetitive parallel symbolism in Jesus’ words:

“1) to day and 2) to morrow, and the 3) third day”

“1) to day and 2) to morrow, and the 3) day following”

Luke 13, therefore, clearly sets forth the Day-Year Principle wherein each “day” can represent a “year” if used symbolically - according to the rules of symbolic time prophecy. We will look at some of these rules shortly. Each of these 3 days represents a year in the life of Jesus Christ. Further, the “certain man” in Jesus’ parable of the fig tree never told the dresser of his vineyard to go ahead and dung the fig tree one more time – so, it appears that the 3 years of Jesus’ ministry to Judea was sufficient enough time to give the fig tree a chance to product fruit. Henceforth, as we know, the fig tree of Jewry did not fructify and, as a



consequence, her branches were dried up and ready to be burned in A.D. 70. On his way to the Cross along the Via Dolorosa, Jesus spoke to the women of Judah who were weeping for him:

For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? Luke 23:31

The reason Judah's fig tree was drying up, with no fruit present, was that Jesus eventually after 3 years had to curse that fig tree, which was a representation of the Jewish nation of his generation that rejected him as ruler:

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever (for the age). And presently the fig tree withered away. Matthew 21:19

Well, what makes certain "days" stand out as symbolic time periods? When are they symbolic?, and, when are they literal? If someone asked you to describe a period of 3 years and 6 months, normally, what would you say in response? It would probably be something like: "It is three years and 6 months". Yet the Bible expresses this same time period of 3½ years in some rather esoteric and most unusual ways, ways not normally used in common, ordinary, everyday speech. Such terms as: 42 months and 1,260 days are found representing this time period in the Book of Revelation! This is the first clue that these "days" are to be treated as something special. Also, another time frame is equated to these two others of the 42 months and the 1,260 days, and the very nature of its obscure terminology tells us that these time periods are beyond the ordinary and are moving into the realm of the symbolic. This additional time frame is 3½ years and is expressed as "time, times, and half a time". Also, we know that certain books in the Bible are identified with the genre of literature known as the "apocalyptic" – especially the writings of the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse, or the Book of Revelation – because they deal with their topics in certain unusual ways using highly symbolic imagery – especially dealing with the time prophecies that contain definitive chronology of some major events in Bible history. In this case, the mysterious expression "time, times, and half a time" is found in both of these apocalyptic books – in Daniel 7:25; 12:7 and in Revelation 12:14. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), using this same Day-Year Principle, surveys the rise of the Papacy or the "little horn" in Western Europe during its rule of 1,260 years in his great study of prophecy *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John* (1733). Newton connects the Papacy with the unusual symbolic time period, found expressed both in Daniel 7:25 and in Revelation 12:14 – the time frame just mentioned of "time, times, and half a time":

By the conversion of the ten kingdoms to the Roman religion, the Pope only enlarged his spiritual dominion, but did not yet rise up as a horn of the Beast. It was his temporal dominion which made him one of the horns: and this dominion he acquired in the latter half of the eighth century, by subduing three of the former horns... And now having arrived at a temporal dominion, and a power above all human judicature, he reigned with a look more stout than his fellows, and times and laws were henceforward given into his hands, for a time, times, and half a time, or three times and an half; that is, for 1,260 solar years, reckoning a time from a Calendar year of 360 days, and a day for a solar year.

Observe how Sir Isaac Newton connects the "time, times, and half a time" with the 1,260 days, which proves to be its chronological equivalent, so we are dealing here with one of the "days" prophecies in its symbolic form. Further, in describing the vision concerning the Messiah in Daniel 9, the angel Gabriel speaks to Daniel in chronological terms of "seventy weeks" - and the King James Version correctly translates it as "seventy weeks". The Futurist school makes it a point, however, to quote this as "seventy sevens" so, if it were possible, to not allow any of these "seventy weeks" to have any "days" contained in them. Days, that is, that might be construed as signifying "years" at the scale of 1 Day = 1 Year – for this would be too close to using symbolic time prophecy to interpret the 490 days of the 70-Weeks Prophecy as 490 years using the Day-Year Principle. The Futurists do not want this – for it would "jerk the carpet" out from under their pet theories, in that their 3½ years of their Great Tribulation would no longer be a literal 3½ years made up of 1,260, 24-hour days! It would become the 1,260 years that Sir Isaac Newton talks about. The Israelites, however, knew the proper words to use in their economy, so they called their summer feast of Pentecost the "Feast of Weeks" and not the "Feast of Sevens". The old bromide of "any day of the week" shows that normal people know that there are "days" in every "week" of the year. Normally, when we first hear the time frame of "seventy weeks", we automatically think that this time period is simply a little over a year in length. In actual fact, following the literal and normal meaning of the words, this would indeed be the case; for it would be 70 multiplied by 7 days (7 days for each of the 70 weeks), thus arriving at a product of 490 days. Now, 490 'literal', 24-hour days would be a period of approximately: 1 year, 4 months, and about 10 days. Since Daniel received this prophecy in about 550 B.C., using a first-blush

'literal' time frame application for the "seventy weeks" would end up with the Messiah appearing in the very next year after Daniel had received the vision – that is, precisely 490, 24-hour days later, 1 year, 4 months, and 10 days, not even 2 years away. Well, obviously, we all know that Christ came much later than the next year after Daniel first wrote down the 70-Weeks vision of Messiah the Prince. In fact, it was to be 490 years later after the certain commandment of a Persian king that the mission of Christ would be fulfilled on the Cross. Therefore, the "seventy weeks" in this case are definitely not "literal" weeks of 24-hour days each (which would only be a little over a year and 4 months and 10 days); but rather, in a symbolic sense, these "seventy weeks" are found to be expanded in their application and must be interpreted as "weeks of years". God knows how to hide things. These 70 Weeks, therefore, are symbolic - figurative Weeks - wherein a small unit of time – "days" – is set aside to represent a larger time unit – viz., "years", at the rate of: 1 Day = 1 Year.

