

Questions on the Book of Daniel Asked to Eminent Historicists

What follows is a slightly expanded version of a letter originally sent early in the morning of November 8, 2004, via e-mail, to three members of the General Conference. It was addressed to Dr. Gerhard Pfandl, the author of the Sabbath School lessons for the fourth quarter of 2004. Copies were sent to Dr. Clifford Goldstein, the editor of the Sabbath School booklet, and Jan Paulsen, the President of the General Conference. On March 12, 2005 the author spoke personally to Jan Paulsen about this letter. The GC President expressed his surprise that Dr. Pfandl hadn't answered. Since these leaders are most unwilling to face this issue, the letter is now being made public so that the public in general will be aware of the indefensible position the SDA church is in regarding the "sanctuary" doctrine.

Dear Dr. Pfandl,

A few weeks ago I received an email from a Pastor Ivor Myers in which you seemed to agree with my observation that few sin-offerings were carried out throughout the year in the Israelite sanctuary. I want to thank you for your positive assessment of my stand on that matter, especially considering that Pastor Myers might have informed you that my appraisal of some of the official tenets of our church isn't as positive as yours was of mine.

I was surprised at the coincidence in timing that just a few hours after receiving Pastor Myers' email I was handed my Sabbath School lessons booklet on Daniel, most of which seems to have been authored by you. As soon as I saw it was about Daniel, and before reading you were the author, I felt that I would probably disagree with some of its contents. Sadly, my detailed analysis has confirmed that to be the case. Even though I think I am sufficiently qualified to teach these lessons at my local church (although I'm not currently employed by the SDA Church, I have an MA in Theology [1988, Newbold College, England, an extension campus of Andrews University], and another MA in Ancient History), I have declined the possibility of doing so because I don't want to instil my view on anybody taking advantage of a teaching post as a Sabbath School instructor. However, I think I'm entitled to ask questions. So, I ask questions in each relevant Sabbath School class. As you will probably see when you read them, it is evident my questions are pregnant with the obvious answer. That might explain why nobody has given an answer to them so far.

In any case, before I present some of my questions, I must, first of all, manifest that I was pleasantly surprised by your courageous admission, on October 6, that the expression "latter days" can simply mean "in the future" and not, necessarily, in the closing days of this world.

I was equally impressed by your concession, on November 21, that saintly sins are *not* the only possible pollutants of God's sanctuary.

I hope you will take the following *partial* list of questions as a hint of possible *serious* deficiencies in your treatment of the book of Daniel. I would like to think that at least some of these questions, with their obvious and easy answers, will contribute toward some remedy in the official stand of our church in the near future, even if that involves throwing the DARCOM "scholarship" overboard *in full*. When I speak of "the author", I mean no disrespect. I do so because your original contribution may have been edited or added to by other people whom I don't know. One of them might be Dr. Clifford Goldstein himself, or perhaps some other member of his staff.

Questions regarding your introduction:

1. Along with many modern authors, mostly liberal, the author characterises Daniel (and Revelation, of course) as "apocalyptic". I admit that, in a way, this might be a play on words. However, since, to most scholars, apocalypticism's three most salient features are *pseudonymity, pseudoprophecy and determinism*, shouldn't we be more careful in how we characterise Daniel and the Revelation if we want to stay on the conservative side? Considering its similarity to the book of Ezekiel, isn't it true that the book of Revelation is more a *prophetic* book than anything else? Isn't it true that symbolism isn't a generic trait of apocalypticism but can also appear in prophetic books, like those of Ezekiel or Zechariah? Isn't it true that Daniel is lacking the distinctive features that might enable us to classify it as belonging either in the apocalyptic genre or the prophetic genre?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 1:

1. Although the author doesn't actually say so, the way the thoughts are expressed will probably be interpreted by many readers as proving that Daniel acted the way he did mostly out of a desire to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle. However, doesn't Dan. 10:3 strongly suggest that, whenever possible or convenient, Daniel ate meat and drank wine?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 2:

1. I find it surprising that, in a lesson where the contents and the meaning of the second chapter of Daniel are supposedly analysed, the space devoted to the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream should be of just two paragraphs, one of them consisting of *one* single sentence, in Wednesday's lesson. Such economy of words would seem to convey the notion that the issue is either trivial or stale. Wouldn't it have been better devoting one day to the historical and anecdotal context, and the rest to analysing the meaning of the dream?
2. Without dwelling on the specific identity of each of the metals, should the succession of kingdoms presented in Daniel 2 be understood as deterministic or conditional?
 - a. If it is deterministic, what is the sense of the text saying that the rock, supposedly Christ's second coming, destroys on its fall not just the feet of clay and iron, but also the golden head, the silver chest and arms, and the bronze belly *simultaneously* (Dan. 2:34f, 45)? Will Christ have the opportunity, on occasion of his second coming, of putting an end to some of the kingdoms or empires purportedly represented by the metals of the statue?

