

APPENDIX EIGHTEEN

The Daniel Committee Of 1938-1952 And The
Chronological Problems Of The 2300 Days

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The present writer claims no expertise in chronology, but it seems to him important that the church should acknowledge the uncertainties that exist in this area. Is our dogmatism upon all the dates we use in connection with the 2300 days warranted?

The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* has excellent material on this issue, particularly its article on New Testament chronology in volume 5. But it may be of interest to some to note the concern on these issues in a Daniel Committee of over twenty years precedence to the one which functioned in the sixties.

The dispute between Dr. Thiele and Miss Amadon (and Brother Froom who supported Miss Amadon) should be observed for its bearing on the current issues. Note that the committee of the time was promised that Brother Froom would validate in detail the Oct. 22, 1844 date in his *Prophetic Faith* volumes. The study of these, it seems to the present writer, does not demonstrate fulfilment of that promise. The exact dates for the “going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem,” the termination of the rebuilding, the baptism of Christ, the Crucifixion, the stoning of Stephen, and the Day of Atonement in 1844, remain very much matters of controversy. Perhaps the only thing we can dogmatically assert is that dogmatism on precise dates is unwarranted. *The Chronology of Ezra Seven* by Drs. Horn and Wood is a classic, but does not solve all the issues here raised. It is doubtful that the issues can ever be solved as there is a veil of obscurity over vital points of history in this regard.

The following papers circulated among the earlier Daniel Committee demonstrates the uncertainties involved. The articles by Miss Amadon in the last months of 1943 and the early ones of 1944 should be compared with the conclusions of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* on the same issues. See particularly the *Ministry* of March and April 1944, and *SDABC* 5:235-266.

The letter by M.L. Andreasen on page 52f. is still significant for our research today.

The source of all the following material in this Appendix is the GC Archives.

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SOME ACTIONS REGARDING ADVENT RESEARCH

COUNCIL OF GC OFFICERS WITH J.H. WIERTS

Agreed, To authorize E.D. Dick to confer with M.E. Kern and bring to the officers the suggestion of a committee for a conference with J.H. Wierts regarding the position of the denomination in respect to the date October 22, 1844 and the day of the crucifixion. — OM, Nov. 1, 1938.

DISCUSSION OF ADVENT RESEARCH BY GC OFFICERS AND CERTAIN OTHERS. (J.L. Mcelhany, A.W. Cormack, H.T. Elliott, H.H. Cobban, I.H. Evans, L.H. Christian, E.E. Andross, W.E. Howell, L.E. Froom, W.H. Teesdale, A.W. Werline, M.L. Andreasen, L.H. Wood, M.E. Kern, F.C. Gilbert.)

Early in November J.H. Wierts talked with E.D. Dick regarding some of his findings on establishing the date October 22, 1844, the true date corresponding to the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month, and Brother Dick arranged for a committee of men to take up the question, not the material alone that Brother Wierts was to present but the general question of

establishing this denominational date. This committee has met several times and now desires counsel.

L.E. Froom stated that as chairman of the committee he wanted to present certain problems they had met on which they desired counsel. The contention has been raised by some of our detractors that the Jews celebrated the Passover on September 23, of the year 1844, and that the denomination therefore had the date wrong. It has been proven, however, that September 23 was celebrated only by the Rabbinical Jews, but that the Orthodox Karaite Jews held to the correct date and had to this day. **We must ascertain the reasons back of the choosing of October 22, 1844, which we have followed all these years. Some of our men also seem not to be sure of the date on which the crucifixion occurred, or the date 457 B.C. and the synchronizing of the beginning of the 70 weeks with that of the 2300 years.** Brother Wierts brought the results of his studies for some 30 years purporting to show that Christ was crucified on the very second that marked the midst of the week in prophecy. In his researches he had found a date which he convinced the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to be correct against the date they have used and secured their promise to make the correction when the next edition is brought out.

Brother Froom stated that the "Advent Shield" was published quarterly and in January, 1845, printed an article after the disappointment and after some of the men who experienced the disappointment had abandoned the date, then setting forth that a smaller period of time had been discovered in the prophecy whereby the 2300 years would not expire until 1947. At first William Miller had said the period would end somewhere between 1844-1847, but after he started preaching in 1831 and onward he dropped this sliding date and adopted 1844. Among American and English students of prophecy there was a range from 1843-1847 when men thought the period probably ended. Though William Miller fixed the date as 1844 he still put the cross at the end instead of the middle of the prophetic week. We have never gone to the bottom of the matter. Our task now is a major one of showing why we insist on the 70 years and the 2300 years beginning at the same time. Some of the old writers confirm the beginning of 457 B.C. but do not define the "midst of the week."

Brother Froom stated further that we needed astronomical and chronological data to establish these dates beyond question, and the committee needs stenographic help to facilitate their work. They also are united in the judgment that **Miss Grace Amadon** who has studied the astronomical aspects of these dates for a number of years, contacted astronomers and astronomical authorities to considerable extent, could offer the committee some real assistance if she could be present here in person and study the matter through with them under their guidance.

The chairman stated that **Ballenger and Conradi are teaching that the true date did not fall on October 22, 1844,** and inquired if the committee has any data available as yet. Brother Froom stated not yet, except a bit that he had sent on to C.B. Haynes to meet some emergency he had on in Michigan. The chairman said further that we must give help to the committee on this work and of making available its findings after its work is done. M.E. Kern said that some weeks would be needed to do thorough work, that Miss Amadon reads Greek, Latin and Hebrew, and that we have recently sent her a book from the Congressional Library to assist in her study; that if she could come here for several weeks to study with us, it might prove of real help. Some years ago George MacCready Price suggested that the General Conference establish a research department, but it was felt that the time was not yet ripe for that but it does look as if we need some such provision now, and he hoped the General

Conference would set aside a sum of money to cover the expense of such work. Miss Amadon's help might shorten the time the committee might need to continue its work.

F.C. Gilbert said he had received letters from a number of ministers and editors in regard to what they had received from Ballenger and Conradi, stating that if Seventh-day Adventists did not repudiate October 22, 1844, they would publish their findings to the world. He had called together at one time a group of rabbis, of both the Orthodox and Reformed Jews, to consult about the matter, and that also we have access to a good deal that is published in Jewish books. There is agreement among both Orthodox and Reformed Jews that they do not agree on the calendar. They have admitted a statement by Cyrus Adler that the Jewish Calendar must be harmonized with the Gregorian calendar. The Day of Atonement is not now observed the same day by Rabbinical and Karaite Jews. He has a letter from the chief Rabbi of the Karaite Jews saying that they followed literally the Old Testament in the observance of the Sabbath and of the feast days without any change from the time of Moses and the prophets. Brother Gilbert has written several brethren who are in trouble on this matter and sent some material to the Review and Herald before he knew of the appointment of the present committee to study this date. Jews have an inter-calary month every seven years, and every 12 years they have a year of only 354 days, but the two sections of the Jews do not agree on the civil calendar dates.

The chairman stated that we owe a duty to our people to set straight the contentions of our detractors.

Elder Froom stated that S.S. Snow in the "*True Midnight Cry*" was the first to state the exact date, October 22, 1844, but after the passing of the time he went into fanaticism. Our quest is to establish this date with reliable data.

L.H. Christian stated that Conradi has put into a leaflet of his a challenge to Seventh-day Adventists, but disclosed that the only ground for the challenge was the calling up of a Rabbi in Hamburg and hearing him state that our date is wrong and his is right. He believes we should not depend too much on astronomy and thinks that a note in the *Review and Herald* would suffice to quiet many of our people. When men investigate our doctrines they should give us the benefit of their investigations. He referred to the search of 666 that had been started a long time ago and data gathered but never given out, and thinks our work could have more dispatch if this were done.

