

Daniel 8:14,  
The Day Of Atonement,  
And The Investigative Judgment

By

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## DEDICATED

*To those who, believing that God raised up  
the Advent movement to proclaim the truth  
for earth's last hour, value truth more than  
position, comfort, or reputation.*

*For such,  
"New occasions teach new duties,  
Time makes ancient good uncouth,  
They must upward still and onward  
Who would keep abreast of truth."*

*(513, Church Hymnal)*



## INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY OF THIS MANUSCRIPT

### CHAPTER ONE

Because the sanctuary truth is such a prominent part of our doctrinal platform, it is vital that our exposition of it be such as will recommend it to the best minds of non-Adventists, as well as our own people, and be able to survive the most searching scrutiny. The issue is not just theoretical, for as R.A. Anderson has said, "A misconception of the great sanctuary truth has robbed many of the very assurance they need when we will have to stand without a Mediator just prior to our Lord's return" (*Review and Herald*, Aug. 3, 1962, p. 9).

Our history shows that loyal leaders in our ranks have undergone agony of soul as they contemplated our traditional teaching on the investigative judgment and tried to reconcile it with Scripture. Some of these men ultimately left us for this reason, including A.F. Ballenger, E.S. Ballenger, L.H. Crisler, I. Kech, W.W. Fletcher, L.R. Conradi, R.A. Grieve, etc, while others, such as W.W. Prescott and L.E. Froom and many contemporaries chose to remain with us, though deeply troubled and perplexed.

Our twentieth century scholars have called into question many pillars of our usual sanctuary presentation. Study of recent documents on the sanctuary by our scholars shows a great departure from the nineteenth century positions. For example, it is now admitted that blood from the offerings of the common people never went into the sanctuary, and that sacrificial blood never defiles. The sanctuary was defiled by the act of sin, not by the transfer of it through blood. Neither is there any Scripture which teaches an investigative judgment of the saints beginning long before the Advent. Doctrine cannot be established by types or prophetic interpretation - these may only be used to illustrate and confirm what is clearly taught elsewhere, and in non-symbolic language. Key texts originally used by us to teach a judgment of the saints have now been recognized by many as pointing rather to a judgment of the wicked. For example, the context of Dan. 7 makes it clear that the little horn, not believers, is being investigated. The same is true of Rev. 14:7,8.

In the 1960's a special Daniel committee met for five years to deal with such problems but reached no unanimity. A previous questionnaire sent to our leading scholars brought the reply that it is impossible to so exegete Dan. 8:14 as to derive the investigative judgment. Dr. Raymond Cottrell, former associate editor of the *SDA Bible Commentary* and the *Review*, has often told that story, and recently published it in the April issue of *Spectrum*. He affirms that the traditional sanctuary interpretation cannot be derived from Scripture, and that most of our scholars know that to be the case.

While no teacher amongst us holds to the Ballenger schema of years ago, which taught a pre-cross sanctuary ministry of 4000 years, yet many acknowledge that Ballenger was at least correct on Christ's entrance within the veil at His ascension. (Contemporary SDA New Testament scholars interpret Heb. 6:19,20 and 10:19,20 quite differently to 19th century Adventist writers.)

E.G. White agreed with Ballenger on this aspect also, as is made clear by *Desire of Ages* 757 and *Signs of the Times*, April 19, 1905, though simultaneously holding to a first apartment ministry culminating in 1844. The words of veteran scholar, W.E. Read, summarize her Day of Atonement emphasis:

"The Day of Atonement in days of old foreshadowed not only the work of Christ on Calvary but also the final events in the great controversy, which envisioned the cleansing of the

universe by the removal and destruction of all iniquity. “When this takes place, and all that relates to sin is finally eradicated from the universe of God, then we shall see “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 8, 1962, p. 4)

## **CHAPTER TWO**

The only book of the New Testament which discusses the meaning of the Day of Atonement, the significance of the first apartment ministry, and the fulfilment of the cleansing of the sanctuary is Hebrews. Chapter 9 deals with all three topics, but in no place gives the traditional Adventist position on these points.

Hebrews 6:19; 10:19,20; 9:8,12, 24-25 teach Christ went into the equivalent of the Most Holy Place at His ascension. Today our New Testament scholars admit that “within the veil” means within the second veil, and Greek scholars acknowledge that *ta hagia* in 9:8,12,24; 10:19 means the second apartment only. Even the English translation makes this clear, for *ta hagia* is only reached through that veil which the High Priest penetrated solely on the Day of Atonement. Heb. 9:7,8,12,24.