- b. Whether it is deterministic or conditional, could the rock stand for something different from Christ's second coming? Could it, for instance, represent the *first* coming (Luk. 20:18) or the foundation of the church?
3. When Dan. 2:44 says that "[i]n the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed", what kings (or kingdoms) does it mean, *according to the context of Daniel 2 itself*?
 4. I think that the author's resource to the Bible to identify that represented by the golden head is very correct. However, I find it surprising that, in the identification of what is behind the other three metals, the author should content himself with resorting to "history". Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to keep on resorting to the book of Daniel in order to identify the kingdoms represented by those metals?
 5. What is the *geographical* background of Daniel 2? In other words, what viewpoint is the succession of kingdoms represented from? For example, it doesn't seem that the perspective is that of an inhabitant of Japan, since neither Babylon, nor Persia, nor Macedonia, nor the Hellenistic world, nor Rome had anything to do with Japan. Then, when the author of the booklet states that there was a Greek empire from 331 to 168 BC, which was followed by a Roman dominion starting from 168 BC, what perspective is he speaking from? From a Roman perspective? From a Greek viewpoint? From an Israelite point of view? From a Babylonian perspective? If the answer were to be "from a Greek viewpoint," what would the relevance of a Greek viewpoint be? Did Rome happen to control most of the old domains of Alexander's empire starting from 168 BC? If that wasn't the case, who was in control of most of those domains precisely in the year 168 BC and in the period of over one century that went by until Rome managed to control Syria? Doesn't that power deserve a place in the prophetic schema of Daniel 2?
 6. Where does the description of the vision or its interpretation say that the fourth kingdom was going to be divided into ten *later* nations that would be impossible to put together in the future? Doesn't it rather intimate that the fourth kingdom itself would have problems of internal cohesion *before it was finally destroyed by the stone*? Isn't it true that the inspired comment manifests that the fourth kingdom would be unstable, and *not* that it would fragment?
 7. Taking into account *everything* Daniel says about the political and military powers starting from his days (Dan. 8, 11), taking history into account, although allowing for the conditional nature of Bible prophecy, and respecting the obvious Israelite background of the book of Daniel, which were, now in earnest, the *four* empires of Daniel 2?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 4:

1. Doesn't Dan. 4:27 teach anything regarding the conditionality of even symbolic prophecies?
2. In the symbolic vision of chapter 4, is the period of "seven times" symbolic of anything? Should we perhaps interpret that Nebuchadnezzar stands there for the Babylonian world, a world opposed to God, and that the period of the king's insanity was to last for 7 "prophetic" years, that is, some 2,520 literal years? So-called Jehovah's Witnesses have exactly this type of interpretation for the passage. Are we right in rejecting this kind of interpretation here? Are we right in upholding the "year-day principle" elsewhere in Daniel, as in Dan. 7:25, etc.?
3. Chapter 4 states explicitly that Nebuchadnezzar's domains reached "to the end of all the earth" (verse 11, KJV; *cf.* verses 20 and 22). When chapter 7 says something similar

about the fourth empire, should we understand that the territorial domains of that fourth empire must be immensely more extended than Nebuchadnezzar's, something like an intercontinental macro empire?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 5:

1. Doesn't Dan. 5:22ff suggest that Belshazzar's doom came as a result of his own evil personal conduct, by consciously choosing not to change his ways, as Nebuchadnezzar had done? Wouldn't that imply that the demise of the Babylonian kingdom wasn't the result of an unbending prophetic forecast, but rather the consequence of avoidable human pride and folly?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 7 in lesson 7:

