

**A Response to David Gates:  
“The Door is About to Close *Are You Ready?*”  
*by Pastor Stephen Bohr***

A recent internet message by David Gates has caused quite a sensation among many in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. At Secrets Unsealed, we have received numerous emails, text messages and phone calls asking what we think of his message. In addition, as I have traveled, many have sought my personal opinion of his remarks. What I think is not important. What is important is whether his message squares with the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Before I respond to David’s complex prophetic scenario, I would like to make something clear. I respect David’s unreserved commitment to the Lord’s cause. He has made huge personal and family sacrifices to carry forward the work of GMI. He has inspired scores of youth to enter mission service. He travels tirelessly pursuing broadcast opportunities for present truth. I share David’s longing for revival and reformation in the church—it is a dire need. No one can question David’s commitment to the Lord, his sincerity and His longing passion for the coming of Jesus. I have spent quality time with David. I have traveled on his plane, roomed with him at a youth event in Panama where one evening in the midst of a torrential rainstorm, we discussed Revelation’s seven seals for over three hours. My response to David’s message as follows in no way questions his love for the Lord, his personal integrity or his sincerity.

**Areas of Agreement**

I agree with the intention of David’s message. Like him, I believe that all the signs of the times are coalescing, indicating that the coming of Jesus is near. I agree with his call to be ready, awake, with lamps burning and I agree with his urgent call that the church must wake up and prepare for the events that will soon explode upon the world scene. I share his deep concerns about what is happening in our own beloved church—hasty baptisms, irreverent music,

improper worship styles, worldly lifestyles, ecumenical overtures and in some circles, the acceptance of alternative lifestyles.

Even a cursory reading of the headlines indicates that the social and religious fabric of America is falling apart at the seams. School and work place shootings, racial conflicts, drug and opioid abuse, political corruption, natural disasters, sexual abuse, strife of political parties, the glorification of alternative lifestyles and the obsession to acquire more 'stuff' at the expense of the poor are all stark realities. In addition, the growth of papal influence and the love affair of Protestants with Catholics all indicate that we are on the threshold of what Ellen White called 'a stupendous crisis'. In her classic book, Education wrote that even the attention of the secular world is riveted on current events:

*"The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their **attention fixed upon the events** taking place about us. They **are watching** the strained, restless relations that exist among the nations. They **observe** the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and **they recognize** that something great and decisive is about to take place—that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis." (Education, pp. 179, 180)*

## **Points of Disagreement**

Having said this, I strongly disagree with David's ongoing tendency to point to specific contemporary historical events as the fulfillment of specific Bible **time** prophecies. He has repeatedly denied that he does this but in actual practice, he has done it many times and continues to do it.

Several weeks before David posted his latest video on the internet I spoke with him on the phone and admonished him against his tendency to set dates for current events. On numerous occasions, David has invited me to travel to his production studio in Bolivia to tape programs for television broadcast. I have resisted because I did not want people to get the impression that Secrets Unsealed agrees with David's time setting tendencies.

It is true that in his most recent internet message, David stated repeatedly that he was not being dogmatic, that he was not trying to set dates, that viewers should trust God, not him, and that we should not rely on human opinion. He also stated that things might not turn out exactly as he saw them and that his views were his own personal conviction. In spite of his disclaimer, David did set a series of specific dates and time-periods for prophetic events.

In support for his novel views, he said that others have reached the same conclusions, that friends have had dreams that corroborate his convictions and that the Lord has personally impressed him. It is true that God on occasion uses these means to impart His message but we must test all these sources by what the Scriptures explicitly teach.

Ellen White constantly admonishes us not to set dates for prophetic events that create a false excitement. Unfortunately, this is not the first time that David has predicted the timing for specific current events by a misuse of the biblical material. We might describe his method as current events looking for a prophecy to sustain them.

## **The Tendency to Set Time Frames**

At the beginning of his latest presentation, David denied that he was setting dates for current events and yet we shall find that in spite of his denials, he did, big time. He stated:

*“I am not trying to communicate a specific date, I am not trying to communicate a specific event that will happen or a specific say, month, but I am trying to communicate exactly what Jesus told us to do, communicate that he is even at the door and we are at the door.”*

This is not the first time that David has set dates. In 2010, he reapplied the story of the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in Egypt to events that transpired between 2001 and 2015 (more on this in a moment). On another occasion, David bought into the idea that Christ will come before the year 2031. Ellen White consistently warned against setting time **parameters** for the coming of Christ. Brother E. P. Daniels once predicted that Jesus would come **within** five years to which Ellen White wrote:

*“I understand that Brother Daniels has, as it were, set time, stating that the Lord will come **within five years**. Now I hope the impression will not go abroad **that we are time-setters**. Let no such remarks be made. They **do no good**. Seek not to obtain a **revival upon any such grounds**, but let due caution be used in every word uttered, that fanatical ones will not seize anything they can get to **create an excitement** and the Spirit of the Lord be grieved.” *Last Day Events*, p. 34*

Ellen White warned:

*“You will not be able to say that He will come in one, two, or five years, neither are you to put off His coming by stating that it may not be for ten or twenty years. . . .*

*We are not to know the definite time either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit or for the coming of Christ.” Review and Herald, March 22, 1892.*

Once again, on July 22, 2015 standing next to his plane shortly after the San Antonio General Conference Session, David stated that he had inside information from friends in high places that the very rich were taking their money out of the United States and investing it in foreign countries. He suggested that in the fall, perhaps September, an economic meltdown might occur and he strongly recommended that his viewers transfer their funds into overseas accounts or turn them into cash. It is now almost 2019 and nothing of the sort transpired.

## **Fourteen Years of Egyptian History**

We find a striking example of David’s tendency to sensationalize current events and set dates, in an email message he sent to his supporters on August 26, 2010. Granted that the original idea was not his, yet he bought into it, added to it and sent it to all of his supporters. At that time, he denied that he was being prophetic or setting dates. The reader will determine if he was or he was not. I quote verbatim with my own emphasis in bold:

*“Several months ago, someone handed me four DVDs and gave me a brief introduction to the material. I did not get a chance to review it until about 10 days ago, and I need to share the contents with you **urgently as it is time-sensitive** and could affect some of the decisions you will make over the **next 3 weeks**.”*

*The subject matter is the **parallels** between dreams of Pharaoh in Joseph’s days and what we are currently living today. I will only summarize this for you, as this is not intended to be the full study. This is **not intended to be prophetic or to set any dates**. Rather it is intended to be a heads up to what God is doing and telling us so we can make the proper decisions ahead of time.*

*Pharaoh’s dreams (Gen 41:1-7) signified **seven fat years**, years of plenty (v 26, 29) followed by **seven lean years**, years of grievous famine (v 27, 30, 31).*

*I never suspected that this beautiful story of God’s leading in Joseph’s life could have such a **direct application to our times**. However, we know that according to Paul in 1Corinthians 10:11, that “all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”*

Here is the application according to the expositor who gave me the DVDs and some **added explanation** from me.

**September 11, 2001:** Collapse of the Twin Trade towers, and beginning of the **seven fat years**.

**September 11, 2008:** Collapse of the Freddy Mac and Fanny Mae through the sudden withdrawal of \$550 billion, and beginning of the **seven lean years**.

In **Genesis 47:13-20** we see a progression. First, the people **spent all their money** (apparently in the **first two years**) and their **money failed**. During the **second two years**, they sold all their cattle and animals in exchange for food. Finally, they **sold their lands and bodies** to Pharaoh in order to keep eating.

What do we see here? The progression divided into **2 years** (money failed), **2 years** (all goods sold), final **3 years** (all lands and themselves sold to the government).

Where is the parallel? **September 11, 2010 marks the two-year point** into the seven lean years when all money faileth.

Interesting enough, some key financial analysts (such as GEAB 2020) are predicting the **total collapse** of the US dollar during the late **summer and fall of 2010**. Also, Tim Walsh, SDA financial manager for large investors, and husband of Brenda Walsh who directs the children's programming for 3ABN, just called the other day to say that he expects the collapse in the **next 30 days**.

What is recommendation?

**We do not know exactly** if something will happen on September 11 of this year, but it is **highly likely that it will**. Since the September 11 mark of 2001 and 2010 was **exact**, one can see that God is in control of things. It is therefore **very probable** that if it is going to happen this fall, then **September 11 is the likely date**. It happens not when man wants, but when God says it will.

I would therefore recommend the following:

If you have funds in the bank, that you transfer them to your overseas accounts or take them out **in cash before September 11**.

If you live in the US, keep the funds **in cash and in smaller bills**.

Just like a person cans during the summer so they can eat during the winter, we must put aside **some food for a month or two**.

Some gasoline or diesel should be kept on hand if you live in the US in case the banks go on holiday for 1-3 months, as they did in the great depression.

Buy your basic supplies or equipment before that date.

Keep watching and praying, as God will not surprise his people unless we are sleeping like the ten virgins. Remember someone has to be awake and watching if we are going to give the cry, "The bridegroom cometh. Let us go forth to meet him."

## **Failure of Time Setting**

David's perspective seemed to fit the events of the time to a 'T' but in the end, the artificial construct that he imposed upon Scripture never transpired. His method was looking at current events and then searching for a prophecy that fit them.

Nothing happened to the financial sector on September 11, 2015. Bottom line: The story of the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine has nothing to do with current events. It is simply an account of historical events that transpired in the past and which teaches us important moral lessons. What hermeneutical principle guided David when he predicted a repetition of the fourteen literal years in this story? Would this be a year-for-a-year principle?

If we are to apply the fourteen years in the historical account of the Egyptian feast and famine literally to the future, should we then reapply the literal 120 years that Noah preached before the flood to a future literal 120-year period? If not, why not? Are not both of these time-periods in the same book of Genesis? How about the 430-sojourn of Israel in Egypt and the 70 years of Israel's captivity in Babylon? Do we reapply these time-periods to literal time-periods in the future? If not, why not?

What gives an interpreter the right to be selective in his application of historical time-periods? What hermeneutical principle guides David when he takes literal time-periods in the past and reapplies them in literal time to future events? What hermeneutical principle allows David to take symbolic time-periods in apocalyptic prophecy, such as the 1260 years, and reapply them in literal time to end time events? The Scriptures do not provide a single example of symbolic time-periods in apocalyptic prophecy fulfilling as literal time in the future.

## Three Problems with Time Setting

There are **three problems** with setting specific time-periods for prophetic events.

