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Adventist Interpretation of Daniel 10-12: A Diagnosis and Prescription

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Statement of the Problem

It is clearly evident that the final three chapters of the book of Daniel contain unique problems. For a long time we have had interpretive difficulties with this part of the book.

Shortly after my graduation from the Adventist Theological Seminary in 1980, I was asked by my conference president in Quebec to arrange a workers' meeting on a theological topic. This was just about the time that the large Sanctuary Review Committee met at Glacier View, Colorado and the topic of the Sanctuary was being widely discussed. I considered inviting one of the Seminary professors to come to Montreal and make some presentations relevant to the issues which had been studied at Glacier View.

In the end, Dr. William Shea agreed to come. He preached three times on Sabbath morning and conducted a question and answer session for the laity in the afternoon. On Monday, he met with the pastoral staff of the Quebec conference, and made three more presentations. These were on the book of Daniel and selected eschatological topics. After his studies, he held another question and answer session for the pastors.

I had been present at all the meetings and led off the question session by remarking about my understanding of the book of Daniel. I told him, "I realized long ago that I have no hope in this

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

world of gaining a perfect, 100% understanding of the book of Daniel. I have told myself that I will have to be satisfied with a *majority* understanding, understanding 51% or more. I am confident that I have such an understanding of Daniel 1 to 9. I don't understand everything, but I think I understand more than I don't. But I haven't yet reached even a 51% understanding of Daniel 10 to 12. I'm hoping you can help a little."

Dr. Shea paused, and smiled a little, and said, "If you find some one who does understand it that well, send him to me."

Attempted Interpretations

This lack of certainty is reflected in the diversity of Adventist views on this segment of the book. We can compare the relative uniformity of our interpretations of the visions in Daniel 2, 7, 8, and 9. But there is considerable diversity in the interpretation of the last three chapters, and especially chapter 11. By way of example, I will present the passage in which our interpretations are the most varied: Daniel 11:29-45. What have Adventist interpreters made of this passage?

Quite a few of the writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries offered a rather strict historicist explanation. The passage is held to describe the medieval Roman church in its interaction with those who held a purer doctrine, whether the scattered faithful of the early middle ages or the Protestant reformers. Verses 36-39 are applied to the revolutionary government in France which attempted to displace Christianity with the worship of the goddess of reason.

In the final six verses these interpreters treated the geographical designations of Daniel 11 quite literally. The "king of the south" is understood to refer to the nation of Egypt. The "king of the north" was whatever power controlled the area north of Palestine, which, by the end of Daniel 11, was understood to be the Ottoman Empire. These interpreters expected the culmination of human history and the return of Christ to occur when Turkey, having failed in its attempts to reestablish control over Egypt, and beset by enemies from the North and East (possibly Russia and Persia), removed its capital from Istanbul to Jerusalem.

Foremost among the exponents of this interpretation was

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Uriah Smith, whose *Thoughts Critical and Practical on the Book of Daniel*,¹ published in 1881, had extensive influence on subsequent generations of Adventists. Later editions of his works, which combined his book on Daniel with a similar volume on the Revelation, are less specific regarding the interpretation of the latter part of Daniel 11. This is particularly true of the editions printed after Smith's death. These later editions state that "the prophecy of verse 45 centers in that power known as the king of the north. It is the power that shall hold the territory possessed originally by the king of the north."² Clearly, after the demise of the Ottoman Empire, Smith's original interpretation seemed dubious.

Another Adventist, who had adopted views similar to those of Smith, was Stephen N. Haskell,³ the popularity of whose volume on Daniel rivaled that of Smith's work for some time after its publication in 1901. Other Adventist books expressing similar views include those of J. Grant Lamson (1909),⁴ Max Hill (1915),⁵ and O. A. Johnson (1919).⁶ One might have expected this interpretive tradition, especially the parts involving Turkey, to have died with the Ottoman Empire, but it persisted in the anonymous *Two Great Prophecies* (1925),⁷ and the works of M. H. Brown (1926)⁸ and W. H. Wakeham (1930),⁹ and even after the Second World War in the works of E. A. Nixon (1945)¹⁰ and Walter E. Straw (1947).¹¹ Without attempting to exegete the book of Daniel, other Adventist writers from this era reflected similar views in their works. These include Alonzo T. Jones (1900)¹² and Arthur G. Daniels (1917).¹³