1. The lesson begins quoting 2 Thes. 2:3, which, obviously, is speaking of apostasy, which consists of having once been a believer only to become a denier of God and truth, and an enemy to believers. The author seems to wish for us to see that somewhere in Daniel a similar prediction exists, since he even characterises the hostile element called the "little horn" by Daniel as a "spiritual power". However, there have been persecutors of believers who were never either Christian or Israelite, like the pharaoh of Moses' days, for example. In which specific passage in Daniel can we establish with certainty that the power that oppresses believers was once part of God's people? If no such passage exists, why is it convenient to read something into Daniel 7 that cannot be found in God's Holy Word?
2. Should the forecasts found in Dan. 7, like those in Dan. 2, be understood in a deterministic way, or can they be interpreted conditionally? For example, according to Dan. 7:12 and its context, it looks as if the empires represented by the first three beasts somehow survive until the time of the judgment of the "little horn", a moment when the fourth beast itself is still alive. In what sense has this found (or will it find) fulfilment in history?
3. Should what Daniel calls "the time of the end", or "the end of time" (Dan. 8:17, 19; 12:4, 9; cf. 4:34!) be applied to the end of *our* world, or should it be applied to what, for him, were distant times that escaped his historical perspective? For example, what Joel calls "afterward" (Joel 2:28f, KJV), is not applied by Peter, even though he translates it as "in the last days", to the end of the world, but rather to the *beginning* of the apostolic times (Acts 2:16ff; cf. Heb. 1:2). Can something similar happen with "the time of the end" in the book of Daniel?
4. In the second lesson, the author of the booklet had contented himself with resorting to "history" in order to identify the powers that, in his view, succeeded the Babylonian empire. His using the obvious parallels established elsewhere in the book in order to identify the first two successors of Babylon, namely, Persia and Macedonia, is an important improvement. However, it is somewhat odd that he should keep contenting himself with just "history" when trying to identify the fourth kingdom. Besides, he adds that Rome is "the only sensible identification for the fourth beast". It would appear that the author is aware of the existence of at least another identification that he must consider senseless or foolish. Can the book of Daniel itself shed some light in order to determine which option is more nonsensical? Would it be appropriate, for example, to use the eleventh chapter of Daniel to determine such issues?

5. Undoubtedly, it is a gigantic step forward that the author should recognise that Greece, together with the Macedonian kingdom, was absorbed by Rome after the battle of Pydna, in 168 BC. The author also exhibits a noteworthy perception of reality when he states that “within another century of conquests, the world was united under Rome”. Would it be right to ask which conquests were those, and which the conquered kingdoms were? Obviously, it can’t have been either Greece or Macedonia, since the author, with keen insight, has already unveiled that both had passed into history. Which power was that, then? Why is it that that power isn’t given a place in the usual interpretation of Daniel 2, or in that of Daniel 7, or in that of Daniel 8?
6. The author does not share with his readers the fact that the Roman empire survived in Constantinople until the 15th century, but it is interesting that he should recognise that, by AD 476, that empire had already disintegrated in Western Europe when its government apparatus “faded away”. He also points out, with keen insight, that the Western empire was occupied by barbarian kingdoms (although, surprisingly enough, he later claims, against all historical evidence, that they “maintained” the Roman civilisation). Up to what point do these historic realities fit the wording of the book of Daniel in that the judgment against the little horn involves the *later* destruction of the beast that is carrying it (Dan. 7:11)? Isn’t it true that the horns aren’t the *successors* of the terrible beast that carries them, but rather its *constituent parts*? Since the Roman empire ceased to exist definitively in the 15th century, and one thousand years before in the West, how can that empire have anything to do with a power that subsists at the time the little horn is judged by its evil deeds if the little horn is still in operation?
7. The same as he does with the fourth beast, when he tries to identify the “little horn” the author contents himself with a subjective interpretation taken from a book of history. Instead of taking for granted that the “little horn” is just as Roman as the beast that carries it, purportedly, is, wouldn’t it have been better to use the evidence within the book of Daniel itself to obtain the true interpretation regarding the nationality of both?
8. Regarding Tuesday’s lesson, were there anti Jewish persecutions before Jesus’ days? If there were, what is the point of saying that the words of Matt. 24:9 announce the fulfilment of the “little horn”'s persecutions in Jesus’ *future*? Couldn’t the “little horn” have persecuted the faithful *before* Jesus’ time? Is there any evidence, for example, that *all* the traits of the “little horn”, like his attack on the law, the Sabbath and God’s people, were manifested between Daniel’s and Jesus’ days?
9. Regarding Thursday’s lesson, the author states that “a prophetic year has 360 days”. It’s an interesting remark. However, taking into account that is exactly the duration of a financial year, where does this consideration take us? Immediately, the author gives four reasons why the “day/year principle” should be applied in order to decipher Daniel’s numbers:
 - a. The first one is that “[t]he visions are symbolic, hence the times indicated should also be symbolic.” However, in the fourth lesson, where a dream was presented which was also symbolic, the time involved wasn’t interpreted symbolically. What is, then, the criterion to determine the “convenience” of a period being interpreted symbolically? Both in chapters 4 and 7, the same Aramaic noun, *‘iddan*, is used. Is there any known proof that this noun is to be translated *years* at all?
 - b. The second is that “[a]s the visions extend over long time periods, the times specified [...] should also be seen as extending over long periods of time.”. Leaving aside the

