

LESSON 8

Our Author's Polemic

Jesus, Foundation of the 2,300 Evenings-Mornings and the 70 "Weeks"

This week our author continues his interpretation of the 70 "weeks" of Dan. 9:24-27, commencing with a minuscule summary of his routine, Messianic polemic that

69 of the 70 weeks of this prophecy reach to "the Messiah the Prince," Jesus. Thus, Jesus Himself forms the center of this prophecy; He's the foundation, the focal point of the 70 weeks. It all rests on Jesus, "the chief corner stone" (*Eph. 2:20*).

Moreover, he returns to this prime point repeatedly: "(W)e have this incredible prophecy, given more than five hundred years earlier, pointing to the ministry of Jesus" (Sunday); "What a powerful prophecy for the messiahship of Jesus!" (Tuesday); "(T)he grounding of the 70-week prophecy is in Jesus, and because the 70-week prophecy is just part of the 2,300-day prophecy, that prophecy is grounded in Jesus, as well" (Thursday). Indeed, he drives his crucial point hard home at some length:

What's so crucial... about the 2,300-day prophecy is that, being undeniably linked to the 70-week prophecy, it is inseparably tied in with Jesus. Again, one can't tamper with those dates in any substantial way without tampering with the dates of Jesus. Jesus Himself is the Surety of this prophecy. Obviously, then, the Lord deemed the 2,300-day prophecy important enough to, in a very real sense, base it on Jesus, on the greatest and most precise prophecy concerning His earthly mission, the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9 [Thursday].

Let me save time by dismissing this folly at once by myself summarising my relevant polemics last week against these points. Quite apart from the wholly cogent concerns raised by the unusual format of this dogma – *a string of small segments precariously linked by fragile threads of often ambiguous, isolated details* – there are sufficient *uncertainties* in interpreting this prophecy to have split even its modern translations clear down their centre! For example, the anarthrous, Hebrew noun *māšīah* by no means *necessarily* denotes Jesus Christ, *the* Messiah. It is frequent in the OT to designate many a prominent, anointed person, even Cyrus! Likewise, our author completely ignores Daniel's *punctuation*, even though it is crucial to the interpretation of his prophecy. Above all, the weighty, *disjunctive* accent *atnaḥ* may very well segregate the initial 49 years from the following 434 years, leaving some princely *māšīah* to arrive upon the scene after just **49** years, not a Messianic **483**. Whatever, *would God ever bury his prime Messianic forecast in so many enigmas!*?

The 70 "Weeks" Cut Off the 2,300 Evenings-Mornings

Our author is almost as enthusiastic in driving home his deduction – *exclusive to Seventh-day Adventists!* – that these 70 "weeks" are "cut off,' obviously from the larger time prophecy of the 2,300 days." (Sabbath, compare Thursday) Moreover:

However clear it is that the 70 weeks are cut off from the 2,300 days, why do we cut them off from the beginning and not the end? The answer is because that's the only way it works logically. If we cut the 70 weeks off at the end, the 2,300 days would terminate in A.D. 34, an impossible conclusion, given the context of Daniel 8, which—parallel to Daniel 7—links the 2,300 days to the time of the end, and that hardly happened in A.D. 34. Plus, too, if you cut them off from the end, the beginning of the prophecy would start about sixteen hundred years before Babylon, the first kingdom depicted in these prophecies. In other words, cutting them off from the end doesn't work at all, given the context in which they appear. Meanwhile, cutting them off at the beginning places the start of the prophecy in the reign of Media-Persia, which fits the context of the vision (Daniel 8 began with Media-Persia) and places their end after the 1,260 years yet before the Second Coming, which also fits perfectly with the context of the vision. [Friday]

Apart from this *logic*, which is relevant only if its *theological* foundation is sound, there are *decisive* reasons why this interpretive detail is quite *exclusive* to Seventh-day Adventists. Here is one of the very worst instances of utter, *sectarian eisegesis* which you are ever likely to come across in Bible study! I will save time, too, by forthwith dismissing this sheer *ineptitude* – if not downright *intellectual dishonesty!* And I will treat the theological considerations when our author returns in Lesson 9.