Everyone agrees in both the Futurist and Historicist schools that Christ came 490 years later, after Daniel's vision and the issuance of a commandment to Ezra the scribe to go to Jerusalem, and that the Christ would then appear and do his work. (Well, maybe not everyone, but about 99.99% of us do.) So, in this case, the "weeks" used were definitely not literal weeks composed of 7, 24-hour days. Even the Futurists readily agree that 490 years are involved here, but the one thing that they stridently do not admit to, or agree to, is to allow the extension of this principle of using "days" as a symbol for "years" to be applied to any other of the "days" prophecies in the Bible! Even though the 70-Weeks Prophecy uses this very same scale. Admittedly, this admission would mess up their complex system of prophecy interpretation that depends for its integrity (which is shaky) upon what they call "literal days" – that is, plain ole 24-hour days. Since they push the "days" prophecies mostly into the future, a shorter version of these days as mere 24-hours each better fits their elaborate Dispensational system. They thus basically ignore God's admonition to treat certain time prophecies symbolically, to interpret "each day for a year". Futurists, however, do make one strong statement quite often, ad nauseum, that such "days" (in any other prophecy setting save for the exception of the 70-Weeks Prophecy) must be interpreted merely as 24-hour days. There is an inconsistency here in the Futurist system. Holy hands go up in horror if you suggest that the weeks of the 70-Weeks Prophecy in Daniel 9 have anything to do with the possibility that 7 "days" are contained within each of these same weeks. The Historicists moreover characteristically refute this 'wooden literalism' of the Futurists and apply the Day-Year Principle to these "days" prophecies. Besides the "seventy weeks" being "weeks of years" using the scale of 1 Day = 1 Year, and, over and above the practical working out in history of the Day-Year Principle, God expressly told his people many centuries earlier what standard in the Holy Bible should be used to interpret symbolic time prophecies. It is: 1 Day = 1 Year, a standard found in various places; but the two main references that are usually listed will suffice enough here, and they are found in Numbers and Ezekiel as a double-witness. In fact, it is God Himself Who says:

...After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years,...Numbers 14:34

...I have appointed thee each day for a year. Ezekiel 4:6

What part, then, of God's instruction of "each day for a year" do some people just don't seem to understand? They just don't "get it". What God appoints, moreover, we should keep as His divine appointments. Especially in the case of such a double-witness, we should take extra care of what God says 'literally'; for the Almighty Jehovah quite literally has "appointed each day for a year". God has showed us how to interpret symbolic days and we should be aware of it and use this standard. Thus, concerning symbolic time prophecy, we must always be ready to apply what God has said in order to interpret correctly. (As an aside, remember that Joseph in Egypt, when interpreting Pharaoh's symbolic dual dream, used two unusual items to represent years - "cows" and a "corn ear".) But "day" is even more perfectly fitted to be representative of a "year", more so than even a "cow" or "corn ear", because there is a 1/360 mathematical ratio between the day and the year, with the 360° of a circle analogous to the path of the earth going around the sun each year. The basic rule then is: "each day for a year"; or 1 Day = 1 Year; which is the Day-Year Principle. Not only has God provided us with this "standard" of interpretation for symbolic time prophecy, but He has also given us (especially in this 21st century) several chief examples of how this has actually worked out. For according to the Bible record, the Israelites did wander around in the wilderness for forty years following their days of disobedience, just as God said they would – all fulfilled at the scale of "a day for a year"; but the chief and best example, the mother of all symbolic time prophecies, is the 70-Weeks Prophecy itself found in Daniel chapter 9, composed of the enigmatic time period of "seventy weeks" – which has been fulfilled in history with a long run of 490 years, fulfilled and therefore

ascertainable for inspection and evaluation. By its very fulfillment, the 70-Weeks Prophecy portrays that the “seventy weeks” were indeed 490 years, which everyone in both the Futurist and Historicist schools agrees was played out over this period of 490 years. Of course, there is always some quibbling over the start and stop dates of the “seventy weeks” but all have to agree, of necessity, since these Weeks are now fulfilled, that the “seventy weeks” cover a period of many, many years, nay nearly five centuries. Hold on, I am getting to the Big Rip Off in just a second.

