

PURPOSE

Reflections is the official newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. It seeks to share information concerning doctrinal and theological developments among Adventists and to foster doctrinal and theological unity in the world church. Its intended audience is church administrators, church leaders, pastors, and teachers.

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NEWS AND COMMENTS

CONTROLLING BEAK SIZE AND SHAPE

A group of scholars, namely A. Abzhanov, W. P. Kuo, C. Hartmann, B. R. Grant, P. R. Grant, and C. J. Tabin, recently wrote an article entitled “The Calmodulin Pathway and Evolution of Elongated Beak Morphology in Darwin’s Finches.” It was published in *Nature* 442 (2006):563-567.

Summary. Darwin’s finches of the Galapagos Islands comprise a group of fourteen closely related species, with major differences primarily in their beaks. The ground finches, genus *Geospiza*, illustrate these differences especially well. The molecule, calmodulin, is produced at higher levels in *Geospiza* species with long beaks than in those with short beaks. Experimental manipulation of calmodulin production in chickens confirmed its effects in elongation of the upper beak. This finding shows that small changes in gene regulation might account for beak morphological divergence in the Galapagos finches.

Comment. This invaluable example can help explain how the Galapagos finches have diverged morphologically. Beak size

and shape is a key character in identifying different types of birds, and this study may help illuminate how some of these differences originated.

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THE YEAR-DAY PRINCIPLE

Until the 19th century, most students of the apocalyptic books Daniel and Revelation used the historicist method to interpret the time prophecies in these books. One of the main pillars of the historicist method is the year-day principle which says that a day in apocalyptic time prophecies represents a year. During the 19th century, the historicist method was slowly replaced by the preterist and futurist systems of interpretation both of which deny the year-day principle. Preterists place most of the prophecies into the past up to the time of the Roman Empire; futurists place most of them into the future, specifically into the last seven years prior to the Second Advent. According to their view, the beginning point of the seven years is the secret rapture of God’s people.

Seventh-day Adventists continue to use the historicist method of interpretation because they believe that the year-day principle is not a paradigm imposed on the text, but that it is found in Scripture itself. In Daniel chapters seven and eight, for example, the interpreting angel uses the historicist method to explain the various symbols as empires in history, one following the other.

It is ironic that one of the best summaries of the year-day principle, based on the works of T. R. Birks¹ and H. G. Guinness,² is found

in Desmond Ford's first commentary on Daniel.³ In his second commentary on Daniel, eighteen years later, he no longer uses it.⁴ Contrary to this position, most Seventh-day Adventist interpreters believe that the year-day principle is based on Scripture. The main points in support of it can be summarized as follows:⁵

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

2) The fact that the visions deal with the rise and fall of known empires in a history, which extended over hundreds of years, indicates that the prophetic time periods must also cover long time periods.

3) The peculiar way in which the time periods are expressed indicates that they should not be taken literally. If the "time, times, and half a time" in Daniel 7:25 stands for three and a half literal years, God would probably have said "three years and six months." In Luke 4:25 and James 5:17 where three and a half literal years are referred to, each time the phrase is "three years and six months." Similarly, Paul remained in Corinth "a year and six months" (Acts 18:11), and David reigned in Hebron "seven years and six months" (2 Sam. 2:11).

The year-day principle is not a paradigm imposed on the text; it is found in Scripture itself.

4) In Daniel 7 the four beasts which together account for a reign of at least one thousand years are followed by the little horn power. It is the focus of the vision since it is most directly in opposition to God. Three and a half literal years for the struggle between the little horn and the Most High are out of proportion to the comprehensive scope of salvation history portrayed in this vision. The same applies to Revelation 12:6 and 14 where the one thousand and two hundred and sixty days or three and a half times cover most of the history between the first and second advent of Christ.

5) According to the context, the expressions "time, times, and half a time" (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14), "forty-two months" (Rev. 11:2; 13:5), and "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (Rev. 11:3; 12:6) all apply to the same time period, but the natural expression "three years and six months" is not used once. "The Holy Spirit seems, in a manner, to exhaust all the phrases by which the interval could be expressed, excluding always that one form which would be used of course in ordinary writing, and is used invariably in Scripture on other occasions, to denote the literal period. This variation is most significant if we accept the year-day system, but quite inexplicable on the other view."⁶

6) The prophecies in Daniel 7-8, and 10-12 lead up to the "time of the end" (8:17; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9) which is followed by the resurrection (12:2) and the setting up of God's everlasting kingdom (7:27). "In the sweep of history described in these prophecies that extends from the

prophet in the sixth century B.C. to our time and beyond, literal time periods of only 3½ to 6½ years are not capable of reaching anywhere near this final end time. Therefore, these prophetic time periods should be seen as symbolic and standing for considerable longer periods of actual time extending to the end of time."⁷

7) The only commonly used measure of time not used in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is the year. Days, weeks, and months, are referred to, but not the time unit "year." The most obvious explanation is that the "year" is the unit symbolized throughout these prophecies.

