

A New Trend in Adventist Eschatology: A Critical Analysis of a Recent Publication

BY EKKEHARDT MUELLER

Background

Although historicism has been the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist church, more recently some Adventists have started to entertain futurism. Futurism, in contrast to historicism, does not allow for a fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecy throughout the centuries and millennia but normally places the predicted events in the last segment of human history. On the other hand, differing from futurists and following a historicist view, Adventists believe that the books of Daniel and Revelation prophetically describe events that run from the time of the author to the final consummation and thus cover large parts of human history.

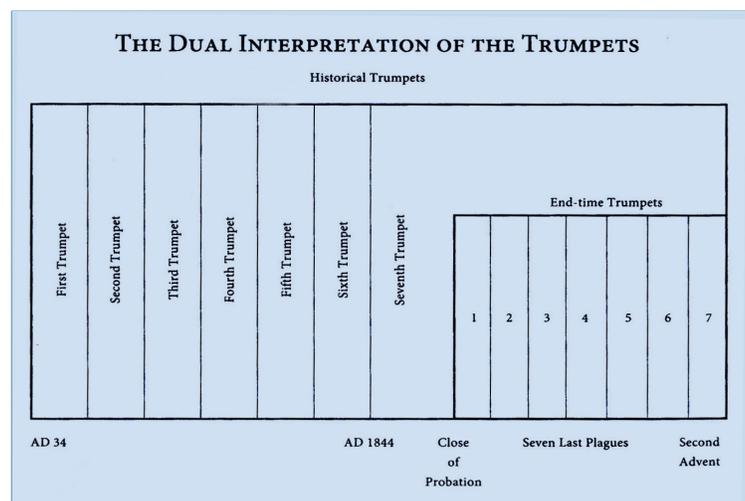
Adventists believe that the text of Revelation supports a historicist approach. They are convinced that the present generation lives already on the verge of Christ's second coming, in the time of the sixth seal and the sixth trumpet. They also recognize that although Revelation discloses the last events, it does not provide details of some current religious and political affairs. In other words, Revelation contains broad lines but not every stroke of history.¹

Some Adventists have attempted to interpret passages in Revelation by combining an historicist and futurist interpretation. Recently, the Adventist scholar Erwin R. Gane has published *Trumpet after Trumpet: Will Revelation's Seven Trumpets Sound Again*.² This author has opted for what he calls a "philosophy of history,"³ which he combines futurism with historicism, thus following "the philosophy of history interpretation, which recognizes history as cyclical and repetitive."⁴

Analysis

Thesis. Gane's main thesis postulates that the

seven trumpets of Revelation have a historicist fulfillment plus a major fulfillment in the time after the close of probation. Consequently, this second interpretation becomes more important because it addresses this generation in stronger terms.⁵ In addition, he understands the historicist interpretation just as a type of the antitypical end-time understanding.⁶ In a chart he suggests that the seven trumpets reach an end-time fulfillment in the seventh trumpet.⁷



As the chart above demonstrates, he opts for a dual interpretation and thus fulfillment of the seven trumpets of Rev 8-11. But obviously, he does not limit his approach to the seven trumpets, but applies it to the seven seals. So "the first three seals (Rev. 6:1-6) parallel the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-12."⁸ With the second trumpet he even seems to have three interpretations. The second trumpet refers to "the decline and fall of the Roman Empire,"⁹ "the Papacy,"¹⁰ and—by linking the second trumpet to Daniel 11—to the clash between the Christian West, including the United States of America and the world of Islam, which will be conquered before the United States and its allies will be destroyed."¹¹

This reminds us to some extent of Desmond Ford's multiple fulfillments of apocalyptic prophecy (aposte-

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A New Trend in Adventist Eschatology: A Critical Analysis of a Recent Publication.....	1
Miniature Symbolization and the Year-Day Principle	6
Scripture Applied	
The End-Time Remnant and the Gift of Prophecy	13
Book Notes	
<i>Entrusted: Christians and Environmental Care</i>	15
News	
Archives.....	16

lesmatic principle). Although there are major differences between the two authors, Gane's approach opens the door for an indefinite number of fulfillments. Furthermore, his approach overlooks the fact that neither Daniel nor Revelation (e.g., Dan 2 and Rev 12-14) suggest or allow for multiple interpretations of apocalyptic prophecy. Furthermore, multiple fulfillments obliterate the concept of recapitulation, held by Adventist interpreters. Multiple fulfillments of apocalyptic prophecy also turns the interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy into a subjective enterprise and deprives the biblical texts of any definite meaning. As Jon Paulien said: "As a prediction of history that runs the entire period from the prophet's time until the end, there is no room for dual or multiple fulfillments. While aspects of a prophecy (such as the 'stone' of Daniel 2) may be applied in various ways by later inspired writers, the original meaning of the prophecy as a whole is complete in its single fulfillment."¹²

Presuppositions. Gane's presuppositions for his dual approach to the interpretation of the seven trumpets are as follows:

1. *The throne scene in Revelation 4-5 is a pre-Advent judgment scene and refers to Daniel 7.*¹³ If this is so, the next logical step would be to place the opening of the seals after the beginning of the pre-Advent judgment in 1844.

2. *The trumpets are "sounding after the close of probation."*¹⁴ According to Gane the throwing of the fire-filled censer¹⁵ to the earth (Rev 8:5) points to the time after the close of probation. While the final close of probation is alluded to in Revelation 22:11, 12, he suggests that there was also a close of probation for Israel referred to in Daniel 9 and fulfilled in A.D. 34. Therefore, the historical fulfillment of the trumpets begins with A.D. 34 while the eschatological fulfillment would be purely future from our present day perspective.¹⁶ However, such an approach would see the primary fulfillment as the eschatological one. In other words, the futuristic interpretation takes precedence and is the dominating approach.

3. *The seven trumpets parallel the seven plagues chronologically.* "The trumpets are devil-inspired scourges that God allows because of the unfaithfulness of humanity. . . . By contrast, the plagues are curses God metes out upon portions of the ungodly as punishments meant to counteract and restrain the destructive work of Satan pictured in the trumpets."¹⁷

4. *Ellen G. White supports this interpretation.*¹⁸ None of these premises is convincing. Although there are allusions to Daniel 7 in Revelation 4 and 5, the judgment message is missing in these two chapters. Rather they emphasize God the Father as Creator and Jesus Christ as the Redeemer who is able to open the seals and bring to completion the plan of salvation. The focus is on the slain Lamb that has purchased humans for God and has made them a kingdom and priests (Rev 5:9). The death of the Messiah is referred to again in 5:12. His sacrifice and resurrection allow him to open the seals. So the Lamb standing in the middle of the throne (Rev 5:6), on which God the Father sits, points to Jesus' enthronement as heavenly King and High Priest rather than to the investigative judgment.

While it is correct that the pouring out of fire on the earth (Rev 8:5) points to judgment, nothing in the text tells us that this is a judgment after the close of probation. The golden censer of Revelation 8:3 is part of the furniture of the Holy Place, not of the Most Holy

Place. The passage contains no allusion to the antitypical Day of Atonement but to intercession for the saints. Therefore, the judgment is not the pre-Advent judgment after the close of probation with no opportunity for unbelievers to repent. Rather the intention of the trumpet judgments is to bring about repentance (Rev 9:20-21). The golden altar including intercession is still in view during the fifth trumpet (Rev 9:13). Also the people of God still proclaim the divine message of salvation (10:11), even during the sixth trumpet.

This makes it impossible for the trumpets to parallel the plagues chronologically since the plagues are the completion of the



Reflections

Reflections seeks to share information concerning doctrinal and theological developments among Adventists and to foster doctrinal and theological unity in the world church. Its intended audience is church administrators, church leaders, pastors and teachers.

Editor Elias Brasil de Souza
Production Manager Marlene Bacchus
Images Brenda Flemmer
Editorial Committee
 Artur Stele • Ekkehardt Mueller
 Kwabena Donkor • Clinton Wahlen
 Gerhard Pfandl • Ángel M. Rodríguez

Manuscript Policy Articles important for Adventist theology are written at the invitation of BRI and should be sent by email attachment to the editor at brnewsletter@gc.adventist.org.

Permissions Material may be used for preaching and public presentations and may be reprinted by official entities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church if the Biblical Research Institute is indicated as the source. Translated articles should be reviewed by the appropriate Biblical Research Committee prior to publication.

Copyright © 2013

Biblical Research Institute
 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
 12501 Old Columbia Pike
 Silver Spring, MD 20904, USA
 Phone: 301.680.6790 • Fax: 301.680.6788

www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org

full wrath of God on his people’s enemies. While the trumpets are limited to a third of humankind, the plagues have no such limitation. In addition, the parallelism between trumpets and plagues does not make much sense since, according to Gane, unbelievers would be tortured by Satan through the trumpets and also by God through the plagues. How the plagues are to “counteract and restrain the destructive work of Satan pictured in the trumpets”¹⁹ is not spelled out. Reading Revelation one gets the impression that the plagues are more severe than the trumpets. Gane seems to have it the other way around.