In addition, the Futurists with their novel new theories of Darbyism circa the 1830s, like Beowulf when he tore off Grendel’s arm, proceeded in the Big Rip Off and amputated the 70th Week of Daniel with its 7 years from the bloody stump of the 69th Week, to thus introduce an artificial “gap” or “parenthesis” on the prophetic time-line, and they moved this last Week out over 2,000 years into the far future. Where it lands, nobody knows – only the Secret Rapture, in their system, will start the last or 70th Week of Daniel, and the Big Jerk is supposedly “immanent” or at “any moment”. This is a very grotesque way to bend the rules of prophecy interpretation to suit a certain system. In the Futurist system, this last or 70th Week of 7 years supposedly kicks-in after the so-called “any moment” or “immanent” Secret Rapture takes place (another novel idea). Futurists claim that this severed off 70th Week runs for 7 years of “Tribulation” after the Great Snatch, with the last half being called by some Futurists (they disagree among themselves) the 3½ years of the “Great Tribulation”. The pre-Tribism of the Secret Rapture sees to it that everybody happily escapes God’s wrath by a change of geographic location (upwards), whereas the record of Israel in Egypt during the Exodus judgments is that they were preserved from God’s wrath while they were still in the midst of the land Egypt, where in Goshen there was light and no darkness, and where the flies and frogs wouldn’t go. An individual Antichrist is also thrown into the mix here for good measure by the Futurists, who goes about “making” and “breaking” covenants right and left, and under his Superman powers of the ☐ bermannsch the world goes-to-hell-in-a-hand-basket. God loses the world to Satan’s shenanigans (fat chance) and the whole world goes down into the pit of hell in one final blazing holocaust of a nuclear G tterd mmerung or “Twilight of the Gods”. God ends up with a destroyed and burned-out world, the world that He loved so much that He sent his Son to save it. On the otherwise, the pattern of the Olivet Discourse says just the opposite. At Harvest Time, the wicked will be severed from among the just, as it were, in a ‘rapture of the wicked’ and they are taken where the vultures gather with blood on their beaks and smiles on their faces. One shall be taken in judgment and the other righteous one shall be left behind. Or, as shown in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, the tares are gathered out of the field first and then bundled and burned, so that God will be the One taking out the wicked with his angel reapers and blessing the righteous by gathering His wheat into the garner. The whole Futurist scenario is backwards. The Historicists, however, point to the principle of 1 Day = 1 Year, namely that the 70-Weeks Prophecy has worked out precisely in history by the 490 years that passed unto Messiah the Prince, employing precisely “seventy weeks of years” - even if someone else calls it - even 999 times over - “seventy sevens”.

It is significant too that many of these symbolic “days” prophecies in the Bible have to do with Israel’s time of national remedial punishment – during that nation’s Diaspora among the gentiles. For example, the main subject of the 70-Weeks Prophecy is the coming of Messiah (not some Mr. Nasty Antichrist - which topic is not even mentioned in the text or context anyway) and thus the Messiah comes to a remnant of Jews who had been allowed to return to the Holy Land from Babylon under permission of the three Median-Persian kings: Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes - not this time to set up Messiah’s consummated kingdom but to set the stage for the appearance of Messiah who would deal with that most horrid venomous thing called Sin that the Serpent introduced into the Garden of Eden. Christ dealt with it on the Cross, thank God, literally. Other “days” prophecies, moreover, foretold various other great events in Church history, but only one of them will be dealt with here – the identification of Antichrist and his time period of extended rule. Our Reformation forefathers recognized the present Antichrist (not future) by interpreting correctly the symbolic “days” prophecies. And, I will stack up the caliber of men like Sir Isaac Newton and the Reformation Protestant forefathers like Luther, Knox, Calvin, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Zwingli, Huss, etc., against any of the Futurist teachers with their bouffant hairdos and \$500.00 suits on television pontificating with wild flights of speculative fancy concerning things that have not yet come to pass and, being yet future, are historically unprovable. Nobody can prove you are wrong when you guess about the future – since it hasn’t happened yet. They speak of a future coming Antichrist that has little relevance to Christians who now live in this world, for this one-man Antichrist is one who has not yet appeared in over 2,000 years of Church history and, thus, he has never yet influenced or affected the Church, and, again, this Mr. Nasty only appears after the Church is gone in Rapture, and, still further, he will supposedly be destroyed before the saints come back to earth from their 7-year vacation in Glory. So, what’s the relevance of all this blather about a future Antichrist that basically never affected the Church, and is not now impacting the Church or the saints, and in the future will not have access to saints either? Very little really.

The Bible, on the other hand, speaks plainly of a present Antichrist making “war on the saints” and ruling for 1,260 years from the “great city” of Rome in Italy according to the Day-Year Principle. Historicists recognize the fearful place that Antichrist has already played in the world’s history, where for many bloody centuries the Spanish Inquisition and papal armies have killed millions of true Christians, murdered in the name of religion and truth. These saints however did not deny their Christ, and because of the “word of their testimony”, they were heinously burnt to a crisp in the fires and Autos-da-fé of martyrdom, or hanged, or drowned, stabbed, garrotted, shot to death, blown up with bags of gunpowder tied around their necks, wives and daughters ravished before their eyes, etc.; and, all the while during such persecutions these stalwart men pointed their finger at Rome and boldly declared: “Thou art Antichrist!” I don’t know of anyone who has died a martyr’s death defending the pre-Tribulation Rapture.