Some later writers adopted the same interpretive schema, but reinterpreted the final elements. Among these are R. A. Anderson (1975), who identifies the "king of the north" in the latter part of Daniel 11 with "worldwide atheistic socialism."¹⁴ As early as 1950 Taylor G. Bunch had adopted a similar view. He holds that the latter two-thirds of the chapter (beginning in verse 14) describe the career of Rome in its pagan and papal phases,¹⁵ but that the "king of the south" represents "the Mohammedan peoples,"¹⁶ and the "king of the north" is atheism and communism, centered particularly in Russia.¹⁷ He admits that "no explanation of verses 40-45 is satisfactorily clear in every detail,"¹⁸ but he sees in Daniel 11 a three-sided eschatological conflict between the "king of the north," the "king of the south" and the papacy.

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

After World War II many interpreters adopted a more radical revision of the earlier position represented by Uriah Smith, Stephen Haskell, and the great majority of Adventist writers of the early twentieth century. Beginning with Edwin R. Thiele,¹⁹ some Adventists identified Rome not only in verses 14 through 35, but in the last 10 verses of the chapter as well. Thiele's explanations of the last 6 verses of the chapter are somewhat vague historically, but nevertheless apply this passage to the papacy without hesitation.²⁰ Thiele also differs from earlier interpreters in applying vss. 29-30 to the Crusades and the medieval church, rather than to the sack of Rome by the barbarian kingdoms.²¹ Thus Thiele's interpretation of Daniel 11:29-45 has a somewhat later historical framework and omits reference to the French revolution and to the Ottoman Empire.

A similar position was adopted by Louis Were in 1949.²² Were makes no attempt to exegete the entire chapter; his focus is more narrow, but he does assert that the references to literal (i.e., pagan) Rome end in Daniel 11:30, and that vss. 31-45 describe spiritual Rome.²³ References to the "king of the north" in this part of the prophecy point to the papacy:

The power brought to view in Dan. 11:40-45 must be one whose activities *concern the people of God*—such has been Daniel's previous presentations of the work of the papacy.²⁴

In a 1955 publication, George McCready Price returned to the essential position of Uriah Smith regarding the interpretation of Daniel 11:29-32, but accepted the views of later interpreters who applied vss. 36-39 to the papacy. Price denies emphatically that these verses can be made to refer to revolutionary France.²⁵ Furthermore, the last six verses of the chapter are also held to describe the demise of the papacy. Egypt, the king of the south, represents atheistic science.

Price acknowledges two possible scenarios: one in which there are two major actors (the "king of the north" and the "king of the south") and another in which there are three major actors, with the third person pronouns of verses 40 to 45 refer to some other entity. The differences between these interpretations Price holds to be slight, since "both views agree in saying that the main world power dealt with here is the Roman papacy, . . ."²⁶

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The last three verses of the chapter receive only brief comments. Price denies that the geographic references should be literally understood, states that parts of the passage are yet unfulfilled, and encourages the reader to wait until these passages are clarified by unfolding events before insisting on a specific interpretation.²⁷

Robert Brinsmead (1960) concurs in the identification of the “king of the north” with the papal system and the “king of the south” with atheism.²⁸ He sees in the final verses of Daniel 11 a conflict between

two opposing ideologies—Babylonian and Egyptian. . . . Babylonian is to profess to be a Christian, to have a form of godliness, but to deny the power thereof. Egyptian is to repudiate the Christian religion and to deny the very existence of God.²⁹

Clearly, the major focus of the closing verses of Daniel 11 in this interpretation is still on the demise of the papacy.