Ellen G. White makes a clear distinction between the two apartments of the heavenly sanctuary. She associates the Holy Place with the altar of incense and the Most Holy Place with the ark of the covenant.²⁰ She links the Most Holy Place to the Day of Atonement,²¹ which includes judgment. She does not do that with the Holy Place. While Gane correctly observes that Ellen G. White speaks about the throwing of the censer to the earth at the close of probation, he overlooks the fact that in this context she refers to the Most Holy Place: “As Jesus moved out of the most holy place . . .” (*EW* 280). In regards to Rev 8:2-5, she does not link that situation with the Most Holy Place. We have to keep in mind that she repeatedly uses the language of Scripture without necessarily interpreting a specific text from which some phrases were taken.

Problems. Gane’s interpretation problems extend beyond his pre-suppositions. Several other issues surface in his book, as briefly mentioned below.

1. While the interpretation of some passages lack exegetical support, some historical comments replace exegetical work. For instance, the angel of Revelation 8:3-5 is understood as Christ, but without exegetical support.²² We have already seen parts of his interpretation of Daniel 11 in endnote 11. Although Gane does some exegesis in examining the historical fulfillment of a trumpet, he hardly does so when it comes to the eschatological fulfillment. It is basically an Adventist end-time scenario superimposed on the trumpets.²³

2. While the author consults the Old and New Testaments to interpret Revelation—and this is laudable—he does not evaluate these texts but uses them in an unqualified way. For example, he seems to overlook the fact

that the same symbol may have different meanings.²⁴ This is not only an academic exercise but influences the outcome of any interpretation.

3. In addition, the grammatical and theological context of Revelation itself (Revelation interpreting Revelation) appears to have been overlooked. Although investigation of the Old and New Testament backgrounds remains important, it is also crucial to listen to the Apocalypse by itself because John uses background material creatively. For instance, while Gane studies the concept of “witness” in the Old and New Testaments²⁵ he does not pay close attention to the rich concept of “witness/testimony” in the Apocalypse itself.

4. Unfortunately, no clear distinction is made between interpretation (exegesis), application, and the theology of Revelation. This is of crucial importance. While Gane talks about “applications,” a look at his publication confirms that he uses the term “application” interchangeably with the term “interpretation,” not distinguishing—as is normally done—the two approaches.²⁶ His two charts summarize his approach under the headings: “The Dual Interpretation of the Trumpets” and “The Historical and End-Time Interpretations of the Trumpets.”²⁷ The latter one contains the subheadings “Historical Interpretation” and “Eschatological Interpretation.”

5. The use of extensive quotations, sometimes more than a page long is disturbing.²⁸ In the case of Ellen G. White, whom he quotes extensively, the impression emerges that he uses her to support his own conclusions. Her description of final events is illegitimately linked to the trumpets.

6. Contradictions arise with Gane’s interpretations of the definite time periods in the trumpets.²⁹ While he employs the year-day principle with his historical interpretation, he cannot use, for instance, 1260 years with the futuristic approach, which according to him, takes place during the seventh historical trumpet. He also has to give up the year-day principle with regard to the five months in the fifth trumpet (Rev 9:5, 1).³⁰ So he has to spiritualize the time periods as soon as he takes them futuristically.

7. While Gane talks about the historical and eschatological interpretations relating to each other as type and antitype, his typology is not necessarily biblical typology.³¹ Biblical typology spelled out in Scripture

THE HISTORICAL AND END-TIME INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TRUMPETS Revelation 8:2–11:19							
HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION							
Trump 1 Fall of Jerusalem AD 70	Trump 2 Fall of Roman Empire	Trump 3 Rise of papacy AD 313–538	Trump 4 Dark Ages papal supremacy	Trump 5 Ottoman Empire 1299–1449	Trump 6 Ottoman Empire 1449–1840	Interlude Advent message disappointment 1840–1844	Trump 7 Investigative judgment 1844–End
ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION							
Trump 1 Satan’s attack on the church Rev. 8:7	Trump 2 Fall of the superpowers Rev. 8:8, 9	Trump 3 Satan impersonates Christ Rev. 8:10, 11	Trump 4 Spiritual darkness loyalty to Satan Rev. 8:12	Trump 5 Time of Jacob’s trouble Rev. 9:1–12	Trump 6 Final attack on God’s people Rev. 9:13–21	Interlude Voice of God “It is done.” Rev. 10:1–11:14	Trump 7 Wicked punished temple opened law in sky Rev. 11:15–19

points in one way or another to a relation between type and antitype. One does not invent it. It is in the text. On the other hand, one should stay away from constructing supposed typologies, if Scripture does not make it evident. Otherwise, typology, i.e., self-made typology may degenerate into allegorization.

8. On page 149 he mixes literal and symbolic interpretations of the fifth trumpet without explaining why. While the locusts are understood as cavalry, human soldiers with headdress and long hair (literal approach), their teeth and wings are considered to be symbols.

9. Dealing with the structure of Revelation, Gane repositions and separates biblical texts to fit his structure.³²

10. For Gane, the seventh trumpet begins in 1844, not with the second coming of Jesus which establishes God's kingdom of glory (Rev 11:15-18).³³

Purpose. Although the author has not stated very clearly the purpose for writing, one may assume it from a statement in chapter 2: "In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor."³⁴ If so, this may explain the tone of the work, which is more reserved and hortative than joyful. To balance the message, at least to some extent, Gane may have decided to finish his work with a quotation of Peter: "Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you . . . (1 Pet 5:7-11)."³⁵

Futurism

This brings us back to the issue of futurism. While futurism shapes the eschatology of certain circles of Christianity, it should not be an option for Seventh-day Adventists. While we do not deny that Revelation describes future events, we also acknowledge that God has led his people in the past, from Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection through the centuries to our time today. And he will bring about the final consummation. We acknowledge this broad perspective as portrayed in the books of Daniel and Revelation. It is a major part of the great controversy theme.

Adventists believe that a historicist approach is mandated by the texts themselves. The vision on the satanic trinity and God's response (Rev 12-14) moves from the time before the birth of the Messiah to his second coming and provides a paradigm for the interpretation of the book. This vision parallels the seal vision, which begins with the enthronement of Jesus after his ascension. We call this parallelism recapitulation. Also in the case of the trumpets, recapitulation should be chosen as the way to interpret them. This would then almost by necessity suggest a historicist understanding.

Some arguments in favor of recapitulation and historicism of the trumpets can be advanced as follows: (1) the delimitation of the surrounding visions that make it unlikely that the trumpets grow out of the seals, (2) the

time frame of the trumpet vision that reaches from the first century A.D.—the beginning of Christ's intercession for us in the heavenly sanctuary—to the final consummation, (3) the parallelism of the climax in the various visions, i.e., the major visions of Revelation all end with the Second Coming and/or the time thereafter, (4) the parallel internal structure of the major visions in the first part of Revelation, which begin with an introductory scene in the heavenly sanctuary followed by a basic prophetic description and an expansion with a preview of final events, and ends with the consummation, (5) the basic locations of the seal and trumpet visions (heaven – earth – heaven) that do not allow redeemed ones, living in the presence of God, to come back to earth in order to suffer further judgments, and (6) the time period of 1,260 days, representing 1,260 years, plus other time periods found in the trumpet vision that only allow for a historicist interpretation of the trumpets.

Fulfillments

In considering the issue of dual or multiple fulfillments, it should be noted that the letters to the seven churches differ to some extent from the seals, trumpets, and the vision on the satanic trinity, not only in their structure but also in content. Nevertheless, these letters also focus on Jesus' second coming and prepare for the apocalyptic part of Revelation (Rev 4-22a) through specific vocabulary and concepts.

Doubtless the seven churches refer to specific congregations that existed in the first century A.D. Could they also refer to consecutive periods in church history as the other series in the historical section of the Apocalypse would represent consecutive eras of history? The number seven and the general promise of blessing to everyone who reads the book and follows its messages (Rev 1:3) would be two indicators among others that suggests a universal audience rather than the members of these seven churches only.

However, by affirming a dual fulfillment of the messages to the seven churches we encounter the problem that apocalyptic prophecy does not have multiple fulfillments (Dan 2 and Rev 12). While classical prophecy may have more than one fulfillment and may be conditional, apocalyptic prophecy seems to have just one fulfillment and is unconditional.