It is of special note, too, that the Protestant world of Western Europe used symbolic prophecy to interpret and discover both the identity of, and the times concerning Antichrist upon the earth – and the Reformers did not flinch or seek political correctness when they were asked to identify Antichrist: – to them Antichrist was that dynasty of Popes who gradually appeared on the scene, then arose in power over the centuries, and finally, after a long and corrupt rule, fell under God’s judgments upon their Roman Catholic Church, the “great city” of Babylon finally came up to remembrance before God. “Babylon is fallen, is fallen!” And this Antichrist or “little horn” or “beast” or “man of sin” or “son of perdition” ruled for a “time, and times, and half a time”, or 1,260 days, viz., 1,260 years, according to symbolic time prophecy. One of the basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation was the promulgation of the idea that the Church of Rome, to use a rather blunt but scriptural term, was indeed the “Whore” of Babylon represented in the Papacy – that very Antichrist ruling over the nations of the earth from their “great city” of Rome on the Tiber. Another part of the Protestant stance was that the Papacy was not only the Antichrist identified, but also that this Man of Sin had a certain designated time period set out in Scripture to rule “in his time”, a time that would eventually have an end, even after a “time, times, and half a time”. This time frame was prophesied to be a period of 1,260 days, and using the 1 Day = 1 Year scale of the Day-Year Principle, this translates into exactly 1,260 years of history; a time frame also expressed symbolically in the Book of Revelation as: 42 months and “time, and times, and half a time”. This is the essence of symbolic “days” prophecies.

In closing, we should heed the words of the late and well-respected George Eldon Ladd (1911-1982), professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, from his book *The Blessed Hope: A Biblical Study of the Second Advent and the Rapture* (1956). Professor Ladd documents the gradual Romeward drift of Protestantism into a state of post-Reformation apostasy, with luke-warm Protestants like Samuel Roffey Maitland succumbing to the wiles of Jesuit sophistry via the impetus of the Oxford Movement (the Tractarian Movement). The goal of the Tractarians, such as John Henry Newman who eventually left the Anglican communion and became a cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church, was to bring rapprochement between the schematics of Protestantism and the Holy Roman Catholic Mother Church - to bring those errant and wandering Protestants back into the fold of the only true Church of Rome under the Pope. Darby & Company of the Plymouth Brethren followed this bellwether of the Oxford Movement and they adopted various aspects of the revived futurism of the Jesuits. Some renegade Protestants like Samuel Roffey Maitland joined in the Catholic chorus to repudiate the Reformation and reunite with Mother Rome. (Some other really weird and wild theories, like the pre-tribulational Rapture aberration, were also originated during this unsettled time.) Since the basis of the ID of Antichrist was established by the Reformation Protestants using the Day-Year Principle, this was the first major Protestant bulwark to be attacked by Romish scholars. As T.R. Birks notes, the Day-Year Principle was the “first object of attack” because it had not only helped identified the Papal Antichrist in Rome but had also showed that the papal antichrist rule would last for 1,260 years, exactly. The rule of the Papacy, in fact, did last for exactly 1,260 years, for Papa’s rule spanned the time from when the Roman Catholics gained control of Rome after the expulsion of the Ostrogoths as they were driven out of the city in 538 A.D., and afterwards Rome “made war on the saints”, and this period of rule extended down to A.D. 1798 when Napoleon’s army eventually entered Rome under General Berthier and took the Pope captive to France, where he died in exile under house arrest – a period of exactly and precisely 1,260 years! The Futurists, to relieve Rome of any guilt, sweep this heinous history of the “Dark Ages” under the carpet, and point with great gusto to a yet coming, future Antichrist that is yet to arise – they discount the Day-Year Principle whenever Rome or Antichrist or Babylon is discussed. It’s always applied to some big Meany Man in the future, after the Secret Rapture so as not to affect the Chosen Few who have already departed this earth on the pre-Trib Express. Ladd explains that the foundational target of the attack of Rome was indeed the Day-Year Principle of the Protestant Reformation:

The Futurist interpretation with its personal Antichrist and three and a half year period of tribulation did not take root in the Protestant church until the early nineteenth century (early 1800s). The first Protestant to adopt it was Samuel Roffey Maitland. (librarian at Lambeth, the central library and repository for the Anglican Church of England) ...In 1826 he published a pamphlet whose title is both long and self-explanatory: *An Enquiry into the Ground on which the Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John Has Been Supposed to Consist of 1,260 years*. This small pamphlet was an attack on the year-day theory of the historical interpreters, insisting upon a period of 1,260 literal days of tribulation before the return of Christ. The pamphlet resulted in a “paper-war” with the Historicists which lasted for many years. James H. Todd (1805-1869), professor of Hebrew at Dublin, met Maitland and became his follower. In 1838 he gave the Donnellan lectures using the subject, *Discourses on the Prophecies Relating to Antichrist in the Writings of Daniel and St. Paul*, dedicating the published lectures to Maitland. ...In 1840, he published a second series of studies on Antichrist in the Apocalypse. William Burgh (1800-1866) has given us the first systematic treatment of prophetic events following the new Futurist interpretation in *Lectures on the Second Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (1835).