The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* declines to speak decisively on this passage. In verse after verse the reader is presented with tentative speculation (“Some see specific reference here . . .”) or alternative and mutually contradictory views (“Others suggest . . .”).³⁰ The editors suggest two possible interpretations of verse 40: that the “king of the north” is Turkey, and that the “king of the north” is the papacy.³¹ No comment is offered on vss. 41-44, and the comment on vs. 45 consists primarily of a warning from James White to be cautious in offering interpretations of unfulfilled prophecy.³²

The view that the “king of the north” represents the papacy and that the final portion of Daniel 11 describes the eschatological demise of papal power is also supported (though with important differences in interpretation) by both Desmond Ford (1978) and Mervyn Maxwell (1981). Ford applies Daniel 11:29,30 to the evacuation of Antiochus IV from Egypt at the command of the Roman Senate. In subsequent passages he sees intimations of both the Antiochene desecration of the Jerusalem temple and the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian activities of Rome. Thus Ford holds the possibility for multiple fulfillments of these passages. Regarding vss. 36-39, Ford states,

These verses transcend Antiochus and pagan Rome, though including

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

reminiscences of them. They are applied in the New Testament to the antichrist . . .³³

Ford applies vss. 36-39 to the papacy, but is reluctant to be very specific on vss. 40-45. He remarks that at this point “we . . . enter upon delicate ground, as this is obviously in the realm of unfulfilled prophecy.” He does insist (against Price and Bunch) that there are only two powers, not three, in the conflict described in these verses.³⁴ He associates the “king of the south” with atheism, or “some latter-day movement opposed to religion.”³⁵

Maxwell, whose interpretations are significantly closer to Adventist tradition, associates all of Daniel 11:29-45 with the papacy, specifically identifying the last six verses of the chapter with the “demise of Roman Christianity.”³⁶ Nevertheless, he is considerably less specific in his interpretation of this passage than in his treatment of earlier chapters, or even of earlier parts of this chapter. He gives a detailed verse-by-verse interpretation of Daniel 11: 1-16. His comments on subsequent verses are more general, and are not always in canonical order.³⁷

Arthur Keough's *Let Daniel Speak*,³⁸ published in 1986, also declines to deal systematically with chapter 11. Less than two pages are devoted to Daniel 11:29-45, and the comments are of a rather general nature, emphasizing the spiritual characteristics of the conflict, without attempting to apply the prophecy to specific historical events.³⁹ Keough does call the reader's attention to the fact that Adventist scholars have not found a common view on this chapter,⁴⁰ and that vss. 40-45 are widely admitted to be yet unfulfilled.⁴¹

Most recently, Jacques Doukhan's *Daniel: The Vision of the End*⁴² (1989) offers a fairly thorough-going spiritual interpretation of Daniel 11.

Daniel 11:5-45 does not lend to a strict literal interpretation; historical events may well be implied here yet the deciphering of those references must also take into account the “spiritual” dimension the author tries to introduce in his description.⁴³

Doukhan does remark that the “king of the north” has the same character as the “little horn” mentioned earlier in the book of Daniel, thus implicitly linking the “king of the north” with

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

the Roman papacy.⁴⁴ He identifies the “king of the north” with “false claims of divinity” and the “king of the south” with “humanity without God.”⁴⁵ The parallel is also drawn between “Babel” as a religious usurper and “Egypt” as a secular power.⁴⁶ This is in basic agreement with George McCready Price's identification of the kings of the north and south, as well as Robert Brinsmead's description of the two conflicting ideologies, the Babylonian and the Egyptian.

These examples which we have cited are taken only from Adventist writers. If we were to consider other conservative evangelicals, the diversity would be even greater. But why is there such great diversity among us? Historically, there are probably several causes.

Factors in the Problem

The Millerite Focus. Shortly after his return from service in the American army in the War of 1812, William Miller sensed a profound need of God. His new feelings were quite at odds with his intellectual convictions regarding religious matters, which had previously led him to Deism. In an attempt to reconcile intellect and experience, Miller undertook to study the entire Bible. Beginning with Genesis, he read as far as Daniel, apparently resolving any difficulties he encountered by comparison of one passage of Scripture with another, using a concordance as his only study aid.

By 1818 he had read as far as Daniel 8 and 9, where he discovered the 2300 day prophecy. This demanded considerable thought on his part. Eventually, he concluded from the prophecy that Christ was to return in about a quarter of a century. Several years later, at the invitation of others, he began to preach his beliefs.

It is certain that Miller continued his studies of the Bible far past the book of Daniel, and that he gave some attention to the later chapters of this book. But it was chapters 8 and 9, supported to some extent by reference to the first seven chapters, which became the focus of his preaching and of the message which the Millerites promoted in the years leading up to 1844. Although Miller studied and preached on Daniel 10, 11 and 12, he gave far less attention to these chapters than to the earlier parts of the book of Daniel.