The chairman stated that the White Trustees had made request that we make available the findings on some of these questions. They had received a letter from a brother making request and stating that many of our people are troubled over these things and we ought to give out what we find. The chairman said further it is reported that one whole union mission has accepted the Fletcher teachings and would be drawing off from the denomination in the future, though this report has not been verified. We should not be too silent on our findings. Very irresponsible persons can start serious trouble, citing the shot that brought on the World War. The influence of irresponsible people is not always commensurate with their standing or importance. We have paid no attention to Ballenger, but not all of our workers can tell what the trouble is that he has not been answered. Some of our workers fear being put down as heretical if they raise a question on our teaching. We should not compel men to take counsel with their fears. We owe it to our workers to give help on these matters. There are workers all through the ranks who are wanting help. Some of our preachers do some hedging by not giving the trumpet a certain sound on some of our doctrines. He had a letter the other day urging that some action on our part is needed to meet wild and foolish ideas that are floating

about. Letters are coming to him every day along this line. One letter wanted the authority or proof that the taking of Ethiopia by Italy was predicted in the Bible and suggested that we might win Italy's favour by acknowledging it so. We cannot close our eyes to these floating views.

L.E. Froom stated that we could easily supply facts on what was done in 1844 but we must get the facts back of what led to the choice of the date October 22, 1844. It is the same with the date of the crucifixion.

The chairman said we talked much of what the nations are doing in the fulfilment of prophecy, but we must not forget that every point of our truth is being attacked. This is in fulfilment of prophecy as really as are things of a national character. A man may say, I know these things, I do not need to investigate, and that may satisfy him, but many will not accept assertions of truth, but desire proof.

M.L. Andreasen stated that he had been asked certain questions in his classes as far back as 1924 and after a little test learned that not half of the students believed in the cleansing of the sanctuary. He thought they had not quite understood and could not believe because of the limit of their understanding. If that represents a cross section of our ministry we do not have a ministry that is profoundly convinced of the truths for which we stand. He feared that our detractors have made more inroads into our ranks than we think and that more research needs to be done to establish our doctrine. When men know they can talk it out they are more easily convinced, but he has been surprised by some saying they did not dare talk out what is in their minds.

The chairman raised the question whether or not we should devote some money to help on research. He had asked for an appropriation from the General Conference Committee sometime ago, without naming the sum, for some special research work. C.H. Watson passed over to him some documents in 1936 to which he suggested that attention be given, especially on 666. Investigations on this latter point show that we had made some unwarranted claims and assertions. We have been troubled somewhat with dogmas being set up by some men and then checking others by these dogmas, as to their belief or unbelief of our doctrines. Unless we give proofs to our workers we shall have a weak ministry giving the trumpet an uncertain sound. **He would like to see this committee prepare matter to answer Conradi and Ballenger on October 22, 1844. Is it not time to meet the situation? Some of our ministers are troubled because we do not make any answer and think that we are not able to answer them.**

M.E. Kern said he was deeply concerned about our losing one-third of our converts by apostasy.

The chairman said we used to preach with power and conviction and brought in people who believed but there has been too much uncertainty in our more recent preaching.

M.E. Kern believes that we should do earnest research work on these things but not talk about it too much. We should have the facts to set forth so that we shall not have to back down.

L.H. Christian said that we must study and find proof, but we have developed a tendency not to use this quotation and that quotation from Catholic writings because they were not authoritative and we cannot be sure of what they say. The effect of this is to undermine faith. We don't want to be so cautious that we shall weaken our cause.

Brother Froom's book is not yet out though the people have heard him give talks and know that he has the facts, yet they cannot receive them and read them for themselves. Why can't some of these things be given out to help our people? We have been silent long enough and should give out something that will bring relief.

L.E. Froom stated that **Grace Amadon has done enough work on the astronomical aspects of October 22, 1844**, to be of value to the committee, that if she comes she would work under supervision to assist the special group of the committee dealing with that particular phase of the study. We might need her for four or five weeks and she might do some things that the members of the committee are not qualified to do.

Agreed, To recommend to the General Conference Committee that a suitable sum be set aside to meet the expense of necessary research work. (Officers' Meeting, Dec. 18, 1938)

AUTHORIZATION OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE BY GC COMMITTEE

A Committee, appointed by the Officers, has been doing certain historical research work. It seems advisable that this committee continue its work.

VOTED, Confirming the appointment of this committee, as follows: L.E. Froom, chairman, L.H. Wood, M.E. Kern, A.W. Weline, M.L. Andreasen, F.C. Gilbert; and that an appropriation of \$250 be made from the Emergency Fund for this work of research. (GC Committee Minutes, Vol. XV, Bk. 3, p. 1004.)

AUTHORIZATION BY THE GC COMMITTEE OF CONTINUATION ADVENT RESEARCH

VOTED, That the treasurer be authorized to make available \$250 for continuing a certain line of research work authorized by the Committee some time ago. (GC Committee Minutes, Mar. 20, 1939.)

MEETING PLANNED TO HEAR REPORT OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

A committee that was appointed to do certain research work presented a statement concerning their extensive report which is now ready. It was felt that this report should be presented to as representative a group as possible, and it was therefore

VOTED, To set July 9 and 10, beginning at 9 A.M., July 9, as the time for hearing the report, in order that the union conference presidents, who will be in attendance at the General Conference Committee meeting in New York City just preceding this date, may be present; and further, that the officers be asked to invite any others they may think advisable, to be present when the report is given. (GC Committee Minutes, May 31, 1939.)

Note. — The above mentioned meeting was held, but there seems to be no record of it. Probably no action being taken.

F.H. YOST ADDED TO RESEARCH COMMITTEE

(GC Committee Minutes, Aug. 4, 1941.)

F.D. NICHOL ADDED TO RESEARCH COMMITTEE

(GC Committee Minutes, June 25, 1942.)

M.E. KERN APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF RESEARCH COMMITTEE

(GC Committee Minutes, Sept. 6, 1943.)

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A STATEMENT ON THE RESEARCH COMMITTEE AND ITS WORK

The Problem

Seventh-day Adventists believe that they are a movement of prophecy — they carry a message that was set forth in Scripture to be preached at a certain time. This conviction is based on their understanding of the sanctuary. The exposition of the sanctuary truth as it relates to history and prophecy revolves around the 2300 days with the key dates of 457 B.C., 31 A.D., and 1844 A.D. Anything which would seem to disturb these dates is of vital interest to the church.

In recent years vast amounts of archaeological data have been unearthed and translated. Also much new information of ancient chronology and calendation has been acquired. In the light of this new knowledge, authorities place the seventh year of Artaxerxes from the spring of 458 to the spring of 457, mostly in 458. The source evidences for arriving at this conclusion are so clear that we can hardly ignore them. To balance the scales on the other side, these same source materials and principles of ancient computation help us to establish certain synchronisms of profane and sacred history that are very useful to us in other areas and periods.

It takes no profound thinking, of course, to see that a change in the dating of the seventh year of Artaxerxes would place us in a most embarrassing dilemma in the presentation of the sanctuary truth.

Somewhat similar is the situation in regard to the date of the crucifixion of Christ. A large section of the Biblical scholarship places this event in the year 30 — not 31 as we have been wont to preach during the past one hundred years.

Related to these two problems is the charge of several of our opponents that the Millerites, and therefore the Seventh-day Adventists, were mistaken in placing the 10th day of the seventh month, Jewish time, on October 22, 1844. The orthodox Jews celebrated the Day of Atonement that year on September 23.

It was to deal with these and related problems that the Research Committee was appointed Dec. 19, 1938.