The important thing to note about what Ladd says is that the Church of Rome, through the skill of its wily Jesuits, first sought to attack the main foundational strength of the Protestants – that bull’s-eye target of the Day-Year Principle. It was the first thing to be assailed as being the most potentially dangerous to the deceptions of the Roman Catholic Church. The Jesuits set the pace with their futuristic commentaries on the Apocalypse like that of Francisco Ribera, for the Jesuits had responded to their post-Trent directive to put the Protestants off the track of a Papal Antichrist in any way possible. So the “bulldogs of the Papacy” went back and reworked and rehashed the futurism of Hippolytus and a few other sundry early Church Fathers (which fathers, indeed, did look for a lot to happen in the future, since they lived about 1,800 years ago!); and then afterwards in the early 1800s certain Protestants became enamored with this new-fangled futurism from Jesuit-inspired theories and imbibed these teachings, producing such waffling Protestants as Samuel Roffey Maitland, James H. Todd, and William Burgh. If the foundation of the Day-Year Principle held by the Reformation Protestants could but be destroyed and torn down, then the whole Protestant edifice of symbolic prophecy interpretation would buckle and fall. And, Antichrist could then hide in the dark shadows as a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” as Protestants looked in vain for him somewhere else – somewhere in the nebulous future in far-off Neverland. The false doctrine of the Jesuits could do what the fires of Smithfield under Mary Tudor, “bloody Mary”, and what the Spanish Inquisition could not do – emasculate the will of the Reformers concerning the chronological role that Antichrist had played throughout his 1,260 years of persecution in the Middle Ages (that’s why they were called the “Dark Ages”). As mentioned, Cambridge professor T.R. Birks described the Day-Year Principle as the “first object of attack” by the Roman Catholic Church to induce deception and get their Church out of the Antichrist limelight. The goal was to cause the Protestants to look away from Rome as the present Antichrist and look somewhere into the murky future for a spectacular, charismatic one-man-band future Mr. Bad Guy Antichrist. Admittedly, the Reformation position on the “days” prophecies did partially collapse under the weight of this Romish onslaught - and it was somewhat killed by these false Jesuit doctrines of Rome’s Counter-Reformation concerning the “who” (anyone but the RCC) and the “when” (not present, but anywhere else in the future) of Antichrist - but the crippled and murdered Day-Year Principles, like the two witnesses in the Book of Revelation, have come to life again and are standing on their feet witnessing their Truth to a new generation - in a more coherent form than ever before. As time goes by, with more and more prophecies being fulfilled according to the Day-Year Principle, there arises new evidence which begets new courage to teach this great Reformation-Protestant truth. The Day-Year Principle provides a firm foundation for the study of Bible Prophecy.

### **“Time of the end”: a short period before the end.**

Historicists argue that the time periods in Daniel are related to the time of the end. They then argue that taking a literal time period for the period in the prophecy would not yield a point in time that could make the beginning of the end-time just before the day of the Lord.

INSERT THE QUOTES AND ARGUMENTS HERE FROM LITCH 1842

MILLER ARGUED THAT WAY.

SO ALSO GOLDSTEIN ET AL.

James White says:

[Dn12:4 quoted] The time of the end noted in the text is not the end itself. It is evidently a period of time just prior to the end. (1970, p.70)

Cottrell says:

It will be remembered that “the time of the end” began with the close of the 1260 years of papal supremacy in 1798, and that this was to be the time when God would set in operation a series of events designed to prepare the world for the transition from this age to the next. In other words, “the time of the end” is that last crucial period of earth’s history during which the great cosmic countdown for launching God’s eternal, righteous reign on earth goes relentlessly forward, the time when He begins to take controls of history ever more securely into His own hands. (1963, pp. 298f.)

SDA historicists cite certain evidence to prove internally in the book of Daniel that the year-day principle is at work. They do this to reinforce what they argue elsewhere for the texts in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6; that is, that the year-day principle must be applied to the time periods in Daniel. This is the other side of the argument using the year-day principle from the texts in Num 14:34 and Eze 4:6 and showing how it “works,” thus confirming the interpretation of the periods in Daniel using the year-day principle. The internal evidences present in Daniel to show the necessity of using the year-day principle include: (1) the presence of “days” in the seventy weeks of Dn9:24-27; (2) The presence of years in Dn8:14 (using a number of arguments: (2a) the fact that the time period covers the full vision, not just the activities of the little horn; (2b) the long duration of the vision, longer than 6.3 years; (2c) the meaning of “evening-mornings” as referring to days; (2d) the reference to “years” in Dn11, in contrast to the “evening-mornings” of Dn8:14.); (3) the long period that the 3½ “times” have to cover in Dn7.

Using these ideas, full of assumptions and circular arguments, they assert the presence of the year-day principle in Daniel, thereby ‘proving’ the correctness of applying this principle in such a manner, compared with the usage in Eze 4:6 and Num 14:34. What is problematic here is that all of these points are circular in that they rely on a bunch of assumptions drawn from their conclusions to prove the validity of their argument. For instance, the presence of “days” in Dn9:24-27 makes this assumption that the week involved cannot mean “week of years” as the Jews have always understood it, but rather, it means with weeks with “symbolic” days, and when it is calculated out, it fits the historical data; the argument that “evenings-mornings” means “days,” that the word “vision” in Dn8:13 refers to the whole vision, and not vs9-12; that the long duration of the empires of the Dn8 vision mean that the 2300 “evening-mornings” and the 3½ “times” are also long; and lastly that the reference to time periods in Dn11 are connected to the 2300 days. These assumptions have, in themselves, a litany of accompanying assumptions.

The term ‘*iddan*’ also occurs in the explanation section of both Dn7 and Dn12, which according to SDA historicists own definition contains no figurative items but only literal explanation.

**7:12** As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and *time*.

**12: 7** And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a *time*, *times*, and *an half*; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

The occurrence of ‘*iddan*’ in Dn7:12 is only treated as an idiomatic statement, and not as a prophetic period, even though it comes in the midst of the actual vision of Dn7. On the other hand, the occurrence of ‘*iddan*’ in Dn12, where we do not find any vision, but only explanation, according to SDA historicists, forces us to conclude, according to their own parameters, that the time here is not symbolic, but literal. Thus, the phrase in the explanatory section of Dn7 is as literal as the one occurring in Dn12.