8) There are a number of texts in the historical narratives of the OT in which "days" stands for "years" (Ex. 13:10; 1 Sam. 2:19; 20:6; Judges 11:40 etc.). Also in the poetic portions of the OT "days" at times stands in parallel to the word for "year" (Job 10:5; 32:7; 36:11; Ps. 77:5; 90:9-10; etc.). "Both of these usages provide a ready background for the kind of thought that could be extended to the more specific quantitative application of this relationship in apocalyptic."⁸

9) In the judgment prophecies of Numbers 14 and Ezekiel 4 God deliberately used the day for a year principle as a teaching device. "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know my rejection" (Numbers 14:34). And in an acted-out parable the prophet Ezekiel was told to lie 390 days on his left side and 40 days on his right side, "I have laid on you a day for each year" (Ezekiel 4:6).

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

References to the year-day principle can be found in Jewish writings of the intertestamental period.⁹ The *Book of Jubilees*, for example, uses the word "week" to refer to seven years. As O. S. Wintermute explains, "Each period of seven years is referred to as a 'week of years' or simply as a 'week.' Each period of seven weeks of years, i.e., forty-nine years, is designated a jubilee."¹⁰ Thus Noah's age in Jubilee 10:16 is given in these words, "Nine hundred and fifty years he completed in his life, nineteen jubilees and two weeks and five years."¹¹

19 jubilees	= 19 x 49 years	=	931 years
2 weeks	= 2 x 7 years	=	14 years
5 years	= 1 x 5	=	5 years
			<u>950 years</u>

Time periods and dates in the book of Jubilee are frequently given with the week standing for 7 years. For example, the marriage of Abram to Sarai in 12:9 took place “in the fortieth jubilee, in the second week, in its seventh year;”¹² and Abram’s change of name in 15:1-7 occurred “in the fifth year of the fourth week of that jubilee in the third month.”¹³

Conclusion

Our study has shown that the historicist method of interpretation is not a Johnny-come-lately on the theological scene, rather it rests on a solid biblical and historical foundation. It was used by the angel interpreter in the book of Daniel and during the intertestamental period by Jewish writers. Until the nineteenth century it was employed by most interpreters of the Bible. And in spite of what some may claim, it is not an outdated method belonging to the past, but a valid principle of interpreting apocalyptic prophecies today.

¹Thomas R. Birks, *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy* (London: William E. Painter, 1843).

²H. G. Guinness, *The Approaching End of the Age, Viewed in the Light of History, Prophecy, and Science*. 8th ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1882).

³Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1978), 300-305.

⁴In his latest Daniel commentary he denies that the 70 weeks are cut off from the 2300 years of Daniel 8 and adds, “Neither do I consider that the year-day principle should be applied in the study of the prophecies of Daniel, though I recognize it as a providential aid over long centuries of Christ’s delay.” (D. Ford, *Daniel and the Coming King*, [Newcastle, CA: Desmond Ford Publications, 1996], 298).

⁵See Ford, *Daniel*, 300-305 and William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Revised edition, DARCOM, 7 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 1:67-104.

⁶Thomas R. Birks, *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy* (London: William E. Painter, 1843), 352.

⁷Shea, 73.

⁸Ibid. 103.

⁹See *ibid.*, 106-110.

¹⁰O. S. Wintermute, “Jubilees: A New Translation and Introduction,” *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed., James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1985), 2:39.

¹¹Ibid., 76.

¹²Ibid., 81.

¹³Ibid., 85.

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A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

I. Christianity and the Nature of Science

There is reason to believe that Christianity provided the ideal culture for the origin of modern science (Polkinghorne 1994, Ratzsch 2000). The creation of the universe by a rational, intelligent God explains why the universe is so intelligible and open to our scientific investigation. Many

great scientists in past centuries viewed their scientific work as thinking God’s thoughts after Him (Moreland, 1989, p. 24), but science as an institution has now rejected the creation account as its foundation.

As modern science developed in the 17th to early 20th centuries, early views of the philosophy of science

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maintained that a theory is valid science only if empirical data verify, or

indicate the truth of the theory. In this materialistic outlook the material and physical were considered to be real, but there could not be any human religious or ethical knowledge unless such knowledge was independently verified by science (Murphy 1990; Ratzsch 2000).

But it became evident that science is rarely that simple and clear cut. Philosophers of science have increasingly recognized that although science is an effective way to discover new principles of how natural phenomena function, scientific conclusions are always open to change because of new discoveries (Popper 1959, 1963; Kuhn 1970; Laudan, 1977; and Lakatos 1978). Science is always a fascinating, continuing search, but it does not reach absolute truth.

Science is still perceived as an important rational activity, but it is now recognized that science is affected by sociology, economics, and other very human factors (Kuhn 1970; Lakatos 1978; Murphy 1990). Because of these human factors, theories at times seem more strongly supported than they really are. If at a given time there is a strong consensus among scientists regarding the truth of a particular theory, this consensus in some cases may result from philosophical or sociological factors, rather than from a body of evidence demonstrating the truth of the theory.