The Progress Thus Far

No one anticipated in 1938 that nearly fourteen years would elapse before a report could be given. Even the nature of the problems was but dimly understood. Any committee given such an assignment, unless the members had had training and experience in the use of the tools of the chronologist and astronomer, would find it necessary to spend many diligent hours, even days and weeks, simply learning the rudiments of calendation, chronology, and some astronomy. The Research Committee has had to do just that. And as the endeavour has drawn out longer than was expected, and the personnel has changed, some of this groundwork has had to be repeated.

An immense amount of labour has been done since the Committee first addressed itself to the task. Committee members qualified in certain lines have carried on extensive studies in archaeology, astronomy, calendation, and Bible time periods. The results of such work have been presented to the Committee for discussion and evaluation. Hundreds of pages of reports and studies have been written. Some of this material was even acceptable for publication in the archaeological press. And the Committee as a whole has spent long hours in discussion and study.

Immediately on its appointment the Committee occupied several months in most intensive labour. On July 9 and 10, 1939, there was a meeting of the General Conference Committee and the union conference presidents with representative leaders about Washington, to hear the report of this Committee. L.E. Froom had prepared a statement regarding the Millerite computation of the 2300-day prophecy. Miss Grace Amadon had written extensively on the astronomical and historical aspects of the crucifixion date. And L.H. Wood had written a statement on the date 457. Two of these statements were presented. But Dr. Wood was not satisfied with the extent of his investigations, and so his paper was withheld. At the close of the meeting, J.H. Wierts raised some questions on the scientific accuracy of certain features of Miss Amadon's work. It was decided to give Elder Wierts an opportunity to discuss his objections with the Committee. This took a long time, and while the Committee believed they had answered Elder Wierts' specific objections, they also felt that the subject demanded further study. The main features of this discussion have been reduced to writing and are in our files.

In dealing with the date 457 the Committee discovered several difficulties, and so the work was continued for some time. Miss Amadon also pursued her study of the crucifixion date, and additional papers were prepared. Then in September, 1943, the Committee was reconstituted with M.E. Kern as its chairman. Under his leadership it was decided to carefully review the whole subject from the beginning in the light of the criticisms of the Committee's work, and to proceed with further investigation.

Since there were no final conclusions of the date 457, and since it seemed a logical place to start, the Committee concentrated on the beginning date of the 2300-day prophecy. For many months the committee investigated every possible source for clues to the answer for this problem. In fact, the kind of answer that would solve our difficulties was really known in advance. This was possible because of the direction given to our thinking by the Bible itself. We even discussed the kind of archaeological document we would need to clinch our arguments. And there our progress stopped. For months we knew not which way to turn.

And so we began work on the date of the crucifixion, which was the second problem assigned to the committee. The work already done by the committee was reviewed and a thorough investigation of all the available materials was begun. Many different aspects of the problem were discussed and studied. Quite a good deal of material was written by various members of the committee. It will be readily appreciated there is a close connection between the date of Ezra's return and the date of Christ's crucifixion, for both are recorded in the Bible in terms of a Jewish calendar. Therefore we continued to study the extra-Biblical calendrical materials available for the fifth century before Christ, hoping that we might find a clue there to help us solve our first century A.D. problems.

It was just at this point that the additional Aramaic papyri from Egypt came to our attention. These documents have already been mentioned in public at the recent Bible Conference. And I am leaving it to Dr. Horn to tell you the story of their discovery and their significance to our quest. He is also prepared to tell of discoveries which have occurred since the Bible Conference that we hope may help us with the fixing of the crucifixion date. All present have doubtless heard that the new Aramaic papyri gave us exactly the answer we had hoped to find, and now we can be certain about the Jewish dating of the seventh year of Artaxerxes, and the journey of Ezra to Jerusalem in 457 B.C.

Thus one-third of the committee's assignment has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Another third of the task was really completed years ago. In fairness to Elder Froom, it

should be said that he found the answer to his part of the assignment in the first year of the committee's work. As has been stated, Adventists had been charged by some of their detractors with being entirely wrong about the date October 22, 1844 — that the day of atonement that year did not fall in October at all, but was celebrated by faithful Jews all over the world in September. Elder Froom's studies have provided us with a satisfactory answer to that charge, and since his conclusions will appear in *Prophetic Faith*, volume 4, the committee has decided not to undertake a separate report on this subject.

This leaves the date of the crucifixion as the only part of our assignment unresolved. Naturally we are not happy to leave the task at this point. We would like to suggest that the committee be continued, even though it seems certain at present that much of our time will have to be spent in watchful waiting. However, the basic study on the problem has been done, and the committee has a clear idea of the kind of evidence that might prove helpful and the various fields where it might be found. With discoveries progressing so rapidly as they are just now, we have reason to believe the Lord may have something in store for us in the not-too-distant future.

We feel deeply grateful to God for so many signal blessings on our work during the past year. It is with a great measure of satisfaction to us that we are able to present this report at this time. The evidences herewith submitted prove once again that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables."

We wish to express our appreciation to the General Conference officers for their kindly and sympathetic understanding of our work, and also for the financial provision which has been so liberally and freely provided from time to time.

Merwin R. Thurber
*Secretary of the Historical
Research Committee*

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August 6, 1946

TO MEMBERS OF THE ADVENT RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren:

Here is a copy of correspondence from Prof. Thiele regarding the date of the crucifixion
Passover.

It seems to me that we should go into this matter thoroughly, and probably, before finalizing,
have Prof. Thiele meet with us.

While some may feel that "in the midst of the week" is not necessarily in the exact middle of
the week, it certainly will be unfortunate if we find ourselves unable to verify our teachings
through the years regarding the crucifixion date.

Sincerely,
M.E. Kern

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Enc.

October, 1943

Elders J.L. McElhany, W.H. Branson, H.T. Elliott, W.A. Spicer, F.M. Wilcox, F.D. Nichol

Dear Brethren:

The enclosed study on the time of the observance of the Passover by the Jewish officials at Jerusalem during crucifixion week has been prompted by the publication of the current series of articles in the *Ministry* on this subject. The conclusion arrived at in this series that, "not only Jesus but the whole Jewish nation kept that last Passover at the only possible *ben ha- arbayim* that could coincide with the date of His death," which in plain English means Thursday night, is a conclusion with which I find myself unable to agree, and this conclusion I believe has a vital bearing upon the validity of the line of argument upon which the committee on sanctuary research in Washington is at present endeavouring to establish the date of the crucifixion and the beginning of the Investigative Judgment.

There is no question about the fact that Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover on Thursday evening of crucifixion week. The question is whether the high priests and the Jews in general also observed the Passover at the same time as did Jesus on Thursday evening, or whether it was observed by them on Friday evening. The one would not necessarily prove the other, no more than the fact that Saturday is the day which should be observed as the Sabbath and which is and has been observed all through the years by a certain group faithful to God constitutes evidence that the Christian world as a whole is today observing the true Sabbath.

My reason for believing in a Friday night Passover observance by the Jewish leaders during crucifixion week is based upon the fact that according to both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy it was after daybreak Friday morning when Jesus was finally condemned by the Sanhedrin and delivered over to Pilate, and that at that time these Jewish leaders had not yet partaken of the Passover. I fail to see how any type of reasoning, any amount of research, or any display of erudite words can ever change a fact so clear and simple as this.