Smith says:



The question, “How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?” undoubtedly has reference to all that has previously been mentioned, including the standing up of Michael, the time of trouble, the deliverance of God’s people, and the special resurrection of verse 2. The answer seems to be given in two divisions: First, a specific prophetic period is marked off, and then an indefinite period follows before the conclusion of all these things is reached, just as we have it in Daniel 8: 13, 14. When the question was asked, “How long...the vision...to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot?” the answer mentioned a definite period of a time, times, and a half, or 1260 years, and then an indefinite period for the continuance of the scattering of the power of the holy people, before the consummation.

The 1260 years mark the period of papal supremacy. Why is this period here introduced? – Probably because this power is the one which does more than any other in the world’s history towards scattering the power of the holy people, or oppressing the church of God. But what shall we understand by the expression, “When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people”? To whom does the pronoun “he” refer? According to the wording of this scripture, the antecedent would at first seem to be “Him that liveth forever,” or Jehovah; but . as an eminent expositor of the prophecies judiciously remarks, in considering the pronouns of the Bible we are to interpret them according to the facts of the case, and hence must frequently refer them to an antecedent understood, rather than to some noun which is expressed, So, here, the little horn, or the man of sin, after being introduced by the particular mention of the time of his supremacy, 1260 years, may be the power referred to by the pronoun “he.” For 1260 years he had grievously oppressed the church, or scattered its power. After his supremacy is taken away, his disposition toward the truth and its advocates still remains, his power is still felt to a certain extent, and he continues his work of oppression as far as he is able, until when? – Until the last of the events brought to view in verse 1, the deliverance of God’s people. When they are thus delivered, their power, is no longer scattered, the end of the wonders described in this great prophecy is reached, and all its predictions are accomplished. (1944, pp.320 f.)

Commenting on interpretation as being plain language, Smith says:

Returning to Daniel, Gabriel, true to the commission here laid upon him, proceeded at once to enter upon his duty and to give the explanation he was enjoined to make. [verse 20 quoted] This is plain language. It cannot be misunderstood....[verse 21-22 quoted] This also is plain and literal language. (1898, pp.152 f.)

## Summary

THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL IS OUT OF PLACE.

The following table summarises my explanation of the time periods in Daniel. The first column lists the textual occurrences for the time periods. The second column lists whether they occur in the “vision” section or the “explanation” of the overall vision. The third column lists the actual textual format for the time period. The fourth column lists the one-step interpretation for the prophetic/symbolic/figurative time period. Where the time period is given in an interpretation in literal terms it need not be treated at all. It is already in the correct format. There is nothing further to be done to these periods.

**Table 15. Proposal for the Decoding of Literal vs Symbolic Time Periods in Daniel**

TEXT	Vision or Explanation?	Symbolic/Figurative Time Period	Literal Interpretation of the Time Period
Dn 7:25 Dn12:4	Explanation	3½ ‘iddan	3½ years
Dn8:14	Explanation	2300 ‘ereb-bôqer	2300 days
Dn 9: 24	Explanation	70 shabu’îm	490 years
Dn12:11	Explanation	It is not Symbolic	1290 days

Dn12:12	Explanation	It is not Symbolic	1335 days
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According to my understanding, which allows both interpretation and vision under the general term “vision – whether it be a *hazôn* or a *mar’eh*, an interpretation can contain either literal or figurative terms, and each item must be assessed on its own merit. For instance, if a vision spoke of a literal river or canal (cf. Dn8 and Dn10, 12), or a literal geographical place, like Susa, or the palace in Shushan, then it would not need explaining. In the case of time periods, we know what the normal units of time are – day, night, hour, month, week, and year. When something is given in these terms, they do not need to be translated any further. That has been done for us. But where the time period is given in figurative terms, it needs to be interpreted into a literal concept. This only involves *one* step, not two, as has been done by the SDA historicists.

### Cressener’s “application of the “correct hermeneutical tool” not so accurate.

The following extract comes from a book published in 1876 by William Kelly, entitled, *The Elements of Prophecy*.<sup>166</sup>

The supposed successes of Protestant interpreters call for few remarks here, though open to not a little assuredly. Suffice it then to say, that the chosen anticipations drawn from prophecy, which have proved so singularly correct in their main features, are these:

First, about the year AD 1600 Brightman calculated in his commentary that the overthrow of the Turkish power would occur AD 1696. In the year 1687 Dr. Cressener renewed the prediction, placing the time a year earlier, but restricting it to the close of the year of the “Turkish encroachments,” or the last end of their “hostilities.” This is caught up as in almost exact accordance with history, because the year 1697 was marked by that most signal victory of Prince Eugene over the Turks, which has proved the final limit to their aggressions upon western Europe. Bengel and Fleming are brought in to swell the train.

Here are the words of Brightman (p. 171, ed. Amst. 1611): “The execution of the commandment lighting upon the year 1300, by due consent of all history-writers; when their domesticall dissensions being appeased, and all consenting to the empire of the Ottomans, they might freely bende themselves with all their power to enlarge their borders, and some time at length creape out of their narrow straightes. How long time this power given to the Turks should continue is declared in the next words, *prepared at an houre, and a day, and a month, and a yeere*, which so exact description pertaineth to the comforting of the godly whom the Spirit would have to know, that this most grievous calamity hath her set boundes, even to the last moment, beyond which it shall not be continued. Which indeed seemeth to be the space of three hundred ninety and six yeeres, every several day being taken for a yeere, after that manner which was interpreted the mouthes before. Thus he makes it out: from AD 1300 + 396 AD 1696; or as he says on Rev. 20:3 (p. 650), if we follow the reckening of the Julian yeeres, the impious kingdom shall not be prolonged beyond seven yeeres; then *utterly* to be abolished without so much as the footsteps of his name after him. It will be judged hence how far it is candid to say that Brightman’s anticipation was verified. Was there indeed such an extirpation of the Turkish name (not to speak of 1696, but) in 1697? Was it singularly correct in its main features?”