The relevant Hebrew verb back of *decreed*, Dan. 9:24a, is *neḥtak*, a passive form of *ḥātak*. Simply stated, there is no evidence, except in late, *Mishnaic* Hebrew, that

this had the basic, *literal* meaning *cut off*. In Daniel's day, it meant *determine*, as attested by every modern version I have consulted, the KJV and Daniel's principal Greek translators. In this light alone *there is no pathway via the 70 "weeks" to 1844!*

The 70 "Weeks" Commenced in 457 B.C.

Our author completes his teacherly routine of reiterating relevant material on a quite specific, temporal note: "Daniel 9 gives us the exact starting point of the 70-week prophecy, 457 B.C." (Sunday, compare Introduction, Wednesday) However, I have dismissed this as rather uncertain on several grounds, quite apart from historicism's folly of *interpreting Holy Writ through its history books*. For example, the Hebrew noun behind *decree* in 25a invites the surmise that the relevant edict was Yahweh's. If, rather, it relates quite specifically to Jeremiah's prophecy, about which Daniel had been praying earnestly, 4:19 – a prime point which I will examine in detail in my Addendum A – in 2 Chr. 36:21f.; Ezra 1:1 it is clearly the one Cyrus issued in his first year. However, the temple restoration was so problematic that *it finally took three Persian decrees*, with Ezra 6:14b drawing *no* distinction between them. In brief, *our author's date, 457 B.C., gains no support even from Ezra's vast benefit of hindsight!*

The 69 "Weeks" Concluded in A.D. 27

Breaking new ground, our author now turns our attention to the terminus of the 69 "weeks". He asks, in counting 483 years from 457 B.C., "What date do you get?"

To get at the date, you need to subtract 457 from 483. That comes to 26, which would mean A.D. 26. However, we are dealing with a calendar here and not a straight number line, which goes like this: -1 0 1 2 3. The calendar, of course, doesn't have a slot for zero (there's no zero year). The calendar, instead, goes like this: ... 2 B.C., 1 B.C., A.D. 1, A.D. 2. Thus, with the zero year missing on the calendar, 483 years would extend one more year on the calendar, coming to A.D. 27 instead of 26. [Sunday]

As for methodology, our author's polemic is perfectly sound, although his date A.D. 27 depends *entirely* upon the relevance of 457 B.C., his outset of the 69 "weeks". As for the fulfilment of this forecast in Jesus Christ, our author points us to Lu. 3:122:

The prophecy... talks about Him as... the Christ; that is, Jesus in His official capacity. Luke puts John's ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, which can be dated to A.D. 27. [Sunday]

To be precise, the 69 "weeks" fall between "two distinct historical events that can be *accurately* dated" (Monday, stress supplied). I will reserve comment on the supposed precision in dating the 15th year of Tiberius' reign to the body of my critique. As for 457 B.C., its precision is utterly *irrelevant* if we are at all uncertain which decree Gabriel had in mind in Dan. 9:25. And I have said quite enough there already!

The 70th "Week" and Jesus' Atoning Death

Our author now turns to the concluding "week" of the 70, in which he observes Jesus' substitutionary death, with manifest echoes of the Mosaic sacrificial system:

Up until now, the prophecy covered the first 69 weeks. Verse 26 now introduces the last week, the final seven years of the prophecy—and it does so with an image of Christ's atoning death. Not only was He "cut off" (a different verb from that used in 9:24), but He was cut off "not for himself," giving the idea that His death was in behalf of others. We see here the substitutionary aspect of Christ's sacrifice: His death wasn't for Himself; it was for us.

It's interesting, too, that the verb (*krt*) used for "cut off" is directly linked with the Levitical sacrificial system, with those who violated the covenant being "cut off" from the people... In Daniel 9:26 we see an image of the innocent Jesus being "cut off" for the sins of others. [Monday]

Though verse 26 talked about Jesus' death somewhat directly, verse 27 talks about it in the sense of what it accomplished: the end of the earthly sacrificial system, at least in the sense that they were [*sic*] of no more value... The real sacrifice was, finally, offered; the old system had to give way for a new and better one. All that was equated with the old system—the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the sanctuary—have been replaced (*see Heb. 9:1-15*).