- supposition that the periods are symbolic, what specific textual evidence indicates that the periods involved encompass a long time?
- c. The third one is that “[t]he peculiar way in which the time periods are expressed [...] indicates that they must apply symbolically”. Since this subjective opinion can’t be substantiated, the author adds an example: “the fact that the word *years* is never used in any of the time expressions can be explained only on the basis of the year/day principle.” The problem of this third “reason” is that there is, at least, another explanation for the absence of the word ‘years’. Could it be that the word ‘years’ isn’t used just because *none* of these periods encompass many years, but only a limited number of months?
 - d. The fourth is Dan. 9:24-27. In the author’s words, “[t]he pragmatic test of this principle in Daniel 9:24-27 indicates that, indeed, years are intended.” However, since Dan. 9:24-27 never uses the word ‘day’, in what sense can that passage constitute a “pragmatic test” of the “year/day principle”? Isn’t it, at best, a computation system based on cycles of Sabbatical years or Jubilee years?
10. The “year-day principle” is usually upheld by some authors on two Bible passages: Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6. In the first of those passages it is said that, due to the people’s disobedience, 40 *days* of the spies’ scouting of Canaan, an event that was *in the past*, was going to turn into 40 *future years* of wandering for the people. In the case of Ezekiel, it is said that a number of *past years* of sin were to be acted out by a number of *ongoing and future days* by the prophet. Oddly enough, in both cases the days are 24-hour days, and the years last for more than 350 days. In which passage does the Bible teach that when in a text we read about *future ‘days’* we should interpret ***just as many future ‘years’***? Is there an occurrence of a time period anywhere in the Bible that is presented symbolically once, and literally another time?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 7 in lesson 8:

1. The quotation taken from 1 Peter 4:17 is very interesting. Its context reveals that the inspired apostle is speaking of the difficult situations that Christians have to endure, sometimes even facing persecution from *human* authorities, but he eases the hardships of this life’s toils by reassuring his readers that things will be even harder for those “who do not obey the gospel”. The NKJV rendering is especially insightful, as it shows that by the first century of our era, that “judgment” time had *already* come and in no way is it coincident in time with a past or future (???) judgment of the “little horn”. So, doesn’t context show that *two entirely unrelated nuances* of the word ‘judgment’ are being used by Daniel and Peter?
2. We may probably find some biblical backing for the concept that “God’s people are accused and maligned by Satan”, at least in Old Testament times, and we can probably sympathise with the notion that God’s people “will be exonerated in the judgment”, probably that of Matt. 25:34, but, where does Daniel speak of the saints being investigated by God? It is clear that in Daniel the saints are persecuted by the evil “little horn”, and they benefit from its condemnation by God. If so, would it be wrong to conclude that, as far as the book of Daniel is concerned, the *only* role of the saints in the divine judgment against the “little horn” is that of *plaintiffs*, or, at the very least (or, at the very most), *witnesses* of the downfall of the evil power that had persecuted them? Where are they presented as *accused or defendants* anywhere in Daniel?