The fact is that Brightman taught that the thousand years’ reign began in the year A.D. 130, and that the first resurrection belonged to the nations of Europe (p. 656); that three hundred years had then passed since that resurrection (p. 657). “We must also yet tarry some short space before that our brethren the Jews shall come to the faith. But after that they are come, and Christ shall have reigned some ages most gloriously on earth by His servants in advancing His church to most high honour above all empire,<sup>2</sup> then also all nations shall embrace true godliness,” etc. (ib.) Hence Brightman was expecting the papacy and the Turk to be utterly abolished shortly. “Until this victory be gotten, the church yet is in war, liveth in tents, and sigheth with many adversaries. But after this war is finished, she shall keep a most joyful triumph, and shall rejoice

<sup>166</sup> William Kelly, scholar and editor of “The Bible Treasury” for most of his life, was respected for his scholarship and stand against higher criticism when it was in its high noon. Was a supporter of Darby’s dispensationalism, and was a prolific writer. See his biography at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Kelly\\_%28Guernsey\\_and\\_Blackheath%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Kelly_%28Guernsey_and_Blackheath%29) He wrote a decisive book which answered the assertions of historicism called “*the Elements of Prophecy*”

with perpetual mirth. . . . The truth shall yet reign among the Gentiles for seven hundred years: how long afterwards among the Jews no declaration doth declare (p. 658). Is this the Protestant way of keeping the expectation of Christ's coming lively? It may be added in illustration of this chosen expositor's skill in prophecy, that he interprets the destruction of Gog and Magog in Rev. 20 of the overthrow spoken of in Dan. 11:45; Dan. 12:12; Ezek. 38:8, when the hour, day, month, and year of the Turks' tyranny shall come out, to wit, at the year a thousand six hundred ninetieth more or less. Finally, Brightman held that the rising of the dead small and great for judgment before the great white throne means: "the full restoring of the Jewish nation" (p. 664).

But the strangest thing of all is that the very advocate who cites Brightman's deduction from Rev. 9:15, as a conclusive answer to such as have declaimed on the total failure of these prophetic times, had himself rejected the reading, and of course the translation, of the text on which this anticipation was based. Thus while Brightman adopted the common text in that verse, which is essential to his calculations, his advocate, at the time when he commended this calculation as an instance of a distinct and accurate insight into what was coming on the earth, adopted as preferable Matthaei's reading. This ought to have made no small difference if it was a date. But we have already shown that it is not, Brightman and his advocate being alike wrong.

Further, Dr. Cressener, like Brightman, looked not merely for a grave check or severe defeat of the Turks, but their then total overthrow, or as Cressener says in the preface to his *Demonstration* (p. xx, London, 1690), "the last end of all Turkish wars." Was this a just estimate of the battle of Zenta?

Secondly, Cressener in 1687 anticipated "that the true religion will revive again in some very considerable kingdom before the general peace with the Turks or eight years at furthest." "The next year seems in all probability to be a year of wonders for the recovery of the church." Will the christian reader believe that all this is thought to have proved singularly correct in the revolution of England, AD 1688, and the peace of Carlowitz, 1698? [http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/page.php?page\\_id=3866 to 3867](http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/page.php?page_id=3866%20to%203867)

The "correct hermeneutical tool" certainly led Cressener astray on this prophecy, even though he applied its principle in exactly the same manner as he did in relation to his prediction regarding the end of the beast "about 1800," – a prediction that occurred in the same publication of his as the one quoted above.

One should note here the contradiction in Froom's work between the actual statements of Cressener and Froom's misconstruing of the facts to something entirely different. On page 675 of *PPF II*, Froom tells us that Cressener predicted the downfall of the Turks to occur in 1697, as Kelly, above, confirmed in 1876. But when it came to charting these predictions, Froom leads us astray by giving us an incorrect date, naming "-1800" as the date for the downfall of the Turk. (see *PPF II*, p. 786) Whether he wanted us to believe Cressener's prediction was close to Litch's prediction is unclear. What is clear is that Froom is incorrect. Not only that, he is even internally inconsistent with himself.

### **5.10 Benjamin W. Newton *Aids to Prophetic Enquiry*, 1848, London:James Nisbet and Co.Bernes Street.**

Benjamin Newton did not believe in the personal premillennial return of Jesus. He says on page 4 of the above booklet. He says:

To those then who expect the pre-millennial advent of the Lord Jesus (and to such principally I now write) it is sufficient to say that the Book we are considering denies that Advent to be personal. On this ground

But disregarding his views on this matter for the moment, Newton has some valid criticisms against John Fleming in regard to the year-day principle, even back as far as 1848:

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And now let us turn from the moral effects produced by this work to the system of interpretation adopted in it. It teaches (and in this indeed it is not singular) that "days" in prophetic Scripture do not mean "*days*" but "*years*," on which assertion the whole of this system is based.