Rev 2-3 reveals a reduced number of symbols and more non-symbolic language. For instance, the dominant name for Jesus in the Apocalypse is "Lamb," occurring twenty-eight times but not at all in the letter frame (Rev 1-3 and 22:6-21). On the other hand, the term *ekklēsia* (church) appears only in the letter frame and not in the apocalyptic part. The latter use symbols such as the "woman clothed with the sun." The messages to the seven churches has more affinities with

classical prophecy than apocalyptic prophecy. This in turn suggests that the book contains mixed genres (cf. the book of Daniel and Revelation). In this case, a dual usage of the messages to the seven churches would be possible without subjecting apocalyptic prophecy to multiple fulfillments

Conclusion

How to approach the interpretation of Revelation remains a crucial issue. Hermeneutical decisions on various levels will to a large extent decide the outcome not only of our interpretation but also of how we will conduct our lives. Therefore we must think about the issues and make informed decisions. In this regard, I must say that the book evaluated above hardly makes a contribution to the Adventist Church. On the contrary, it could prove to be detrimental.

From a biblical perspective, it seems evident that historicism provides the correct framework to interpret apocalyptic prophecy, which precludes two or more interpretations of the same apocalyptic prophecy. However, historicism would not exhaust itself in narrating dry historical realities. By looking at history we notice God's guidance and the advancement of the plan of salvation towards the future. We learn lessons about God and about ourselves. We are assured of our salvation. We are called to action and moral living. We are challenged to join the mission of the God's people, proclaim the good news of God's last message, and await the Lord's coming.

Ekkehardt Mueller is Deputy Director of the Biblical Research Institute



¹See Gerhard Pfandl and Ekkehardt Mueller, "How Do Seventh-day Adventists Interpret Daniel and Revelation," in *Interpreting Scripture: Bible Questions and Answers*, Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 2, edited by Gerhard Pfandl (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2010), 79-81, and Jon Paulien, "The Hermeneutics of Biblical Apocalyptic," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, edited by G. W. Reid, Biblical Research Institute Studies, vol. 1 (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 249-250.

²Erwin R. Gane, *Trumpet after Trumpet: Will Revelation's Seven Trumpets Sound Again?* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2012). The author is a retired Bible teacher and has served the Adventist Church for many years in various positions. His book on the trumpets consists of 320 pages and contains fifteen chapters plus a preface and a bibliography.

³Gane, 9, 10, 15-17.

⁴Ibid., 295.

⁵See *ibid.*, 166.

⁶See *ibid.*, 156, 297.

⁷Ibid., 293.

⁸Ibid., 215; see also 22.

⁹Ibid., 93.

¹⁰Ibid., 95.

¹¹See *ibid.*, 98-101. Unfortunately the detailed description of these events reminds readers of Hal Lindsay's books. On pages 98-99 Gane states: "The king of the south (Islamic powers) will attack the king of the north (the Western world), and all-out war will result. The king of the north (the Western powers, including the United States, in league with the papacy) will invade the territories of the Islamic world with a huge military force and take over some of the countries. . . . The Western powers will invade Palestine, but some of the Islamic countries that are allied with the West will escape being attacked. . . . as the Western powers continue their attack on the Islamic world, Egypt will join the Islamic alliance and, as a consequence, will be attacked. . . . In league with the papacy, the Western powers, including the United States, will subjugate the Islamic powers and will then appropriate the wealth of the Islamic world (oil). . . . The preaching of Christ's coming will alarm the king of the north, and he will turn his attention to destroying those who preach the message. Having conquered the Islamic world, the king of the north—the papacy in league with the United States and other Western powers—will at that point be in the position to be able to enforce worldwide 'the image of the beast' (Rev. 13:14) and the mark of the beast (verse 16)."

¹²Jon Paulien, 249.

¹³See Gane, 21, 27, 214.

¹⁴Ibid., 23.

¹⁵See *ibid.*, 48.

¹⁶See *ibid.*, 56.

¹⁷Ibid., 56.

¹⁸*Early Writings*, 279-280, *Great Controversy*, 490-491.

¹⁹Ibid., 56.

²⁰*Great Controversy*, 415-416: "The holy places of the sanctuary in Heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in Heaven, he beheld there 'seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.' [Rev. 4:5.] He saw an angel 'having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.' [Rev. 8:3.] Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in Heaven; and he saw there the 'seven lamps of fire' and the 'golden altar' represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, 'the temple of God was opened,' [Rev. 11:19.] and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld 'the ark of His testament,' represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God."

²¹*Great Controversy*, 433-434; *The Review and Herald*, November 9, 1905.

²²See *ibid.*, 45, 47.

²³This is how he sees the eschatological fulfillment of the seven trumpets (312): First trumpet: Satan's attack on the church; second trumpet: fall of the superpowers; third trumpet: Satan impersonates Christ; fourth trumpet: spiritual darkness, loyalty to Satan; fifth trumpet: time of Jacob's trouble; sixth trumpet: final attack on God's people; interlude: voice of God "It is done"; seventh trumpet: wicked punished, temple opened, law in sky.

²⁴Jon Paulien, Jon. *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets: Literary Allusions and Interpretations of Revelation 8:7-12*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series Vol. 11 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1987) has developed a method that allows us with some degree of certainty to determine the Old Testament background of a certain allusion.

²⁵See Gane, 241-242.

²⁶With regard to the second, third, and fourth trumpets Gane speaks about the “historical application” (95, 111, 127) and the “future” or “end-time application” (98, 116, 131). As soon as he discusses the fifth and the sixth trumpets his language reverts to “historical interpretation” (149, 164) and “end-time interpretation” (156, 166).

²⁷See, *ibid.*, 293 and 312.

²⁸See *ibid.*, 129-131, 131-132, 185-188.

²⁹E.g., *ibid.*, 148 and 158.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 158: “The historic period of five prophetic months (Rev. 9:5) is simply a type of an indefinable period of trial imposed by Satan and his demons upon the professed people of God after the end-time close of probation.” On the historic level he still mentions 150 years (148).

³¹See, *ibid.*, 59, 180.

³²See, *ibid.*, 32.

³³See, *ibid.*, 285.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 57.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 311.

Miniature Symbolization and the Year-Day Principle¹

BY ALBERTO R. TIMM

A basic hermeneutical component of the historicist school of prophetic interpretation is the so-called “year-day principle.” Those who advocate this hermeneutical principle argue that the prophetic periods connected with the apocalyptic prophecies of Scripture have to be understood not as literal days, but rather as symbolic days that represent the same number of literal years.² Some critics have not only rejected the year-day principle altogether, but have also blamed the historicist school for its alleged inconsistency in the application of this principle. The present article argues that the concept of “miniature symbolization” provides a hermeneutical framework for the application of the year-day principle to the prophetic periods of Daniel and Revelation.

As argued by some nineteenth-century historicist scholars, the year-day principle of prophetic interpretation should be applied only to the time elements of those specific symbolic prophecies whose symbols represent broader entities than the symbols themselves.³ In 1843, George Bush, professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature at New York City University, elaborated on the concept of “miniature symbolization” in the following terms:

The Scripture presents us with two distinct classes of predictions—the *literal* and the *symbolical*. Where an event, or series of events, of a historical character, is *historically* announced, we naturally look for the announcement to be made

in the plainest, simplest, and most literal terms. No reason can then be assigned for designating periods of time in a mystical or figurative diction. . . . But the case is entirely reversed in regard to the *symbolical prophecies*. . . . The prophets have frequently, under divine prompting, adopted the system of *hieroglyphic representation*, in which a single man represents a community, and a wild beast an extended empire. Consequently, since the mystic exhibition of the community or empire is in miniature, symbolical propriety requires that the associated chronological periods should be exhibited in miniature also.⁴

Bush argues further that

the grand principle into which the usage of employing a day for a year is to be resolved, is that of *miniature symbolization*. As the *events* are thus economically reduced, the periods are to be reduced in the same relative proportion. What that proportion is, we cannot positively determine without some antecedent information touching the rate or scale of reduction. But the probability is, that such scale will be at the rate of a day or minor revolution of the earth round its axis, for a year or greater revolution of the earth round the sun.⁵

The discussion that follows tries to show how the presence of a miniature symbolization in Numbers 14 and Ezekiel 4, on one hand, and in some apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, on the other, provides a basic thematic correlation between that expression and those prophecies.

Numbers and Ezekiel

The expression “for every day a year” appears in the book of Numbers (14:34) in the historical episode of the twelve spies chosen from the twelve tribes of Israel “to spy out the land of Canaan” prior to its conquest (13:1-25). After “forty days” of searching, the spies returned to their camp (13:25). The negative report of ten of them (13:26-33; cf. 14:6-9) led “the whole congregation” of Israel to rebel against Moses and Aaron and “against the Lord,” even to the point of deciding to stone the two spies, Joshua and Caleb, who did not agree with that report (14:1-10). Then “the glory of the Lord” appeared in judgment to all the Israelites (14:10-12). After Moses pled with God to spare the rebellious people from being completely destroyed (14:13-19), God announced the following sentence:

And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and shall suffer for your

faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. 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, and you shall know my displeasure (Num 14:33, 34).