For example, the scientific consensus that all life forms resulted from evolution is based on a common scientific commitment to an anti-supernatural philosophy, rather than from the ad-

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equacy of the evidence. If so, then it is reasonable to call for a reevaluation of the evidence and for a new, more open philosophical framework for interpreting the evidence. Judeo-Christian theology makes many historical claims about the existence of persons and the occurrence of events that should be testable by empirical methods (Laudan 1977). If the use of biblical concepts for suggesting testable hypotheses leads to improvement of knowledge, then it is beneficial to science. Theology and science are still, in important ways, quite different, but I believe there are reasons to propose that theology and faith can play a legitimate role in influencing science.

The problem of evil, in the form of pain and suffering, according to Laudan, “is at its core an empirical problem *par excellence*: how can one maintain one’s belief in a benevolent, omnipotent deity in the face of all of the death,

disease, and natural disasters which are a daily element of our experience” (Laudan 1977, p. 190)? As we will see, the solution of this problem is crucial if theism is to be defensible to many people in this scientific age.

II. *What Should Be the Relationship Between Science and Religion?*

There are various ways to define the types of possible relations between science and religion (Barbour 1990; Murphy 1990; Peacocke 1993; Ratzsch 2000), but I am going to compare a set of three models for this relationship. The three models differ in how they view theological knowledge. In model one theological “knowledge” is not really knowledge, and is not allowed to influence scientific thinking. In model two theological and scientific knowledge are both accepted, but are kept separate. There is still little influence of theology on scientific thinking. Model three encourages integration; religion can, and should, influence scientific thinking.

Model 1: Separate Domains

Science and religion remain isolated from each other. The philosophy of naturalism dictates that science must reject any explanations involving the supernatural in the origin of life forms, or in any other process. Religion is at most an emotional experience and is not relevant to scientific issues. This entirely secular approach (naturalism) appears to be the closest to what could be thought of as an “official” description of science as practiced in the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

Following a naturalistic model to its logical conclusions implies that pain, suffering, and death are a natural result of the laws of nature, and there is no other meaning for them to be found - we need to grow up and live with this.

Critique of Model 1. Is science

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an open-ended search for truth, wherever the evidence may lead? Or is it a game, defined by a set of rules, that seeks to find answers as far as it can go *within* those rules? For many scientists the relevant rules in the study of origins are defined by naturalism, and even if life was actually created by God, the rules determine that science can never consider that hypothesis, no matter what the evidence indicates. But although science may have limits in evaluating hypotheses that imply a designer, advances in molecular biology make it increasingly difficult to justify excluding the hypothesis that life requires an intelligent inventor. That idea must be at least open for candid discussion (Behe 1996; Johnson 1997; Dembski 1999).

Model 2: Parallel but Separate

This model seeks to understand the relationship be-

tween science and religion, because they are both accepted as sources of truth. However, religion is not allowed to influence science. Religion and science remain separate, searching in parallel to each other.

The writings of Peacocke (1993), Polkinghorne (1994, 2000), Barbour (1990) and Murphy (1990, 2002) illustrate what I mean by the *parallel but separate* model. All four authors believe in God as the ruler of the universe and in Jesus Christ as God’s supreme revelation to humankind. They seek to understand God’s revelation and how it gives us hope and salvation.

They also accept the entire theory of evolution and of the origin of life from non-living material as understood by science today. They agree that evolution through hundreds of millions of years has been God’s method of creation, including the evolution of humans and apes from common ancestors (theistic evolution). They do not accept any kind of literal reading of Genesis (Polkinghorne 1994, p. 21-22), and they deny that religion has access to any privileged source such as revelation. They also insist that science must generally proceed without interference from religion. Thus in practice they actually accept methodological naturalism in the study of origins, but are different from Model 1 in that they do see the search for religious truth to be a valid scholarly exercise. These authors’ conclusions well portray the theological implications of theistic evolution.

In their belief system there was no literal Garden of Eden or Adam and Eve. There was no fall into sin as many Christians believe. Evil, pain, suffering, and death did not result from human sin, but are a natural part of the evolutionary process, as seen today and in the fossil record.

They propose that life arose through the laws of nature, and then evolved into many different types of plants and animals, including humans, through the action of “chance and law” - mutation and natural selection. How can this theology explain pain and suffering, disease, death, natural disasters like earthquakes and floods (natural evil), and cruelty, concentration camps, and murder (moral evil)? All four of these authors conclude that if God had imposed his will on the world, nature and humankind would not have been free. God could only give the gift of freedom by letting the world “make itself” through the operation of chance and law - mutation and natural selection, and/or processes at the microscopic and sub-atomic levels. The uncertainties in these processes were what allowed freedom to emerge in nature generally and in humanity specifically. The chance element in this process not only produced the freedom necessary to realize the full potential of self-conscious, God-conscious beings, but the same process also of necessity produced the natural evil that is so destructive, because mutations are random and do not know what the organism needs. The freedom and the evil came as a package deal, and “even god cannot have one without the other” (Peacocke 1993, p. 125).