Because of the limited attention paid by Miller and his

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

nineteenth century followers to the last three chapters of the book of Daniel, those of us whose denominational background lies with the Millerite movement are historically less committed to these chapters, even though we accept them as fully inspired Scripture.

Evangelistic Usefulness. Customarily, Adventist preachers, especially those who are involved in public evangelism, make considerable use of the earlier parts of the book of Daniel, but have largely neglected the last three chapters. Daniel 2 and 7 have been used to confirm the reliability of the Bible. Evangelists have pointed to the accuracy of these chapters in predicting the rise and fall of the empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, as well as the activities of the papacy.

The dependability of the prophecies of Daniel having been established from chapters 2 and 7, use has been made of chapters 8 and 9 to establish the doctrine of the sanctuary, and in particular, to determine the dates for the “heavenly day of atonement” which we see foreshadowed in Daniel 8:13,14. Daniel 9, with its prediction of the coming of “Messiah the Prince,” has also been called into service to establish the accuracy of apocalyptic prediction. If Daniel could tell us the dates of Christ's sacrificial ministry, surely he could also tell us the times of his mediatorial ministry.

Other parts of the book of Daniel may have been used somewhat less in evangelism, but they are standard elements of Adventist exhortation. Sabbath morning sermons exploit Daniel 1, 3 and 6 for examples of moral faithfulness, and Daniel 4 and 5 have served as illustrations of divine judgement.

But we have not found it necessary to use the rest of the book for these purposes. To a considerable extent, the last three chapters of Daniel have been abandoned for homiletical and evangelistic use. Adventist congregations in the latter half of the twentieth century are as likely to hear a sermon on Nahum or Obadiah as one on Daniel 11. There is thus a pervasive bias against the usefulness of Daniel 11.

Examples of popular evangelistic presentations which reflect this bias are easy to find. An illustration may be taken from Mark Finley's *Discoveries in Daniel*,⁴⁷ the participant worktext for Daniel Seminars conducted in conjunction with Finley's evangelistic campaigns. This book contains eleven lessons, one for each of

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

the first ten chapters, and a final lesson covering chapters 11 and 12. Since these last two chapters have a combined length more than three times as great as chapter 1, or chapter 10, it is clear even on the briefest examination that chapter 11 is likely to receive very cursory explanation.

This impression is aggravated by the fact that Finley devotes 22 pages to his examination of chapter 1 and only 11 pages to chapters 11 and 12. Closer study of the book shows that the single page devoted to Daniel 11:29-45 does not attempt to identify any of the events or characters of vss. 36-45 except the “king of the north.” It should be added that Finley's presentation is not atypical of Adventist evangelistic treatment of Daniel 11. We simply have not found this passage useful for evangelistic purposes.

Apologetic Necessity. There are several doctrines which distinguish Seventh-day Adventists from other Christian denominations. Among these are the Sabbath, the nonimmortality of the soul, the Spirit of prophecy, and the sanctuary. Of these, the last depends largely on our interpretation of the books of Hebrews, Revelation, Leviticus, and Daniel. Because of the uniqueness of this doctrine (which is not shared with any other denomination), it has faced opposition and challenge.

Since our interpretation of Daniel 8 and 9 is crucial for the doctrine of the sanctuary, and since this interpretation is contested by opponents of normative Adventist Theology, we have focussed our research on these chapters, to the neglect of other parts of the book. Again, examples are easily found: Dr. William Shea's *Selected Studies in Prophetic Interpretation*, a book of 137 pages, contains only 9 pages discussing Daniel 11, with nearly all of the rest of the book devoted to issues arising from Daniel 7, 8 and 9. This disproportionate ratio is determined by apologetic necessity: defense is needed at points where we have *been attacked*, not at points where we have *nothing to be attacked*.