This occurred in the "midst of the week." That would be three and a half years... Through counting Passovers in John, we can show that it was three and a half years later, in the spring of A.D. 31, that Jesus was crucified. [Tuesday]

As for the conclusion of the entire 70 "weeks", our author shares this conviction:

[T]he 70-week prophecy talks about an affirmation of the covenant that God made with Israel. He will "confirm the covenant with many" during that specific period, obviously referring specifically to the Jews who accepted Jesus at that time. Though the prophecy itself doesn't give a specific event

for that last year, A.D. 34, many believe it was the year that the apostle Paul accepted the gospel and became the great preacher to the Gentiles (*Acts 9*). In other words, Israel's exclusivity came to a close, and a new era in salvation history was inaugurated at the end of the 490 years as the gospel went to all the world. [Wednesday]

“1844 Made Simple”

Looking much further afield, our author poses the crucial question: “If you use the 70 weeks as the starting point of the 2,300 years, what date do you come to?”

If you count 2,300 years from 457 B.C.... you get 1844; or, if you count the remaining 1810 years from A.D. 34 (2,300 minus the first 490 years), you come to 1844, as well. Thus, the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 can be shown to start in 1844. [Thursday]

Of course, in terms of simple arithmetic, our author's methodology is impeccable. However, the cogency of his crucial, terminal date 1844 depends entirely upon the accuracy of 457 B.C. as the commencement date of the complete 2,300 evenings-mornings. And to repeat myself, I have said quite enough on that matter already!

1844 and Divine Judgment

Our author now directs our memories way back to his Lesson 5, Friday, 28th July:

We saw from the parallels between Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 that the cleansing of the sanctuary (the same event as the judgment scene in Daniel 7) had to occur after the 1,260-year period in Daniel 7 and yet before the Second Coming. [Thursday]

In this light he asks: “How does the calculation done today fit in with that study?” The response he seeks is patent. However, in light of my still requiring persuasion about this purported parallel between judgment and purgation, this point must rest here. Likewise, unless and until our author's dependence upon his year-day ideology to reach 1844 is fully verified, his following question, Friday, must equally rest:

Why does the date 1844 for Daniel 8:14 show why the sanctuary being cleansed is the heavenly one, not the earthly?

1844 and Seventh-day Adventism

In passing, let me likewise merely remind my readers that implicit in our author's seemingly simple questions, following, is *the very raison d'être of this entire series of lessons – the very raison d'être of the Seventh-day Adventism is its 1844 dogma!*

Why do you think is it important for us, as Adventists, to understand this prophecy, considering that the event depicted in it, the cleansing of the sanctuary, occurred so long ago? What does it mean to us as a church today? [Friday]

1844 and the Gospel

Commendably, our author concludes on a pastoral, gospel note. However, since he will return here in a later lesson, I will reserve all comment until then regarding the salvific backdrop on which he is seeking to justify his Church's prime dogma:

The 70-week prophecy, a prophecy of the gospel, is linked with the 2,300-day prophecy. What does that tell us about why the gospel should form the foundation of our understanding of the meaning of the 2,300-day prophecy? [Friday]

Evaluation

The Relevance of A.D. 27

Were one to listen rather uncritically to our confident author, one might readily be swept along by his passion in enthusing about the salvific ministry of Jesus Christ as the *specific* focus of Daniel's 70 “weeks”. However, the cautious, open mind is quick to lose some respect for his *scholarship*, if not his *scruples*, in realising that *all talk of astounding fulfilment runs the gauntlet of major uncertainty over 457 B.C. as their outset*. Regardless, is he correct that the 15th year of Tiberius' reign “can be *accurately* dated” as A.D. 27, thus coördinating their close with Jesus' baptism?