Critique of Model 2. This concept has many theological consequences. Death and evil were not the result of any human action, since there was no Adam and Eve and no human fall. Thus the classical explanation of the redemptive work of Christ in saving us from the effects of sin is not correct, and pain and suffering were the result of God's method of creating by evolution. These authors then explain that God does not walk away and leave us to suffer, but He suffers with us. Jesus hanging on the cross was God (but, for some authors, in a merely human form) suffering with us in our pain and suffering.

However, their conclusion that pain and suffering are inevitable natural results if God allows us to have freedom depends entirely on their assumption that all life is the

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result of evolution. It is not clear that science has demonstrated the truth of this assertion (Brand 2006a, 2006b). It seems likely that human free will operates

through the features God built into the amazing complexity of our brain cells.

The world of cancer, earthquakes, accidents, death, child abuse, and Auschwitz is not "free" at all; it is just dysfunctional. If evolution, with its inevitable result of pain and suffering, was God's way of creating, this is inconsistent with the Christian view of a God who has a personal concern for individual humans. If their theistic evolution model were correct, I would have to wonder why Scripture and its "god" would be interesting to me at all. The conclusions reached in this *parallel but separate* model do not come from Scripture, but are imposed on Scripture by a particular philosophy of science and religion.

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Model 3: Interaction, with God Having Priority in Our Thinking

This model encourages active interaction between science and religion in topics where they make overlapping claims, because both are accepted as sources of cognitive knowledge about the universe. Feedback between them encourages deeper thinking in both areas and provides an antidote to carelessness on both sides. Both religion and science can make factual suggestions to each other, which can be the basis for careful thought and hypothesis testing. This model respects the scientific process, but also recognizes truth in Scripture. There are pitfalls to be avoided in any such integration effort, but these are human problems, not religious problems, and there are ways to minimize the risk (Brand 2006b).

The interaction model that I will propose takes Scripture more literally than model 2. In this more conservative approach to the Bible, "reason must acknowledge an authority superior to itself, and heart and intellect must bow before the great I AM" (White 1892). The events described in the Bible are accepted as actual historical happenings including the miracles and God's literal communication of ideas and facts to at least some Bible writers such as Moses, Daniel, Paul, and John (not through verbal inspiration, but communication of thoughts).

This model begins with the assumption that science is an open-ended search for truth, and if we wish to ask whether there were unique events (supernatural or otherwise) in the history of the universe, arbitrary rules like the philosophy of naturalism must be set aside so that the search can proceed unhindered. Some statements about the world can be derived from Scripture and can be tested by the methods of science. In this process science and religion challenge each other in areas where they are in conflict, motivating more careful thought and research in both areas and avoiding superficial explanations. The scientific process used will be the same as that used by others and will differ only in 1) the questions that are asked; 2) the evidence likely to catch the researcher's attention; and 3) the range of explanations open for consideration (Brand 1997, fig. 6.4, 2006b, fig. 2).

This approach is not just a theory, but some of us have been using it for years and find that it works very well. We have space here for just one brief example, the falling of the walls of Jericho. When the walls of Jericho fell down, as described in Scripture, the result would be a pile of rubble. If we can now identify the ruins of Jericho, we can study that pile of rubble. Science would probably not be able to determine whether the walls fell from an earthquake or from a divine push. However, before beginning the archeological study we could use biblical information to predict that the walls fell down suddenly, rather than disintegrating gradually through time, and then test this hypothesis or prediction with the methods of science. This example is theoretical, but several examples of actual published paleontological or geological research that resulted from this same process are described in Brand 2006a.

Theological Implications of the Interaction Model.

This philosophy for integrating science and religion yields a consistent, rational explanation for the origin of life and of pain and suffering. A conservative reading of Scripture portrays a cosmic conflict between God and a created being called Satan. Humans were created sinless, but with brains designed by God with the ability to make free choices. Satan and human beings made the wrong choice, and sin, pain, suffering and death for the human race resulted from this choice, along with changes in the geological structure of the earth, producing natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and storms. Evil is the result of sin, not a part

of God's plan. These theological concepts cannot be studied by science, but they are affected by one's philosophy of the relationship between religion and science. For me personally, the coherent explanation of pain and suffering resulting from my application of Model 3, in contrast with the explanation offered in Model 2, is a powerful argument in favor of the epistemological approach underlying Model 3.

Of course this philosophy requires that humans actually originated in a creation event that predated the formation of the sequence of fossils in the fossil record. If pain, suffering, death, and geological hazards like earthquakes and volcanoes resulted from human sin, then humans could not have evolved from ape-like ancestors near the end of geological history, but had to have been in existence from the beginning of life's history on earth.

This challenges some of science's contemporary interpretations, and predicts that a number of significant

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phenomena are yet to be discovered, especially in the areas of geology, paleontology, and radiometric dating. It also accepts the reality of divine creation and God's involvement in earth

history. Jesus demonstrated this ability when He healed people or raised the dead, which required the creation of healthy tissue at that moment.