First, although it does awaken the saints and cause an excitement, after the time passes and the predicted events fail to occur, believers tend to relax and fall into a worse state of lethargy than before. The gasoline thrown into the fire flares up for a moment and then burns out. The story of the young boy who shouted ‘wolf, wolf’ comes to mind. His message of alarm certainly ‘excited’ the populace, instilled fear and woke them up. However, after several false alarms, no one paid attention to the boy’s cry and then the wolf **did come** and the people were not ready! Ellen White wrote:

*"Time after time will be set by different ones, and will pass by; and the influence of this time setting will tend to **destroy the faith of God's people.**" IT, p. 72*

Ellen White wrote about what happened to certain Adventist date setters who predicted that Jesus would come in 1854. Its supporters sacrificed much financially to extend the message. The movement created an excitement, spread extensively, and seemingly led to conversions. However, the proponents mingled truth with error, and when the predicted event did not occur, many gave up both the truth and the error:

*"I saw that God tested His people upon time in 1844, but that no time which has since been set has borne the special marks of His hand. He has not tested His people upon any particular time since 1844. We have been, and still are, in the patient waiting time. The 1854 time created a considerable **excitement**, and many have settled it that that movement was in the order of God because it was **quite extensive** and some were apparently converted by it. However, such conclusions are not necessary. **There was much** preached in connection with the time in 1854 that was **reasonable and right**. Some who were honest took truth and error together, and **sacrificed much** of what they possessed to carry out the error, and after their disappointment, they **gave up both truth and error**, and are now where it is very difficult for the truth to reach them. Some who endured the disappointment have seen the evidences of present truth, have embraced the third angel's message, and are striving to carry it out in their lives. But where there is one who has been benefited by believing the 1854 time, there are ten who have been **injured by it**; and many of these are placed where **they will not be***

**convinced of the truth**, though it be presented before them ever so clearly.” *1T*, p. 409

The second problem with setting specific time-periods for current events is that it gives **ministers of other denominations** fodder to bring reproach upon the Remnant Church. When they see Adventists setting dates, they say, ‘here we go again’! Ellen White wrote:

*“Those who so presumptuously preach **definite time**, in so doing gratify the adversary of souls; for they are advancing infidelity rather than Christianity. They **produce Scripture** and by **false interpretation** show a chain of argument, which **apparently** proves their position. However, their failures show that they are **false prophets**, that they **do not rightly** interpret the language of inspiration. The word of God is truth and verity, but men have **perverted** its meaning. These **errors** have brought the truth of God for these last days **into disrepute**. **Ministers of all denominations** deride Adventists, yet God's servants must not hold their peace. The **signs foretold in prophecy are fast fulfilling** around us. **This should arouse** every true follower of Christ to zealous action. Those who think they must preach **definite time in order to make an impression upon the people** do not work from the right standpoint. The **feelings** of the people may be stirred and their **fears aroused**, but they do not move **from principle**. An **excitement is created**; but when the **time passes**, as it has done repeatedly, those who moved out upon time fall back into **coldness, darkness, and sin**, and it is almost impossible to arouse their consciences without some great excitement.” *4T*, pp. 308, 309*

There is a third reason why is it problematic to set dates and it involves the secular world. When Adventists sets dates and the time passes without fulfillment, worldlings become even more hardened in unbelief. Regarding this, Ellen White wrote:

*“The **repeated efforts** to find new dates for the beginning and close of the **prophetic periods**, and the **unsound reasoning** necessary to sustain these positions, not only lead minds **away from the present truth**, but throw contempt upon all efforts to explain the prophecies. The more frequently a definite time is set for the Second Advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites **ridicule and contempt of its advocates**, and thus casts reproach upon the great advent movement of 1843 and 1844.” *GC*, p. 457*

*“Because the times repeatedly set have passed, **the world is in a more decided state of unbelief** than before in regard to the near advent of Christ. They look upon the failures of the time-setters with disgust, and because men have been so deceived, they **turn from the truth** substantiated by the Word of God that the end of all things is at hand.” 4T, p. 307*

## **Dependence on Emotions and Feelings**

God does not use **sensational interpretations** of prophecy that cause a momentary excitement and seemingly awaken His people from their Laodicean slumber only to leave them in a worse condition after the time passes. Ellen White warned:

*“We want not to move the **people's passions** to get up a stir, where **feelings are moved** and principle does not control. I feel that we need to be guarded on every side, because Satan is at work to do his uttermost to insinuate his arts and devices that shall be a power to do harm. Anything that will **make a stir, create an excitement** on a wrong basis, is to be dreaded, for the reaction will surely come.”  
*Letter 34, 1887**

Ellen White warned that we do not need to attach time to the third angel’s message; that it can stand on its own feet:

*“The Lord has shown me that the message of the third angel must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, but it must not be **hung on time**. I saw that some were getting a **false excitement**, arising from **preaching time**; but the third angel’s message is **stronger than time** can be. I saw that this message can stand on its own foundation and **needs not time** to strengthen it; and that it will go in mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.” EW, p. 75*

## **Ministries Working Together**

In a recent visit to Chattanooga, I warned the hearers about the dangers of David’s persistent tendency to set dates for current events and someone wrote me a less than complementary email accusing me of betraying David like Judas betrayed Jesus. Others have written and admonished me to share my views with David in private because all conservative Adventist supporting ministries need to work together and not be at odds with one another.

I agree that all supporting ministries should work together to extend the three angels' message. However, David went public with his views and they have gone viral on the internet. His views are no longer personal and private and therefore we must scrutinize them and provide a response in public. As I stated before, my comments about David are not personal. He is a good man. I consider him my friend. I admire his tireless work for the kingdom. Ellen White wrote the following appropriate words about the need to oppose good men who are time setters:

*“Let all our brethren and sisters beware of anyone who would **set a time** for the Lord to fulfill His word in regard to His coming, or in regard to **any other promise** He has made of special significance. “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.” False teachers may appear to be very **zealous for the work of God**, and may **expend means** to bring their theories before the world and the church; but as they **mingle error with truth**, their message is one of deception, and will lead souls into false paths. They are to be met and opposed, **not because they are bad men**, but because they are teachers of falsehood and are endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth.” *TM*, p. 55*

## **Patent Inaccuracies**

David made several comments in his video presentation that are factually challenged or misleading. I will mention only three:

First, he stated that when Pope Francis visited the United States, Donald Trump told him that he was willing to follow his orders. Where is the corroborating source for this statement? The fact is that Donald Trump and Pope Francis are at odds on almost every single issue. When Donald Trump visited the Vatican shortly after his inauguration, the body language of both Pope Francis and President Trump showed that they were quite uncomfortable.

Donald Trump and Pope Francis are opposites in almost every detail. President Trump is a **capitalist** and the pope is a socialist (dare I say a Communist?). President Trump favors **nationalism** ('America First') while the pope is a **globalist**, wanting to establish a New World Order. Donald Trump's budget approved a massive **military buildup** (by 700 billion dollars) while the pope is for disarmament. President Trump strongly opposes **illegal immigration** (building a wall along the southern border) and the pope is for open borders.

Donald Trump rejects the reality of **climate change** calling it a hoax (signing the **Keystone pipeline** executive order, authorizing drilling in **Anwar**, deregulating the **coal industry** and withdrawing the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement) while climate change is at the top of the pope's agenda.

Furthermore, Trump does not favor **spreading the wealth** of the United States to poorer nations while the pope favors a **redistribution** of wealth from the rich nations to the poorer ones 'for the common good'. Trump claims to be a convert to **social conservatism** (against abortion, gay marriage, LGBTQ, etc.) but the pope is liberal on these social issues, saying very little about them and asking, 'who am I to judge?' Conservatives in the Catholic Church despise this pope for his liberal stands.

Thus, the policy differences between Trump and the pope appear to be as broad and deep as the Grand Canyon! Donald Trump is not following the pope's orders! He may be following the counsel of the evangelicals but not of the pope!

David presented no documentation for several of his claims such as that Donald Trump promised to obey the pope's orders, that the Sunday law is already in place, that the Compliance Document is oppressive and dictatorial, that the judgment of living Adventists began on the Day of Atonement September 23, 2015, etc.

David made a second inaccurate statement when he said that all the justices of the Supreme Court are Catholics except for one. In fact, the Court has five Catholics, one who grew up Catholic but attends the Episcopalian church and three Jews.

The third erroneous statement is the most serious. David claims that the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church at the General Conference Session in San Antonio in 2015 rejected the imminent second coming of Jesus and the inspired writings of Ellen White. He seemed to be implying that probation closed for the corporate church at that time.

David protested because the delegates of the World Church voted to change the word 'imminent' to 'soon' in the Statement of Fundamental Beliefs thus, in his mind, rejecting the second coming. According to David when the church changed the word from 'imminent' to 'soon', the Seventh-day Adventist Church lost the 'Midnight Cry'.

Is the change of word really an indication that the Seventh-day Adventist Church no longer believes in the imminent coming of Jesus? Ellen White uses the word 'imminent' 21 times in her writings and not once does it refer to the second coming. On the other hand she uses the words 'soon' or 'near' for the second coming dozens of times. Does this mean that Ellen White did not believe in the imminent coming of Jesus? Here is one example where Ellen White uses the word 'soon':

*"The Lord is **soon** to come, and we must be prepared to meet Him in peace. Let us be determined to do all in our power to impart light to those around us. We are not to be sad, but cheerful, and we are to keep the Lord Jesus ever before us. He is **soon** coming, and we must be ready and waiting for His appearing." Counsels to the Church, p. 356*

The dictionary defines the word 'soon' with the following synonyms: 'shortly, presently, in the near future, before long, in a little while, in a minute, in a moment, in an instant, in a bit, in the twinkling of an eye, in no time, before you know it, any minute (now), any day (now).' I leave it to the reader to determine if the use of the word 'soon' is a rejection of the second coming.

David also stated that a change in the wording of the Fundamental Belief on Spiritual Gifts indicates that the corporate church now teaches that the writings of Ellen White 'are not considered inspired anymore.' He also said that the Spirit of Prophecy is the sign that we are God's remnant people and that the Seventh-day Adventist Church removed the sign and therefore ceased being God's remnant people.