Not according to *all* of the respected, conservative, Lukan authorities I have consulted! For example, although the details need not detain us, Great Britain's Prof. I. Howard Marshall laments: “Unfortunately.. the fifteenth year of Tiberius is ambiguous”, *The Gospel of Luke: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter, 1978), 133. And in North America, Prof. Darrel L. Bock devotes an entire Excursus to the relevant

problems, *Luke Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, 1994), 910-913. It follows, regrettably, that *our author must face the grave charge doubly that he is either inept or intellectually dishonest*. And that is a very heavy burden to bring to God's **judgment**, James 3:1!

Let me hasten to clarify here that *none of this casts any cloud over the ministry of Jesus Christ*. Rather, it raises further serious doubts over the very notion that the 70 "weeks" are in *any* way Messianic. For it is scarcely conceivable that *any* forecast of his salvific sacrifice, let alone *the most astounding of them all*, would be clouded in as many *enigmas* as Dan. 9:24-27! My Addendum B adds something here, too.

The Relevance of A.D. 31

What, though, of A.D. 31? Do the 70 "weeks" not climax in Christ's substitutionary Crucifixion? Not unless *māšīah* really is the Messiah, cut off, "but not for himself", 26a, KJV. By now no fair-minded student of Daniel should be unaware of the substantial *obstacles* facing the thesis that *māšīah* is Jesus Christ. Moreover, quite apart from the differences among modern translations, even the KJV margin offers "and shall have nothing" as a viable alternative to "but not for himself". All of our author's enthusing over the substitutionary self-sacrifice of our Lord is quite pointless, then, in light of such a *vague* forecast. Worse, he does not even bother to caution his hapless students that *26b may well predict the work of God's enemy*, similar if not identical to that of the **Little Horn**, 11:31!! In this striking regard, see my Addendum C.

The Relevance of A.D. 34

As for the conclusion of the entire 70 "weeks" in A.D. 34, my final comments must await our author's return to Dan. 9:24-27 in a later lesson, when it will be more apropos to deduce what Gabriel meant by *end* here and back in 8. Likewise, what he intended by *covenant* in the former will clarify in my Addendum C. For now, then, it will suffice for me to respond to our author's concession that, while Dan. 9:24-27 gives no "specific event for that last year, A.D. 34, many believe it was the year that the apostle Paul accepted the gospel and became the great preacher to the Gentiles". **PLEASE!!** Do we require any *more* reasons to dismiss these 70 "weeks" as Messianic!? If Dan. 9:24-27 really were the cause of *amazement* for both the huge scope and great precision of its *towering* details, *it would scarcely close with such an extremely meek whimper on a relatively minor detail of rather uncertain date!!*

Summary

By now our author's pupils are well accustomed to his enthusing repeatedly about the astonishment which ought to greet the study of Dan. 9:24-27, the OT's Messianic forecast *par excellence*. Regrettably, though, the prime amazement which the truly open mind will experience in probing it through the normative hermeneutics of conservative Bible study is that any *teacher*, let alone a **scholar**, should harness it to promote the *sectarian* interests of his Church in seeming, reckless *disregard* of such fearful warnings as 2 Tim. 2:15 and James 3:1. The striking irony, moreover, is that, whether directly or tacitly, *their backdrop is the divine judgment he must face!*

For one thing, quite apart from all of the uncertainties exposed in Lesson 7 over 457 B.C. as the outset of these 70 "weeks", there is inadequate certitude about the 15th year of Tiberius' reign to make *any* cogent claim that their penultimate "week" reached to A.D. 27. And while this is no reflexion on our Lord's ministry, it is yet one more dark cloud casting grave doubt upon the Messianic thesis of Dan. 9:24-27. Indeed, as my Addendum B verifies, *the NT knows nothing about any such notion!!*

For another, even were it possible to view the *date* A.D. 31 with assurance amongst the fulfilments of these 70 "weeks", the *identity* of *māšīah* is far from certain, 26a, as is the *meaning* of the Hebrew clause back of *but not for himself/and will have nothing/and will have no one*. As for Addendum C, its *bombshell* speaks for itself! For yet another, quite apart from Addendum C's exposé about *covenant*, 27a, I will protest again over Paul and A.D. 34 that Dan. 9:24-27 would hardly close with such an extremely meek **whimper** on a relatively **minor** detail of rather **uncertain** date!!