Many scientists object strongly to such proposed divine interventions that do not follow the normal course of natural processes. However, if these interventions did occur (and Scripture says or implies they did), should science pretend they didn't happen, or is it better for science to recognize them? Perhaps the reason Scripture tells us about the creation and flood, and gives us insights into the amount of time represented, is because God knew we would have trouble correctly interpreting the complex evidence from the ancient past without these insights.

Conclusions

There is an important relationship between religion and the philosophy of science. However, an incorrect philosophy of science will lead us away from biblical truth, if we are logically consistent. If we do not seek to learn from God's communications to us and even use them to inform our science, then science, not God, has priority in our thinking. A correct philosophy of science facilitates a constructive integration of religion and science, making use of all that we as Christians know from Scripture. We can even utilize that knowledge to open our eyes to potential new discoveries in science. Christians have an exciting opportunity to follow God's leading in this integra-

tion process, to demonstrate to a skeptical modern world that Christianity speaks not just to the emotions, but also reaches the mind and challenges it to reach beyond a mere human view of the universe, and to grasp a truly harmonious understanding of its origin and destiny.

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FOCUS ON SCRIPTURE

THE ABOMINATION THAT CAUSES DESOLATION

The recent incursion of futurism among Adventists has led some to reinterpret the use of the phrase "the abomination that causes desolation" and the "continual" in the book of Daniel. Here we will concentrate on the phrase "the abomination that causes desolation." The phrase is found in Dan 11:31 (LXX: *bdelugma erēmōseōs*) and 12:11 (LXX: *to bdelugma tēs erēmōseōs*). Similar expressions

are found in 9:27 (LXX: *bdelugma erēmōseōn*), and 8:13 (LXX: *hē hamartia erēmōseōs*). We will briefly examine those passages.

I. Daniel 8:13

Here we find the phrase “the rebellion [Heb. *happešaʿ*] that causes desolation [*šomēm*],” instead of “the abomination [*šiqqûš*] that causes desolation [*šomēm*].” Both phrases appear to refer to the same phenomenon.¹ The Hebrew word translated “transgression,” “rebellion” (*pešaʿ*), designates a person who “does not merely rebel or protest against Yahweh but breaks with him, takes away what is his, robs, embezzles, misappropriates it.”² The activity of the little horn is a willful rebellion against and a misappropriation of the work of mediation of the heavenly Prince, Christ, that results in “desolation” or spiritual “devastation.”

When the verb “to desolate” (*šmm*) is applied to inanimate objects, it describes the state in which a place is left after being attacked by enemies (e.g., Lev. 26:31; Joel 1:17). When applied to humans it refers to the psychological impact produced by the desolation on those who observed it (1 Kings 9:8; Ezra 9:3, 4; Dan 8:27; 9:18).³ In the Old Testament a desolated place is deserted, abandoned by those who used to live there or who had access to it (e.g., Lev. 26:22, 34; Isa. 33:8; Jer. 33:10; Zeph. 3:6; Zech. 7:14). The context of Dan. 8:13 indicates that the desolation is related to the attack of the little horn (the church during the Middle Ages) against the heavenly sanctuary. The act of rebellion caused spiritual desolation by usurping the priestly work of the Prince, by rejecting the very foundation of the sanctuary, and by establishing its own priestly work.

II. Daniel 9:27

This text is part of the prophecy of the 70 weeks, with its prediction of the coming of the Messiah and the destruction of the *temple and the city of Jerusalem* in A.D. 70. The destruction is associated with the “abomination that causes desolation.” The phrase is not exactly the same one used in Dan. 8:13. Instead of “rebellion” we find “abomination” (*šiqqûš*), also used in Dan. 11:31 and 12:11. In 9:27 there is a problem of syntax; while the noun “abomination” is plural (*šiqqûšîm*, “abominations”) the participle is singular (*mēšomēm*, poel participle, “that causes desolation”). This has led to different interpretations of the phrase. But the problem could be solved if we identify the plural as a plural of intensification, meaning in this case “utter abomination.”

The noun *šiqqûš* (“abomination”) is employed in the OT in cultic contexts to refer to “images and symbols of pagan deities,”⁴ that is, to idolatry (cf. 1 Kings 11:5; 2 Kings 23:13; Isa. 66:3; Jer. 32:34). A good example is found in Zech. 9:7, where “the forbidden [*šiqqûš*, “abominable”] food from between their teeth,” refers to the repulsive meat of the pagan sacrificial animal. *Šiqqûš* fundamentally

designates that which is essentially incompatible with the worship of the Lord. Those who practice abominations, including the Israelites, become themselves abominable to the Lord (Hosea 9:10). This is also the case with Israelites who eat abominable animals. In Lev. 11:43 the verb *šqs*, “to detest as ceremonially unclean,”⁵ is employed in the piel formation (*šiqqēš*), meaning “to make oneself as something unclean and abhorrent”⁶ by eating unclean animals. The noun *šeqeš* (“cultic abomination”), another noun from the same word family, is occasionally used to refer to unclean animals that are repulsive and detestable to the Lord. It is closely related to the idea of uncleanness and, like uncleanness, it designates what is essentially incompatible with the holiness of the Lord (Lev. 7:21; 11:10-13, 20, 23, 41).