Is it true that the writings of the Spirit of Prophecy are the sign between God and His people? Once again, David's assessment on this matter is misleading, if not erroneous. Ellen White repeatedly states that the Sabbath is the sign or the mark that we are God's peculiar people. Here are two examples:

*"The **sign**, or **seal**, of God is revealed in the observance of the seventh day Sabbath, the Lord's memorial of creation. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Exodus 31:12, 13. Here **the Sabbath is clearly designated as a sign between God and His people.**" 8T, p. 117*

*"No name which we can take will be appropriate but that which accords with our profession and expresses our faith and marks us a **peculiar people**. The name Seventh-day Adventist is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world. Here is **the***

***line of distinction*** between the worshipers of God and those who worship the beast and receive his mark." 1T, p. 223

Let us compare the Fundamental Belief on Spiritual Gifts, as it existed before and after San Antonio. Here is the Fundamental Belief before San Antonio:

*"One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger, her writings are a **continuing and authoritative source** of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested."*

After San Antonio the Fundamental Belief reads:

*The **Scriptures testify** that one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and we believe it was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. Her writings **speak** with **prophetic authority** and provide comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction to the church. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Num. 12:6; 2 Chron. 20:20; Amos 3:7; Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10; 22:8, 9.)*

I believe that the San Antonio General Conference actually reaffirmed, simplified and clarified our Fundamental Belief on the Spirit of Prophecy:

- It clarifies that our belief in the continuity of spiritual gifts in the church finds its basis in **the Scriptures**.
- It continues to identify this gift as '**a mark of the remnant church**'.
- It reaffirms that **Ellen White had this gift**.
- The **present** verbs 'speak' replaces the word 'continuing' meaning that her writings continue to speak in the present.
- The expression 'prophetic authority' replaces the phrase 'authoritative source of truth'. That is to say, Ellen White's writings presently **speak** (not spoke) with prophetic authority as did the biblical prophets. What gave the biblical prophets authority is the fact that the Holy Spirit inspired their writings (2Peter 1:20, 21).

It was simply inaccurate for David to state that after San Antonio, the writings of Ellen White '*are not considered inspired anymore*' or that '*the Seventh-day Adventist Church no longer has in its Fundamental Beliefs the Spirit of Prophecy as a source of Truth.*'

Thus, David was simply wrong when he stated that as of July 9, 10, 2015 in San Antonio, *'the official position of the organized church is to reject the imminent coming, to reject the Spirit of Prophecy as an inspired source of truth.'*

## **No Time Setting for any Prophetic Event**

In his presentation, David claimed that Ellen White's statements against time setting, in their context, apply only to setting a specific time for the second coming. However, is this statement accurate? Ellen White made it clear that the prohibition against time setting extends to other events besides the second coming:

*"Let all our brethren and sisters beware of anyone who would **set a time** for the Lord to fulfill His word in regard to His coming, **or** in regard to **any other promise** He has made of special significance." TM, p. 55*

Ellen White has warned that we cannot set the time for the second coming **or** for the outpouring of the Latter Rain:

*"We are not to know the **definite time** either for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit **or** for the coming of Christ." Review and Herald, March 22, 1892.*

In the following statement, Ellen White warned that God has not revealed the time for the **close of probation**:

*"God has not revealed to us **the time** when this message [the third angel's] will close, or **when probation will have an end**. . . . Letters have come to me asking me if I have any special light as to the time when probation will close; and I answer that I have only this message to bear, that it is **now time to work** while the day lasts, for the night cometh in which no man can work." FLB, p. 215*

In The Great Controversy, Ellen White warned that no one knows when the judgment of the living will begin:

*"The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years, this work has been in progress. Soon—**none know how soon**--it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God, our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others, it behooves every soul to heed the Savior's admonition: 'Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' Mark 13:33. 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' Revelation 3:3." GC, p. 490*

Ellen White discouraged time setting for any unfulfilled prophecy:

*“There will always be false and fanatical movements made by persons in the church who claim to be led of God—those who will run before they are sent and will give day and date for the occurrence of **unfulfilled prophecy**. The enemy is pleased to have them do this, for their **successive failures** and leading into false lines cause confusion and unbelief.” 2SM, p. 84 (1897)*

## **Time no Longer**

What is the basis for Ellen White’s statement that it is inappropriate to set dates for prophetic events since 1844?

In Revelation 10, we find the clearest description of the origin of the Remnant Movement in the time of the end. In 1798, Jesus removed the seal from the book of Daniel and descended from heaven with the open book. After His voice uttered the seven thunders—which symbolically describe events that occurred between 1842 and 1844—Jesus swore that after October 22, 1844 time would be no longer. To what time was Jesus referring when he stated that time would be no longer? Was he referring to the end of the world or the end of probationary time? Ellen White provided the answer:

*“This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world's history, neither of probationary time, but of **prophetic time**, which **should precede** the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will **not have another message upon definite time**. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be **no definite tracing** of the **prophetic time**. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844.” 7BC, p. 971*

*“This message [that time will be no longer] announces the **end of the prophetic periods**.” Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 108*

Some might think that the expression ‘time will be no longer’ refers to the close of probation or the second coming. However, this idea is untenable for two reasons:

First, Jesus made the announcement that time would be no longer during the period of the **sixth trumpet**, and Jesus will not come to take over his **kingdom** until His second coming when the **seventh trumpet** sounds (Revelation 11:15-19).

Second, after Jesus announced that “*time will be no longer*,” He instructed John to **prophecy again** (Revelation 10:11). What good would it do for John to prophesy again if probation had ended and the second coming had already taken place?

It is obvious that Jesus could not have announced that after 1844 prophetic ‘time will be no longer’ if there were still prophetic periods that had not yet been fulfilled. This means that the **42 months** (Revelation 11:2; 13:5), the **1260 days** (Revelation 11:3; 12:6), the **3.5 times** (Revelation 12:14; Daniel 7:25), the **1290 days**, the **1335 days**, the **3½ days** (Revelation 11:9, 11), and the **2300 days** (Daniel 8:14) had already been fulfilled in 1844.

## **Definition of Prophetic Time**

David agrees that these time-periods, in their **symbolic sense**, do not extend beyond 1844. However, he states that these periods will have another fulfillment in the future, in **literal time**. As proof for his view, David points out that there are some unfulfilled time prophecies that are still future such as the symbolic **half-hour** of silence in heaven (Revelation 8:1), the symbolic **one hour** (Revelation 18:10, 17, 19), and the literal **thousand years** (Revelation 20:1-3).

It is important to underline that Ellen White clearly defines ‘prophetic time’ as time-periods relating to events that **precede** the second coming.

*“This time, which the angel declares with a solemn oath, is not the end of this world’s history, neither of probationary time, but of **prophetic time**, which **should precede** the advent of our Lord. That is, the people will not have another message upon **definite time**. After this period of time, reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be **no definite tracing** of the **prophetic time**. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844.” *ZBC*, p. 971*

When we examine the examples that David provides, all of them point to events that occur after the close of probation **at** or **after** the second coming. These events occur beyond what Ellen White defines as ‘prophetic time’.

Furthermore, David applies the year/day principle to the ‘half hour’ and ‘one-hour’ in the end time (7 days and 15 days) but does not do the same with the 42 months, the 3.5 times and the 1260 days, which he considers to be literal time. Where is the consistency in David’s use of the year/day principle? Let us consider the periods to which David applies the year/day principle.

The half hour of silence in heaven describes a period **during** the second coming of Jesus when *'the angels' song is hushed'* and the saints cry out *'who shall be able to stand?'* (The Great Controversy, p. 641). The 'one hour' refers to the demise of Babylon when God utters His voice saying 'it is finished' during the period of the fifth, sixth and seventh plagues. At this point God has delivered His people from Babylon and the great city has fallen (see Revelation 18:10, 17, 19).

The fact that 'prophetic time' refers to events that **precede** the second coming helps us understand a seemingly vexing problem.

Ellen White explains that when God delivers His people from the death decree at the fifth, sixth and seventh plagues (The Great Controversy, p. 635, 636), He will resurrect those who died in the faith of the third angel's message, and glorify the living saints. He will then announce to His faithful ones the day and hour of His coming.

*"The voice of God is heard from Heaven, declaring the day and hour of Jesus' coming, and delivering the everlasting covenant to his people."* GC, p. 640

Is this not a time prophecy that God will give to His people after the close of probation and before the second coming? Yes it is! Does this not conflict with Mark 13:32 where Jesus explicitly stated that no one knows the day or hour of His coming? Not really. The prohibition to set dates applies only to events that transpire before the second coming during probationary time. The context indicates that at this point, Jesus has already delivered His people from the death decree, the special resurrection has taken place, God has glorified the living saints, the Synagogue of Satan is worshipping at the feet of the saints and Jesus has taken His place on the cloud to begin His second coming.

What about the millennium? David argues that because the millennium is literal time we are justified in saying that the other time-periods in the end time can also be literal. However, at this point David is inconsistent. He uses the year/day principle for the half hour and the one-hour after probation's close but he fails to use this principle for the thousand years. Why?

The fact is that, contrary to what David stated, the Bible does apply the year/day principle to the millennium as it does to all other apocalyptic time-periods. Isaiah 24:22 refers to the millennial period as 'days' but the book of Revelation applies the year/day principle referring to the 'days as 'years' (Revelation 20:1-3). Thus, Revelation 20 applies the year/day principle to the days of Isaiah.

David is inconsistent in his application of prophetic time-periods. He takes literal time-periods and applies them to another future literal time-period (such as the 14 years of plenty and famine, and the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week), he converts literal time-periods to symbolic ones (such as the literal 1260 days, 3.5 times and 42 months) and claims that those same time-periods will fulfill literally once again.

## **Proper Understanding of Typology**

David justifies his reapplication of apocalyptic time-prophecies appealing to the law of typology. He states that God has always used dual applications of prophecy and he gives as an example the seven churches where the seven literal churches represent ‘seven periods of time’. He also sees a repetition of the time-periods in Daniel 12, symbolic in the past and literal in the future.

It is true that the law of typology is a valid principle of Bible study. It is also true that in typological stories, history repeats itself (see below). However, it is the events, not the time-periods that repeat in similar fashion. There is no biblical example of events of a long symbolic apocalyptic time-period repeating in shorter, literal time. This is an unfounded conjecture.

David claims that the seven literal churches in Revelation represent long periods of church history and he is correct. Ellen White agreed that the seven literal churches in Asia Minor represent seven **long periods** of church history:

*“The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in **different periods** of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at **different periods** in the history of the world.” AA, p. 585*

However, David’s example of the seven churches is inadequate to prove his point. He is actually comparing apples with papayas. In Revelation, the seven literal churches in literal Asia Minor, represent long time-periods of church history. The year/day principle functions in a similar way, where the shorter time-periods—such as 1260 literal days and 42 literal months—point forward symbolically to longer ones, that is, 1260 years. David’s interpretation does just the opposite; he takes the longer symbolic apocalyptic time prophecies of the past and applies them to literal, shorter periods at the end of time.

Typology is a valuable tool for understanding Bible prophecy and even though typology involves a repetition, the repetition is always larger and longer than the type—it works from lesser to greater. In apocalyptic prophecies, shorter literal time-periods point forward to longer symbolic ones. There is no evidence that long apocalyptic time prophecies will repeat once more in shorter, literal time as if there were a reverse year/day principle!

The Bible itself identifies typological relationships. For example, in Matthew 24:37 Jesus said, ‘**As** it was in the days of Noah **so** also will it be at the coming of the Son of Man.’ The combination of ‘as/so’ clearly identifies a typological relationship between the events in the days of Noah and end time events. However, the typological relationship is parallel as to events, not as to time. Are we to expect that the door of mercy in the future will remain open for 120 years? Nowhere does the Bible tell us that the 120-year period will repeat either literally or symbolically.