Addendum A

The 70 “Weeks” Prophecy Answers Daniel’s Prayer

In evaluating our author’s crucial nexus between Dan. 8 and 9, one fruitful line of inquiry is often neglected, the attractive option that *Gabriel answers Daniel’s prayer!* In other words, here is yet more cause to deem the forecast of 9 *independent* of 8.

First, Gabriel makes it perfectly manifest that the beneficiaries of his prophecy of Dan. 9:24-27 were intended to be *the nation of Israel* and their earthly capital, *the city of Jerusalem*, 24a. And of course, both his exiled *nation* and desolate *Jerusalem* were the focus of his prayer, 19b. We should not be surprised, then, if it had somewhat *less* scope than the *entire* world envisioned by the Messianic interpretation!

Secondly, it is excellent exegesis to view the senary summary of benefits, 24b, in light of Daniel’s intercessory prayer, 4-19. Indeed, in the second purpose expression of 24b, the Hebrew noun *hattāʾt* behind *sin* repeats the pair in 20, which summarises the cognate verb *hātāʾ* in 5, 8, 11, 15, although this does not universalise those benefits. But in its first purpose expression, the noun *pešaʿ* back of *transgression* is applied elsewhere by Daniel *only to the Little Horn’s devastating rebellion*, 8:12, 13! This is so salient a motif that it recurs in 11:31 and echoes in 9:27b. We should not be surprised, then, if the blessing which Yahweh offers his exiles includes *the specific eradication of the tyrant who will desecrate his temple, and the restoration of its sacred services*. In this regard, my Addendum C may be helpful to my readers.

Most conservative Christians read the verb *kāpar* rendered *atone* in the third purpose expression of 24b in terms of Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Careful exegesis may bolster this option. Yet the open mind will equally entertain the possibility, at least, that it may finally favour the total restoration of the central service of God’s temple.

Most conservative Christians equally insist that this verse’s fourth purpose expression can only be comprehended correctly via the victory of the Cross, especially when the noun *righteousness* is qualified by the temporal adjective *eternal*. However, few of such Christians have taken the trouble – as they should! – to analyse God’s *original* promise of his new covenant to recognise its *intended* application.

There is no doubt whatever that *God originally intended to offer his new covenant to those Jews who returned, repentant, from Babylonian captivity*. For one thing, he directed it to them specifically, Jer. 31:31, 33, and here he does not mean spiritual Israel. For another, context makes it quite clear that this blessing awaits their return from Babylon, as in 23-25, 38-40. For yet another, precisely the same covenant is in view in Eze. 37:26, in the clear context of a restored temple, 26-28, which occupies 40-48. Moreover, the Jews’ return from Babylon, not Pentecost, was when God’s Holy Spirit was *scheduled* for bestowal, 39:25-29, whatever the eventuality. And as the very point of the vision of the initial third of 39, 11-14, this superlative gift would guarantee, 23f., that the *eternal righteousness (šedeq)* promised in Dan. 9:24b would be achieved at that return from captivity. In this light, it is scarcely any coincidence that the cognate verb *šādaq* describes the restoration of the ruined temple in 8:14!

Having already recognised, in reviewing Lesson 7, that in his final purpose expression Gabriel refers to the (re)inauguration of the sanctuary, as in Ex. 30:22-33, I may move on. His fifth purpose expression should be approached in light of this fact. Its verb *hātam* behind *seal* also appears in the second about ending sin,[#] as in 12:4, 9 for delaying all cognition of Daniel’s book. I have no desire to be dogmatic. But this looks very much like a prediction that even Yahweh’s gift of prophecy, so extremely significant in seeking to convert his hidebound people, would obsolesce once his other blessings obtained. And they point consistently to the restoration of his sanctuary services within a sanctified nation liberated from its sins and its foes.