In Daniel 9:27 *šiqqûš* designates the abominable force that after the death of the Messiah causes desolation by destroying the city and particularly the temple. This is precisely how Jesus understood the passage when He applied it to the future literal destruction of both the city and the temple by the Roman armies.⁷ This usage of the phrase “abomination that causes desolation” is different from what we find in Dan. 8:13, 11:31, and 12:11.

III. Daniel 11:31; 12:11

In these passages the abomination is directly related to the “daily” (*tāmîd*), i.e. Christ’s mediation in the heavenly sanctuary. In Dan. 8:12 the little horn, through an act of rebellion, usurps the role of the Prince and places its own hosts over the “daily.” It is to this action that Dan. 8:13 is referring with the phrase “the rebellion that causes desolation.” In Dan. 11:31 the king of the north desecrates the temple, removes the “daily,” and then sets up the “abomination that causes desolation.” Again we find the “daily” removed and the abomination/rebellion taking its place. The opposite of the *tāmîd* (“the daily”) is the *šiqqûš šomēm* (“the abomination that causes desolation”). Daniel 8:9-13 indicates that the language of “rebellion/abomination” is describing the work of the little horn in establishing or setting up its own system of mediation and worship, its own daily services. It is to that same activity that the phrase “the abomination that causes desolation” is referring to in Dan. 12:11. The verb *nāthan* (“to set up”) is used in a variety of ways in the OT, but here it can be translated as “to set, to place, to lay,” a usage associated with idolatry (Lev. 26:1). In this case what is set up is the “abomination that causes desolation.” The setting up of this abomination includes the historical process that led to setting aside the “daily.”

Some Adventists are now arguing that the abomination of desolation in 12:11 designates the enforcement of Sunday observance shortly before the coming of the Lord, and the “daily” is somehow connected to the Sabbath. That interpretation lacks contextual and linguistic support. It is fundamentally a speculative view that should not be taken seriously. The phrase “abomination that causes desola-

tion” designates what took place during the destruction of Jerusalem and the work of the papacy during the Middle Ages. The slightly different variations in the wording of the phrase in the Hebrew text of Daniel point to those two different events.

¹Johan Lust, “Cult and Sacrifice in Daniel: The Tamid and the Abomination of Desolation,” in *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East, Proceedings of the International Conference Organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 17th to the 20th of April 1991*, edited by J. Quaegebeur (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1993), 285.

²R. Knerim, “*Peša*,” in *Theological Lexicon of the OT*, vol. 2, edited by E. Jenni and C. Westermann (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 1036 (hereafter *TLOT*).

³F. Stolz, “*Šmm*,” in *TLOT*, vol. 2, 1372.

⁴Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, M. Richardson, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1640 (hereafter *KBL*³).

⁵*KBL*³, 1646.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷The way the different gospels report the comments of Jesus helps us understand how He understood the prophecy of Dan. 9:27. The phrase Mark uses, “standing where it does not belong” (Mark 13:14), is clarified by Matthew with the phrase, “standing in the holy place” (Matt. 24:15) referring to the temple. This is based on the Greek text of Dan. 9:27 that renders the Hebrew phrase, “*al k'naph šiqqūšim m'šomēm*” (“On a wing an abomination that causes desolation”), as “on the temple there will be an abomination that causes desolation” (*epi to hieron bdelugma tōn erēmōseōn estai*). Matthew suggests that those who practice abomination are themselves abominable and are now present in the temple to destroy it, causing desolation. Luke clearly defines the referent of the abomination as the Roman armies that surrounded Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-22; cf. T. J. Gedert, “Apocalyptic Teaching,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by J. B. Green, S. McKnight, I. H. Marshall [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992], 23). Jesus’ prediction, based on Dan. 9:27, “concerning the ‘abomination of desolation’ was fulfilled when the Jerusalem Temple was desecrated and destroyed in A.D. 70” (*ibid.*).

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SCRIPTURE APPLIED—A BIBLE STUDY

HOTLINE TO GOD

In our days cell phones have become so common that many think they would not be able to do without them. They feel deprived, vulnerable, and lonely without this device that allows them to connect to others. Prayer is also such a hotline, a hotline to God. Through prayer God can be reached always and wherever we are.

I. What Prayer Is

Prayer has been defined differently, but many of these definitions are complementary. Prayer is talking with God, a pouring out of one’s heart to God. It has been called the breathing of the soul.

Elements of prayer are adoration and praise, thanksgiving, petitions, intercession, meditation, and silence (see 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Rev. 5:13-14; James 1:5; Zech. 2:13).

