

The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment ***Day-Year Principle***

Lesson #9 for August 26, 2006

Scriptures: Exod. 34:22; Lev. 12:5; Num. 14:34; Deut. 16:10; Ezek. 4:5,6; Dan. 8:17,19,26; 10:2,3.

1. So far in our study of Daniel we have considered three visions (Daniel 2, 7, and 8) and three major time prophecies: the 3 1/2-year (or 1260-day) prophecy, the 2300 evenings-mornings prophecy and the 70-weeks or 490-day prophecy.
2. Are we justified in suggesting that one day in these symbolic time prophecies equals one year of actual time? On what basis do we come to this conclusion? Is it possible to make sense of these three time prophecies *without* applying the day-year principle? What other attempts have been made to apply these prophecies to other time periods?
3. Almost all conservative commentators agree that the 490-day or 70-week prophecy really means 490 years. However, few would agree with us that the 1260 days equals 1260 years or that the 2300 evenings-mornings means 2300 years. Are we justified in using the same principle for interpreting each of these prophecies? What questions arise in your mind when looking at these issues?
4. Let us first look logically at the big picture. Read Daniel 8:17,19,26. If these prophecies are meant to be days only (and not years), how can we explain a period of six-plus years extending down to “the end of the world” (Dan. 8:17) or “the time of the end” (Dan. 8:19) or even “a long time”(Dan. 8:26)? Is 490 days (one year and 125 days) sufficient time for the rise and fall up several world empires? Was Daniel supposed to understand that the Messiah would arrive about a year and a half (490 days) after he was given the prophecy? Even the period of a little over six years (that would be encompassed in 2300 days), allows very little time for major world changes.
5. But as we have noted already, using the date of 457 B.C. for the beginning of the 490 day-year prophecy takes us precisely to the anointing of Jesus in A.D. 27, and the Gospel being extended to the Gentiles in A.D. 34. Furthermore, when we apply the little horn prophecy to the beginning of the religious-political empire of papal Rome which began in 538 B.C., we find that it extends precisely to 1798 A.D. when the pope was captured by Napoleon’s forces and put in prison where he died that very year. Would it be unreasonable for us to believe that the 2300 evenings-mornings prophecy should be fulfilled in any less precise a manner? ***It seems apparent that the scale of days simply does not encompass adequate time.***
6. Is there precedent within Scripture for applying the day-year principle? Read Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:5,6. The spies who had traveled through Canaan took a period of 40 days to explore the land. God responded by saying they should wander in the wilderness 40 years—a year for a day. (Numbers 14:34) Many years later the prophet Ezekiel was told to symbolize a period of trouble coming upon the northern kingdom of Israel and later on the southern kingdom of Judah by lying on his side facing north for a period of 390 days and then on his side facing south for 40 days. Then Ezekiel is told one day is to equal one year, and in the Hebrew the expression “a day for a year” is repeated for emphasis.
7. We have already suggested in earlier lessons that Daniel was earnestly praying for a time when the children of Israel would return to their homeland in Jerusalem. In Daniel’s mind this was to be the reestablishment of a holy, healthy, happy people following God’s plan for their lives. From our vantage point we know that this is not what happened. God, looking forward in time, also knew that the people returning to Palestine would not be living up to Daniel’s hopes. God realized that the only hope that Daniel could honestly look

forward to was the coming of the Messiah (the 490-year prophecy) and ultimately to the end of the world (the 2300-year prophecy). Thus the very hope that Daniel was looking for would be fulfilled, not in the near future as he hoped, but in the distant future as God prophesied.