On the other hand, there is a story where the typology applies both as to time and to events. However, in harmony with the unbending biblical principle, we must apply the year/day principle to the time element in the original story.

The story of Elijah is well known. The book of Revelation takes this story and interprets it typologically. No speculation or conjecture is necessary because Scripture itself provides the typological relationship both as to events and as to time.

The history of the church of Thyatira in Revelation 2:20-23, of the two witnesses in Revelation 11:3-6 and of the woman of Revelation 12:6, 14 provide clear typological parallels to the period of papal dominion during the 1260 years. Here are some of the parallels:

The apostasy in **literal** Elijah’s day lasted for three and a half **literal** years (James 5:17, 18), the leader of the apostasy was **literal** Jezebel (Revelation 2:20), who had an illegitimate **literal** marital relationship with **literal** king Ahab. Ahab and Jezebel imposed the worship of the **literal** sun god Baal. God called **literal** Elijah to rebuke the apostasy and as a result, he had to flee to the **literal** wilderness where God **literally** fed him and during this period, there was no **literal** rain.

Thus, the Bible itself in the book of Revelation applies the year/day principle to the 3.5 literal years in the Elijah story and the fulfillment broadens out the original time-period to 1260 years!

## **A Repetition of History**

Several times in his presentation, David underlined that history repeats itself and he quoted Ellen White to prove his point. Granted that history does repeat. However, it is not the original prophecy that repeats but rather the history that fulfilled the prophecy. Let us take as an example, Daniel 11:31-36. Ellen White quotes these verses and applies them to the 1260 years of papal supremacy. Then she states that **much of the history** that fulfilled these verses will repeat in similar fashion in the future:

*"We have no time to lose. Troublous times are before us. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. The prophecy in the eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. **Much of the history** that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy **will be repeated**. In the thirtieth verse, a power is spoken of that "shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." [Verses 31-36, quoted.] **Scenes similar** to those described in these words will take place." 13MR, p. 394*

In this quotation, Ellen White does not state that these verses will have a dual fulfillment, one symbolic and past and the other literal and future. The 42 months/1260 days'/3.5 times are past in the prophetic chain and there is not an inkling that that we can extract them from their original context and give them another future fulfillment in literal time. In the historicist mold, Daniel 11 presents a sequence of events in chronological order from the rise of Persia (11:2, 3) until the time that Christ concludes his intercessory work (Daniel 12:1) and sets up His everlasting kingdom (Daniel 12:3). No one has the right to extrapolate or extract some of these verses from their proper place in the prophetic chain and give them another future fulfillment. Ellen White wrote the following counsel to schoolteacher, John Bell, who was relocating the timing of the prophecies and applying them to the future:

*“Some will take the truth applicable to their time, and **place it in the future**. Events in the **train of prophecy** that had their fulfillment away **in the past** are made future, and thus by these **theories** the faith of some is undermined.*

*“From the light that the Lord has been pleased to give me, you are in danger of doing the same work, presenting before others truths that have had their place and done their specific work for the time, in the history of the faith of the people of God. You recognize these facts in Bible history as true, but **apply them to the future**. They have their force still in their **proper place**, in the **chain of events** that have made us as a people what we are today, and as such they are to be presented to those who are in the darkness of error.”*

*“The truths that have been unfolding **in their order**, as we have advanced along the **line of prophecy** revealed in the Word of God, are truth, sacred, eternal truth today. Those who passed over the ground step by step in the past history of our experience, seeing the **chain of truth in the prophecies**, were prepared to accept and obey every ray of light.”*

*“All that God has in prophetic history specified to be fulfilled in the past has been, and all that is yet to come **in its order** will be.” Manuscript Releases, volume 17, pp. 1-23 “Testimony Concerning the Views of Prophecy Held by John Bell” Part I (written November 8, 1896, at Cooranbong, New South Wales)*

According to Ellen White, the history that already fulfilled Daniel 11:30-36 will repeat in similar—not identical—fashion. Why will the repetition be similar? Simply because when the king of the north (representing the papacy) resurrects from its deadly wound it will be the same power with the same evil character that acted during the 42 months. It will have essentially the same character, operate based on the same principles and carry out the same actions as it did during the previous stage of its existence only on a much larger scale.

The 42 months/1260 days/3.5 times are past. The deadly wound is past and we are now in the period when the wound is in the process of healing. Ellen White used expressions such as ‘reestablish’, ‘recover’, ‘revival’ ‘reinstated’ to describe the period when the wound will heal and history, not prophecy, will repeat:

*'And let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she **never changes**. The principles of Gregory VII and Innocent III are **still** the principles of the Roman Catholic Church. And had she but the power [which was removed in 1798], she would put them in practice with as much vigor now as in **past centuries**. . . . Rome is aiming to **re-establish** her power, to **recover** her lost supremacy. . . . She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures in the secret recesses of which her former persecutions **will be repeated**. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her **forces** to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike.'* The Great Controversy, p. 581

*"Let the restraints now imposed by secular governments be removed [these restraints were put in place in 1798] and Rome be **reinstated** in her former power, and there would speedily be a **revival** of her tyranny and persecution."* The Great Controversy, p. 564

*"The Roman Church now presents a fair front to the world, covering with apologies her record of horrible cruelties. She has clothed herself in Christ-like garments; but she is **unchanged**. Every principle of the papacy that existed in **past ages** exists today. She **still holds** the doctrines devised in the darkest ages. Let none deceive themselves. The papacy that Protestants are now so ready to honor is **the same** that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty and slew the saints of the Most High.'* The Great Controversy, p. 571

## **The Importance of Literary Structure (for more study my syllabus, Prophetic Principles, volume 2, pp. 513-542)**

One of the problems with David's method of interpreting prophecy is that he fails to take into account the literary structure of prophetic passages. David sent me a letter after his internet presentation where he graciously asked me to explain whether I believe that the time-periods in Revelation 11-13—the 1260 days, the 42 months and the 3.5 times—have a dual fulfillment, one symbolic

in the past and the other literal in the future. My answer to him is that I believe that the time-periods have only one symbolic fulfillment in the past. However, as I indicated before, I believe that many of **the historical events** that occurred during these periods will repeat in similar fashion in the end of time.

Ellen White made it perfectly clear that the 3.5 times, the 1260 days and the 42 months apply to the period of papal dominion from 538 AD to 1798 AD and nowhere in her writings is there the slightest hint that these symbolic time-periods will fulfill again in literal time in the future. To reapply these periods to the future is a conjecture without any foundation in Scripture or in the Spirit of Prophecy. Notice how Ellen White links the 42 months, the 1260 days and the 3.5 times and applies them to the period of papal dominion from 538-1798 AD:

*“Power was given unto him to continue **forty and two months**.” And, says the prophet, “I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death.” Again, “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” The **forty and two months** are the same as the **“time and times and the dividing of time,”** three years and a half, or **1260 days**, of Daniel 7,—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God's people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the establishment of the papacy, **A. D. 538**, and terminated in **1798**. At that time, when the papacy was abolished and the pope made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.” GC, p. 439*

The prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8-9 and 11 and Revelation 11-13 function in cycles rather than in straight-line fashion. In Daniel 2, we have Nebuchadnezzar's dream (verses 1-28) and then the repetition and interpretation (verses 29-45). In Daniel 7, the prophet had the vision (Daniel 7:1-14) and then three successive cycles (7:15-18; 7:19-22; 7:23-27) repeat and expand upon the first cycle. In Daniel 8, the prophet received the vision (verses 1-14) and then Gabriel gave him the explanation of the vision (verses 15-27) and in Daniel 11, Gabriel further expanded the vision of Daniel 8 (see my syllabus, 'Our Redemption Draweth Nigh').

There is no clear example in Bible prophecy where a literal time-period points forward to another literal time-period of equal length such as the fourteen years of feast and famine in Egypt. Furthermore, there is no example of a symbolic period pointing forward to a future literal period. In the Bible, shorter and literal time-periods point forward to longer and symbolic time-periods. In

Apocalyptic prophecies, there is a day-standing-for-a-year-principle but not a year-standing-for-a-day principle.

## **Revelation 20:1-21:8: Four Repetitive Cycles**

The book of Revelation uses the same principle of cyclical repetition and expansion as the book of Daniel. Before we deal specifically with chapters 11-13 I will give you a striking example from later in the book.

Revelation 20:1-21:8 describes the millennium. It is clear that the events in this passage are not in chronological sequence but rather run in **four repetitive cycles** each expanding upon the previous one and each reaching the same climax. Although there are four repetitive cycles in the millennial passage, each repetition has a different center of focus or emphasis:

- **Revelation 20:1-3**: Central focus: Satan and the earth.
- **Revelation 20:4-10**: Central focus: The saints in heaven.
- **Revelation 20:11-21:1**: Central focus: The millennial and post-millennial judgments of the wicked culminating with the new heaven and new earth.
- **Revelation 21:2-8**: Central focus: The destruction of the wicked and life in the Holy City.

If we attempt to read the events in Revelation 20:1-21:8 in strict chronological order we will end up hopelessly confused. Three times God shows John the lake of fire (20:7-9; 14, 15; 21:8). Does this mean that there will be three lakes of fire?

Revelation 20:7-9 indicates that the New Jerusalem will descend from heaven to the earth before the wicked surround the city and are thrown into the lake of fire, and yet, Revelation 21:1 seems to say that God will create a new heavens and new earth before the descent of the city in verse 2. How do we explain this seeming discrepancy? Simply by recognizing that Revelation 21:1 completes the third cycle and Revelation 21:2 introduces the fourth cycle that ends in verse 8.

## The Time-Periods in Revelation 11

We can see the same principle of cyclical repetition and expansion in Revelation 11, 12, 13. Let us take a brief look at the chronological sequence in all three of these chapters.

There is a historical chain or succession of events in Revelation 11:2-13. Ellen White is clear that we must interpret these verses by using historicist principles. In The Great Controversy, pp. 265-288 she does a verse-by-verse analysis of the chapter, 'The Bible and the French Revolution'. In chronological order she applies the 1260 days and the 42 months to the period of papal supremacy from 538-1798 AD, culminating with the events of the French Revolution and its aftermath.