II. Invitation to Prayer

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Jesus is an example in praying | - | Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 11:1; 22:41, 44 |
| Jesus’ prayers | - | Matt. 26:39, 42, 44; Luke 23:34, 46; John 11:41-42; 12:28; 17:1-26 |
| Jesus provides a model prayer | - | Matt. 6:9-13 (the Lord’s Prayer) |
| Jesus calls on us to pray | - | Matt. 5:44; 7:7-11; 9:38; 24:20; 26:41; Luke 18:1; 21:36 |

III. God’s Responses

1. God Ignores the Prayer

At times humans feel that God ignores their prayer, while in reality this is not true. God has different ways of answering prayer (1 Sam. 28:6), acting according to his schedule and for the good of his children. Only a few cases are reported in which God did not react to prayer. This happened when persons made decisions against God, but then realized in their distress that they needed God--1 Sam. 28:6; Ps. 18:41.

2. God Does Not Grant the Request

Deut. 3:26 - God refused to let Moses enter the promised land. The reason was that Moses had acted on his own authority and against God’s will (Num. 20:1-13). Moses’ request was not granted as he expected. Yet, it was granted in a better way--Moses was taken to heaven (Jude 1:9; Matt. 17:1-3).

3. God Grants the Request

Many cases in Scripture show that God actually listened to prayers and answered them accordingly.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| (1) Jesus promises to answer prayers | - | Matt. 18:19; 21:22; John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23 |
| (2) Prayers for the sick are being answered in God’s ways | - | James 5:13-16 |
| (3) Elijah’s prayers were answered | - | James 5:17-18 |
| (4) Daniel’s prayers were answered | - | Dan. 2:16-23; 9; 10:12-14 |

IV. Recommendations for Effective Prayer

God is free to answer prayers as He wills. Yet following the guidelines listed below may reveal our sincerity and may also have an impact on our prayers:

- | | | |
|--|---|-------------------------|
| (1) Calling upon the Lord | - | Luke 11:9-13; Ps. 50:15 |
| (2) Separation from sin | - | Ps. 66:18 |
| (3) Faith | - | Matt. 21:22 |
| (4) Praying in the name of Jesus (agreeing with Him) | - | John 14:13-14 |

- (5) Abiding in Jesus - John 15:7
This includes
obedience—v. 10
- (6) Praying with others - Matt. 18:19

V. *Prayer and Assurance*

In certain areas of our lives we do not directly know God's will for us. We may bring our petitions to Him anyway, but we add to our prayer "Your will be done" (Matt. 26:42). Such prayers include requests for health, financial means, jobs, and others.

However, in other areas of our lives God's will is crystal clear. God's will is defined in Scripture. A unique promise is found in 1 John 5:14-15. It indicates that prayers in accordance with God's will are already answered while we are still praying. When asking ourselves what is in agreement with the will of God, we detect two major areas: (1) All of God's commandments reflect His will. (2) All of His promises reflect His will.

If in prayer we claim one of God's promises or ask Him for strength to keep His commandments, we can have the assurance that God has answered this prayer.

Samples of divine promises

- Freedom from worries - 1 Pet. 5:7
Liberation - John 8:36
The gift of the Holy Spirit - Luke 11:13
Wisdom - James 1:5
Eternal life - John 3:36
All that is needed - Matt. 6:33
Abundant life - John 10:10
Forgiveness of sins - 1 John 1:9

Samples of divine commands

- Ten Commandments - Ex. 20:2-17
Love for enemies - Matt. 5:44
Joy - Phil. 4:4
Gratitude - Eph. 5:20
Occupation with the word of Christ - Col. 3:16
Proclamation of the Gospel - Mark 16:15
Fellowship with believers - Heb. 10, 25

If I have any need that is covered by God's commands or promises--wisdom, love, joy, etc.--I may turn to God:

- (1) I ask Him for what I need.
- (2) I tell God that He has made the wonderful promise in 1 John 5:14-15 to grant requests that are in accordance with His will. I point to the divine promise or command, not to remind God but to strengthen my faith.
- (3) I thank Him right away for answering my prayer. I do not rely on my feelings, but trust in Him (Rom. 1:17; Heb. 11:6). By the way, I may also pray for faith (Mark 11:22; 9:24).

Even today and on a daily basis we may experience God. However, with regard to prayers for others we do not have the same assurance that we have when we pray for ourselves, even if these prayers for others correspond with God's will. The reason is that God does not ignore or override our free will. If, however, we decide to agree with God's will, God will do great things for us. He hears our prayers and does what is best for us.

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BOOK NOTES

Graeme S. Bradford, *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again Ellen White*. Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2006. Paperback, 287 pp. US\$25.00.