Ellen White and Daniel 11. Ellen White has made some rather significant remarks about the eleventh chapter of Daniel, including her statement that “The prophecy of the eleventh chapter of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment.”⁴⁸ Nevertheless, she has not written on the specifics of this chapter. The *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* contains only four non-

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

repetitive references to chapter 11,⁴⁹ three of which are general comments on the chapter as a whole, like the one cited above, and one of which refers exclusively to Daniel 11:1. By contrast, there are 102 non-repetitive references to chapter 1⁵⁰, even though the first chapter of Daniel is less than half as long as the eleventh chapter, and contains not a single word of apocalypse. Without disrespect to the Spirit of Prophecy, Seventh-day Adventists have taken pains to establish doctrine on the Scriptures, and not on the writings of Ellen White. Nevertheless, her silence on this chapter may be a factor in our neglect of it.

The Opacity of Unfulfilled Apocalyptic. There is among Seventh-day Adventists a general belief that some parts of the predictions in Daniel 11 and 12 are yet unfulfilled. Though many nineteenth century interpreters were quite brave in their identification of characters and events in Daniel 11, it is now generally agreed that apocalyptic predictions are quite opaque to the reader who lives before the fulfillment, and that they become clear only in retrospect. Regarding the final verses of Daniel 11, Mervyn Maxwell remarks,

... as to the precise events on earth that will accompany their fulfillment, wisdom suggests we may not know them until they actually take place.

The purpose of prophecy is not always to provide prior knowledge of specific future events. Many Bible prophecies were given with the intention that they would be understood—and build faith—only after they were fulfilled.⁵¹

Some of the nineteenth century writers shared this caution. The editors of the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* quote approvingly a statement made by James White in 1877:

Positions taken upon the Eastern question are based upon prophecies which have not yet met their fulfillment. Here we should tread lightly and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement.⁵²

Similar cautions regarding the opacity of unfulfilled apocalyptic have been voiced by Price,⁵³ Ford,⁵⁴ and Keough.⁵⁵ Thus, we have declined to expound these chapters because we hold an antecedent belief that they are not interpretable—at present.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Failure to Observe Transitions of Genre. It is a commonplace that the first six chapters of Daniel are primarily narrative, and the last six primarily apocalyptic. There are, to be sure, exceptions to this general description: there is an extensive apocalypse embedded in the narrative of chapter 2, and there are narratives in chapters 9 and 10 which serve as introductions or transitions for the apocalyptic material. But the over-all distinction is useful. Nevertheless, the broad description of chapters 7 through 12 as apocalyptic may conceal a shift of genre which is just as important as the shift between chapters 6 and 7. It should be noted that there are varieties within major genre categories: it is not the case that all narratives are the same. In fact, there are several different narrative forms: the narrative of Daniel 1 is a story; the narrative of chapter 4 is a decree; the narrative of chapter 9 is a prayer. So also there are varieties of apocalypse: the apocalypses of chapters 2, 4 and 5 consist of dreams (or portents) of the king, interpreted by a prophet; those of chapters 7, 8 and 9 are dreams or visions of the prophet, interpreted by an angel; those of chapters 10, 11 and 12 are auditions of the prophet, dictated by an angel.

Adventist commentators have acknowledged this distinction. Maxwell remarks,

The language of Daniel 11 is considered to be "literal" in that it isn't symbolic in the same way that the language of chapters 2, 7 and 8 is. There are no multi-element images, no beasts or horns. Just the same, its language is far from easy. It is cryptic, almost like a code.⁵⁶

Similarly, Keough refers to Daniel 11 as "prophecy without symbols."⁵⁷ Nevertheless, despite this perception, Adventist interpreters of the book of Daniel have tended to treat chapter 11 as merely a longer, more detailed, and less symbolic version of chapter 7 or 8. Such a reading fails to recognize the transition in genre between chapters 7 to 9 and chapters 10 to 12.

Failure to Observe Dialogical Patterns. The apocalypses of Daniel are not monologues. There is, in each of them, a conversation between Daniel and his heavenly guides. As an active participant, Daniel has some influence on the content of these conversations. That is to say that subjects discussed by the interpreter include those suggested by Daniel. Even in the apocalypses of chapters 7 to 9, much of the visionary experience receives, initially, only a cursory

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

explanation. More complete explanations are given only in response to Daniel's explicit inquiries.

Furthermore, the longer explanations which follow Daniel's inquiries tend to focus on the issues of Daniel's concern, rather than treating the various elements of the vision equally. For example, Daniel's vision of the four beasts from the sea in chapter 7 receives a terse initial explanation only two verses long.⁵⁸ Fuller explanation is given only after Daniel inquires about the fourth beast and the little horn—and this supplementary explanation, five verses in length, deals almost exclusively with the issues raised by Daniel's question.

