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Book Review of Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation, by William H. Shea

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Shea, William H. *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*. Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol 1. Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1982. vi + 137 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

Holbrook, Frank B., ed. *Symposium on Daniel*. Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol 2. Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1986. xii + 557 pp. Paperback, \$9.95.

Holbrook, Frank B., ed. *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*. Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol 3. Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1986. xii + 394 pp. Paperback, \$8.95.

In this trilogy on Daniel and related topics, the historicist school of prophetic interpretation espoused by the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century receives a vigorous scholarly reaffirmation. At the same time, futurist and preterist systems of interpretation—popularized during the Counter-Reformation and currently dominating the scholarly understanding of Daniel—are challenged by meticulous exegetical, historical, and theological studies.

In the first volume, William Shea presents a series of selected studies pertaining to the historicist interpretation of Daniel. In succeeding chapters, Shea (1) examines some twenty-eight representative OT passages that parallel and illuminate the *rîḥ* (covenant lawsuit or investigative judgment) of Dan 7, (2) discusses in detail the problematic nature of interpretations identifying the little horn of Dan 8 with Antiochus IV, (3) provides some two dozen lines of biblical evidence for affirming the year-day principle within scripture (and particularly within Daniel), (4) shows how this principle was known and applied by Jewish interpreters from the second century B.C. through the post-Qumran period, (5) provides a literary analysis and exegesis of the judgment scene in Dan 7, and (6) suggests mathematical calculations based upon Parker and Dubberstein's *Babylonian Chronology* related to the fulfillment of Dan 8:14.

Volumes two and three are collections of scholarly papers presented to the Daniel and Revelation Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in sessions beginning in 1980. The *Symposium on Daniel* is composed of two sections: the first addressing questions of introduction related to the book of Daniel, and the second focusing upon exegesis of major passages in Dan 2 and 8. Volume three (*The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*) continues the exegesis of Daniel with four studies on Dan 9, examines the cultic background of Daniel in Leviticus, and concludes with five general studies related to the fulfillment of prophecy and the theology of judgment.

Contributors to these symposia include an international array of Adventist biblical scholars (a number of whom are specialists in Daniel

studies): Niels-Erik Andreasen, Douglas Bennet, Ivan Blazen, Arthur Ferch, Gerhard Hasel, William Johnsson, Angel Rodríguez, Siegfried Schwantes, William Shea, Alberto Treiyer, and Pierre Winandy.

Rich insights abound in these three volumes. Fresh literary, historical, grammatical-syntactical, semasiological, and theological analyses of Daniel in its OT context have made significant advances beyond previous Adventist studies and provide a wealth of new data to be considered in the ongoing scholarly study of Daniel.

In volume one, this reviewer was impressed particularly by Shea's analysis of the broad spectrum of biblical parallels to the investigative judgment of Dan 7 (especially the divine *ṛīḇ* of Eze 1-11), and by the internal evidence adduced within Daniel (as well as the numerous external biblical and extrabiblical indicators) supporting the historicist year-day principle of prophetic interpretation.

The four studies in volume two dealing with technical questions of introduction in Daniel have carefully synthesized a significant amount of data favoring a sixth-century B.C. date for a unified book. Analyses of the chiasmic structure of Dan 7 (Ferch) and the dual chiasmic structure of the whole book (Shea) are especially illuminating. The five studies on Dan 8 provide insight into crucial issues in the chapter. Particularly noteworthy are the terminological studies on key words in Dan 8:14 (Schwantes and Andreasen), the detailed exegesis of Dan 8:9-14 (Hasel), and the analysis of the cultic language in this same passage (Rodríguez).

The four studies of Dan 9 in volume three are all worth reading, but the exegesis of Dan 9:24-27 (Shea) is outstanding for its insightful treatment of the passage. The studies on transfer of sin and the Day of Atonement (Rodríguez and Treiyer respectively, synopses of their doctoral dissertations) are penetrating treatments of the function of the Levitical cultus. And the general studies which conclude volume three are all helpful for their insights on the issues of the conditionality and multiple fulfillment of prophecy (Johnsson and Hasel), the theology of the investigative judgment in Dan 7 and biblical parallels (Shea), and the relationship of judgment and justification (Blazen).

There are some noticeable weaknesses in this trilogy on Daniel: (1) the organization of the books is problematic—a typical difficulty in volumes developed out of symposia; (2) a systematic treatment of the major portions of Daniel is not achieved; (3) a number of the studies overlap in the material covered; and (4) crucial portions of Daniel's prophecies are only lightly treated—most conspicuous by its absence is a major study on Dan 11.

A significant problem with these volumes seems to be the breadth of the target audience. According to the "Foreword" of volume 2, the books are commended to the average reader, pastor and layman alike, yet much of the discussion is too technical for laity or most pastors to follow.

Editorial synopses at the beginning of each subsection of the chapters are apparently an attempt to partially remedy this problem, but the interspersed synopses tend to disrupt the connected argument of the chapters for scholarly readers.

Certain exegetical issues have not been completely resolved by the committee. That is apparent in tensions between contributors in minor details. Note, for example, the disagreement over whether or not the little horn of Dan 8 engages in defiling activity (2:246-247, 409, 442-443). This limitation, which arises from multiple authorship, is unavoidable; and the editor is actually to be commended for his stand in not seeking "to harmonize the authors where they differed on minor points" (2:xii).

There are some exegetical conclusions that call for further study and reassessment. For example, the analysis of Dan 8:12 (2:418) does not canvass all the options regarding the translation of this verse, the identity of the host, and the ones committing the transgressions (see 2:416-418, in apparent tension with the argument of 2:441-443; cf. 2:516). In addition, some of the biblical evidence adduced in favor of the year-day principle in *volume one* may be strained (although the cumulative force of the various lines of evidence, especially those internal to Daniel, is difficult to dismiss). Again, the survey of biblical parallels to the *riḅ* in Dan 7 needs to be expanded to include the divine *riḅ* in passages without an explicit sanctuary setting.

Aside from minor limitations such as these, I have found the three volumes to be quite productive of new insights, fresh analyses, and provocative conclusions. This work of the Daniel and Revelation Committee and its contributors has provided the opportunity for the historicist position of prophetic interpretation to have a fair hearing in the current scholarly discussion. It is hoped that the forthcoming NT volumes planned by the Daniel and Revelation committee will be as rich as this trilogy on Daniel.

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