In this chapter, Ellen White never even hints that the symbolic time-periods (1260 days, 42 months) will repeat in literal time in the future. She does indicate in the book Education that similar **events** to the French Revolution will occur on a global scale once more, but she gives no indication that the time-periods will repeat:

*"With such teaching [of spiritualism] given at the very outset of life, when impulse is strongest, and the demand for self-restraint and purity is most urgent, where are the safeguards of virtue? What is to prevent **the world** from becoming a second Sodom?"*

*"At the same time anarchy is seeking to sweep away all law, not only divine, but also human. The centralizing of wealth and power; the vast combinations for the enriching of the few at the expense of the many; the combinations of the poorer classes for the defense of their interests and claims; the spirit of unrest, of riot and bloodshed; the **world-wide** dissemination of the same teachings that led to the French Revolution--all are tending to involve the **whole world** in a struggle **similar** to that which convulsed France." Education, p. 228*

Let us consider Revelation 11:1, 2:

*"Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod and the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. <sup>2</sup> But leave out the court that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months."*

There is a potential chronological problem in Revelation 11:2. In verse 1, God told John to measure the temple and those who worship therein, a clear reference to the beginning of the investigative judgment in 1844. Then verse 2 mentions the 42 months. Does this not indicate that the 42 months have a future fulfillment after 1844? After all, do not the events in verse two logically follow those in verse 1? David and others make this assumption but their assumption is wrong. Let us consider verse 1 first.

Ellen White applied the measuring of the temple and its worshipers in Revelation 11:1 to the beginning of the investigative judgment in 1844 after the great disappointment described in chapter 10:

*“Have you, dear youth, your lamps trimmed and burning? The work **is going on** in the heavenly court. In vision on the **Isle of Patmos** John said: “And there was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood, saying, Arise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” This solemn work is to be done upon the earth. Look and see how stands your measurement of character as compared with God’s standard of righteousness, his holy law. The **worshipers** are to pass under the measuring line of God.” The Youth’s Instructor, August 25, 1886.*

Those who worship in the temple are obviously believers and Ellen White unequivocally states that God only measures/judges the cases of believers in the pre-advent judgment:

*“As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of **all who have believed on Jesus** come in review before God.” GC, p. 483*

What does the prohibition to measure the court in the first part of verse 2 mean? Ellen White explained the meaning of the ‘outer court’:

*“In the temple at Jerusalem there was a partition wall separating the outer court from the inner one. **Gentiles** were permitted to enter the outer court, but it was only lawful for the **Jews** to penetrate to the inner enclosure.” Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, p. 150.*

Jesus forbade John to measure the court beginning in 1844 because the cases of unbelievers transpires later, during and after the millennium. Clearly, the Gentiles referenced in this verse represent unbelievers because they trampled upon God’s people during the 42 months of papal dominion. Daniel 7 refers to

this trampling as the persecution of the ‘saints of the Most High’ for time, times and the dividing of time (Daniel 7:25). Daniel 8:10 describes it as the trampling of the stars of heaven by the little horn and Revelation 12:6, 14 describes it as the dragon persecuting the woman for 3.5 times and 1260 days.

Do the events in the second half of verse 2 transpire after the events in verse 1 and the first part of verse 2? The answer is no. In order to prove this we must examine the tenses of the verbs in verse 2. Revelation 11:1 and the first part of verse 2 conclude the events in chapter 10. The last half of verse 2 goes back in history to the year 538 AD and begins a new cycle.

Here are verses 1 and 2 with my own explanatory notes in brackets:

*“**Then** [after the great disappointment in 1844] I was given a reed like a measuring rod and the **angel** [a continuation and conclusion of chapter 10] stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and **those who worship there** [the beginning of the investigative judgment in 1844].<sup>2</sup> However, leave out [from measuring] the court that is **outside the temple**, and do not measure it [the pre-advent judgment involves only believers; the judgment of the wicked transpires during and after the millennium], for it **was given** [past tense, taking us back to 538 AD] to the **Gentiles** [unbelievers]. And they [unbelievers] **will tread** [future tense; beginning in 538 AD; see Daniel 8:10] the **holy city** [the faithful church] underfoot for **forty-two months** [538-1798 AD].”*

The last half of Revelation 11:2 literally reads:

*“But leave out the court that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it **was given** to the Gentiles and they **will tread** the holy city [the true church] underfoot for forty-two months.”*

Most Bible versions translate the first part of verse 2 in one of two ways:

- *‘But leave out the court that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it **has been given** to the Gentiles. . .’*
- *‘But leave out the court that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for **it is given** to the Gentiles’*

However, *Wuest’s Version* offers a **third possibility** (supported by *Young’s Literal Translation*):

*“But the court which is outside of the inner sanctuary leave out [of your calculations] and do not begin to measure it, because it **was given** to the nations.”*

Neither of the majority translations is correct. The translation ‘has been given’ is a perfect tense and the translation ‘is given’ is a present tense. However, the verb in the original is an aorist or past tense. Thus, the best translation is ‘was given’ (so translated 15 times in other places of the NIV version of Revelation)

This, then, is how verses one and two flow:

- After the great disappointment on October 22, 1844, Christ tells John to measure the temple and its worshipers, that is, believers—the beginning of the investigative judgment (verse 1).
- In the first part of verse 2, Jesus tells John not to measure the court of the temple where those who trampled God’s people for 42 months are, because they will not be ‘measured’ or judged in the pre-advent judgment.
- The second part of verse 2 takes us back in time to the year 538 AD when the court ‘**was given**’ to unbelievers and they began to trample God’s faithful people.
- The second part of verse 2 then explains that the unbelievers would persecute God faithful people for 42 months, from 538-1798 AD.
- Thus, the second part of verse two begins a new chronological cycle.

## **Revelation 12 and 13**

Now let us turn to the literary structure of Revelation 12 and 13. A careful study of these chapters reveals that they contain three repetitive cycles. The first cycle, Revelation 12:1-5, repeats and expands in Revelation 12:7-12. The second cycle, Revelation 12:6, repeats and expands in Revelation 12:13-16. The third cycle, Revelation 12:17, repeats and enlarges in Revelation 13:11-18.

## **The first cycle: The controversy between the dragon and the Child:**

**Revelation 12:1-5:** The dragon (Satan working through the Roman Empire) attempted to slay Jesus at his birth, but He emerged victorious and ascended to His Father's throne (verse 5).

**Revelation 12:7-12:** Further expansion of Revelation 12:1-5: When Jesus dies and resurrected he cast out Satan as the representative of this world and all heaven celebrated His victory:

*"At the death of Jesus the earth was wrapped in profound darkness at midday; but at the resurrection the brightness of the angels illuminates the night, and the inhabitants of heaven sing with great joy and triumph: Thou hast vanquished Satan and the powers of darkness! Thou hast swallowed up death in victory! "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God, day and night." The Present Truth, February 18, 1886*

## **The second cycle: The controversy between the dragon and the woman:**

**Revelation 12:6:** The dragon (Satan working through papal Rome) persecuted the woman who gave birth to the Child, for time, times and the dividing of time.

**Revelation 12:13-16:** Further expansion of Revelation 12:6: The dragon (Satan working through papal Rome) persecuted the woman for 1260 days but the earth came to the rescue.

## **The third cycle: The controversy between the dragon and the final remnant:**

**Revelation 12:17:** After the earth (the territory of the United States) helps the woman, the dragon (Satan working through papal Rome) launches a final war against the remnant because they keep the commandments of God and have the gift of prophecy. This verse does not explain how the dragon will war against the commandments and the gift of prophecy.

**Revelation 13:11-18:** These verses expand Revelation 12:17. Revelation 13:1-10 repeats the first two cycles of Revelation 12 and then verses 11-18 enlarge upon the third cycle

- **Revelation 13:1, 2:** The chapter begins with the dragon (the same dragon that attempted to kill the Child) giving its seat, its power and its authority to the beast (papal Rome):

*“In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” Revelation 13:2. Now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7.” GC, p. 54*

- **Revelation 13:3-10:** Papal Rome then persecuted the saints (the woman in Revelation 12) for 42 months (1260 days and 3.5 times in Revelation 12) at the end of which the civil sword of the French state imposed the deadly wound.
- **Revelation 13:11-18:** These verses greatly expand upon how the dragon will war against the remnant of Revelation 12:17. Now we discover that a beast (called the false prophet) from the earth (the territory that helped the woman) will heal the sea beast’s wound (all it does is to please the sea beast), speak with a dragon’s voice, attack the fourth commandment and persecute those who remain faithful to God.

## **42 Months in Revelation 13: Past and Future?**

There is a fundamental misconception on the part of those who believe that the 42 months in Revelation 13:5 will repeat in literal time after the healing of the deadly wound. A hasty reading of Revelation 13:3-5 without taking into account the literary flow of the chapter would seem to indicate that the 42 months follow the healing of the deadly wound:

*“And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his **deadly wound was healed** and all the world marveled and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” <sup>5</sup> And he **was given** a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he **was given** authority to continue for forty-two months.”*

The mention of 42 months in verse 5 follows the description of the healing of the wound in verses 3 and 4 and therefore David and others assume that there will be a 42 literal-month period after the healing of the deadly wound. However, what appears to be the case on the surface is not so. David and others fail to take into account the literary arrangement of the chapter. A careful study of Revelation 13:1-10 reveals that there are actually three repetitive cycles:

**Revelation 13:1-4: The first cycle: The entire career of the sea beast:**

*“Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> Now the beast that I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. **The dragon gave him his power**, his throne, and great authority. <sup>3</sup> And I saw one of his heads as if it had been **mortally wounded**, and his **deadly wound was healed** and all the world marveled and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”*

These introductory verses summarize the **entire career** of the sea beast from the time it received its power from pagan Rome ‘till the time its wound is healed and the whole world worships it. There is no mention of how long the beast ruled or of its actions:

- The sea beast **begins** its career when it receives its throne, power and authority from the dragon of Revelation 12:1-5.
- The sea beast then **rules** for a period that is not specified in these verses.
- At the end of the period the sea beast receives a **deadly wound**.
- The deadly wound is then **healed**.
- The whole world **worships** the beast.

**Revelation 13:5-8: The second cycle: The actions of the sea beast, the length of its dominion, the healing of the wound and the worship of the world:**

*“And he **was** given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he **was** given authority to continue for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who*

*dwell in heaven. <sup>7</sup> It **was** granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority **was** given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. <sup>8</sup> All who dwell on the earth **will** worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”*

These verses expand upon the first cycle, describing the **actions** of the beast and the **length** of its dominion ending with the whole world worshipping it. It is vitally important to recognize that the verbs that describe the sea beast’s actions and the length of its dominion in verses 5-7 are all in the past tense. However, in verse 8, the verb ‘will worship’ is future indicating that this verse moves us forward to the time when the beast’s wound is healed:

- **Spoke** great things and blasphemies.
- **Trampled** on the heavenly host and the sanctuary.
- **Made** war with the saints and overcame them.
- **Exercised** authority over every tribe, tongue and nation.
- **Was given** authority for 42 prophetic months.
- The entire world **will** (future tense) worship the beast.