▲ 4

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As this assertion is so important and affects so vitally every thought that we can form in connexion with the whole scope of prophetic enquiry, it becomes very needful to examine most carefully into the ground on which it is made. It would seem at first sight very strange, very contrary to the simplicity of Scripture that God should use the word "*day*" when really He means not "*day*" but "*year*." What then are the grounds on which it is asserted that He does so?

The arguments used by Mr. Fleming, are as follow: He refers first to Exodus xliii. 10—12. "Six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof. But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still, that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat \* \* \* Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day, thou shalt rest, that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed."

These are the verses which Mr. Fleming quotes in support of his theory, that a day means a year. But surely if there be any passage in which day means day and year means year, it is this: for every one knows that Israel were commanded to keep every seventh year as a sabbatical year, and every seventh day, as a sabbatical day; and every seventh day they *did* keep, and no one among them ever dreamed of its meaning any thing else than a day.

The second argument is, that after the spies of Israel had searched the land for forty days, they were punished by wandering in the wilderness for forty years. Is day here put for year? Did they not search the land for forty literal days, and were they not punished for forty literal years? No passage could prove more convincingly that day means day and that year means year.

Again, he quotes a similar passage in Ezekiel, (Ch. iv.) Ezekiel is commanded to lie on his side for

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forty days, typically to bear the punishment of sins which Judah had committed for forty years. Did not Ezekiel lie on his side for forty literal days, and did not Judah sin for forty literal years? Ezekiel would surely have considered it a strange thing, if he had been told, that God had said indeed that he was to lie on his side forty days, but that He really meant forty years. It must have been so if day be put for year. Did Ezekiel so think or<sup>1</sup> so act?

Mr. Fleming adds, "Nay, our Saviour himself speaks in this dialect, when He calls the years of his ministry 'days,' saying, 'I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'" But Mr. Fleming in saying this seems to have forgotten two things—first, that these words were spoken at the time when He wept over Jerusalem, and left it for the last time just three literal days before his death, whereas, on Mr. Fleming's theory, they ought to have been spoken during the first year of his ministry; secondly, he has forgotten that the duration of our Lord's ministry was not three years, but three years and a half. Each, therefore, of these arguments proves exactly the reverse of that which ~~it~~ is adduced to sustain.\*

The next and last argument derived from Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks, appears to an English

\* Mr. Fleming adds also, "The seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's lycanthropy is called indefinitely *days* or *times*." But this is not true. The seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's madness is never called "days." The Hebrew word for *days* is יָמִים and the Chaldee word for *times* is מְדַי. It is the same word that is used in the seventh chapter, where the power of Antichrist is said to be for a time, times, and dividing of time, i. e. for three years and half a year, or 42 months, or 1260 days. Now, if three times and a half mean, as Mr. Fleming asserts, 1260 years, then Nebuchadnezzar's madness must last double that time, for it is said to be for seven times, which would be equal, on Mr. Fleming's principle, to 2520 years, and consequently, since he, i. e. Nebuchadnezzar, lived only about 600 years before the Christian era, his madness must be continuing still.

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Newton makes a worthy observation concerning the occurrene of *hebdomad* in Daniel 9, in relation to the year-day theory:



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ear more plausible. But it also fails equally in proving the point intended. It appears more plausible to an English ear, because we are not accustomed to apply the word "*week*," (a word which our translators have chosen as their rendering of the Hebrew expression,) to any period longer than seven days. We are not accustomed to say a *week* of weeks, or a *week* of months, or a *week* of years. We confine the expression to a seven of days. In Hebrew, however, it is otherwise. The word which our translators have rendered by week, means simply what the Greeks would call a "*hebdomad*," i. e. a septenary number, or a number consisting of seven. The word "*hebdomad*" stands in the same relation to *seven*, that "*decad*" does to *ten*, or our English word "*dozen*" to *twelve*. As therefore we can say a dozen of days, or a dozen of months, or a dozen of years, so we can say, a hebdomad of days, (i. e. seven days,) or a hebdomad of months, (i. e. seven months,) or a hebdomad of years, (i. e. seven years.)

Now supposing that in the prophecy before us it had been said, "Seventy dozen of *days* are to be fulfilled," and it was afterwards found that the prophecy really meant seventy dozens of *years*, then indeed it might be said that "*day*" meant *year*, and the point would be unquestionably proved. But if the word *day* was not mentioned at all, and the prophecy simply said, "Seventy dozens are to be fulfilled," then we should say that the prophecy was ambiguous—that it might mean dozens of days, or of months, or of years, and that we must endeavour by other means to discover which of these was intended. And if on examination we found that *days* should be supplied, we should supply days, and interpret them as days; or *months*, we should insert months, and interpret them as months; or if *years*, we should insert years, and interpret them as years. In either case, day would mean day, and month, month, and year, year. It would

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simply be a question of which should be inserted. There would be no question respecting their meaning when inserted.

Thus is it in this prophecy of Daniel. It is not said, "Seventy hebdomads of *days* are appointed;" it is merely said, "Seventy hebdomads are appointed." Consequently, seeing that the word "*day*" does not exist in the passage, that which does not exist cannot be put for any thing nor mean any thing, and there is an end of the question.

Such, then, are the reasons given for this strange imagination, reasons of which it may be fairly said, that they are no reasons at all, and therefore it follows that the whole superstructure built on such a foundation utterly falls.