The episode under consideration presents a parallel typological relationship between spies and tribes, and between days and years. Crucial in the whole narrative are microcosmic entities (twelve spies and forty days) representing larger macrocosmic realities (twelve tribes and forty years). According to Birks, “we have, thus, from the lips of God himself, the clear relation established in this notable instance of chronological prophecy, that while the spies represent the nation, a day should represent a year.”⁶

While in Numbers 14:34 the expression “for every day a year” occurs in a historical setting, in Ezekiel 4:6 the expression “a day for each year” appears in a symbolic prophecy. As Numbers 13-14 comprises a typology in miniature, so Ezekiel 4 portrays a symbolic representation in miniature. Several small symbols are mentioned in Ezekiel 4 and 5 to illustrate the coming destruction of Jerusalem. Already in 4:1-3, the prophet Ezekiel is asked to take a “brick” and “portray upon it” the city of Jerusalem, surrounded by a siege. That was a miniature model of the city surrounded by enemy armies prior to its destruction. But in vv. 4-8 the prophet himself becomes a miniature symbol, first, of the house of Israel and, then, of the house of Judah. In those verses we read the following:

Then lie upon your left side, and I will lay the punishment of the house of Israel upon you; for the number of the days that you lie upon it, you shall bear their punishment. For I assign to you a number of days, three hundred and ninety days, equal to the number of the years of their punishment; so long shall you bear the punishment of the house of Israel. And when you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of Judah; forty days I assign you, a day for each year. And you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem, with your arm bared; and you shall prophesy against the city. And, behold, I will put cords upon you, so that you cannot turn from one side to the other, till you have completed the days of your siege.

Once again we are facing a small microcosm (the prophet himself) representing a broader macrocosm (first Israel and then Judah). The act of Ezekiel lying on

his left side for 390 days was understood by Bush as

a miniature hieroglyphic of Israel; a man, of a nation. Hence as the man represented the nation in miniature, so the 390 days represented the period of 390 years in miniature. In like manner, his lying forty days on his right side symbolized the foreseen iniquity of Judah through the period of forty years (emphasis original).

The previous consideration confirmed the fact that the time periods mentioned in Numbers 13-14 and Ezekiel 4 occur within the context of specific miniature symbolizations. While in Numbers the context is of a miniature typology, in Ezekiel it is of miniature symbolization. But in both cases the hermeneutical principal provided by the text itself to interpret the time elements involved is each day for a year. This led several nineteenth-century historicists to believe that the year-day principle should be used only in regard to those time prophecies in which occur a similar miniature symbolization.

The discussion attempts now to verify how this principle can be applied consistently to the apocalyptic time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.

Daniel

Crucial to understanding the validity of the concept of miniature symbolization as a hermeneutical tool to interpret apocalyptic prophecies is the task of identifying precisely the passages of Scripture in which that concept occurs associated with some prophetic time period. In regard to the book of Daniel, the present discussion will consider how this concept is applicable to the following time periods usually interpreted by historicists from a year-day perspective: (1) “a time, two times, and half a time” (Dan 7:25); (2) 2,300 “evenings and mornings” (Dan 8:14 [also NASB, NIV]); (3) “seventy weeks” with their time subdivisions (Dan 9:24-27); (4) “a time, two times, and half a time” (Dan 12:7); and (5) 1,290 days and 1,335 days (Dan 12:11, 12).

In the apocalyptic prophecy of Daniel 7, all main entities are portrayed in a clear miniature symbolization. According to the Protestant historicist tradition, the “lion” with “eagle’s wings” (v. 4) represents the Babylonian Empire; the “bear” (v. 5) refers to the Medo-Persian Empire; the “leopard” with “four heads” (v. 6) describes the Greek Empire; the “fourth beast” with “ten horns” (v. 7) is an allusion to the Roman Empire; and the little “horn” (v. 8) is a symbol of papal Rome. As the entities (“beasts” and “horns”) of the vision represent larger political powers (empires), so does the symbolic time-element involved represent a broader range. There is

almost a consensus among historicists that “a time, two times, and half a time,” during which the saints should be oppressed by that little horn (v. 25), stands for 1,260 literal years.

Likewise, in Daniel 8 two different animals are used as miniature symbols of larger empires. The “ram” with “two horns” (vv. 3, 4) is identified by the text itself as a symbol of Medo-Persia (v. 20); and the “he-goat” with “a conspicuous horn between his eyes” (vv. 5-8), as a representation of the Greek Empire (v. 21). Once again the counterfeit activities of the little horn are mentioned (vv. 9-12), which would be reversed only at the end of the symbolic period of 2,300 “evenings and mornings” (vv. 13, 14 [also NASB, NIV]).⁸ As the entities mentioned (animals and “horns”) are symbols of broader and longer-living empires, so the time element is seen as representing 2,300 years.

Daniel 9:24-27 mentions the prophetic period of “seventy weeks,” subdivided into “seven weeks,” “sixty-two weeks,” and “one week.” The content of the passage itself, isolated from the background context of Daniel 8, is worded in apparently concrete language, without a clear miniature symbolization involved. But by recognizing that Daniel 9:24-27 is a later appendix explaining the vision of the 2,300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14 (cf. 8:26, 27; 9:20-23), one might conclude rightly that seventy weeks and its shorter time-period subdivisions have to be understood also within the miniature-symbolization context of Daniel 8. Linguistic evidences indicate that the seventy weeks were actually “cut off” (Heb., *neak*) of the larger period of 2,300 days-years and, therefore, must be interpreted as 490 years. If not understood as 490 years, the seventy weeks becomes senseless as a messianic prophecy. So evident is the year-day principle in Daniel 9:24-27 that this passage, together with Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5, 6 are considered by historicists as the hermeneutical keys to interpret the time periods of other symbolic prophecies.

Three significant prophetic time periods are mentioned in the concluding section of Daniel (12:4-13): (1) “a time, two times, and half a time” (v. 7); (2) “a thousand two hundred and ninety days” (v. 11); and (3) a “thousand three hundred and thirty-five days” (v. 12). One might be tempted not to apply the year-day principle to those time periods because of the fact that no explicit miniature symbolization is found in that specific section of the book. But this argument cannot be accepted when one looks beyond the narrow context into the larger prophetic scope of the book. Actually, “a time, two times, and half a time” (v. 7) seems to be just an echo of the same time period mentioned previously in Daniel 7:25. If the miniature symbolization found in Daniel 7 requires the time period in 7:25 to be understood as 1,260 years, then, to be consistent, the same

period has to be interpreted as 1,260 years also in 12:7.

The allusion in Daniel 12:11 (NIV) to the “daily” and the “abomination that causes desolation” connects the 1,290 and 1,335 days not only with the content of the vision of Daniel 11 (see v. 31), but also with the 2,300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14 (see 8:13; 9:27). The very same apostate power that would establish the “abomination that causes desolation” in replacement to the “daily” is described in Daniel 7 and 8 as the “little horn,” and in Daniel 11 as the “king of the north.” These reoccurrences confirm that the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:11, 12 share the same prophetic-apocalyptic nature of “a time, times, and half a time” of Daniel 7:25 and of the “2,300 evenings and mornings” of Daniel 8:14.

The attempt to isolate the content of Daniel 12:4-13 from the prophetic chain of Daniel 11 is not endorsed by the literary structure of the book of Daniel. Shea explains that in the prophetic section of the book of Daniel each prophetic period (70 weeks; 1,260, 1,290, 1,335, and 2,300 days) appears as a calibrating appendix to the basic body of the respective prophecy to which it is related. For instance, the vision of chapter 7 is described in vv. 1-14, but the time related to it appears only in v. 25. In chapter 8, the body of the vision is mentioned in vv. 1-12, but the time appears only in v. 14. In a similar way, the prophetic time periods related to the vision of chapter 11 are mentioned only in chapter 12. So, if we apply the year-day principle to the prophetic periods of Daniel 7 and 8, we should also apply it to the time periods of Daniel 12, for all these time periods are in some way interrelated, and the description of each vision points only to a single fulfillment of the prophetic time period related to it.

The above-mentioned symbolic time periods are interpreted by means of the day-year hermeneutical principle because of their direct or indirect relationship with a specific miniature symbolization setting. But in the book of Daniel there are also a few other prophetic time periods to which that principle of interpretation cannot be applied because of their historical nature, which is without any miniature-symbolization point of reference. Attention will be given to the “seven times” of Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32; the “seventy years” of Daniel 9:2; and the “three weeks” of Daniel 10:2.