In the same way, the vision of chapter 8 is initially explained only partially. The angelic interpreter does not, at first, clarify the parts of the vision dealing with the sanctuary and its justification. Supplementary explanation of these parts of the vision is given only after Daniel's lengthy prayer about *the sins of the Jewish people* and *the restoration of the temple and of Jerusalem*—and then, in the supplementary explanation Gabriel tells Daniel that he will inform him about “your people and your holy city,”⁵⁹ that is, *the Jews* and *Jerusalem*. Thus, in both cases, the explanations offered by the angel are not comprehensive, but dwell on issues anticipated in Daniel's questions.

The final apocalypse of Daniel, contained in the last three chapters, consists of an angelic discourse which responds to inquiries made by Daniel himself during a three-week period of fasting and prayer. When the angel appears to Daniel, he tells him,

Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them⁶⁰ (NIV).

Unfortunately, Daniel does not record the content of his prayers on this occasion, so we do not know, from his own lips, the issues to which the angel promises to respond. Nevertheless, at the beginning of this revelation the angel tells Daniel,

Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.⁶¹

Clearly, any interpretation of chapters 11 and 12 which does not understand this revelation as a response to some question(s) by

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Daniel regarding the future of his people faces the risk of serious error.

Steps Toward a Solution

Our approach to the last three chapters of Daniel, and to Daniel 11 in particular, should be based on what we already know about the book of Daniel. This would include its background, authorship, composition, genre, themes, content, historical scope, and the internal progressions in the book. That is to say, we should start with what we have already learned from the rest of the book, seeking explanations that are in harmony with this previously established body of knowledge. What do we know about Daniel?

Sixth Century Origin. It is generally agreed among Adventists that the book of Daniel was written in the sixth century, B.C. At least two conclusions follow from this. First, the concerns of the writer tend to be tied to his era. He did not think the thoughts we think today, or ask the questions we might ask. Second, the things he wrote about regarding the history of the sixth century tend to be quite precise and highly detailed. The more remote periods tend to be described with less specificity.

Written by Daniel. The author of the book was a specific sixth-century person, Daniel, a high-born Jew of Jerusalem who was deported to Mesopotamia in 605 B.C. Daniel's concerns are directed toward the Jewish people and Jerusalem, rather than toward certain eschatological questions which tend to preoccupy us. For example, Daniel's prayer in chapter 9, does not address any of the issues of interest to Adventists living in the "time of the end."

Rather, Daniel cares about the Jewish people, the city of Jerusalem and the temple of Solomon, not about the investigative judgment or the heavenly day of atonement. These latter issues arise in the book of Daniel under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but God is obliged, as it were, to inform Daniel on these matters while the prophet is looking in another direction. The book of Daniel does indeed deal with eschatological issues, but we must realize that these are sometimes obscured by Daniel's own concerns.

One Author: Daniel. Not only do we assert that the book of Daniel was written in the sixth century by the historical Daniel,

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

but we also insist that *the whole book* was written by him. The document is not a composite. We, therefore, expect it to present the *same ideas in the same way and in the same sequence* throughout.

Thematic Unity. If we understand the book to be the product of the sixth century, the veritable composition of the historical Daniel himself, then we should anticipate a consistent style and, more importantly, a unified perspective.

We should be sensitive to the shifts in genre which take place in the book, including the shift between chapters 7 to 9 and chapters 10 to 12. Nevertheless, despite the change of genres, we should expect to find an over-all thematic unity in the book. It is demonstrable that the same themes which motivate the narratives of chapters 1 to 6 are also expressed in the apocalypses of chapters 7 to 9. Both the narratives and the earlier apocalypses emphasize the ideas of *divine judgment* and *sovereignty*, frequently proclaimed to humanity through *encoded revelations* which are subsequently deciphered by a *divinely guided interpreter*.

Even though there is another significant genre transition between chapters 9 and 10, we should anticipate a thematic unity between the last three chapters and earlier portions of the book. The same themes of judgment, sovereignty, revelation and interpretation may reasonably be expected in the last three chapters.