According to the writer of Hebrews, the significance of the first apartment was to underline the inadequacy of the Jewish typical sacrificial service, and to show that only the coming of the true Sacrifice could bring forgiveness of sins, and entrance into the presence of God. See 9:7-12; 10:1-12. This New Testament book, far from saying that the heavenly sanctuary is just like the earthly, only larger, often contrasts it with the earthly. The same is true of the heavenly ministry. Christ is not a Levitical priest, but one after the order of Melchizedek — a king-priest who has completed His sacrificial work and sat down on his heavenly throne. Nowhere in Hebrews do we find the early Christians waiting for Christ to go into the second apartment. On the contrary, it teaches that at that time He was already there, and they were waiting for Him to come out. See 9:28. The Day of Atonement is applied throughout Hebrews to what Christ had already done by the Cross and His ascension to heaven. Hebrews does not teach that the Day of Atonement points to some event eighteen centuries then future. It teaches the opposite. Scholars such as F.D. Nichol, and our contemporary New Testament exegetes, admit that our sanctuary teaching cannot be found in the only book of the New Testament which discusses the significance of the sanctuary services. This has been acknowledged by well-known Adventist writers around the world.

The cleansing of the sanctuary is mentioned in Heb. 9:23, but it is applied to what Christ has already done by His death, not to some future judgment work. Nowhere does Hebrews draw on Dan. 8:14 and project its fulfilment to a later Day of Atonement towards the end of the world. The cleansing of the sanctuary is identical with His making “purification for sins” on the Cross prior to His ascension to “the right hand of the Majesty on high.” See Heb. 1:3 and compare Rom. 5:9-11,18 with Heb. 9:22-26.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

Our Daniel scholars this century have for the most part concluded that, as with Hebrews, in this book also, there is neither contextual nor linguistic evidence to support our traditional interpretation of Dan. 8:14. This has been admitted repeatedly by such men as Don Neufeld, Raymond Cottrell, E. Heppenstall, and many others.

There is no Biblical basis for assuming that the year-day be applied to Dan. 8 and 9. Dan. 9 nowhere mentions days that could be turned into years. It speaks of “seventy sevens,” not seventy weeks of days.

Neither is it possible to be dogmatic on any of the dates focused on by our by our prophetic exegesis of these Daniel chapters. No man knows the year of our Lord's death, nor the exact time of His birth or baptism. Neither is it possible to prove that "the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" can only mean Autumn of 457 B.C. There is nothing in Ezra 7 that speaks of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. Neither can we establish that Stephen was stoned in A.D. 34, or that the Day of Atonement in 1844 fell on Oct. 22. Scholars say rather that the Day of Atonement in 1844 fell a month earlier, and was so observed even by most Karaite Jews.

The evidence of the New Testament is that Christ could have returned in the first century had the church taken the gospel to the whole world. See Matt. 24:14,34 (the expression "this generation" which occurs over a dozen times in the gospels always means the generation of Christ's contemporaries); Heb. 1:1; 9:26; 1 John 2:17; Rom. 13:13; Acts 3:19,20. The *SDA Bible Commentary* clearly teaches this in several places. See 4:26-33; 7:29. And the *Review* similarly has thus affirmed. Thus all the Daniel prophecies are conditional, and their primary meaning was not to affirm a two thousand year gap between the advents.

In the New Testament we find the Daniel prophecies re-interpreted, but again not in such a way as to indicate that many centuries must necessarily transpire before the end of the world. Revelation, which draws on Daniel, speaks seven times of the imminence of Christ's return in John's day.

In Dan. 9:24-27 we have an eschatological prophecy which is explanatory both of Dan. 7:9-13 and 8:14. Five terms occur in verse 24 which are only found together in one other chapter of Scripture — Leviticus. 16. Here we read of the fulfilment and consummation of the Day of Atonement type. But the New Testament applies this not only to the Cross of Christ, but also to the end of the world. Christ's Second Advent sermon is a commentary on Dan. 9:24-27 and uses its key motifs for the last things but in such a manner as to show that He is projecting the latter-day consummation for the world of what was to overtake Him at His passion. This shows conclusively that Leviticus. 16 finds its legal fulfilment in Christ's sacrificial atonement, but its empirical consummation in the final cleansing of the universe from sin and sinners. See *Patriarch and Prophets* 358.

In recent years, non-Adventist scholars have shown an unparalleled interest in apocalyptic, and many have seen that Dan. 7:9-13; 8:14; 9:24-27 apply to the last judgment and the end of the world.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

Not only Hebrews, but Revelation, contains references to the Day of Atonement. In this book the type is applied eschatologically rather than soteriologically. It is connected with the last judgment, and God's wrath prior to the setting up of the kingdom of glory. Non-Adventist scholars for centuries have pointed out the prominence of *Yom Kippur* imagery in the Apocalypse.

In the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, the seven last plagues, the climactic chapters of 13, 14, 17 and 20 we have allusions to the Day of Atonement as the final wiping away of sin is contemplated.

Thus in the Bible's last book we find strong evidence for the Adventist eschatological use of the Day of Atonement, though not for a protracted investigative judgment.