The “seven times” of Nebuchadnezzar’s punishment for his pride (Daniel 4:16, 23, 25, 32) was erroneously understood by some nineteenth-century historicists as 2,520 years ($7 \times 360 \text{ days} = 2,520 \text{ days-years}$).¹⁰ There is no doubt that the “seven times” are mentioned within Nebuchadnezzar’s symbolical prophetic dream of a huge and fruitful “tree” that would remain devastated for “seven times” (vv. 8-18). Daniel’s interpretation of the dream (vv. 19-27) and its actual fulfillment (vv. 28-37)

corroborate the fact that no miniature symbolization at all is involved in this incident. In the prophetic dream, the tree represented just one person (Nebuchadnezzar) with whom it was fulfilled (vv. 20-22, 28). The prophetic “seven times” (v. 16) were interpreted by Daniel as “seven times” (vv. 23, 25) and actually fulfilled just as “seven times” (v. 32). Understood as seven literal years,¹¹ this period can be easily adjusted within the lifetime of king Nebuchadnezzar. No room is left in the text for a year-day interpretation of this prophetic period that would stretch it beyond those seven years. Only an allegorical reinterpretation of the dream’s basic entities (“tree” or “Nebuchadnezzar”) can favor any other artificial fulfillment not contemplated by the text itself.

The prophetic promise that Jerusalem would be restored after “seventy years” of Babylonian captivity (Dan 9:2) was taken from Jeremiah 29:10. References to the same time period are found also in Jeremiah 25:11, 12, and 2 Chronicle 36:21. By reading the respective literary setting of each of those passages, one can easily perceive that not only in Daniel 9:1-19 and Jeremiah 29:1-32 but also in Jeremiah 25:1-14 and 2 Chronicle 36:17-21, the narratives are always expressed in a literal language, without any miniature symbolization or other kind of symbolisms. Thus, the “seventy years” of Daniel 9:2 have to be understood as a literal period of time.

Similarly, the “three weeks” of Daniel 10:2-3 occur in a different literary context from the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9. In this passage, the prophet refers to his own concrete experience of “mourning for three weeks,” abstaining from most, wine, and delicacies.” There is nothing symbolic in these verses, the actions of which all occurred within “the third year of Cyrus” (10:1), so there is no basis for interpreting this time period as anything other than three ordinary, literal weeks.

The previous considerations of the occurrences of miniature symbolizations in the book of Daniel allow us to suggest that the year-day principle seems applicable in that book to the “seventy weeks” with their time subdivisions (9:24-27); “a time, two times, and half a time” (7:25; 12:7); the 1,290 days (12:11); the 1,335 days (12:12); and the 2,300 “evenings and mornings” (8:14). By contrast, the absence of such kind of symbolization in regard to the “seven times” (4:16, 23, 25, 32) and the “seventy years” (9:2) and the “three weeks” (10:2-3) implies that these specific time periods have to be taken literally as seven years, seventy years, and three weeks, respectively.

The discussion turns now to the book of Revelation, with special attention to the presence of prophetic time periods within a miniature-symbolization setting.

Revelation

The discussion about the concept of miniature

symbolization in the book of Revelation will gravitate mainly around the following prophetic time periods: “ten days” (Rev 2:10); “five months” (Rev 9:5, 10); 42 “months” and 1,260 “days” (Rev 11:2, 3); “three days and a half” (Rev 11:9, 11); 1,260 “days” (Rev 12:6); “a time, and times, and half a time” (Rev 12:14); and 42 “months” (Rev 13:5). Some historicist scholars would also understand the expression “the hour, the day, the month, and the year” (Rev 9:15) as a prophetic period, at the end of which “four angels” were “to kill a third of mankind” while others would suggest it is a point in time.¹²

The period of “ten days” mentioned in Revelation 2:10 occurs within a literary setting not clearly symbolical (see vv. 8-11). But, according to the concept of miniature symbolization, it is not just the presence of some symbols that justifies the use of the year-day principle. The real point at stake is whether the main entity involved (“the church in Smyrna”) can be considered a symbol (as in Ezek 4) or a type (as in Num 13-14) of a broader corporative reality. This means that if the “church in Smyrna” is considered just as a reference to the first-century Christian community of that specific town,¹³ then the “ten days” would have to be taken just as a literal ten days. But if that church is understood as a miniature symbol of the Christian church between “about the close of the 1st century (c. A.D. 100)” and “about A.D. 313, when Constantine espoused the cause of the church,”¹⁴ then those “ten days”¹⁵ should be considered most probably as ten literal years.

Twice in Revelation 9 a reference to the “five months” (vv. 5, 10), during which “those of mankind who have not the seal of God upon their foreheads” should be tormented (v. 4), appears. The entire narrative of the fifth “trumpet” (vv. 1-12) in which those references appear is crowded with symbolic entities, such as “star,” “bottomless pit,” and exotic war “locusts.” Those interpreters who regard the presence of symbolic entities as sufficient to justify the use of the year-day principle would not hesitate to consider those “five months” as 150 literal years. Thus, if the trumpet is seen as a miniature representation of an era of the Christian church—for instance, from the “rise” of the Ottoman Empire in A.D. 1299 to the “downfall” of the Byzantine Empire in A.D. 1449¹⁶—then the “five months” can only be taken as 150 years.

The 42 “months” and the 1,260 “days” mentioned in Revelation 11:2, 3 (see also 13:5; 12:6) are recognized as synonyms not only of each other, but also of “a time, two times, and half a time” derived from Daniel 7:25 (see also Dan 12:7; Rev 12:14).¹⁷ This implies, just by itself, that the miniature symbolization by which the vision of Daniel 7 is presented requires the year-day

principle to interpret not only “a time, two times, and half a time” in Daniel 7:25, but also all of the other correlated time periods. Yet, in addition to the miniature-symbolization prophetic background of Daniel 7, the actual content of Revelation 11:3-12, in which the 42 months and the 1,260 days are mentioned, is focused on the historical events related to the “two witnesses,” also called “the two olive trees” and “the two lampstands” (v. 4). Despite the widespread tendency of reducing the two witnesses¹⁸ to two literal prophets (such as Moses and Elijah), some authors argue in favor of a broader corporative understanding of these witnesses.¹⁹ Kenneth A. Strand and Ekkehardt Müller argue that they actually represent the larger prophetic witnesses comprised by “the word of God” (the OT prophet message) and the “testimony of Jesus Christ” (the NT apostolic witness).²⁰ This confirms the already-established notion that the 42 months and the 1,260 days of Revelation 11:2, 3 have to be understood from a year-day perspective as 1,260 years.

Within the same pericope of Revelation 11:3-12, there are also two references to a period of “three days and a half” (vv. 9, 11). By considering the “two witnesses” as miniature representations of the broader prophetic testimonies of the Old and New Testaments, one can easily conclude that those “three days and a half” stand for three years and a half.²¹

In Revelation 12, the time periods of the 1,260 days (v. 6) and “a time, and times, and half a time” (v. 14) are synonymously identified as the age during which the apocalyptic “woman” would find refuge in “the wilderness” (vv. 6, 14) from the satanic “dragon, with seven heads and ten horns” (v. 3). The presence of a symbolic “woman” as a miniature representation of God’s faithful church²² confirms the already-settled year-day interpretation of each of those periods as 1,260 years.

The prophetic period of 42 months reoccurs in Revelation 13:5 as the period in which the “beast” with “ten horns and seven heads” (v. 1; cf. 12:3) would exercise the “great authority” granted to him by the dragon (v. 2). Here in Revelation 13:1-8, the “little horn” of Daniel 7 and 8 reappears under the symbol of a “beast” as a miniature representation of papal Rome. The nature of this symbolic vision also corroborates the 1,260 years of religious persecutions.

In the book of Revelation, the time periods of “three days and a half” (11:9, 11); “ten days” (2:10); “five months” (9:5, 10); “a time, and times, and half a time” (12:14); 42 “months” (11:2; 13:5); and 1,260 “days” (11:3; 12:6) all occur within a miniature symbolization setting. To all those time periods the year-day principle of prophetic interpretation seems applicable. But what could be said on this matter about the 1,000 years of

Revelation 20? If the year-day principle is applied to all those periods, would it not be inconsistent to not also apply it to the 1,000 years?

If the only criterion to use the year-day principle is the presence of a given period within an apocalyptic narrative, then there would be no convincing reason not to interpret the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 as 360,000 years. The attempt to consider the word “years” (vv. 2-7) by itself as an obstacle for the year-day principle does not seem convincing, however, because in a few other places that principle is applied also to this word. Already in the expression “a time, two times, and half a time” (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14) the word “time” is taken as “year” and multiplied by 360, the number of days of a year in biblical times. No more convincing is the argument that a “year” can be interpreted from a year-day perspective only when designated by the symbolic term “time.” In this case, should the year-day principle be used because the word “day” is mentioned or should it not be used because the term “year” is also present? But if the notion of miniature symbolization is a valid hermeneutical principle of prophetic interpretation, then the nature of the 1,000 years can be defined more easily by considering the presence or absence of a miniature symbolization in that context.