Shift in Genre. As noted above, there is a shift in genre between Daniel 7 to 9 and Daniel 10 to 12. Both of these sections are apocalyptic, but they are different kinds of apocalypse. This change of genre has been noted, as indicated above, by Maxwell,⁶² Keough⁶³ and others. It is also worth observing that both of these can be contrasted with a third type of apocalypse in Daniel, the type found in Daniel 2, 4 and 5. These three types may be compared in tabular format: (see the following page)

Table 1
Comparison of Apocalypses in Daniel

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Examples	Cf 2:1ff; 4:4-7; 5:5ff	Cf 7:1-27; 8:1-26; 9:20-27	Cf 10:1-12:13
Form of Revelation	Dream/vision/(portent)	Dream/vision	Word/vision/(audition)
Recipient of Revelation	King	Prophet	Prophet
Opacity of Symbols	Highly opaque	Highly opaque	More transparent
Divinely Inspired Guide	Prophet	Angel	Angel

Apocalypses of the first type (found in chapters 2, 4 and 5) consist of dreams or portents given to a king and consisting of highly opaque symbols which are interpreted by a prophet, under the guidance of God. Apocalypses of the second type (found in chapters 7, 8 and 9) consist of dreams or visions given to a prophet and consisting of highly opaque symbols which are interpreted by an angel. Apocalypses of the third type (found only in chapters 10 through 12) consist of auditions delivered by an angel and heard by the prophet, in which symbolism is largely absent and is apparently somewhat less opaque than in apocalypses of the first two types.

The auditory genre of chapters 10 through 12 has been seen earlier in the book, in chapters 7, 8, and especially in chapter 9, in which the angel explains to Daniel the visions which he has seen. But audition becomes the primary, and for all practical purposes the sole, apocalyptic genre of chapters 11 and 12.

It is evident that we treat various genres differently. Narrative

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

is identified as something that happened “back then,” a record of a discrete event within historical time. Apocalypse, on the other hand, offers either a diachronic view of the continuum of historical time (as with most of the apocalypses of Daniel), or else a view outside of historical time into the heavenly realities (such as we find in many of the apocalypses of the book of Revelation).

Even within these broad categories there are significant differences. The narrative of chapter 1 is linear and unidirectional. Its movement is set off by the initial event, and others follow in sequence as the plot develops. The narrative of chapter 4, which takes the form of a royal proclamation, begins with its conclusion, and recapitulates the development of its theme several times.

Similarly, we should not expect all of the apocalypses of the book of Daniel to work in exactly the same way. We have already seen that the dreams and portents of chapters 4 and 5 are treated differently than those of chapters 7 and 8. It is not a foregone conclusion that the apocalypse of chapters 10 through 12 should be treated in the same way as either of the two earlier types. We may need to consider whether there are any clues in the text as to how this third type of apocalypse should be treated.

Concern with a Succession of Historical Entities. Few things are more evident than that most of the apocalypses of Daniel deal with a series of historical entities. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Daniel 2 and 7, where the successions of metallic elements and animals are specifically identified as kingdoms. In each case, the series is terminated with an act of eschatological judgment. This can also be seen in the ram and the goat of chapter 8. We do not find such a series of historical entities in the dreams and portents of chapters 4 and 5; these seem to be concerned with immediate judgment, rather than eschatological judgment.

The question, of course, is whether Daniel 11 conforms to the pattern of chapters 2, 7 and 8, or that of chapters 4 and 5. In response, we may say briefly that it has entities described as kings or kingdoms, some of which are identified or identifiable. It also terminates (in chapter 12, which is part of the same apocalypse) with an act of eschatological judgment. Despite the differences of the apocalyptic form in Daniel 11 and 12 from the form of the earlier apocalypses, these factors of content would seem to strengthen the

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

hand of those who see the various characters of this apocalypse (for example, the “king of the north” and the “king of the south”) as concrete historical realities.

Internal Progression of Apocalypses. The historical apocalypses of the book of Daniel are not uniform in regard to the issues treated. The first of them (Dan 2) is primarily concerned with politics. The second historical apocalypse (Dan 7) addresses both political and spiritual concerns. The third (Dan 8) shifts even further toward spiritual or religious concerns.