**The third cycle (Revelation 13:9-18):** After the sea beast ruled for 42 months, it received a deadly wound after which the land beast healed the deadly wound and the entire world worshiped the sea beast, his image and received his mark.

## **A Misunderstood Statement**

Some have misunderstood a quotation in Manuscript 153, 1902 where Ellen White seemed to suggest that the 42 months will have a dual fulfillment, the first symbolic and past and the other literal and future. Here is the quotation:

*"In the last days Satan will appear as an angel of light, with great power and heavenly glory, and claim to be the lord of the whole earth. He will declare that the Sabbath has been changed from the seventh to the first day of the week; and as lord of the first day of the week, he will present his spurious sabbath as a test of loyalty to him. Then will take place **the final fulfillment of the Revelator’s prophecy**:*

*“They worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue **forty and two months**. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” [Revelation 13:4-8.]*

Because Ellen White quotes Revelation 13:4-8 after describing Satan’s appearance as an angel of light, David and others assume that the 42 months will have a literal future fulfillment. Moreover, some believe that the expression ‘final fulfillment’ of the prophecy seems to imply a ‘previous fulfillment’.

We must note, however, that Ellen White not only quotes verses 4-8. Immediately after quoting verses 4-8 (about the past career of the papacy) she quotes verses 11-18 where the beast from the earth (the United States) will heal the wound:

*“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.” [Verses 11-18.]*

Does the prophecy in Revelation 13:11-18 concerning the two-horned beast, the image of the beast, the death decree, the prohibition to buy and sell and the mark of the beast have a dual fulfillment, one past and the other future? Of course not! It will have only one fulfillment in the prophetic chain and it is future. Likewise, the events described in verses 4-8 had only one fulfillment in the past during the 42 symbolic months and provides the historical reference point for the future events in verses 11-18. In short, the events in verses 4-8 are past and when the events of verses 11-18 take place, the **final fulfillment** of Revelation 13 will have occurred. Ellen White also used the expression 'final fulfillment' in relation to the prophecy of Daniel 11:

*"The time of trouble, which is to increase until the end, is very near at hand. We have no time to lose. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. The prophecies of the eleventh of Daniel have almost reached their **final fulfillment**." RH Nov. 24, 1904.*

Daniel 11:1-39 describes past events—Persia, Greece, Pagan Rome and Papal Rome during the 42 symbolic months. Daniel 11:40A then describes the deadly wound verses 40B-45 describe the completion of the prophecy. When the final stage of Daniel 11 takes place (verses 40B-45), then the fulfillment of Daniel 11 will be complete and final. In other words, 'final' means 'complete'. This becomes clear when we compare two statements. In RH, November 24, 1904 Ellen White uses the expression 'final fulfillment' and in 9T 14 she uses 'complete fulfillment'.

## **The 1260, 1290 and 1335 Days**

In his follow up letter David asked me, "Is it possible that the time periods relating to the abomination of desolation in Daniel 12:7, 11 and 12 have a two-fold application, one symbolically in the past and the other literally in the future?" The short answer is 'no'. All of the pioneers believed that these periods found their fulfillment in 508, 538, 1798 and 1843 and Ellen White never contradicted them.

Some appeal to the following statement as support for the idea that we must understand the time-periods in Daniel 12 in the time of the end:

*"The people of God need to study what **characters they must form** in order to pass through the test and proving of the last days. Many are living in **spiritual***

**weakness and backsliding.** *They know not **what they believe.** Let us read and study the twelfth chapter of Daniel. It is a **warning** that we shall all **need to understand** before the time of the end.” 15MR, p. 228*

Nowhere in this quotation does Ellen White state that we must understand the time-periods before the time of the end because they are literal. A careful reading of this quotation clearly indicates that we need to know what we believe and focus on the formation of character.

For further information on the fulfillment of these time periods, see Mark Swearingen, *“The 1260, 1290, and 1335 Days: A Response to Futurist Interpretations of Daniel 12”* Journal of Interdisciplinary Graduate Research, (August 2015) volume 1, Article 3. For an excellent article on the 1290 and 1335 days see, Alberto Timm, *“The 1290 and 1335 Days of Daniel 12”* available from the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. Also in my Daniel series available from Secrets Unsealed, the last three CD’s deal with the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days.

Futurist Adventists argue that in the Old Testament, the word ‘day’ with a numeral qualifier always means a literal day so they conclude that the 1260, 1290 and 1335 days must be understood as literal time. However, this argument is flawed. In Revelation, the 1260 literal days become 1260 years when we apply the year/day principle. Likewise, forty-two literal months become forty-two symbolic months and the 3.5 literal years refer to 3.5 symbolic years.

Others argue that these periods must refer to literal time because Daniel uses the word ‘days’ in Daniel 12 instead of the expression ‘time, times and the dividing of time’ as he did in Daniel 7:25. The argument is weak because the book of Revelation uses ‘time, times and the dividing of time’ synonymously with ‘1260 days’.

Another point we need to consider is this: Why would Daniel use symbolic language to express literal time? It is obvious that expressions such as 1260 days, 1290 days, 1335 days is not the normal way of expressing literal time. If Daniel wanted us to believe that, the 1260 days are 3.5 literal years, why did he not use literal language such as James 5:17? He could have used three years and six months for the 1290 and three years and seven months for the 1335, but he did not.

We should consider Daniel 12:5-13 as the epilogue to the book. The book actually ends in verse 4 with its sealing until the time of the end. Then in verses 5-13 God tried to explain further details to Daniel about the previous time-periods on the book but Daniel was not able to grasp them so God simply revealed no more to him at that time.

## **The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem**

In his internet presentation, David takes two historical time-periods and events from the past and reapplies them to the future. The first is the time-period between the siege of Jerusalem by Cestius Gallus in the fall of the year 66 AD and the destruction of the city by Titus in spring of the year 70 AD three and a half years later. The second is the last 3.5 years of the prophecy of the seventy-weeks in Daniel 9.

Let us consider David's line of reasoning concerning the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. In order to understand his perspective we need to look at a little history.

In the fall of the year 66 AD, the Roman general Cestius Gallus came with the Roman legions and surrounded Jerusalem for what appeared to be speedy conquest of the city. A good number of Christians lived in the city and when they saw the Roman legions, they remembered the sign that Jesus had spoken of almost 40 years earlier:

*"But when you **see Jerusalem surrounded by armies**, then, know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her." Luke 21:20, 21*

Ellen White explained that the sign was the setting up of the Roman standards in the holy ground just outside the city walls. As I have shown in my series on Matthew 24, the Roman standards contained an eagle with outstretched wings, with arrows in its talons and surrounded by a circular wreath that represented the sun god Mithra. Here is Ellen White's description:

*"When the **idolatrous standards** of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign **should be seen**, those who would escape must make no delay. Throughout the land of Judea, as well as in Jerusalem itself, **the signal** for flight must be immediately obeyed. He who*

*chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down into his house, even to save his most valued treasures. Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day. They must not hesitate a moment, lest they be involved in the general destruction.” GC, p. 26*

The question is, how could the Christians escape the coming ruin of the city if Cestius had it surrounded? The answer is that after nine days, Cestius, for no apparent reason (we know there was!), withdrew with his troops and in a panic fled back to Rome. The Jews, believing that Cestius’ miraculous withdrawal was an act of God, pursued him and the Roman legions suffered the loss of many troops:

*“The Jewish forces, pursuing after Cestius and his army, fell upon their rear with such fierceness as to threaten them with **total destruction**. It was with great difficulty that the Romans succeeded in making their **retreat**. The Jews escaped almost without loss, and with their spoils returned in triumph to Jerusalem.” GC, p. 31*

Having seen the sign when Cestius retreated from the city, the Christians fled into remote areas:

*“Upon the retreat of Cestius, the Jews, sallying from Jerusalem, pursued after his retiring army, and while both forces were thus fully engaged, the Christians had an opportunity **to leave the city**.” GC, p. 31*

Approximately three and a half years after Cestius retreated with the legions, Titus returned and destroyed the city and massacred the Jews. However, no Christian suffered a loss of life in the destruction because they had obeyed the sign and fled the city.

In his presentation, David draws a parallel between what happened to Jerusalem between the fall of 66 AD and the spring of 70 AD and events in the United States between the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2019.

According to him, the three and a half year repetition began on September 23, 2015 when Pope Francis invaded the United States and took over the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the government. According to him, the Sunday law, in the form of ‘a law of the environment’ was already in place at that time but was under the radar. According to David, by December 2018, the papacy will be finished with its plan to enforce the Sunday law and in March/April 2019, the United States will enforce the Sunday law and the

papacy will begin its final assault against God's law and people. Only those faithful Adventists who have fled between the fall of 2015 and the spring of 2019 will survive. The rest will be victims of Rome's persecution.

First, let us look at points on which we can agree with David. We can agree that Matthew 24 has a two-fold fulfillment. Jesus said as much in Matthew 24:1-3 and Ellen White concurred in several places:

*"The prophecy which He uttered was **twofold** in its meaning; while foreshadowing the destruction of Jerusalem, it **prefigured** also the terrors of the last great day. The Great Controversy, p. 25*

*"The Savior's prophecy concerning the visitation of judgments upon Jerusalem is to have **another fulfillment**, of which that terrible desolation was but a **faint shadow**. In the fate of the chosen city we may behold the doom of a world that has rejected God's mercy and trampled upon his law." The Great Controversy, p. 36*

*"The ruin of Jerusalem was a **symbol** of the final ruin that shall overwhelm the world. The prophecies that received a **partial fulfillment** in the overthrow of Jerusalem have a **more direct application** to the last days. We are now standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. A crisis is before us, such as the world has never witnessed." Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, pp. 120, 12*

David is also correct that there were approximately 3.5 years between the siege of the city by Cestius in the fall of 66 AD and the destruction of the city by Titus in the spring of 70 AD. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus provides the chronology and Ellen White concurred:

*"At the time of the siege [by Cestius], the Jews were assembled at Jerusalem to keep the **Feast of Tabernacles** [a fall festival], and thus the Christians throughout the land were able to make their escape unmolested. . . . Terrible were the calamities that fell upon Jerusalem when Titus resumed the siege. The city was invested at the time of **the Passover** [a spring festival], when millions of Jews were assembled within its walls." GC, p. 31*

However, there are serious flaws with David's perspective. First, what principle of interpretation allows David to reapply a literal 3.5-year period in the past to another literal 3.5-year period in the future? Is he not doing precisely what he did with the story of the feast and famine in Egypt?

Second, neither the Bible nor the Spirit of Prophecy make a special point of the precise time-interval between the arrival of Cestius Gallus in Jerusalem and its destruction 3.5 years later. Ellen White does mention that Cestius arrived in the fall and Titus in the spring, but she did not give any special importance to the time-period neither did she say that it would transpire once more, literally in the future.