By reading Revelation 20:1-10, where the 1,000 years are mentioned six times, one might notice several apocalyptic symbols being mentioned, such as the “bottomless pit,” “a great chain,” “thrones,” the “beast” and “its image,” “Gog and Magog,” and “the false prophet.” But it seems quite evident that the overall tone of this apocalyptic narrative cannot be considered a true miniature symbolization. First, the “beast” and “its image,” which were the main miniature protagonists in Revelation 13, are mentioned in Revelation 20 only in a tangential way (vv. 4, 10). The predominant figure in the whole narrative is the “dragon,” also called “old serpent” (v. 2). While the “beast” and “his image” gave to Revelation 13 a miniature-symbolization tone, the presence of the “dragon” in Revelation 20 does not have the same tone. This is due to the fact that in the book of Revelation the “dragon” is not a miniature symbolization of a larger entity or community, but of one spiritual being called “Devil” and “Satan” (20:2; cf. 12:9). For this reason, it seems more consistent to understand the 1,000 years of Rev 20 just as a literal 1,000 years.

Some readers of Revelation might wonder about the “half an hour” of “silence in heaven” when the Lamb (Christ) opens the seventh seal (Rev 8:1). If the sealed “scroll” (or “book” [KJV]) in Revelation 5²³ and each of its “seven seals” (6:1-17; 8:1-5) are considered miniature symbolizations of broader historical realities, then that “half an hour” might be considered a sym-

bolic time representing about a week of literal time.²⁴ However, if one considers Revelation 10:6 (“there should be time [Greek *chronos*] no longer” [KJV]) as implying that no symbolic time prophecy would reach beyond the fulfillment of the 2,300 “evenings and mornings” of Daniel 8:14 in A.D. 1844,²⁵ then not only the “half an hour” of Rev 8:1 but also the 1,000 years of Revelation 20:1-10 would have to be understood as literal time periods, to which the year-day principle should not be applied. But this is a discussion that goes beyond the purpose of the present study.

Conclusion

In many apocalyptic prophecies, both the major entity and the time element involved have been zoomed down into a symbolic microcosmic scale that can be better understood by zooming them up into their macrocosmic fulfillment. The miniature-symbolization motif provides a basic thematic correlation between Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, on one hand, and the symbolical time elements of Daniel and Revelation, on the other. The presence of this motif justifies the carrying of the “each-day-for-a-year” principle from Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5, 6 over to those apocalyptic visions in which the time periods involved appear within a similar miniature-symbolization context. This miniature-symbolic parallelism enriches the year-day principle with a meaning that goes far beyond a mere proof-text approach.

The presence of miniature symbolizations in the book of Daniel allows the year-day principle to be applied to the “seventy weeks” with their time subdivisions (9:24-27): “a time, two times, and half a time” (7:25; 12:7); the 1,290 days (12:11); the 1,335 days (12:12); and the 2,300 “evenings and mornings” (8:14). But the absence of such symbolization in regard to the “seven times” (4:16, 23, 25, 32), the “seventy years” (9:2), and the “three weeks” (10:2) implies that these time periods have to be understood as literal.

In the book of Revelation, the time periods of “three days and a half” (11:9, 11); “ten days” (2:10); “five months” (9:5, 10); “a time and times, and half a time” (12:14); 42 “months” (11:2; 13:5); 1,260 “days” (11:3; 12:6); and perhaps even “half an hour” (8:1), all occur within a miniature-symbolization setting. It seems evident that the year-day principle is applicable to these periods, but not to the 1,000 years of Revelation 20, where no miniature symbolization occurs.

A comparative study of these passages leads to additional, more specific conclusions. First, prophetic miniature symbolization can involve entities such as symbols (as in Ezek 4) and types (as in Num 13-14). Second, the presence of miniature symbolization requires that the main entity or entities involved

represent larger corporative powers (as the “little horn” in Dan 7 and the ten-horned “beast” in Rev 13). Third, tangential allusions to miniature symbols do not replace the lack of miniature characteristics in the main entity or entities (as with the “dragon” in Rev 20). Fourth, a prophetic time period is of a symbolic nature and has to be interpreted from a year-day perspective whenever it appears in the midst of miniature symbols (as with the 1,260 “days” and the 42 “months” in Rev 13:1-8) or in subsequent passages explaining those symbols (as with the 2,300 “evenings and mornings” in Dan 8:14 and the 70 “weeks” in Dan 9:24-27). Fifth, a prophetic time period previously defined as of a symbolic nature does not lose its symbolic nature when referred to in not so clearly miniature-symbolic contexts (as in “a time, two times, and half a time” from Dan 7:25 that reappears in 12:7 and Rev 12:14).

The relevance of the year-day principle of prophetic interpretation is dependent not only on the concept of miniature symbolization. Rather, sound scholarly studies of the Scriptures have demonstrated the internal (exegetical) and external (historical) need for a year-day interpretation of some apocalyptic time periods. But I am personally convinced that the concept of miniature symbolization can strengthen the inner consistency of that principle of prophetic interpretation. Besides this, it also provides convincing answers to crucial questions in regard to the rationale to be used in defining when the year-day principle should or should not be used.

Alberto R. Timm is Associate Director of the Ellen G. White Estate



¹An expanded version of this article was published in Alberto R. Timm, “Miniature Symbolization and the Year-Day Principle of Prophetic Interpretation,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 42, no. 1 (2004): 149-67.

²E.g., the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 are usually interpreted as 490 years; the 1,260 days of Revelation 11:3 and 12:6 (cf. Dan 7:25; Rev 11:2; 12:14; 13:5) as 1,260 years; the 1,290 days of Daniel 12:11 as 1,290 years; the 1,335 days of Daniel 12:12 as 1,335 years; and the 2,300 evenings and mornings of Daniel 8:14.

³E.g., Frederic Thruston, *England Safe and Triumphant; or, Researches into the Apocalyptic Little Book, and Prophecies, Connected and Synchronical* (London: Coventry, 1812), 1:145; T. R. Birks, *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy: Including an Examination of Several Recent Expositions, and of the Year-Day Theory* (London: William Edward Painter, 1843), 308-419; George Bush, “Prophetic Designations of Time,” *The Hierophant; or Monthly Expositor of Sacred Symbols and Prophecy* 11 (April 1843): 241-253; E. B. Elliott, *Horæ Apocalypticae; or, A Commentary on the Apocalypse, Critical and Historical*, 3d ed. (London: Seeley, Burnside, and Seeley, 1847), 3:224.

⁴Bush, 241-253, here 244-245 (emphasis original).

⁵Ibid, 246.

⁶T. R. Birks, *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy: Including an Examination of Several Recent Expositions, and of the Year-Day Theory* (London: William Edward Painter, 1843), 338-339.

⁷Bush, *Hierophant*, 246.

⁸For further study of this expression, see S. J. Schwantes, “‘Ereb Boqer of Dan 8:14 Re-examined,” *AUSS* 16 (1978): 375-385.

⁹Shea, *Daniel 7-12: Prophecies of the End Time* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), 217-218. See also idem, “Time Prophecies of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12-13,” in *Symposium on Revelation: Introductory and Exegetical Studies—Book 1*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol 6, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Springs, MD: Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1992), 327-360; Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel*, 186-189.

¹⁰See, e.g., Elliott, 227-228, n. 4. This interpretation is still upheld today by the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

¹¹Cf. Francis D. Nichol, ed., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977), 4:790: “The majority of ancient and modern interpreters explain the Aramaic ‘iddan, ‘time,’ here (also in vs. 23, 25, 32; chs. 7:25; 12:7 [this last text is not in Aramaic but in Hebrew]) to mean ‘year.’ The original LXX reads ‘seven years.’ Among the earlier expositors supporting this view are Josephus (*Antiquities* x. 10.6), Jerome, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Jephth. Most modern expositors also agree with this view.”

¹²Cf. Birks, 321-324. This time expression appears within the description of the sixth trumpet (vv. 13-21), in which are used such symbolic expressions as “the great river Euphrates,” “horses” with heads like those of lions, “mouths” that issued “fire and smoke and sulphur,” and “riders” having “breastplates the color of fire and sapphire and of sulphur.” It should be noted that some authors, even some historicists, seem to favor the notion that the expression “the hour, the day, the month, and the year” should be understood as a specific moment in time rather than a time period (see, e.g., R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985], 1:252; J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, AB 38 [New York: Doubleday, 1975], 153-154; G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 508; Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009), 317). Yet, some other historicists tend to see that expression as alluding to an actual time period. Therefore, as in the case of the “five months” (vv. 5, 10), “the hour, the day, the month, and the year” could also be seen as 391 years and 15 days if regarded as a miniature portrait of an historical period related to the Christian church, e.g., from the “downfall” of the Byzantine Empire in A.D. 1449 to the fall of the Ottoman Empire in a.d. 1840 (Josiah Litch, *The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ about A.D. 1843* [Boston: David H. Ela, 1838], 153-157).