[#] Please observe, though, that the actual verb translated is the more logical, “marginal” reading *tāmam*. This phenomenon, recognising probable errors in the sacred text, albeit without altering its completely “sacrosanct” consonants, occurs about 2,250 times, normally rather inconsequentially, in the MT. Its prime interest to the more motivated laity may be its bearing upon the realities of its divine inspiration.

Addendum B

How the NT Employs Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 "Weeks"

One major omission by apologists for a Messianic interpretation of Dan. 9:24-27 is ignoring the striking fact that *neither Jesus nor his disciples ever once made explicit appeal to this forecast* which, if truly Messianic, would be *by far the most forceful confirmation of our Lord's entire earthly mission!* And Jesus himself very carefully tutored his disciples in *all* of the OT Messianic prophecies, Lu. 24:27, compare 44-47.

If they were careful to employ this category of striking evidence, as in Mt. 2:4-6, in verifying their Master's Messianic claims *from their very outset*, it is completely **inconceivable** that they would not leap at *every* opportunity boldly, confidently and joyfully to assure the world: "Look! Jesus Christ appeared among us **precisely on time**, and suffered this ignominious death, though not for himself, **just as Daniel the prophet specified in 9:24-27 600 years ago!** He is most **certainly** the Messiah!!"

Nor did Jesus hesitate to appeal to the Book of Daniel, Mt. 24:15. Why, then, did he make **no reference whatever** to Dan. 9:24-27 forcefully to verify his own Messiahship when he claimed, as in Mt. 26:31; Lu. 4:17²¹, that *he and his mission were quite specific fulfilments of many OT Messianic forecasts!*? Manifestly, he never **once** looked upon the enigmatic prophecy in Dan. 9:24-27 as Messianic to **any** degree whatever!

Such confident conclusions – the fruit of scrupulous exegesis – are only confirmed, moreover, whenever any Christian, even in naïve, presumptuous loyalty to his or her beloved Lord, parades Mk. 3:15 – "The time is fulfilled," NASB, NRSV, etc. – or Gal. 4:4 – "when the fulness of the time came," NASB – as a reference to Dan. 9:24-27. Compare *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Volume 5* (Washington, 1956), 568b. For the strength of any contention is readily estimable in terms of the very best argument mounted in its defense. And frankly, such references would be quite *pathetic* were they really all that the *entire* NT can muster in support of the Messianic nature of Dan. 9:24-27!! Rather, they imply that there never was another period in history more favourable to the rapid spread of the gospel. For instance, the "entire" world enjoyed the Pax Romana. And Greek was its universal language.

In brief, an argument from silence is usually worthless, to all intents and purposes. When, however, the *general* context all but demands the presence of all relevant, *specific* details, such an argument is perfectly legitimate. Indeed, at times it can be forceful. The utter **silence** of the NT on Dan. 9:24-27 against the background of its frequent, ardent appeal to **all possible OT Messianic predictions** is a splendid case in point. All Christians would be very well advised, then, to emulate Jesus' silence.

Indeed, the tragic irony here is that zealous advocates of the Messianic nature of Dan. 9:24-27 are often motivated by deep devotion to their beloved Lord, and wish to honour him by promoting their firm belief. In this instance, however, *they fail in their worthy objective* – inadvertently or not – *by failing to check his position here.*

Addendum C

Confusion, Confusion, Confusion

It is utterly *reprehensible* that our author does not caution his hapless pupils, even by way of recommending further study, about the salient fact that there are very good reasons why the translations display so much *variance* in rendering Dan. 9:26f. Some of the more obvious questions such differences raise include these:

- Which ruler destroys the city and its sanctuary, 26b?;
- What does Gabriel mean by *end*, 26c?;
- Who confirms the covenant, with *whom* and for how long, 27a?;
- What is the *nature* of that covenant?;
- Who puts an end to sacrifice and offering, and for how long, 27b?;
- Does the *desolating abomination*, 27b, echo 8:13b; 11:31b; 12:11?

The coming prince, 26b, may be the Roman Titus, destroying Jerusalem and its temple. But *that disaster was scarcely within the final seven years of the 490*. And *nothing in the forecast even remotely hints that this major detail exceeds their limits*. Indeed, that would confront the clearest purport of the towering blessings of 24b! As for the Gabriel's intent in *end*, 26b, this salient point must await a later review, that of Lesson 9. This will offer our author the courtesy of attempting to justify his crucial stance on the precise temporal relationship between the visions of 8 and 9.