In addition to the specific evidence for Friday of crucifixion week is the evidence of Josephus that at his time it was the custom of at least a large group of the Palestinian Jews to offer their Passover sacrifices between the hours of three and five of the afternoon of Nisan fourteen, which would agree with the evidence of both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy in pointing to a Friday night Passover meal during crucifixion week. Again I do not see how any amount of argument can get around evidence so pertinent and cogent as this. **The vital point concerning this discussion is that it appears to involve the validity of the basic premise upon which certain members of the sanctuary committee at Washington are now endeavouring to fix the year of the crucifixion and the year of the opening of the Investigative Judgment. The basic argument seems to be that the Jewish officials established the date of the Passover by means of certain lunar observations, and then the endeavour is made to show by means of astronomical calculations exactly what year such phenomena were observed in Palestine during crucifixion week and thus to arrive at the year of the crucifixion. But the calculations are based on a Thursday night observance of the Passover, not Friday.** If it is a fact that the date of the Passover was annually set by lunar observations of the type postulated, but if it is also a fact that the Jewish officials at the time of the crucifixion observed their Passover on Friday night rather than Thursday, then certainly the lunar observations of a Friday night Passover rather than Thursday should be the ones employed, and **any conclusions basing the year of the crucifixion on postulated observations of a Thursday night Passover would be invalid.**

These points and their significance have been under discussion between both Miss Amadon and Elder Froom and myself for the past eighteen months, but for some reason we have not been able to come to see this matter alike, but it has nevertheless been decided to begin publication of this material at this time. This I regard as unfortunate, for I feel **it is putting this matter of the dating of the crucifixion and the beginning of the Investigative Judgment upon a basis which is open to question** and which I believe will only invite from our opponents further and justifiable criticism of the positions we hold. If there is any subject upon which I feel we should stand upon absolutely solid ground I believe it is the sanctuary question. Certainly we cannot afford to jeopardize our position on this highly important doctrine by going officially on record as holding views which we cannot maintain. I do not believe the validity of our fundamental position is at all bound up with the validity of the articles in question, but some of our opponents may endeavour to indicate that it is. It is hardly the course of wisdom to unnecessarily put into the hands of our opponents material which may prove to be a most potent weapon against us. Our ministry should in our official church organ be supplied only with such material as is altogether solid and firm, and which cannot be undermined. I do not believe that this present series of articles is of such a nature. Even if this material should prove to be sound, I do not believe any great harm would have resulted if its publication had been deferred till the matter had been more thoroughly thrashed out.

If my point of view in this matter can be shown to be faulty, I will be glad to have this pointed out and I shall be happy to change my views. Such an invitation I have a number of times extended to Elder Froom in connection with this discussion but thus far without any response from him other than to refer me to the arguments of Miss Amadon. These arguments I have gone over carefully but I must confess that I cannot find in them anything that I consider to be valid evidence for a Thursday rather than a Friday night Passover observance on the part of the Jewish authorities during crucifixion week. The line of reasoning employed in reaching these conclusions I believe to be faulty and the treatment of the evidence from the Bible, the Spirit of Prophecy, and Josephus which points to a Friday night Passover I cannot but regard as hardly more than mere evasion. It would be easy enough to just let this matter drop, but I do not feel that, holding the views I do, I would thus be giving my best service to the cause of the Lord, and for this reason I am at this time presenting this matter to you.

With others I am highly interested in the early finalization of the work of the sanctuary committee. But while there are items that might have been finalized upon and published years ago, I do not believe that it is the source of wisdom to engage in premature publication of items on which we are not yet altogether sure. Much of the material that Elder Froom has gathered at great expense to this denomination I feel might with profit have been published either in the MINISTRY or in book form years ago. But in this phase of the work in which Miss Amadon is engaged I am wondering whether it would not be the course of wisdom to wait a bit longer till we are more certain of the ground upon which we stand.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Edwin R. Thiele

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December 12, 1943

Elder H.T. Elliott
General Conference of SDA
Takoma Park, Washington, DC

Dear Brother Elliott:

It has occurred to me that the following quotation from the Book of Jubilees might be of interest to our brethren in Washington in connection with the question of the chronology of the New Testament Passover:

Remember the commandment which the Lord commanded thee concerning the Passover, that thou shouldst celebrate it in its season on the fourteenth of the first month, that thou shouldst kill it before it is evening, and that they should eat it by night on the evening of the fifteenth from the time of the setting of the sun ... Let the children of Israel come and observe the Passover on the day of its fixed time, on the fourteenth day of the first month, between the evenings, from the third part of the day to the third part of the night, for two portions of the day are given to the light, and a third to the evening. This is that which the Lord commanded thee that thou shouldst observe it between the evenings. And it is not permissible to slay it during any period of the light, but during the period bordering on the evening, and let them eat it at the time of the evening until the third part of the night, and whatever is left over of all its flesh from the third part of the night and onwards, let them burn it with fire. Jub. 49:1, 2, 10-12.

The importance of this reference coming from the second century B.C. and reflecting the customs of at least the Pharisees at that time will be immediately recognized. The above quotation leaves no question but that in the second century before Christ it was already a widespread custom among the Jews to slay the Passover sacrifice on the afternoon of the fourteenth, just before evening, and to eat the Passover meal after sunset, during the opening hours of the fifteenth. You will recall that this is in perfect agreement with the evidence already given you from Josephus as to the Jewish custom in the latter part of the first century A.D. Likewise is the evidence from both of these authorities in complete agreement with the testimony of the gospels and also the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the time of Passover observance at the crucifixion.

You will also recall that the conclusion expressed in the recent series of articles in the *MINISTRY* on the New Testament Passover was that the Passover was both slain and eaten in the early evening hours of the fourteenth, i.e. Thursday evening of crucifixion week. The vital point concerning this subject is that on the basis of such a theory the endeavour is made to fix the year of the crucifixion, whereas if the Jewish authorities who fixed the times by various lunar observations actually observed the Passover feast on Friday evening, then Friday and not Thursday should be the time employed.

In view of the fact that in the December issue of the *Ministry* another item appeared in which the main stress was on the point of "chronology," and in which a quotation from Philo was used in the endeavour to bolster the theory of a Thursday night Passover meal, I felt it only proper that our leaders in Washington should give careful attention to the full evidence available concerning this question. It is my studied conviction that the continued presentation of material along the present line will only result in future embarrassments and disappointments for us. I have just written to Miss Amadon at length expressing my

convictions to her and I have written to Elder Froom calling his attention to the evidence from Jubilees.

I can well understand the position taken by Miss Amadon and the grounds on which she bases her views, and I have endeavoured carefully to point out to her just where she is making her mistakes.

The first mistake made by Miss Amadon is that she did not make a careful study of the time of the final trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin and Pilate. It was her conclusion that these trials were held during the night, before morning, whereas the definite evidence of both the gospels and *Desire of Ages* is to the effect that this trial was not held till after daybreak, Friday morning. The difference is of vital importance to the question of the time of the New Testament Passover, for if this final trial of Jesus had occurred during the night as Miss Amadon maintains, then according to her the Jewish leaders could have partaken of the Passover feast that same night, following the trial and before morning broke. But if the final trials did not come until after daybreak, then the Passover meal could not have come till Friday night. For this reason the question of the exact time of this final trial and condemnation of Jesus before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate is of fundamental importance, and the mistake made by Miss Amadon on this point is fatal to all her theories concerning New Testament Passover chronology. She has started with the foundation awry and for this reason the great structure she is endeavouring to build on this foundation is likewise awry.