¹³An insightful description of Smyrna is provided in Faith Cimok, *A Guide to the Seven Churches* (Istanbul, Turkey: A Turizm Yayinlari, 1998), 54-61. See also W. M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1963), 251-280.

¹⁴*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:746.

¹⁵See *ibid.*, 747-748.

¹⁶Litch, 153-157.

¹⁷Cf. David E. Aune, who states: “The period of forty-two months (also mentioned in Rev 13:5, where it is the period during which

the beast exercises authority . . .) is a symbolic apocalyptic number for a divinely restricted period of time (often a limited period of eschatological tribulation), ultimately derived from Daniel 7:25; 12:7. Forty-two months is equivalent to three and one-half years, a period of time that the author expresses differently elsewhere as 1,260 days (11:3; 12:6) and as ‘a time, times, and half a time’ (12:14). He uses the number three and one-half for the number of days between the death and the ascension of the two witnesses (11:9, 11)” (*Revelation 6-16*, WBC 52B [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998], 609).

For Millerite/Seventh-day Adventist expositions of this interrelationship of time prophecies, see, e.g., William Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, about the Year 1843: Exhibited in a Course of Lectures* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), 78, 96, 112, 215-216; Josiah Litch, *Prophetic Expositions; or A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Time of Its Establishment* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842), 1:92-93; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 4:833-834; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Revelation* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1985), 2:326; Shea, “Time Prophecies of Daniel 12 and Revelation 12-13,” 327-360.

¹⁸A partial listing of different individuals, who have been considered as the “two witnesses” is provided in J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, AB 38 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 177-178.

¹⁹See, e.g., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:801; Kenneth A. Strand, “The Two Witnesses of Rev 11:3-12,” *AUSS* 19 (1981): 127-135; Beale, 572-579; Ekkehardt Müller, “The Two Witnesses of Revelation 11,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 13/2 (Autumn 2002): 30-45.

²⁰Strand, 127-135; Müller, 30-45. Cf. Ellen G. White, who states: “Concerning the two witnesses, the prophet declares further, ‘These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of earth.’ ‘Thy word,’ said the psalmist, ‘is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.’ The two witnesses represent the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Both are important testimonies to the origin and perpetuity of the law of God. Both are witnesses also to the plan of salvation. The types, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Testament point forward to a Saviour to come. The Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament tell of a Saviour who has come in the exact manner foretold by type and prophecy” (*The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1911], 267).

²¹*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:803.

²²*Ibid.*, 807.

²³The meaning of this sealed “book” is discussed in Stefanovic, *The Background and Meaning of the Sealed Book of Revelation 5*, Andrews University Seminary Dissertation Series, vol. 22 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1996); idem, *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 199-215.

²⁴See, e.g., Joseph Bates, *Second Advent Way Marks and High Heaps, or a Connected View, of the Fulfillment of Prophecy, by God’s Peculiar People, from the Year 1840 to 1847* (New Bedford, MA: Benjamin Lindsey, 1847), 43; E[lon] Everts, “The Seventh Seal,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 15, 1857, 85; Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical on the Book of Revelation* (Battle Creek: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1865), 139; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:787. Cf. Ellen G. White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views* (Saratoga Springs, NY: James White, 1851), 11-12.

²⁵See *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:798, 971.

SCRIPTURE APPLIED

The End-Time Remnant and the Gift of Prophecy

BY EKKEHARDT MUELLER

Throughout history God has had faithful followers (Rev 12). By making such a statement we also acknowledge that the Old and New Testaments also recount the apostasy of God's people (Ezek 23; Rev 17; 2 Thess 2:1-4). The faithful followers of God are called remnant.

I. The End Time Remnant in Revelation 12

1. Historical Background

Rev 12:1-2	The woman in Revelation 12 is a symbol, representing the people of God (Isa 54:5-6; Eph 5:25-32).
Rev 12:3	The dragon is Satan (Rev 12:9).
Rev 12:4-5	He tried to destroy the male child, Jesus Christ, who was taken to God.
Rev 12:6	With only the church left, Satan persecuted the true believers for centuries (see also verses 13-16).
Rev 12:17	Finally, he turns against the last descendants of the church, the remnant.

2. Major Characteristics of the Remnant

Rev 12:17	They keep the commandments of God (the Ten Commandments including the Sabbath which were placed in the ark of the covenant—Rev 11:19; the Sabbath commandment is alluded to in Rev 14:7) and have the testimony of Jesus.
Rev 14:12	They have also patience and faith in/of Jesus. Jesus takes center stage in their lives.

3. What is the testimony of Jesus?

Rev 1:2, 9	The testimony of Jesus is the prophetic message, which includes the content of the Book of Revelation and the gospel.
Rev 19:10	The “testimony of Jesus” is also defined as “the Spirit of prophecy.” It is the Holy Spirit that gives the gift of prophecy.
Rev 22:9	This verse closely parallels Rev 19:10. Here “the brothers who have the testimony of Jesus” are

the “prophets.” That means the faithful remnant of God treasures Scripture and accepts prophetic manifestations that accord with Scripture.

II. Prophecy in the Adventist Movement

New movements and philosophies emerged in the beginning of the nineteenth century such as the theory of evolution proposed by Charles Darwin and modern spiritualism. Belief systems were shaken and there arose people who claimed to be prophets of God, but were fanatics instead. In that challenging time, God intervened through the genuine gift of prophecy.

1. William Foy. As a Baptist he was preparing for the ministry. He believed in the soon coming of Jesus. On January 18, 1842 he had his first vision about the reward of the believers and the judgment of the unbelievers. He had a second vision on February 4, 1842. He was asked to proclaim what he had seen. He received a third vision shortly before October 22, 1844, the day of the Great Disappointment. And because he did not understand the vision, he refused to proclaim it.

2. Hazen Foss. Foss had a good education. He also believed in the soon return of Christ. He had his first vision shortly before October 22, 1844. When during his second vision he was asked to proclaim it, he refused. In his third vision he was warned of the consequence but persisted in his refusal. When due to strange feelings he finally called for a meeting to share what he had seen, he was not able to relate it. Instead of proclaiming God's message he declared himself a lost man. He lived for another forty years but lost his interest in spiritual matters.

3. Ellen Gould White. E. G. Harmon, later White, was quite sick during her childhood. So she managed to have only three years of schooling. At the age of twelve she was baptized. The entire Harmon family was disfellowshipped from the Methodist Church due to their connection with the Millerites and their expectation of the soon coming of Jesus. With the age of seventeen Ellen had her first vision and, in spite of opposition, she proclaimed the messages received. When God requested her to write down the visions, the task was taxing in the beginning but after some time it became easier. Later she experienced relatively good health and died in 1915 at the age of 87. She affirmed biblical doctrines that others had found through intense study. She wrote many books, strengthened individuals and the Adventist Church as a whole. She never held an ecclesiastical office. She claimed having received divine revelations in a supernatural way. Foy still lived when Ellen White related her visions. He declared that he had seen the same scenes. Foss was once in the house of his sister in which some Adventists met to hear Ellen White. Later he confirmed

that the visions were taken from him and given to her. Indeed, Foss had already rejected his visions, when Ellen White received her first vision.

III. Phenomena that Occurred to Ellen White During Her Visions

Before a vision, people sensed the specific presence of God. When Ellen White received a vision typically she would exclaim “Glory to God.” She lost her strength and fell to the floor. Sometimes she received extra strength. For instance, she was able to hold an eighteen-pounds Bible with outstretched arm for half an hour. She did not breathe; however, heartbeat, pulse, and skin color were normal. With opened eyes she intensely observed events that others could not see. Her eyes were not fixed like in a trance. Physicians investigated her when she was in a vision, and many witnesses testified what happened.

When in vision, she had no awareness of what was going on around her. She was sitting, standing, walking, or laying down during a vision. Her gestures were always graceful. Toward the end of a vision she took a deep breath. Gradually her normal breathing resumed and her normal physical strength returned. After a vision her state of health was improved.

These phenomena remind us of the ones experienced by the prophet Daniel. The content of her visions dealt with the past, the present, and the future like with the prophets of old (see her book *The Great Controversy*).