## CHAPTER FIVE

Twentieth century scholars, our own and others, point out that the New Testament views the “end of the world” as launched by the Christ event. Thus all great eschatological themes such as the kingdom, judgment, the gift of the Spirit, eternal life, resurrection, the destruction of Satan, the abolition of death, are applied to the Cross and its fruits. See Heb. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:10; John 5:24; 12:31; Matt. 12:28; Acts 2:16; Eph. 2:1; Col. 1:13; 3:1; Heb. 1:1; 9:26; I John 2:17, etc. But these same motifs figure again in the prophetic promises of the times associated with the return of Christ. Thus the Passover is not only applied to the first advent, but to the second. The same is true of Tabernacles, the Jubilee, **and the Day of Atonement. Thus Leviticus 16 has an application to the Cross, but also to the last judgment. While the rest of the religious world has seen the soteriological application of the Day of Atonement but not, as a rule, the eschatological, Seventh-day Adventists have done the reverse — with the exception of Ellen G. White, who saw and taught both applications.** When this is linked with the fact that many Old Testament scholars in recent years have admitted that Dan. 8:14 was not exhausted by the Maccabean era, but applies to judgment at the end of time, Adventists find that they do have foundations for their basic prophetic postulate — that Dan. 8:14 and Leviticus. 16 point to “the last things” and contain important truths for modern Christians. This, however, does not guarantee the accuracy of subsidiary positions such as the investigative judgment.

## CHAPTER SIX

A misunderstanding of the issues of authority, inspiration, and inerrancy have been responsible for the majority of doctrinal controversies the Seventh-day Adventist church has experienced.

The scriptural doctrine of authority has to do with the primacy of the Word as interpreted to loyal believers through the Holy Spirit. Inspiration’s primary purpose is to lead men to Christ. See John 20:31. It is perfect for God’s purpose and may, like the Living Word, challenge and upset our prior prejudices. Inerrancy is never claimed for prophets, and E.G. White specifically denied any claim to it.

Not one doctrine came to this church through E.G. White. First, truth was established through the Word and only then confirmed through the Lord’s messenger. Ellen G. White, according to W.C. White, had an imperfect grasp of truth as shown particularly by some of her early expressions. She changed several doctrinal positions, including systematic benevolence versus tithing, the law in Galatians, the covenants, time to keep the Sabbath, the eating of pork, etc. Furthermore, W.C. White tells us that it was quite possible for his mother to sometimes misunderstand and misinterpret her own visions. She told the brethren that they should understand the significance of the revelations from heaven made to her better than herself. She erred regarding the meaning of her first vision, thinking it confirmed the shut door doctrine.

Our major error has been to make the writings of E.G. White have veto power over Scripture. But in matters of scriptural debate where good men were ranged on both sides, it was not Ellen White’s practice to decide doctrinal issues. When tithing was first introduced in the 1880’s, many opposed it because E.G. White had advocated a different system for many years — systematic benevolence. When the new view of the daily came (actually the old view of the Reformers) extreme conservatives opposed it on the basis of a single statement from *Early Writings*. At Minneapolis in 1888 U. Smith opposed Waggoner and Jones on the grounds that

in *Sketches from the Life of Paul Ellen White* had set forth the law in Galatians as the ceremonial law.

Repeatedly, her writings have been misused to prevent progress in understanding Bible truth. Against this she vigorously protested. See *Selected Messages* 1:164.

To understand the *Great Controversy* exposition of the sanctuary doctrines we should study how other prophecies are applied in this same book. . It comes as a surprise to many to learn that prophecies such as Rev. 6:12; 2 Thess. 2:3,4; Matt. 25:1-13; and Dan. 8:14, etc. which in *Great Controversy* are applied to 1844 or times earlier, are also applied by E.G. White to events yet future at the end of the world.

Ellen G. White used the apotelesmatic principle whereby prophecy is interpreted as applying to more than one time and one event. She applied such passages as Joel 2:28; Mal. 4:5,6; Matt. 24; Rev. 6:14; Matt. 25:1-13; Rev. 14:8; and Dan. 8:14 to separate eras. Particularly do we find her applying eschatological motifs such as the shut door, the marriage, the mid-night cry, the shaking, the sealing, the signs in the heavens, to events associated with 1844 — but also she applies the same themes to the end of the world yet future. For example, she used Matt. 24:1-13 as a prophetic parable of the Miller movement (*GC* 428) but in *Christ's Object Lessons* applied the same passage to the worldwide church at the end of the world. Here she makes no reference whatever to the Miller movement. The midnight cry becomes the Loud Cry of Rev. 18:1-4, and the marriage is the union of the church with Christ at His coming (instead of His entrance into the Most Holy Place to be married to the New Jerusalem as taught in *Great Controversy*).