The second mistake made by Miss Amadon is her endeavour to allow a partial picture given by Josephus to stand for a complete picture. It is true, for instance, that Josephus repeatedly mentions the 14th as the day on which the Passover was observed, and it is also true that a careless and superficial reading of some of these references might seem to convey the impression that all of the events connected with Passover observance — the slaying of the lamb and the eating of the feast — were both observed on the 14th. But such a conclusion is hasty and dangerous. Before any such a conclusion can be drawn much more evidence than that presented is required. One needs to know just on what hour of the 14th, for instance, the Passover sacrifices were offered. If the authority in question presents such evidence, well and good. If he does not, then must other authorities be consulted. In the case of Josephus we fortunately possess his evidence on this point, namely that the Passover sacrifices were offered between the 9th and the 11th hours, which would be between three and five o'clock on Friday afternoon of crucifixion week. But Miss Amadon will have none of this latter evidence, for it does not agree with her theories. For two years in her correspondence with me she has been doing her utmost to discredit this evidence. In her latest letter to me she simply brands it, "unworthy of notice." But it is evidence of the utmost importance to this inquiry, the very type of evidence that is essential before any sound conclusion can be arrived at.

The third mistake is almost identical in nature with the second. In the December issue of the *Ministry* appears a quotation from Philo in which again the fourteenth is mentioned in connection with Passover observance. But again this quotation makes no mention of hours at all, and until we have this last evidence from Philo the citation from him cannot be used as evidence for the exact time of Passover observance in New Testament times, as between Thursday or Friday night.

The fourth mistake of Miss Amadon is the failure to take into consideration such evidence as that above given from Jubilees, and other early Jewish writers. In such a letter as this I cannot go exhaustively into this question, but let me simply mention that the Jewish evidence for a

very early observance of the Passover feast on the 13th instead of the 14th is altogether conclusive. Jubilees alone settles that question for a date as early as the second century B.C.

In brief, the first and most important point concerning New Testament Passover chronology is the fact that the final condemnation of Jesus did not take place until after the break of day Friday morning and that at that time the Jewish leaders had not yet partaken of the Passover but were looking forward to the observance of this rite. This alone would prove the incorrectness of Miss Amadon's contention that the Jewish nation as well as Jesus observed the Passover on Thursday night.

If both the Bible and *Desire of Ages* are correct in the evidence which they provide on the above point then should we expect to find corroborative evidence in contemporary sources pointing to an observance of the Passover feast on Nisan fifteen. Jubilees provides such evidence for the second century B.C. and Josephus for the first century A.D.

But an examination of the testimony of both Jubilees and Josephus shows that while the Passover was eaten in the early evening of the fifteenth, the Jewish writers of that period went to great lengths in the endeavour to place stress on the fourteenth, and thus to make it appear as if their current practice in Passover observance was in accord with the regulation originally given by Moses calling for the observance of these rites in Nisan fourteen.

Only the slaying of the Passover took place in the later afternoon of the fourteenth, but this was put forth in such a form as to indicate this was the main feature of Passover observance and thus in accord with the provisions of the Mosaic law. The Jewish writers at the beginning of the Christian era thus use the term "fourteenth" in rather a loose sense when applied to Passover observance, as is witnessed in both Jubilees and Josephus, and it is in this same sense that it is evidently also used by Philo. While a superficial survey of some of the statements of these writers might thus make it seem as if the Passover was both slain and eaten on the fourteenth, a careful study of the full evidence reveals the fact that the custom was to slay the Passover on the late afternoon of the fourteenth and eat the Passover feast in the early evening hours of the fifteenth.

In no field of endeavour is it every proper to take some isolated statement and to build upon it any weighty conclusions which are out of harmony with the complete evidence in that field. For instance, a superficial reading of Phil. 1:23 and of Mark 9:43-48 might seem to provide evidence for the entrance to heaven immediately at death and for an ever burning hell. But we recognize the fact that the true picture in these fields can be obtained only from a careful study of the full evidence in the case. This is true in every field, including New Testament Passover chronology. Miss Amadon's mistake has been to take an isolated statement and to build upon it a general conclusion which was not warranted by the full evidence in the case.

Others who have not had the opportunity of going over all the evidence in this field have considered Miss Amadon's conclusions as plausible, and the result is that there is at present a growing confusion among us on this point of New Testament Passover chronology. Miss Amadon considers herself an authority in this field, but the simple fact is that she is badly confused. While she might have some items in this field which are sound, I know that her chronology simply is not sound, and it is on this point where her chief interest lies. The very heart of her item in the December *Ministry*, for instance, consists of five sentences in which this word "chronology" is used five times. The item closes with the solicitation of further correspondence on this subject and points to further articles to follow: "We are pleased to receive letters of inquiry from those who are studying together. The next study will be on 'The Passover Peace Offering.'" I wish with all of my heart that this material were sound and

that our people could be edified and established thereby, but I am afraid that as long as Miss Amadon clings to her present theories, her presentation of this material will lead us to the place where embarrassment and disappointment will certainly come, and where a great deal of explaining will be necessary to try to clear up wrong conceptions. If the material already published is any correct guide to that still to come, then does it appear that it cannot but lead to erroneous conclusions. And if this thing has not yet been finalized upon, then why proceed with it now?

Very sincerely your brother,
(Signed) Edwin R. Thiele

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December 17, 1943

Elder M.E. Kern
1502 E Brill St.
Phoenix, AZ

Dear Brother Kern:

You are now the chairman, I believe, of the sub-committee on the Advent Source Material that is dealing with Miss Amadon's argument and the arguments that have been offered contrary to it.

You may have all the information which I am herewith giving you, but just to make sure I am sending on letters that have come to me in recent months from Brother E.R. Thiele. These are his letters to me of October 6 and December 12.

It seems to me, as I have expressed it to Brother Thiele and Froom, that it is unfortunate to have this argument going on in the *Ministry* magazine when it is in such an unsettled state and when even the facts on which the argument is based are in question ...

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) H.T. Elliott

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February 7, 1944

Elder H.T. Elliott
General Conference of SDA
Takoma Park, Washington, DC

Dear Brother Elliott:

In the February issue of the *Ministry* I noticed the article on the "Date and Hour of the Crucifixion Passover." My first reaction to this article was to simply ignore it and just to let things take their own course be the outcome whatever it might. But after thinking things over more carefully I feel that if this article is as unsound as I believe it to be and if its ultimate outcome will be what I expect it to be, then, if I truly love this work and am concerned over its welfare, I would not be doing my full duty either to God or this cause by remaining silent. I will not discuss the many points in this article which I believe to be unsound, but will

mention only one item which I believe to be vital and which will carry with it the key to everything else.

After giving a citation from Philo which is used as evidence for both the slaying of the Passover and the Passover feast itself on the fourteenth of Nisan, the article declares: “**Only an after-sunset** sacrifice and supper could agree with Philo’s description. If the lamb were slain in the **afternoon**, it would then have to be roasted and eaten on the subsequent evening. Hence two Jewish dates would be involved — not one date only.” Let us put against this statement Philo’s own words, taken from the same section of Philo mentioned in the above citation: “After the New Moon comes the fourth feast, called the Crossing-feast, which the Hebrews in their native tongue called Pasoha. In this festival many myriads of victims from **noon till eventide** are offered by the whole people, old and young alike.” Philo, *Special Laws*, II, sec. 145, tr. by Colson, Loeb Classical Library, Vol. VII, p. 395. Notice that Miss Amadon declares that “only an **after-sunset** sacrifice and supper could agree with Philo’s description,” but that Philo himself declares that it was from “**noon till eventide**” when the Passover sacrifices were offered! If there had been merely a casual reading of Philo’s presentation of this matter, his statement that the hour when the sacrifices were offered was the period between noon and sunset, would have made any speculation concerning this time entirely out of place. And if the testimony of Jubilees had been noted and accepted, that the Passover was slain on the 14th before evening and eaten on the evening of the fifteenth, immediately after the setting of the sun, it would have been clear as to just what Philo had in mind, and the above completely erroneous deduction would not have been drawn. Yet again, if Josephus’ very clear statement that the Passover sacrifices were slain on the 14th, and that the hour was from the 9th to the 11th, three to five in the afternoon, then again would the meaning of Philo’s statement have been entirely clear. In other words, the testimony of any one of these three witnesses would have been entirely sufficient in itself to show just when it was customary in New Testament times to slay the Passover sacrifices and when the Passover feast occurred, and the baselessness of the position taken in these four recent articles in the *Ministry* would have been apparent. But for Philo himself to give the very hour of day of the offering of the Passover sacrifices, and to have that statement entirely passed by, and to endeavour to argue that the time which Philo says was the time, was an impossible time, is hardly in line with sound and careful research. I must say that I cannot understand how it was possible for a presentation so strikingly and so demonstrably erroneous as this to appear in the *Ministry*, and that, after the errors were pointed out.