IV. Was Ellen G. White a Prophet?

An appropriate answer to this question requires the application of the following biblical tests:

1. No materialistic attitude—Micah 3:9-12. She did not prophesy for money.

2. Full agreement with the Holy Scriptures—Isaiah 8:19-20; Deuteronomy 13:1-4. She taught what Scripture teaches (e.g., the Godhead, the Sabbath, the state of the dead, etc.). At times she commented on a detail in a biblical verse or passage, which would require knowledge of the original languages. But she did not know Hebrew or Greek and seldom used academic works dealing with Scripture. This indicates that she was inspired by God.

3. Recognition of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Savior who had become fully human—1 John 4:1-3. She clearly recognizes that one of her purposes was to uplift Jesus as our Savior and Lord. See her crucial books *Steps to Christ* and *The Desire of Ages*.

4. Good fruit, that is, an exemplary conduct of life and an effective ministry—Matthew 7:15-21. Her exemplary Christian life received recognition not only from the vast majority of Adventists but also from public newspapers in the United States. Edith Dean said about

E. G. White: “Certainly, she was a spokesman for God. Like the prophets of old, her life was marked by humility, simplicity, austerity, divine learning, and devotion” (*Great Women of the Christian Faith*, 230). Her influence continues today, and her books still lead people to God.

5. Not only proclamation of messages that people like to hear—1 Kings 22:4-8. Her letters and books contain admonition and rebuke. She did not follow rules of political correctness that avoid tricky issues, but she also presented divine promises and comfort.

6. Fulfillment of predictions—Deuteronomy 18:22. She warned against (1) the potential danger of x-rays, (2) the pollution in the cities and the problem that they may become a health hazard, (3) brain damage done by alcohol, (4) animal fat (cholesterol), (5) tobacco as a kind of poison. (6) She also spoke of electric currents in the brain decades before these facts were known. (7) Furthermore, she made some unequivocal predictions: In 1902 she predicted a judgment on San Francisco and Oakland; in 1906, the great earthquake happened. She mentioned the worldwide spread of spiritualism when its modern form had just appeared. She talked about millions of dead people, the destruction of entire fleets twenty-four years before the beginning of World War I. She also addressed issues such as the increase in crime, extremely difficult economic conditions, and disintegration of society.

As a result of the above observations is the inescapable conclusion that Ellen G. White was genuine prophet.

V. The Purpose of Her Ministry

The purpose of her ministry as described by herself was probably fivefold: (1) exalt Scripture and bring people back to the Bible, (2) clarify and apply the biblical principles for daily living, (3) rebuke sin and call people to obey God and his commandments, (4) lead people to Jesus and present to them hope and comfort, (5) prepare people for the final days of earth’s history and Christ’s Second Coming.

VI. Ellen White and Scripture

Although E. G. White shares in the inspiration of the biblical writers and in this respect is not different from them, her writings do not take the place of Scripture but are subordinate to it. Therefore, we recognize that although her writings are authoritative, the Bible remains supreme. Scripture contains what is needed for salvation and a relationship with God. Nevertheless, the genuine gift of prophecy leads people back to the Scriptures they have neglected or misunderstood.

“The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. . . . The Spirit was not given—nor

can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested” (E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, vii).

The gift of prophecy has been provided by God’s grace, and we should be extremely thankful for it, use it, and follow it. This God-given gift does not replace the Bible but remains vital because we need it.

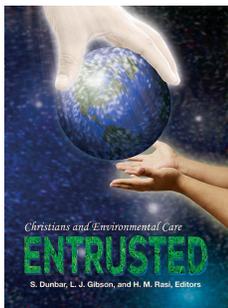
VII. How Should We Interpret Ellen White’s Writings?

As the Bible needs to be interpreted (Luke 24:27) E. G. White’s writings need interpretation too. Here are some principles: (1) Focus on the most important issues, (2) do not take passages out of context, (3) try to understand the historical situation in order to determine whether her advice is universal or applies to a certain case under certain circumstances only. (4) If you study a topic, investigate it in all of her writings, (5) keep in mind that she oftentimes does not strictly interpret biblical texts but applies them to specific situations, (6) look for the principles that she stresses, (7) discover the theological themes that she highlights and makes a special contribution, (8) if others use or mention her, be sure she has really said what these persons claim.

Conclusion

The end-time church has specific characteristics that are pointed out by Jesus. Among them is the gift of prophecy. This gift is revealed in Scripture and in genuine prophets that God may send. Prophecy is a gracious gift of God that we treasure and follow. The end time remnant that have this “testimony of Jesus” are committed to Jesus and yet are still struggling believers, looking forward to being united with God and being freed from all traces of sin. In addition to them, there are other faithful people in apostate organizations. They are called to join the faithful remnant of Jesus—Revelation 18:2 and 4—and with them live godly lives and proclaim the last message, waiting for the appearance of their beloved Lord.

BOOK NOTES



Stephen Dumbar, L. James Gibson, and Humberto M. Rasi, eds. *Entrusted: Christians and Environmental Care*. Argentina: Adventus, 2013. x + 286 pp. US\$19.95.

How should Bible-believing Christians respond to environmental degradation? *Entrusted*, with its twenty-three chapters,

is a response to this fundamental question. The book is a compilation of papers from an international group of Adventist educators, environmentalists, ethicists, researchers, theologians, and scientists. All of them share the conviction that “Christianity, properly understood, includes a mandate from the Creator to care for the ecosphere and that this responsibility involves a balance between preservation and consumption that requires setting priorities” (p. ix).

The book is organized into three sections. Section one, “Christians and the Environment,” offers biblical basis for environmental stewardship from creation to new creation (chaps. 1-6). The authors focus on God’s care for the environment and the responsibility placed upon humans as caretakers of the planet’s ecosphere. Humans are to maximize, utilize, and conserve the resources of nature which the Lord has placed in their care. Section two, “Animal and Environmental Ethics,” outlines ethical principles that should guide human relations with animals in general, in research, in the livestock industry, and in genetic manipulation (chaps. 7-10). Section three, “Human Health and the Environment,” explores the biblical perspective on the connection between the environment and human health as well as the impact of ecosystems and biodiversity on human health (chaps. 11-13). The fourth section, “Biodiversity and Conservation Strategies,” discusses the value of the ecosystem, the consequences of today’s building practices on the natural environment, and the primary anthropogenic causes of species extinctions and biodiversity loss (chaps. 14-17). Section five, “Environmental Education,” serves to educate society in practical terms on the need and viability of environmental care and conservation (chaps. 18-22). The last chapter of the book, “What Do Adventists Have to Say to the World About Environmental Stewardship?” brings together the major conclusions of the preceding chapters and then sums up,

Seventh-day Adventists recognize and support the Scriptural call to environmental care. Adventists engage creation care in multiple ways and at both individual and corporate levels. Can the Adventist Church do more to promote creation care? We believe the answer is ‘yes’, and the time to do so is now. We need to increase discourse among ourselves and with others who share our concerns and goals. We need to support those who undertake worthwhile projects that advance environmental education and conservation management. We need to take advantage of the effective witness creation care can serve, incorporating it more effectively with other Adventist messages including health, education, and evangelism (pp. 260-261).

Entrusted appeals to both general and scholarly readers. The chapters are concise, readable, original, and carefully written. In unison, the authors impress upon the reader the deep conviction that environmental care is a God-given responsibility. *Entrusted* has certainly achieved its purpose as a resource book for teachers,

students, thoughtful Christians, and concerned citizens who are seeking a Christian perspective on environmental care and conservation.

Daniel K. Bediako,
Valley View University,
Ghana

NEWS

Archives

On September 25, 1975, the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) was established by action of the General

Conference Committee BRI, essentially a merger of the Biblical Study and Research Committee (organized in 1940) and the Defense Literature Committee (organized in 1943), has the following goals: (1) identify areas in which biblical research is needed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church; (2) conduct research in the Bible and related areas; (3) communicate the results of this research to the appropriate audiences; (4) assist the GC administration



Current full- and part-time staff

From left to right: Ekkehardt Mueller, Gerhard Pfandl, Kwabena Donkor, Brenda Flemmer, Clinton Wahlen, Marlene Bacchus, Elias Brasil de Souza, Artur Stele, Ángel Manuel Rodríguez

on matters of biblical interpretation, doctrines, and church trends; (5) serve the world field as a resource in the areas of biblical interpretation and doctrine; (6) evaluate manuscripts referred to it by the North American unions and the overseas divisions; (7)

provide educational services in biblical studies and theology for pastors, Bible teachers, administrators, and other interested workers; (8) maintain contact with SDA seminaries; (9) foster and maintain contact and good relationships with the community of SDA scholars in biblical studies, theology, and related areas; and (10) provide a

forum for the presentation and discussion of papers on biblical studies.

(P-1327) BIBLICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

VOTED, That the Biblical Research Committee be organized as the Biblical Research Institute, the terms of reference to remain unchanged.