Third, upon close inspection, the parallels that David draws between the events in the past and the events in the future hold very little water.

According to David, Pope Francis ‘invaded’ the United States on the Day of Atonement September 23, 2015, just as Cestius besieged Jerusalem in 66 AD. He further stated that at that time the Pope took control of the United States economy as well as the judicial, executive and legislative branches of government. He also stated that at this time, a disguised Sunday law was already in place and was the sign for God’s people to ‘flee’. In his own words:

*“The Sunday law has been there ever since 2015 and after that. It is disguised as the law of the environment.”*

He goes on to say that by December 2018, the papacy’s plans to enforce the Sunday law will be complete and in the spring of 2019, the papacy will begin its final assault against God’s law and His people. In his own words:

*“I believe that it will happen in March or April [2019] from the parallels. . . The second attack of Rome will begin and this time it is in serious, and this time it is going to involve legislation, it is going to involve destruction, it is going to involve loss of life.”*

To sustain his perspective David repeats the often-told story about the discovery of some guillotines that the papacy will use to decapitate God’s people. This story, based on hearsay internet reports, has been repeated in different versions for decades. Sometimes the guillotines have fallen off trucks and on other occasions from ships. It reminds me of an internet story that Pope Francis had a brother who was a Seventh-day Adventist. Many Adventists bought into the story until the evidence discredited it.

David points out that after his visit to the United States, Pope Francis returned to Rome, just as Cestius did almost two thousand years before. David is quite certain that the events between 66 and 70AD find a perfect parallel with our time. In his own words:

*“God has impressed me, shown me, that those events of the past will be perfectly replicated, will be duplicated in like manner.”*

What evidence does David provide for his spectacular scenario? He gives the following evidence:

- Publications
- Comments from some very high-level Catholics
- Dreams
- Comments by people who have received communications from others.
- Talking to a pastor who by his study of Scripture has reached the same conclusions.

Of course, the big question is how David’s views square with the testimony of the Scriptures. Let us review the historical events between 66 and 70 AD:

- Cestius came with the Roman legions to destroy Jerusalem.
- Christians within the city saw the sun-standards of the Roman legions.
- Cestius then retreated apparently without reason and in a panic fled back to Rome.
- The Jews pursued the Roman legions and the legions suffered great losses.
- Christ’s faithful followers escaped the city.
- 3.5 years later, Titus came back and destroyed the city.
- Not one Christian perished because they obeyed the sign.

Let us now see how David’s parallels stack up with the visit of Pope Francis to the United States in September of 2015.

Cestius came to the city with hostile intentions **without an invitation**. In contrast, the pope gave his speech to Congress by invitation. Obviously, we can hardly consider that an invitation is an invasion. Cestius **never entered the city** he merely surrounded it. The pope actually entered the United States White House and Congressional Chamber. Where is the evidence that Francis took control of the economy, the judicial, executive and legislative branches in on

September 23, 2015? David offered no documentation because there is none. Cestius did not give a speech in Jerusalem to the glee and applause of the Jews. However, when the pope gave his speech he received a standing ovation. Cestius returned to Rome for no apparent reason and the Jews pursued him with the intention of destroying him, but the pope returned to Rome in peace with no persecution by the Congressmen and senators.

The most devastating argument against David's view has to do with when the Sunday law will be enforced. According to his view, the siege by Cestius and the Roman sun standards that the legions set up in the holy ground outside the city represent a stealthy Sunday law that has existed in the United States since September of 2015, a law that is there but not yet enforced by legislation. In his estimation, the enforcement will come three and a half years later in March/April of 2019.

Perhaps David misspoke when he mentioned John Paul II's pastoral letter *Dies Domini* as the place where we find the Sunday 'law of the environment'. It is true that in his pastoral letter, John Paul defended Sunday observance. However, the letter contains no Sunday law and no mention of the environment. John Paul wrote this letter in 1998, not to the United States Congress, but rather to the religious leaders of the Roman Catholic Church.

As support for his views, David referred to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*. David claims that Pope Francis implemented a stealth Sunday law in his encyclical *Laudato Si*, a law that David calls 'the law of the environment'. He claims that all the nations of the world have embraced this law and have agreed on how to enforce it.

However, the pope's encyclical contains no Sunday law. The pope does suggest that the environment could use a rest on Sunday but his encyclical is not a law in the United States, and certainly not during Donald Trump's presidency! There is presently no legislation before Congress for a national Sunday law and yet David is certain that there is. He stated, along with a potential disclaimer:

*"When we think there is no Sunday law we are blind. . . it is **already in place**, it is just a matter of **enforcing it**. I believe in **March or April** [2019] the Sunday law will be enacted. That is my conviction. Let's suppose it does not happen, praise the Lord! Let's assume that we have more time, praise the Lord! However, I am not making that assumption because the parallels that God has shown me tells us that we have to be ready. . . We have a **few months** to be ready."*

There is a serious problem with David's parallel between the siege by Cestius and the unenforced stealth Sunday law. Ellen White does draw a parallel between the Roman standards and the national Sunday law. However, the sign for God's people to flee in the end time is not a stealth Sunday law yet to be enforced. The sign is the **enforcement** of Sunday observance by the United States Congress and that did not happen in September of 2015. Ellen White is categorical that the sign for God's people to flee is not a stealth, unenforced Sunday law but rather the '**decree enforcing** the papal sabbath'. That is to say, as the siege by Cestius was the sign, so the **enforcement** of Sunday by an act of congress will be the sign in the end time. In September of 2015, there was no such decree of enforcement and there still is not. Therefore, the parallel that David draws breaks down.

Here are Ellen White's statements comparing the siege of the city with the decree enforcing the national Sunday law:

*"As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, **so** the assumption of power on the part of our nation in the **decree enforcing** the papal sabbath will be a warning to us. It will then be time to leave the large cities, preparatory to leaving the smaller ones for retired homes in secluded places among the mountains. And now, instead of seeking expensive dwellings here, we should be preparing to move to a better country, even a heavenly. Instead of spending our means in self-gratification, we should be studying to economize." Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, pp. 464, 465*

*"As the approach of the **Roman armies** was **a sign** to the disciples of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, so may **this apostasy** be **a sign** to us that the limit of God's forbearance is reached, that the measure of our nation's iniquity is full, and that the **angel of mercy** is about to take her flight, never to return. The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of **affliction and distress** that prophets have described as the **time of Jacob's trouble**. The cries of the faithful, persecuted ones ascend to heaven. And as the blood of Abel cried from the ground, there are voices also crying to God from martyrs' graves, from the sepulchers of the sea, from mountain caverns, from convent vaults: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 451*

## **The Seventieth Week**

There is no prophecy in the Bible or in the Spirit of Prophecy, which predicts a 3.5-year period between the siege of Jerusalem in the fall of 66 AD and its

destruction in the spring of 70 AD. Further, there is no parallel between a supposed stealth Sunday law in the fall of September 2015 followed by its enforcement and persecution in the spring of 2019. These parallels are David's creation.

However, there is a Bible prophecy that David extrapolates from its original context to draw a parallel between the close of probation for the Jewish nation and the close of probation for the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Here is how it works: David takes the last 3.5 **literal years** of the prophecy of the seventy weeks and reapplies them as **literal years** to events that occur between July 2015 and March/April 2019. What justification is there for this? Is it because of a dream, or a personal conviction, or an impression, or seemingly hearing God's voice? Is it because there are others who are teaching the same scenario or because it seems to work out? It is true that God sometimes uses these methods to communicate His will to His people but we must test everything by the word of God to see if it is so.

Is it legitimate to extrapolate the last 3.5 years of the prophecy of the 70 weeks from their original context and reapply them to end time events? When it comes to Bible prophecy, we cannot simply cut out a time prophecy from its original context and paste it to an end-time context. One wonders why the last three and a half years of the seventy repeat in the end-time, and not the entire prophecy. Can we pick-and-choose in this manner without any contextual justification to do so?

### **Persecution of the Faithful**

Here is how David draws the parallel between the final half week for the Jewish nation and what is happening in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today:

David draws a parallel between what happened with the Jews between the years 31 and 34 AD and what would happen with the Seventh-day Adventist Church between July 2015 and March/April 2019.

According to David, in the spring of 31 AD when Jesus descended the Mt. of Olives to the Jerusalem Temple for the last time, probation closed for the Jewish nation for rejecting Jesus. Three and a half years later in the fall of 34 AD, Stephen was stoned and the Jews began persecution in earnest against the followers of Jesus.

From this, David draws the following parallel:

On July 9, 10, 2015 (equivalent to 31 AD) the Seventh-day Adventist church in World Session in San Antonio rejected the imminent coming of Jesus and the Spirit of Prophecy thus rejecting Jesus as did the Jews in the year 31 AD. From July 2015 on, the Adventist leaders who protect error and promote worldliness are no longer under the influence of the Holy Spirit and are acting with increased hostility toward those who are living and preaching present truth.

In a chart on the screen, David claimed that persecution against faithful Adventists by the leadership will begin in earnest in March/April 2019 and is equivalent to the persecutions that began against Christians by the Jewish leadership in the fall of AD 34. However, David's chart creates chronological problems. The 70-week prophecy requires 3.5 years from the spring of 31 AD to the fall of 34 AD. However, David's parallel begins in the summer of 2015 and ends in March/April 2019. From July 2015 to March/April 2019, there are 3.8-3.9 years. This time discrepancy between David's type and the antitype is significant because he claims that the 'parallel is perfect.' His graphic on the screen reads as follows:

*"Israel's rejection of the Messiah (31 AD) was followed by persecution (34 AD) is an **exact parallel** of what is happening in the church (rejection summer 2015, persecution spring 2019)"*

## **Annual Council 2018**

According to David, shortly before Annual Council on October 14-17, 2018 a Union president from the NAD told someone who then told David that the General Conference was going to approve a document that would give the General Conference administration the ability to discipline anybody, to control the membership and the power to approve or disapprove pastoral ordinations. This would give the administrators all the power they would need to discipline all the rebel divisions.

According to David, this 'persecution' by the leaders at the top will cause a shaking among Adventists. The majority in the church will choose to obey human authority but a small remnant will remain faithful and suffer persecution at the hands of the leadership of the organized church. The majority who decide to obey the leadership in this small test where there is no physical persecution will give in when the Sunday law brings actual physical persecution by Rome in the spring of 2019.

In the spring of 2019 (March/April), **exactly** 3.5 years after the beginning of the Day of Atonement for the living Adventists on September 23, 2015, the leaders

of the organized church will persecute those who do not comply with the will of a few leaders at the top. This will bring about the final shaking through a type of persecution in which the General Conference leadership will control the consciences of pastors and members through threats of firing and disfellowshipping. This persecution will peak in early 2019.