In *More Than a Prophet* Graeme Bradford articulates his views about Ellen White, Adventist history, inspiration, and the broader Adventist culture and theology that he has spent the previous twenty years analyzing. In this particular book he expands on topics raised in his two previous books, *Prophets are Human* (2004) and *People are Human* (2005). The stated purpose of the book is to respond to those who have attacked Ellen White's writings in recent years, but underlying this is a much more powerful thesis that the church needs to present the real Ellen White and has failed to do so. This thesis has generated a very strong reaction in some Adventist circles, most notably from Colin and Russell Standish who reacted negatively to Bradford in *The Greatest of All the Prophets* (2006).

From a historical point of view, it appears that there are some significant areas of concern in the depiction of Adventist history presented by Bradford (and in the reaction by Colin and Russell Standish for that matter, too). A foundational concept for Bradford is that truth is progressive. However, the important question is whether or not the direction that Bradford suggests the church needs to head is accurate. Bradford is confident that the church took a wrong turn, that the truth about Ellen White needs to be presented, and that these problems began soon after Ellen White's death (1915) at the 1919 Bible Conference.

An earlier review of *Prophets are Human* in the *BRI Newsletter* examined other problematic areas articulated again in *More Than a Prophet* that include the author's understanding of inspiration. From a historical standpoint, what troubles me the most about *More Than a Prophet* is that he seems to be starting from a false premise in his depiction of Adventist history, beginning as noted above, at the 1919 Bible Conference.

The 1919 Bible Conference has become in the past two decades a pivotal event in Adventist history. Before 1974 it was a non-event. For those who were there, none of them felt it significant enough to mention it in detail. It has only been with the passing of time that the importance of this conference has been realized. It took on new meaning in the context of discussions about Ellen White and the nature

and authority of her writings during the 1970s and 1980s. It was in this milieu that Adventists realized that there were others who had before them struggled with how to make sense of issues relating to inspiration and the authority of Ellen White's writings.

What has not been clear until recently has been the historical and theological context leading up to and surrounding the 1919 Bible Conference. Bradford depicts so-called progressives such as W. W. Prescott and A. G. Daniells as the heroes of the 1919 Bible Conference who were marginalized during the 1920s. According to him the winners were fundamentalists, individuals like J. S. Washburn and Claude Holmes, who orchestrated their downfall at the 1922 General Conference session. My own analysis of the 1919 Bible Conference transcripts (which are available in their entirety on the www.adventistarchives.org website) is that in reality two hermeneutical schools became especially apparent and polarized during the 1919 Bible Conference. One school emphasized the importance of context, but differentiated the verbal inspiration of Scripture from the thought-inspired writings of Ellen G. White. A second school emphasized the complete inerrancy of both the Bible and Ellen White's writings. Both schools were obviously influenced by the fundamentalist emphasis on the inerrancy of Scripture. What was happening in 1919 was that church leaders, in both camps, were trying to make sense of how the church should relate to a culture that had greatly changed. Adventists definitely affirmed the authority of the Bible, but where did they fit in the broader Christian culture? How would they interpret the inerrancy of the Bible? The answer to these questions lies at the very foundation of what the 1919 Bible Conference was all about.

The discussions about Ellen White at the very end of the conference were actually part of a post-session for educators attended by less than a third of those who attended the main Bible Conference. The decision to not publish the transcripts occurred before these pivotal discussions about Ellen White (on July 30 and August 1, 1919) took place. In the end the decision appears to have been driven far less by issues related to inspiration and the writings of Ellen White and more by a need to not further inflame

controversy about the interpretation of the "king of the north" in Daniel 11 and its identity as Turkey by some Adventist exegetes. This was a sensitive subject at the end of World War I. But it cannot be claimed that the church hid the truth about Ellen G. White.

The discussions about Ellen White at the end of the 1919 Bible Conference are very significant and more complex than how Bradford presents it. They also shed insight on two groups within Adventism and their interpretation of the Bible, the writings of Ellen White, and ultimately the relationship of the Bible to Ellen White's writings. Clearly a far more nuanced depiction of the 1919 Bible Conference is needed where both camps represented in 1919 were more influenced by Fundamentalism than previously realized. The need for a clearer hermeneutic of Scripture in Adventism would only become more apparent with the passing of time. This would be addressed in significant ways at the 1974 Bible Conference, in the Rio de Janeiro Statement on Methods of Bible Study (1986), and most recently in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach* (2006). This is in contrast to Bradford who asserts that the real truth about Ellen White was hidden in 1919, suppressed again in 1982, and continues to be marginalized. Bradford thus creates a revisionist platform in which he finds historical precedent for presenting his views. In the end he creates more confusion than clarity.

The publisher, Samuele Bacchiocchi, has tried to circulate this book widely and in some cases may have given the impression that it carries the support of church officials including some at the Ellen G. White Estate. It is for this reason that the White Estate has issued a disclaimer about this volume. It is unfortunate that the publisher has ventured into this enterprise without counseling with the Seventh-day Adventist Church and that he promotes a work that is unbalanced at best. The issues involved in *More Than a Prophet* are far more than purely academic. They lie at the heart and center of what Adventism is all about: how to understand and interpret Scripture and Ellen White's writings. This book does very little to biblically and historically clarify those issues.

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