The *Great Controversy* application of Matt. 25:1-13 and Dan. 8:14 had some appropriateness for an age that could have witnessed the return of the Lord had all who professed the name of Christ been true to duty. As it is, it is no longer valid to interpret the eschatological prophecies in the identical way that our Millerite pioneers did. Thus Ellen White can declare in letters about the turn of the century that the bride is the church (though in *Great Controversy* the opposite is declared). She made plain in her first pronouncements on the topic, that the heavenly signs are yet future. See *Early Writings* 41. **If the marriage, the shut door, heavenly signs, the sealing, the shaking, the seventh trumpet (all of which were applied to the times surrounding 1844 by our pioneers) are all yet future, it is quite consistent to say that the full application of Dan. 8:14 likewise so applies.** *Patriarchs and Prophets* 358 and the last pages of *Great Controversy* (where such terms as “vindicate,” “purify,” “clean,” or cognates are common) indicate that this was Ellen White’s position also.

Similarly, most of the later statements by E.G. White about the Day of Atonement apply it to both advents, with Christ entering the Most Holy at His ascension. Nowhere does E.G. White equate the cleansing of the sanctuary with the Investigative judgment. (D. Neufeld also in the *Review* of Feb. 14, 1980, warned against such an identification.) The former is one of the landmarks being clearly established before the end of the 1840’s, whereas the doctrine of the investigative judgment was not held by us as a people till near the end of the 1850’s. The doctrine of the investigative judgment is not one of the landmarks, and there is no vision from Ellen White that teaches it. Neither is there any Biblical basis for a judgment that began over a hundred years ago. Scripture does teach pre-advent judgment — namely Christ’s sealing as His own through His imputed merits all whose names are still in the book of life on the eve of probation’s close. This is no attenuated affair. See Dan. 12:1. The judgment of Dan. 7:9-13 and 8:14, like that of Rev. 14:7, is a judgment upon the wicked which simultaneously vindicates the righteous.

It is essential to have a better view of inspiration than most Seventh-day Adventists have at present. Only the picture given in *Selected Messages* 1:15-39 will suffice, where inspiration is pointed out as perfect for practical purposes, but involving a union of the human with the divine whereby the inspired writers become God's penmen but not His pen, subject to error, and certainly not representing God in rhetoric or logic.

Ellen White never claimed infallibility, and demonstrable error is present in her writings. There is neither historical nor exegetical evidence for the *Great Controversy* application of the fate of the two witnesses to the events of the French Revolution. Neither is there any evidence for Aug. 11, 1840, as a fulfilment of prophecy. Our scholars have known about both of these errors for nearly a hundred years. Ellen White's conceptual expression of the investigative judgment is as surely drawn from Uriah Smith and J.N. Andrews as her other prophetic expositions were drawn from such men. But none of these interpreters was infallible. According to E.G. White, her writings are not to be used as the basis of doctrine or to solve doctrinal issues. She refused over the decades of the "daily" controversy to decide the issue, and forbade men to use her writings to that end. The same applies to present-day controversy over sanctuary interpretation. On the Bible and the Bible only our doctrinal beliefs must rest. When fierce doctrinal controversy was waging over the identity of the law in Galatians, she affirmed that it was God's will that the issue be solved from Scripture and not from her writings. The same principle applies today.

Nevertheless, those who wish to reject Ellen White as a special messenger with the gift of prophecy should remember that Adventism could never have become what it has but for God's providential leading through Ellen G. White. In crisis after crisis she proved a worthy prophetess, and a guide and protector to the tiny church. This includes the 1844 disappointment, the Minneapolis conference, the Holy Flesh movement, the Kellogg crisis, etc. Neither her use of multiple sources, or her errors of exposition disqualify her from her place as a worthy servant of God, His providential agency to aid His people in the last days. But we honour her best if we see her writings as she herself declared them to be — but a "lesser light" when compared with Holy Scripture, "the greater light." To use her own words:

"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. ... God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms."  
(GC 11, 595).

See our summary of the conclusion of this manuscript including our comments on the unique nature of the message God has given this church for the world, and see chapter 2, for the essence of what the New Testament teaches regarding the two apartments of the sanctuary.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- AG Arndt, W.F., and Gingrich, F.W., ed., *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (E. T., Cambridge-Chicago, 1957)
- Ap Appendix
- BDB Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon*
- CT *Christianity Today*
- ed. editor
- EB *The Expositor's Bible*
- HERE *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*
- ICC *The International Critical Commentary*
- JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JThCh *Journal for Theology and Church*
- K-B Koehler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*
- LXX The Septuagint
- nd. no date
- N.T. New Testament
- O.T. Old Testament
- RSV Revised Standard Version of the Bible
- SDABC *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*
- TDNT *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, and G. Friedrich, F. T. by G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, 1964-74)



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