A plural substantival participle of special interest in 26c is *šōmēmôt* behind *desolations*. Its cognate verb *šāmēm* repeatedly applies to the appalling sacrilege of the *Little Horn*, 8:13; 11:31; 12:11. Likewise, the verb *hāraṣ* back of *decree* appears in 9:26c and in 27, and its application to the *Little Horn's* future, 11:36, is a probable parallel. Such details equally belong *within* the 490 years in view of the blessings of 9:24b.

If the Messianic reading of this forecast is credible, it must be clear in 27a, in view of the paucity of prior evidence. However, the closest candidate in 26 for the subject of the verb *gābar* rendered *confirm* in 27a is *the coming prince*, not the *anointed one*. This is a rather serious enigma for the Messianic interpretation! Granted, much ink has flowed over it, even among Seventh-day Adventist scholars like Dr. William H. Shea. But this review has its strict bounds, and I must move on. Another is that *the covenant which the prince was to launch would hold for just seven years*. That falls somewhat short of "the eternal covenant", Heb. 13:20! Moreover, as the differences among modern versions clearly attest, the translation of the Hebrew noun *h'šî* behind *middle* (NASB, NIV) is somewhat uncertain. Rather, should it be *half* (GNB, NEB, NLT, NRSV), giving the *duration* of this covenant, not its *point* of application? The latter, at least, is most *non-Messianic*! Yet another hurdle is *gābar*, implying *enforcement*, not the *benevolence* apposite to any Messianic forecast. In this light, *curtailing sacrifices and offerings has nothing to do with the Christ-event, but everything to do with the Little Horn's activities*, which continue until he is destroyed. This conclusion gains credence in that our author has scant cause to infer that Jewish converts are the recipients of this covenant! Although Daniel refers to it nowhere else, it is probable that the breaking of the holy covenant, 11:28, 30, 32, in extremely close association with the abomination of desolation, 31, is very intimately related.

It follows that, despite its many challenging enigmas, above all else, *Dan. 9:24-27 manifestly predicts the definitive solution to the gravest crisis within Daniel's entire book: the Little Horn's ruinous attack on Yahweh through his temple cultus!!*

Conclusion

In brief, by no means is this merely lay oriented critique any adequate response even to Seventh-day Adventist scholarly studies of Dan. 9:24-27,[#] let alone those of their conservative, Christian peers at large. However, it does raise enough serious questions about the Messianic reading of this entire passage to cast further grave doubts upon this unique denomination's extremely weighty reliance upon it both for historicism's very foundation in the purported year-day principle of prophetic interpretation – an assertion which I will verify sufficiently in the process of reviewing Lesson 9 – and as a launching point for the 2,300 evenings-mornings of 8:14, and therefore their supposed termination, with its crucial investigative judgment, in 1844.

[#] Even these can fall rather short of the strenuous objectivity marking the genuine student of Holy Writ. Dr. Gerhard F. Hasel was probably his Church's most prominent OT apologist until his tragic death. He concluded, "Interpretations of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks", *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy* (Washington, 1986), 63, that Dan. 9:24-27 is "a most profound Messianic prophecy" with "an absolutely exact mathematical fulfillment," even though he concedes, *ibid.*, n., that this "does not imply that there is absolute certainty about the date of the death of Christ or the stoning of Stephen. But the other interpretations are faced with computational difficulties of such magnitude that the relative uncertainty of an absolute chronology of the life of Christ and the events of the early church appears to be insignificant." However, it is ludicrous to speak of utter precision in one breath and imprecision in the other. Despite all Seventh-day Adventist apologia, there is also uncertainty about the precise decree which launches the 490 years, as we have seen, with that of Cyrus certainly terminating Jeremiah's 70 years, 2 Chr. 36:22 (= Ezra 1:1), about which Daniel was praying so earnestly, Dan. 9:2.