Members, fearing to lose their membership or their denominational jobs will rapidly align themselves in obedience to denominational policies. Those who choose to follow their consciences will suffer discipline. By their own choice, members who claim to belong to the church will choose to be on one side or the other. The 'chaff' that obeys human authority will be blown away while the 'grain' that obeys divine authority will remain.

### **Latter Rain, Sunday Law, Loud Cry**

David's scenario continues. Once the sifting is over and probation has closed for Seventh-day Adventists (in March/April 2019), God will pour out his Spirit upon the faithful remnant who refused to follow the oppressive decisions of the General Conference leadership. By the spring of 2019, the United States will **enforce** the Sunday law and the faithful remnant will receive the latter rain and proclaim the Loud Cry calling people in the world to reject the worship of the beast and his image.

At this point in David's view, God has judged all Seventh-day Adventists and placed His seal upon the faithful. Persecution against the faithful remnant will come from two directions. On the one side, the leadership of the organized Seventh-day Adventist Church, and from the other side, the world that has embraced the Sunday law. At this time, the judgment of the living in the world will begin. Those Adventists that chose to obey the church leadership rather than the Lord will not have another opportunity to repent, they will receive the mark of the beast and be lost. Thus, for David, probation closes for individual Seventh-day Adventist members in March/April 2019.

### **Problems with David's Scenario**

David's scenario has multiple problems. Let us examine some of them:

If David's scenario were correct, we would know the timing for the beginning of the judgment of living Adventists (September 23, 2015) and the close of their probation (March/April 2019). We would also know the time for the beginning of the outpouring of the Latter Rain, the Sunday law, the Loud Cry (March/April 2019), and the beginning of the judgment of the world (March/April 2019).

How can David accuse the Seventh-day Adventist Church of rejecting the Spirit of Prophecy when he ignores the testimony of Ellen White that prophetic time ended in 1844 and there will be no more events before the second coming marked by prophetic time? Ellen White is explicit that no one knows the time for the outpouring of the Latter Rain and the close of probation.

As we have previously noted, it is not true that the Seventh-day Adventist Church rejected the imminent coming of Jesus and the Spirit of Prophecy at the General Conference Session in San Antonio in July 2015. It is also inaccurate to say that the pope invaded the United States September 23, 2015, a date that David sets for the beginning of the judgment of living Seventh-day Adventists. Further, there was no stealth Sunday law when the pope came to the United States. David provides no documentation for this.

Contrary to what David stated, the Compliance Document that the Annual Council approved in October 2018 was not the decision of a few men and women at the top. The Executive Committee of the General Conference is composed of representatives from the world field and does the business of the world church between Sessions. Thus, the approval of the Compliance Document was a decision of the world church, not of a few men and women at the top.

David stated that the Unions reserve the right to approve ordinations and that in the Compliance Document the top leadership usurped this right. David's assertion is misleading. True, Unions do reserve the right to approve candidates for ordination that the local conferences refer to them. However, what David fails say is that Unions can only approve ordinations that meet the criteria established by the world church in General Conference Session. The World Church, three times has rejected the ordination of women, a decision with which several Unions have failed to comply. The purpose of the Compliance Document is to make sure that the various levels of organization obey the will, not of a few men and women at the top, but rather, the votes of the World Church.

David's assertion that the Compliance Document gives a few men and women at the top the power to disfellowship people at the local church level is flat wrong. Only local churches can disfellowship local church members. The Document does authorize the General Conference Executive Committee, after a long period of probation to remove from office on the Division level the officers who do not comply with the votes of the World Church but the Document has

nothing to do with disfellowshipping local church members or even officers at different denominational levels.

## **The Judgment of the Living**

As we have seen, David claims that the pope invaded the United States when he arrived in the United States on the Day of Atonement September 23, 2015. He claims that this event marked the start of the judgment of living Seventh-day Adventists, beginning with the leadership and ending 3.5 years later in the spring of 2019 with each church member. The shaking occurs between these two dates with the great shaking beginning after Annual Council voted the Compliance Document October 14-17, 2018. In David's own words:

*"On September 23, 2015 on the Day of Atonement Jesus entered the second phase of the investigative judgment. He began with the leadership of the church and will finish with each church member 3.5 years later in the spring of 2019."*

David claims that when God ends judging Adventists in March/April 2019, the United States will enforce by legislation the national Sunday Law and then the judgment of the living for the world will begin. Adventists whom God found worthy in the judgment will then receive the latter rain and proclaim the loud cry to the world. The whole world will then decide whether to receive the seal of God or the mark of the beast.

Thus, David has set a time for the judgment of living SDA's (September 23, 2015 through March/April 2019) and the beginning of the judgment of the world with the Sunday law in March/April 2019.

What is the biblical source for this claim? The fact is that there is no prophecy in Scripture that specifies the beginning of the judgment of the living, either for Adventists or for the world. The last date predicted by a specific Bible prophecy was October 22, 1844. Ellen White wrote in 1911 that no one knows how soon the judgment of the living will begin.

*"Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—**none know how soon**—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Savior's admonition: "Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33." Counsels to the Church, p. 349*

*“God **has not revealed to us the time** when this message will close, or when **probation will have an end**. Those things that are revealed we shall accept for ourselves and for our children; but let us not seek to know that which has been **kept secret** in the councils of the Almighty.” 1SM, p. 191*

Despite Ellen White’s clear testimony, David is quite certain that God has given him this special light:

*“God has impressed me, shown me, that those events of the past will be **perfectly replicated**, will be duplicated in like manner.”*

Paradoxically, throughout his presentation, David claims that he is not attempting to set dates that he is not being dogmatic and that he is not 100% certain. However, he throws out the idea that the judgment of living Seventh-day Adventists began on the Day of Atonement, September 23, 2015 and will end in March/April of 2019 when the United States enforces Rome’s Sunday law. Here are his perplexing words:

*“So please, I make this disclaimer ahead of time, I am **not trying to set any dates** but I am trying to communicate the parallels that are happening and it gives us an idea of how close we are to Jesus’ coming. The exact timing God will reveal to us. In addition, I am **not being dogmatic** either. I am **not saying that I know 100%** but I cannot but communicate what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have observed and my convictions. Not to communicate this to you could mean that your blood will be on my hands and I do not want that to be the case so I am communicating what God has showed me and I believe **something is going to happen in March or April 2019**. The Sunday law has been there ever since 2015; it’s disguised as a law of the environment.”*

Is David not setting dates based on his reinterpretation of prophetic periods? How can he say that he is not setting dates when he claims that the judgment of the living Adventists began in September of 2015 and will end in March/April 2019 and that the United States Congress will enforce the already existent stealth Sunday law in March/April of 2019?

## **Two Closes of Probation?**

David claims that 1Peter 4:17 proves that that probation will close for Seventh-day Adventists first and later on for the world. However, Ellen White makes it clear that the pre-advent investigative judgment will include all the professed people of God, not only Seventh-day Adventists:

*"In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the **professed people of God**. The judgment of **the wicked** is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. "Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?" 1 Peter 4:17." GC, p. 480*

In the late 1940's the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia faced a group of members who claimed that God would judge Adventists first and their probation would close before it closed for the world. They were teaching a prophetic scenario much like that of David. Louis Were, in his classic book, *The Judgment of the Living*, responded to these ideas. His book proves, beyond any doubt that probation will close for everyone at the same time. The following statement proves that the great test for God's people is not a stealth Sunday law or the acceptance or rejection of church leadership but rather the **enforced** Sunday law:

*"The Lord has shown me **clearly** that the image of the beast will be formed **before** probation closes; for it is to be the great test **for the people of God**, by which their eternal destiny will be decided. . . . [Revelation 13:11-17 quoted.] . . . This is **the test** that the **people of God** must have **before they are sealed**. All who proved their loyalty to God by observing His law, and refusing to accept a spurious sabbath, will rank under the banner of the Lord God Jehovah, and will receive the **seal of the living God**. Those who yield the truth of heavenly origin and accept the Sunday sabbath, will receive the **mark of the beast** (Letter 11, 1890). 7BC, p. 976*

Ellen White clearly stated that probation closes **for all of Christ's professed servants** when He changes His garments in heaven, ceases His intercessory work and pronounces the awesome words in Revelation 22:11:

*"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."*

*"Jesus has left us word: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." **We** are waiting and watching for the return of the Master, who*

is to bring the morning, lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping. What time is here referred to? Not to the revelation of Christ in the clouds of heaven to find a people asleep. No; but to His return from His ministration in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, when He **lays off His priestly attire** and clothes Himself with **garments of vengeance**, and when the mandate goes forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

When Jesus ceases to plead **for man, the cases of all** are forever decided. **This is the time of reckoning with His servants**. To those who have neglected the preparation of purity and holiness, which fits them to be waiting ones to welcome their Lord, the sun sets in gloom and darkness, and rises not again. **Probation closes**; Christ's **intercessions cease in heaven**. This time finally comes suddenly **upon all**, and those who have neglected to purify their souls by obeying the truth are found sleeping. They became weary of waiting and watching; they became indifferent in regard to the coming of their Master. They longed not for His appearing, and thought there was no need of such continued, persevering watching. They had been disappointed in their expectations and might be again. They concluded that there was time enough yet to arouse. They would be sure not to lose the opportunity of securing an earthly treasure. It would be safe to get all of this world they could and in securing this object, they lost all anxiety and interest in the appearing of the Master. They became indifferent and careless, as though His coming were yet in the distance. But while their interest was buried up in their worldly gains, **the work closed in the heavenly sanctuary**, and they were unprepared.

If such had only known that the **work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary would close so soon**, how differently would they have conducted themselves, how earnestly would they have watched! The Master, anticipating all this, gives them timely warning in the command to watch. He distinctly states the suddenness of His coming. *2T*, pp. 190, 191

Here is another one of Ellen White's statements that probation closes once for everyone:

"The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, **irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above**. Before the flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in, and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed,

continued their careless, pleasure-loving life, and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. "So," says the Savior, "shall also the coming of the Son of man be." [Matthew 24:39.] Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of **every man's destiny**, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men."

### **Some Final Counsel**

In closing, Ellen White gave the following wise counsel to those who create an excitement setting specific time-frames for end time events:

*"Instead of living in expectation of some special **season of excitement**, we are wisely to improve present opportunities, doing that which must be done in order that souls may be saved. Instead of exhausting the powers of our mind in **speculations in regard to the times and seasons** which the Lord has placed in His own power, and **withheld from men**, we are to yield ourselves to the control of the Holy Spirit, to do present duties, to give the bread of life, unadulterated with **human opinions**, to souls who are perishing for the truth." 1SM, p. 186*



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