The first apocalypse (Dan 2) depicts the conflict of human kingdoms without reference to religious values, and resolves the issue by (apparent) brute force: the stone strikes the statue and grinds the metals to powder. There is no overt evaluation, there is no discussion of the reasons for the destruction of these kingdoms, and no particular fault found in any of them, except that none of them is the kingdom of God which will fill the earth.

The second apocalypse (Dan 7) depicts the conflict of human kingdoms, as well as the opposition of human powers to God and to God's people. It ends with a scene of judgment in which the actions of the “little horn” are evaluated and a formal judgment is announced and executed. This judgment is based on the religious character of the little horn, its antagonism to God and to the saints.

The third apocalypse (Dan 8) depicts the conflict of human kingdoms, as well as their opposition to God, and describes the resolution of the issue in liturgical or cultic terms, the “justification of the sanctuary.” The supplementary explanation to this apocalypse, delivered to Daniel by Gabriel in chapter 9 also centers on religious matters, notably “Messiah the Prince.”

Thus, there is a marked progression in these historical apocalypses. They become progressively more spiritually focused. A similar progression can also be seen in the narratives. The narratives of chapters 1 and 2 are primarily political (including the partially religious apocalypse of chapter 2). The narratives of chapters 3 and 4 mix religious themes with the political: Nebuchadnezzar enforces an act of worship by political force in chapter 3, and acknowledges the sovereignty of the true God over all political powers in chapter 4. The narratives in chapters 5 and 6 continue the mixture of religious and political themes. Chapter 6, for ex-

LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

ample centers on Daniel's prayers and Darius' edict which would forbid them. The narratives of Daniel 9 and 11 are entirely religious or spiritual in nature, transcribing Daniel's prayers and God's (supernatural) response.

Given this progression in both the narratives and the historical apocalypses of the book of Daniel, we might expect an even more profound spiritual focus in the apocalypse of chapter 11.

An Unfinished Task

At this point, several observations may be made:

First, the items recorded above do not, by any means, constitute a complete listing of data, and will not, in themselves, sustain a comprehensive approach to the interpretation of the final apocalypse of the book of Daniel. The reader may think of other widely held insights that may also contribute to the interpretation of chapters 10-12. There are certainly other patterns and progressions within the book which will, if carefully observed, help us in our reading of the last part.⁶⁴

Second, it may have already been observed that some of these factors appear, at first glance, to work at cross-purposes. For example, the concern of the book of Daniel with a succession of historical entities seems to make a concrete historical interpretation of Daniel 11 more probable. On the other hand the internal progression of the apocalypses from the more political to the more spiritual would seem to imply that the identification of concrete historical entities within this chapter is less significant. Considerable study will be necessary to resolve the tension between these factors, and the tension which may arise in other similar cases.

Third, the title of this paper is "Adventist Interpretation of Daniel 10-12: A Diagnosis and Prescription." I would not be accused of false advertising. I offered an analysis of the malady, and a proposal for therapy. I did not promise to present the cured patient, well and healthy and in his right mind. I cannot pretend to have a comprehensive, cogent and consistent interpretation of the last apocalypse of the book of Daniel. I only urge that such an interpretation be sought. By collaboration, by diligent study and sincere prayer, we may hope eventually to find such an interpretation. And

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

it is to this task that I would exhort the ministry and the academicians of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Endnotes

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- 21 Thiele, *Outline Studies*, pp. 123-125.
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LEATHERMAN: ADVENTIST INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL 10-12

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- 27 Price, *The Greatest of the Prophets*, pp. 315, 316.
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- 30 See, e.g., the comments on Daniel 11:30 in Francis David Nichol, ed. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977) Vol. 3, pp. 872, 873.
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- 55 Keough, *Let Daniel Speak*, p. 119.
- 56 Maxwell, *God Cares*, Vol. 1, p. 278.

JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

57 Keough, *Let Daniel Speak*, p. 114. This expression is Keough's chapter title for his analysis of Daniel 11.

58 Daniel 7:17, 18.

59 Daniel 9:24.

60 Daniel 10:12.

61 Daniel 10:14.

62 Maxwell, *God Cares*, Vol. 1, p. 278.

63 Keough, *Let Daniel Speak*, p. 114.

64 This might include chiasmic structures such as those identified by Jacques Doukhan in *Daniel*, pp. 81-84.