When an argument is proceeding along sound lines it is possible to accept valid evidence at its full value and it does not become necessary to endeavour to try to circumvent the force of such evidence by any equivocation or specious reasoning. Thus when Josephus said that the Jews offered their Passover sacrifices between the 9th and the 11th hours — three to five o’clock in the afternoon — (Wars VI.IX.3) it does not become necessary to endeavour to dismiss such weighty evidence with a puerile, “But the text has no date!” (*Ministry*, Feb. 1944, p. 38), or with the declaration that “a critical examination of B.VI.IX.3 is unworthy of notice” (Personal letter to me by Miss Amadon of Nov. 2, 1943). And when Jubilees bears witness to the fact that already in the second century before Christ the time of offering the Passover sacrifices among the Jews was considered to be in the later afternoon of the fourteenth, before sunset, and that the Passover feast itself was held in the early evening of the fifteenth, after sunset (Jubilees 49:1, 2, 10-12), we need make no attempt at all to discard such valuable testimony. And when John declares that the hour when Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover was “before the feast of the Passover” (John 13:1), it does not become necessary to try to evade a statement so plain as this. And when John says further that when the Jews on Friday morning refused to enter into the judgment hall “lest they should be

defiled; but that they might eat the Passover;" (John 18:28), it does not become necessary to endeavour to substitute one's own "Talmudic supper" (Letter to me of Nov. 2, 1943), for "Passover." And again, when the Spirit of Prophecy corroborates this witness of John and says that the Jewish officials would not enter into the judgment hall lest they become defiled thereby and "thus prevented from taking part in the feast of the Passover" (DA, 723), we do not need to substitute "Talmudic supper" for an unequivocal "Feast of the Passover." Yet again when the time of the last trial of Jesus is described by the Spirit of Prophecy as "as soon as it was day" (DA, 714), by Matthew as the time "when the morning was come" (Matt. 27:1), by Mark as "straightway in the morning," (Mark 15:1), and by Luke as, "as soon as it was day" (Luke 22:66), it will not be necessary to be forced to endeavour to place the time of this trial during the night, before the break of morning (Letter to me of Oct. 10, 1943). And when *Desire of Ages*, and Klausner declare that the final legal trial of Jesus could come only in the light of day (DA, 710; Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 340: Sanh. IV.ii), it will not be necessary to maintain that Jesus' last trial was held "at night" and in the "darkness" (Letter of Oct. 10, 1943). Nor when Mrs. White expressly declares that "The Passover was observed as it had been for centuries, while He to whom it pointed had been slain by wicked hands, and lay in Joseph's tomb," (DA, 774), will it be necessary to try to argue that the observance of the Passover does not here mean the observance of the Passover at all, for the Jews had observed their Passover on Thursday night, at the same time as did Jesus, and not on Friday night while Jesus lay in the tomb.

I could carry the above to much greater lengths, but I simply give the above examples to show the shifts and evasions it is necessary to resort to when the position one is endeavouring to maintain is contrary to fact. Yet the pity of it is that this position, totally devoid of any sound foundation, is now apparently receiving official sanction among our leaders in Washington, and that **we are opening up the pages of the official church organ for our ministers throughout the world, for the promulgation of such error, and that, in support of one of our most cherished doctrines — the sanctuary truth!** And the double pity is that this should come just one hundred years after the stirring times of 1844 — a time when God's people should be receiving the most positive and unshakable confirmation of the truth of the positions they hold.

Our position on the sanctuary question is already under serious fire by our enemies. Why should we now play into their hands by providing them with the ammunition they so much desire — an evidence of faulty history, unsound logic, erroneous use of ancient testimony? In God's work and in the realm of truth no position will ever be in need of the unsound support that it is now being proposed to lend to our views on the sanctuary question.

Why must we publish before our workers and before the world such a statement, for instance, as the following in the February *Ministry*: "The Second Temple sources have clearly shown that the ancient Passover date had not changed — even as late as Josephus." The facts are that the complete testimony for the time of Christ shows that at that period a change had been introduced,* that the Passover was no longer observed on the evening of the fourteenth, and the Passover feast was held on the evening of the fifteenth. The testimony of John is proof of the fact that on Friday morning of crucifixion week the Jewish leaders had not yet partaken of the Passover and thus were planning to partake of it on Friday evening, which would be the fifteenth. Jubilees is proof of the fact that that is the view maintained in the second century before Christ. Philo is witness to the fact that the slaying of the Passover sacrifices took place in the afternoon, the fourteenth, and that the Passover feast must therefore have been held on

* but that the sacrifices were slain on the afternoon of the fourteenth.

the evening of the fifteenth. Josephus is witness for the slaying of the Passover sacrifices between three and five of the afternoon of the fourteenth at the close of the first century A.D., and thus again the Passover feast must have been held on the evening of the fifteenth. All this testimony of these contemporary witnesses is in complete agreement on the one point that the time of Passover observance had definitely changed and that the above statement is therefore not true to fact.

The original Passover law, however, had of course not changed, and that law was still well known among the Jews. It was remembered that Moses had commanded that the Passover be observed on the fourteenth, and even though it was no longer customary to obey that law, an attempt was still made to indicate that their customs were still in line with the original directions given by Moses. This fact is well known by all outstanding Jewish writers of our age that I am acquainted with.

Christ and His followers, however, still continued to observe the Passover at the time appointed by Moses, the evening of the fourteenth, which was Thursday evening of crucifixion week. And there were no doubt scattered remnants of people who were still faithful to God in complying with the original regulations concerning the time of Passover observance, but the Jewish leaders at Jerusalem at the time of Christ and the majority of Jews at that time most certainly observed the Passover just twenty-four hours too late.

With each new presentation of this subject in the *Ministry* we are getting ourselves ever more deeply involved. Where will all this end? Many of our workers will think this material reliable and will weave it into their oral and written presentation of the sanctuary truth, and ultimately the time will come when our mistakes on this point will come before those who are informed on this matter, and that will most certainly result in embarrassment for us.

But what are we now going to do? Are we going to allow the present erroneous views which have gone out to remain uncorrected? We can hardly allow error to stand and lead us into the embarrassment which will surely come, but to set forth the correct point of view on this matter will likewise result in embarrassment, for we will have to show that the views on which so much labour and argument were spent were not sound. I cannot but feel that the publication of this material was hasty and unwise, and that it would have been far better to have waited until we were more certain of the ground we were building upon.

Might I now request some information from you as to just how this matter now stands in Washington? Has the committee appointed to investigate the subject finalized upon it, and has the signal been given to go ahead with the matter? It does seem as if this must be so, or publication would not now be continuing. And might I ask who were the members of the committee appointed to investigate this matter? Are all of our brethren there and elsewhere clear on this matter, and am I the only one who seems to see the thing in a different light? Thus far none of the men to whom I have addressed myself in Washington concerning this thing some months ago, has given me any intimation that they felt I might be in error, nor has any attempt been made by any of them to point out in any wise where my reasoning might not be sound or my evidence reliable. If I am wrong I would really appreciate having this pointed out to me.