8. But our interpretation of the 2300 evenings-mornings and 490 days-70 weeks depends on two major factors: 1) in apocalyptic prophecy a day stands for a year, and 2) the 70-week or 490-year prophecy is to be cut off from the 2300 evenings-mornings prophecy. Thus both prophecies are to begin at the same time.
9. What other evidence is there to suggest that the year for a day principle should be applied here? 1) A contextual study of Daniel 8 and 9 as we have noted points to the distant future. 2) The nature of symbolic prophecy calls for long time periods. 3) The relationship which we've already discussed between the 70 week-490 day prophecy and the 2300 evenings-mornings prophecy. 4) The end-time nature of the 2300 evenings-mornings prophecy.
10. Some scholars who choose to interpret the 70 week-490 year prophecy as years while trying to interpret the others as days will tell you that the word "weeks" in Daniel 9:24 is supposed to mean "weeks of years". They're trying to suggest that the very word or the context means "weeks of years" and therefore, should be applied to this prophecy while **not being applied** to the others. There is no justification for this in the Hebrew whatsoever.
11. Look at some other examples of the use of the word "week" in other parts of the Old Testament: Exodus 34:22; Leviticus 12:5; Deuteronomy 16:10; and, in Daniel itself: Daniel 10:2,3. Is it possible for any of these passages to mean "weeks of years"? When God tells them to keep the annual "festival of weeks" is he talking about a festival that occurs only every seven years or less frequently? Is a woman to remain ritually unclean for 14 "years" after giving birth to a daughter? Did Daniel fast for three "weeks of years" or 21 years? Obviously these passages refer to real weeks of seven days each and not to weeks of years! But in the context of symbolic apocalyptic prophecy the term clearly means "weeks of years".
12. The real reason why scholars do not want to apply the day-year principal to the other prophecies is that it points directly at the Roman Church as the little horn and to the revival of religion occurring in the early 19th century as leading up to events which would foreshadow the end of the world. Would it be fair to say to these scholars: "if the shoe fits, wear it?" "If the prophecy fits accept it"?
13. We should note in passing that there are many prophecies in Scripture that are not symbolic or apocalyptic. Usually these prophecies involve God giving messages to prophets for a group of people or a single individual living at that time. They involve warnings or short-term prophecies of events to happen very quickly. There is no reason to apply the day-year principle to these prophecies. (Jeremiah 29:10)
14. But in the prophecies of Daniel 2,7, and 8 there are many symbols. And the symbols do not represent in precise detail the actual events or kingdoms symbolized! God is not talking about flying goats, animals with multiple heads, or literal animals with iron teeth!
15. So what do we mean when we say that the contextual flow of Daniel's prophecy fits the day-year principle?
 - a. The world empires mentioned in Daniel 2,7,8, and 9 last for long historic periods. Several of the prophecies clearly reach to the end of this world.
 - b. Daniel 8:26—an explanation of Daniel 8:14—says that the prophecy is to be sealed up, "for it concerns the distant future." This clearly is not talking

- about a period of a little more than six years, but of 2300 years.
- c. If Daniel were expected to understand that the temple in Jerusalem were to be rebuilt within a period of a little over six years wouldn't that be a basis for rejoicing instead of becoming exhausted and sick? (Daniel 8:27)
 - d. In explaining the 70-week or 490-day prophecy Daniel is told that it is to be cut off from the "*mareh*". This is clearly a reference to the 2300 evenings-mornings prophecy. But how could a period of 490 years, which virtually all scholars accept, be cut off from a period of a little over six years? And we've already suggested that the Messiah was not to arrive within six years!
 - e. Many scholars down through the centuries have suggested the prophecies here in Daniel should be interpreted using the day-year principle, but in more modern times, critical scholars particularly, have rejected these interpretations not because they have a biblical basis for doing so but because they do not want to accept the conclusions that they point to! (Like admitting that the Roman Church might be the little horn. Or that the SDA church might be a partial fulfillment of a prophecy of Daniel!) A very famous Jewish scholar from the 11th century by the name of Rashi (A.D. 1040-1105), translated Daniel 8:14 as, "and he said unto me, unto 2,300 years...". It seemed clear to him!
16. Look at Genesis 5:14; Genesis 5:23; and Genesis 9:29 in the King James Version. "The days of these ancient man were so many years." Does this tell us anything about the use of days-years even in the days of Moses?
 17. So what do you think Daniel understood from all of these prophecies? What would we say about someone who came up with these kinds of stories in our day? Would we suggest that this 80 or 90 year old man had develop dementia or delusions of grandeur?
 18. Look very specifically at the question raised in Daniel 8:13. It could be paraphrased as follows: "how long will all these things—from the rise of Medo-Persia, the rise of Greece, and finally to Rome's attack on Christ's heavenly ministry—be allowed to go on?" And if we include the activities of papal Rome, it continued until at least the year 1798! It should be obvious from all this that to take these as literal days is completely out of the question! We have already noted in Daniel 8:17,19,26 that the prophecy is to extend to "the end of the world".
 19. Another point to be noted is that in these three prophecies at no time does Daniel use the normal everyday expressions used for time. For example, for the 2300 evenings-mornings why didn't Gabriel say six years, three months, and 20 days? Compare 2 Samuel 5:5.
 20. **So why is it that people are so reluctant to accept the day-year principle and the conclusions that it leads to? If you accept this principle are you compelled to become a Seventh-day Adventist? Would you be required to believe that we live in the end of this earth's history?** In light of Paul's predictions about things that will happen at the end of this world's history (see, for example, 2 Timothy 3:1-5), do we have any question about living in the end of time?
 21. So was God unreasonable in employing all of these symbols? Is it impossible for ordinary mortals to understand them? What have we learned from this lesson?

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