It must, of course, be understood that the views I hold on this matter are views which I am teaching to the young people in my charge at Emmanuel Missionary College. I am particularly anxious that our young men receive a solid foundation for the truths which they will go forth to proclaim. And I am anxious that when they come in contact with error, however subtle, cunning, or insidious it may be, that they be able to discern this. It is my

conviction that the type of reasoning employed in arriving at the conclusions expressed in this series of articles in the *Ministry* is just as erroneous as the reasoning often used to prove the position of an ever-burning hell, of the immortality of the soul, and of the keeping of a spurious Sabbath. Our young people are constantly being brought in contact with error that is more and more subtle, and they just must be trained to be able to detect falsehood from truth. What will I now do in regard to this presentation of this subject? I believe it to be wrong, I certainly do not wish the young people in my charge to go out teaching something so demonstrably and yet so subtly in error, and yet to point out the falsity of this matter cannot help but result in embarrassments. I must repeat that I believe with all my heart that the publication of this material at this time to be untimely and unwise, and that it is performing a distinct disservice to the cause of present truth.

And what is to happen next? Will this thing go on and on? The further we go, the more difficult will it be ultimately to retrace our steps. Would it not be well to wait until we first know that we are going forward upon solid ground? And if this material is wrong, how will we now inform our ministry of this fact so that the errors may not continue to be given an ever wider circulation?

Finally, I am wondering, Brother Elliott, whether it might not be well to secure a copy of Philo and then invite Miss Amadon over and have her read the statement referred to in the early part of this letter concerning the offering of the myriads of paschal sacrificial victims "from noon till eventide." It is found in section XXVII.145, p. 395, Vol. VII of Philo. The citation upon which Miss Amadon has placed such stress as proving that Philo could not possibly refer to an afternoon sacrifice but that it must come after sunset is on page 397, same section, 149. The title is *Philo*, F.H. Colson trs., Loeb Classical Library, VII. The American publisher is Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. The Seminary will of course have a copy. If after seeing the above statement by Philo and noticing that it is the exact opposite of what she has been endeavouring to prove, Miss Amadon will, if the real truth of this matter is the thing of first importance to her, accept the full force of this testimony and acknowledge the erroneousness of her position. And with that will fall this whole position she has so laboriously been endeavouring to build up in this present series. That will of course not be easy. But if Miss Amadon's chief interest is to prove that her position has been and still is correct, her endeavour will be to parley and do away with the force of this testimony.

With kindest Christian greetings, believe me to be,

Very sincerely your brother,
(Signed) Edwin R. Thiele

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**CORRESPONDENCE WITH NAVAL OBSERVATORY REGARDING
WORK OF GRACE AMADON**

February 26, 1946

Dr. Glen H. Draper
Naval Observatory
Massachusetts at 34th NW
Washington, DC

Dear Dr. Draper:

One of our teachers is in receipt of a letter which concerns a statement made by Miss Grace Amadon to the committee on chronology, of which she was a member. She stated that she had your endorsement on some of her computations, but did not specify. The question is: assuming that you gave an endorsement, did this concern or include her position that the Jewish Passover in the year 31 A.D. fell on a Friday? As she is now deceased, we would appreciate a word from you.

Respectfully yours,
(Signed) D.E. Rebok

DER:y

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US Naval Observatory
Feb. 27, 1946

Mr. D.E. Rebok
SDA Theological Seminary
Takoma Park 21, DC

Dear Mr. Rebok:

Your letter of 26 February has been received. I did check over the work of Miss Grace Amadon and found it to be an interesting and accurate research following the premises she accepted. Her conclusion that the Jewish Passover in the year 31 A.D. fell on a Friday is correct and consistent with her premises.

But as I told her so frequently there may be some question in accepting the premises as real. They are interesting and furnish as consistent a set of conclusions as any I have seen on the subject, although **they seem to contain several precepts of almost hearsay. They are novel to say the least.**

I am enclosing a mathematical paper of mine own which should sufficiently demonstrate the roll of traditional premises in most discussions. The truth is had, only when the last exception has been clearly understood and defined.

Sincerely,
(Signed) Glen H. Draper

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March 1, 1946

Dr. Glen H. Draper
Naval Observatory
Massachusetts at 34th N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Draper:

I wish to acknowledge your letter of February 27 and to thank you for the answer which you have given to my question. I wonder if you would be willing to offer your comments or counsel regarding the premises upon which Miss Grace Amadon based her work, or if you would feel free to give us the facts so far as science and mathematics know them concerning the Passover day in the year 31, as well as the other years which are now considered by various groups studying this problem. We are looking for facts and truth. If you can help us in any way, it will be greatly appreciated.

Again thanking you for your very prompt and careful reply to my question, I am

Respectfully yours,
(Signed) D.E. Rebok, President

DER:y

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US Naval Observatory
Washington 25, DC
March 5, 1946

Dear President Rebok:

Your letter of March 1 has been received. I am answering it immediately as I am so pressed for time that I shall never get to answer it if I set it aside for proper considerations.

I am a little perturbed to know exactly what you desire as Miss Amadon's work must certainly be in your possession and states for itself what it is. Briefly though **it assumes that the Paschal moon is the important moon and not the new moon. Her calendar is refreshing in its (at present) novel premise that the Jews knew enough of the motions of the moon to predict the time at which the moon would be full.** The Paschal feast should *never* arrive before the full moon is her major premise. I have never heard of any other modern who claims this, but it was indeed interesting to me to see how she was able to make a consistent chronology on that premise. It appears in many respects to be the most consistent chronology I have seen, *although it requires the difficult assumption that the priests knew a great deal more of the laws of motion of the moon than they recorded as such.* Miss Amadon insisted, with evidences of record that they did have this knowledge as a divine secret. **She had faith that the priests were able to regulate the entire year by observations of the new moons of a previous year. It is difficult to understand now how they were able to do this as we have only in the last three hundred years been able to reproduce this feat.**

I do not have the time to go into all the details of her problem, as you request but she has it fairly well outlined.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Glen H. Draper

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March 7, 1946

Dr. Glen H. Draper
Naval Observatory
Massachusetts at 34th NW
Washington, DC

Dear Dr. Draper:

I fully realize you are a very busy man and I even hesitated to approach you with my original question, but you have answered my question satisfactorily and I thank you for your frankness and for your opinion. These are interesting problems, but without doubt there are others which are certainly more pressing and I would not encroach upon your time to discuss them further.

Appreciating your two letters and your viewpoint in the matter, I remain,

Respectfully yours,
(Signed) D.E. Rebok, President

DER:y

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San Francisco
Oct. 2, 1948

Dear Brother Kern:

The following points seem to me essential to an understanding of the committee problem of the 2300 days.

1. The beginning of the 2300 days. Which command?
2. The meaning of "how long," "Until," "Going forth"?
3. Proof of the connection of the 70 weeks and 2300 days.
4. Is "unto Messiah, the Prince" a chronological statement?
5. When are we to reckon that the Messiah came? Birth? Baptism?
6. He "began to be about 30 years," When? "Began," "About" are indefinite.
7. When did God reject Israel? At crucifixion, Stephen's death, destruction of Jerusalem?
8. What reason is there for an attempt to fix the absolute beginning of the 7th of Artaxerxes apart from an attempt to arrive at the tenth day of the seventh month in 1844? If we are not compelled to arrive at Oct. 22 is there any point in spending years to establish the exact moment of Artaxerxes accession?

9. (a) If Christ was born in B.C. 4, how do we account for Herod's death also in B.C. 4, when Christ must have been born some considerable time before Herod's death?
10. If Christ was born in B.C. 4; the crucifixion in A.D. 31; if Christ in 26-7 began to be about 30 years old, if there was a 3½ year's ministry; how do these dates harmonize?

If Dr. Wood arrived at an undisputed date for Artaxerxes' 7th year; if Dr. Lindsjo arrives at another date; where are we after all these years? There would seem to be no point to continue these discussions unless some of the above questions are settled; and that will take years.

(Signed) M.L. Andreasen

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THE DATE OF CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION

Biblical scholars have not been able to reach unanimous conclusions in regard to the crucifixion date of Christ. The reason for the disagreement lies in the fact that **data on which the crucifixion date must be based are still uncertain.**

Let us first list points on which there is general agreement. We know that the crucifixion took place (1) at the time of the Jewish Passover (Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:1-23; John 13:1-30; 18:28), and (2) that it was the preparation day for the weekly Sabbath (Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23: 50-56; John 19:31, 41, 42). It is also evident that Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath (Matt. 27:62-66), and that He rose from the dead early Sunday morning, the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-6; John 20:1-18). It is, furthermore, certain that the crucifixion took place between the years A.D. 26 and 35, during which time Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. We know, moreover, from Scripture that the law of the Passover required (1) the lamb to be slain before sunset on the fourteenth day of Nisan and eaten before the following midnight (Ex. 12:6ff; Lev. 23:5), and that ripened barley had to be available for the wave sheaf on the second day of the feast of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:6, 7, 10, 11).

It is also generally agreed that the Jews, in common with the Babylonians, Persians and other Eastern nations based their calendar on the movements of the moon, and that their ordinary years had 12 months, each month having a length of either 29 or 30 days. In order to keep the year in step with the seasons, an intercalary month was inserted every two or three years — 7 times in 19 years.

With this evidence in hand, the establishment of the 14th of Nisan in any year of Christ's time may seem to be a simple matter. Assuming that the 14th of Nisan was the day of the full moon, it may appear to be comparatively easy to establish the crucifixion date by finding astronomically the date at a Passover season when the moon was full on a Friday during the years of Pilate's reign.

A crucifixion date arrived at by this procedure, however, is based on a number of unproven assumptions, since the exact nature of the Jewish calendar used during the time of Christ is unknown. Uncertain factors are the following: (1) Was the Jewish calendar in the time of Christ based on observation or computation — did the beginning of each month depend on an observation of the new moon crescent, or was the month's beginning calculated in advance? (2) Was the moon always full on the 14th of the month, or sometimes one or two days earlier? (3) Which years during Christ's life consisted of thirteen months, i.e., were embolismic?

(4) Did the Jews at the time of Christ follow the Babylonian calendar in toto, as some scholars think, or did they follow their own scheme?

Although the present-day Jewish calendar is basically still lunar, it cannot help to clarify the uncertainties listed above, because it was introduced not earlier than the fourth century and varies considerably with the one previously used. It is fixed by computations made before the beginning of the year, and is arranged in a way that the festival days will not fall on certain days of the week. For example, the Day of Atonement, which comes on the 10th day of the 7th month, is according to Jewish regulations not supposed to fall on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday, hence the calendar is adjusted in a way to avoid this.

The only other Jewish calendar concerning which we are reasonably well informed is that of the 5th century B.C. Our knowledge about this calendar is derived from a number of Jewish documents found in recent years in Egypt. See on this calendar S.H. Horn and L.H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Assoc., 1953), pp. 66-88 and 118-145.

For a reconstruction of the Jewish calendar for the period lying between the 5th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D. no reliable source materials is as yet available. Rabbinical statements concerning the earlier Jewish calendar found in the Talmud from A.D. 200 on and other Jewish writings are late, ambiguous, and not always reliable. They can be interpreted in different ways, and it is unknown whether these statements are based on good information or tradition. In view of these uncertainties regarding the calendar used in the time of Christ every attempt to fix the crucifixion date scientifically, can only be based on a number of hypotheses and unproven assumptions.

Scholars who have arrived at A.D. 30 as the year in which the crucifixion took place, believe that the Jewish calendar in the time of Christ was identical with the Babylonian calendar of earlier centuries. They also believe that this calendar was based on observation of the moon, in which the first day of each month began at sunset the evening on which the new crescent of the moon was seen for the first time after its conjunction, that is the appearance of the new moon.

A calendar based on observation, however, is dependent on the weather. If on the evening after the 29th of the month the crescent was invisible because of an overcast sky, the first of the month was postponed one day. This weather problem would not be a matter of concern in those lunar months which naturally would be thirty days in length. If the first day of the month was delayed by one day because of bad weather, the 14th also would have fallen one day later. Since we have no source material from the time of Christ on which to construct with certainty a calendar for the year A.D. 30, it is obvious **that in view of the factors involved we cannot set an exact date for the crucifixion.**

Further, it is not known whether the Jews regulated their calendar at that time so that the full moon coincided with the 14th of Nisan or with the 12th or 13th, as some think, in order that those who were travelling to Jerusalem during the Passover season might have lighted nights for travelling. Such a calendar would be based on computations and not on observations. Those working on the assumption that the Jews computed their calendar instead of basing it on observation, and fixed it in a way that the full moon came on the 12th or 13th of Nisan, reach entirely different conclusions with regard to the crucifixion date. **Using this hypothesis as the basis for her astronomical computations, Miss Grace Amadon arrived at A.D. 31** for the crucifixion date (See "Ancient Jewish Calendation," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 61, part 4 [1942], pp. 227-280). It should be noted that **her conclusions are likewise**

based on an interpretation of certain Jewish statements which are ambiguous, and that her conclusions will stand or fall on the correctness of several still unproven hypotheses.

Years of investigation carried on by a number of members of a committee appointed by the General Conference to investigate this and other related dates, have led to the conclusions that **our present source material is insufficient to arrive at a scientifically unassailable date for the crucifixion.**

For the reconstruction of the Jewish calendar used in the time of Christ, the discovery of contemporary source material of an unambiguous nature must be awaited. **Without such material the crucifixion date cannot scientifically be established.** It might not be superfluous to mention in this connection that in the present state of our knowledge it is also impossible to establish accurate dates for a number of events of Christ's ministry for which chronological statements are made in the Gospels, like Luke 3:1 and John 2:20. The reason for this uncertainty is once more the present scarcity of historically reliable extra-Biblical source material of the first century of the Christian era.

While admitting that the crucifixion date cannot scientifically be established, fortunately we have other means by which we are able to arrive at a correct date for the crucifixion of Christ. The prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9:25-27 provides the answer to this problem, since it contains the prediction that the Messiah would "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" in the midst of the last of the 70 weeks, which means after 60 ½ prophetic weeks or 486 ½ prophetic days — 486 ½ actual years.

Furthermore, this prophecy provides not only the length of the period involved, but pins its beginning down to the time when "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" should occur (Dan. 9:25), a decree which was issued in the 7th year of Artaxerxes 1 as recorded in Ezra 7. Since events described in that chapter can be dated in the year 457 B.C., a date whose accuracy can be demonstrated (see S.H. Horn and L.H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, pp. 107-117), it is merely a matter of simple reckoning to find the end of the 70 prophetic weeks or 490 years in the fall of A.D. 34. **If the 70th week ended in the fall of A.D. 34** the event which took place in the midst of that prophetic week — the cessation of the sacrificial service through Christ's death — must have taken place in the spring of A.D. 31. In this the Spirit of Prophecy concurs (*GC*, 410, *DA*, 233).

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