3. It is very clear that the judgment on the “little horn” is “a pre-Advent judgment”. So was the judgment on Sodom, wasn’t it? And yet, Sodom’s judgment is in our past. What is the biblical evidence that the judgment of the “little horn” isn’t in our past, too?
4. It is very clear that Jesus used for himself the title “Son of man”, even though it had been used before for regular humans, like the prophet Ezekiel. However, I’m inclined to accept the view that Jesus’ usage of the expression has Danielic overtones. If so, wouldn’t the fact that a “son of man” appears at the close of a vision dealing with beasts that stand for heathen nations imply that a non-beastly power is being introduced? Would it be wrong to assume that this “son of man” is another expression for God’s kingdom of the true Israel? When Jesus used the title “Son of man” for himself, wasn’t he, in fact, saying that *he* was the true Israel?
5. In Wednesday’s lesson, the author asks a most excellent question: “If the judgment in Daniel 7 is really about the saints, why is it depicted in the context of the persecuting little horn?” He knows himself that this is a “[g]ood question”. He seeks “the answer, very briefly, [...] in the Hebrew concept of justice and judgment.” ***Where exactly, in the book of Daniel or anywhere else, do we find evidence that its inspired author shared that curious “Hebrew concept of justice and judgment” that confuses an innocent and wronged plaintiff with a guilty defendant?***
6. Even if we were to admit that the saints are “judged” in the judgment scene (although Daniel 7 doesn’t say so), they *all* receive the benefit of the little horn’s sentence *simultaneously*, and they are *all* accepted into God’s kingdom. How does that fit the SDA concept of an “investigative judgment” where each person is judged *individually* at a pace that takes many decades, if not centuries, from one saint to another?
7. Thursday’s lesson states, apart from the unproved notion that 1,260 days should be interpreted as 1,260 years, that “we use the dates AD. 538 to AD. 1798 to depict the beginning and the end of that 1,260-year period”. Yes, we do that, but is there any kind of biblical evidence that would support such dates? Is there any *actual* historical evidence that would show the relevance of both dates? If no biblical and no historical evidence can be presented to sustain such dates, would it be wrong to say that they are sustained on whim?
8. Thursday’s lesson presents a most curious argument trying to reach an approximate date for the *commencement* of Heaven’s judgment of the “little horn”. However, since there’s no indication in Daniel 7 that divine justice is less expeditious than that provided by human tribunals, why would the author content himself with just dating roughly the *beginning* of such a judicial procedure? Why not go ahead and date its *ending point* as well? Besides, since, according to the very context we are considering, it is *the fourth beast itself* and not just the little horn the one suffering the consequences of divine justice, how come Rome passed into history many centuries before the trial that supposedly judges it is set in motion?
9. Thursday’s lesson ends with the curious request, “Study carefully Daniel 7 until you can see for yourself the sequence of events: little horn, heavenly judgment, Second Coming. Know it well enough to share with someone in a clear and convincing manner.” Is the repetition concept in the above request similar to the one in the popular saying that if you repeat a lie one thousand times you end up believing it? Has the author himself shared that supposed “sequence of events” “in a clear and convincing manner”?
10. In the summary of the lesson it is stated that, among other things, “[i]n this pre-Advent judgment, the sins of God’s people are blotted out”. Where exactly do we find this

concept that sins are blotted out on occasion of a judgment? Aren't they blotted out when a person sincerely asks for God's forgiveness on the merits of Christ's blood?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 8 in lesson 9:

1. The author states that “[t]he historical context of the chapter shows that it’s talking only about the sanctuary in heaven, where Christ is now our High Priest”. It’s a pity that Daniel doesn’t say anything about Christ being our High Priest. It does speak of a sanctuary, but doesn’t the true context show that the real concern of the prophet is “the Beautiful Land” (Dan. 8:9; cf. 11:16, 41), that is, Israel? When the chapter speaks of the geographical gains of the “little horn” toward the south or the east, would those be directions in Heaven, in the vicinity, perhaps, of the heavenly sanctuary?
2. The author further states that “[t]he key issues revealed here don’t revolve around some military battle in which pagan armies defile the earthly sanctuary. The scope of the chapter goes way beyond any localized, earthly, political, or military struggle. The issues, instead, are spiritual”. It is interesting that the author should speak of some “localized, earthly, political, or military struggle” in which, apparently, some “pagan armies defile[d] the earthly sanctuary”. It’s a pity, and a shame, that he should spare us such interesting details. In any case, even though it is obvious that, ultimately, a spiritual question is involved, what *contextual* evidence is there that “the chapter goes *way beyond* any localized, earthly, political, or military struggle”? What contextual evidence is there that “this chapter is a [...] view [...] involving a massive religious system that has set itself up in opposition to the work and ministry of Christ and against His people”? The extant evidence in Daniel would seem to suggest that the “little horn” is an *irreligious* power, but perhaps I haven’t read the text correctly. If so, where’s the textual evidence that the “little horn” was to be a “religious system”?
3. The composite question at the end of the lesson for the Sabbath is very interesting. So much so that it deserves a more detailed analysis.
 - a. The author asks first “How was the earthly sanctuary defiled?” A most opportune question indeed. In Sunday’s lesson several correct possible answers are given. For example, the author accurately points out that God’s temple could be “desecrated when foreign armies came in and looted the temple treasures”, which is an excellent point. The temple could also be defiled “by destroying it”, which is equally insightful. Furthermore, unfaithful Hebrews themselves could desecrate the temple “by setting up detestable things” in it. That’s very good. Of course, other hypothetical scenarios could be thought up. For example, a person with leprosy might have sought refuge inside the sanctuary while fleeing a pack of wolves, then he could stumble and fall on the “shewbread” (using the KJV rendering), thereby defiling it. Of course, imaginative scenarios like the latter are pointless unless they are hinted at by the context itself. What does the context of Daniel 8 hint at regarding the defilement of the sanctuary? Who are the ones effecting the defilement, God’s people or the “little horn”?
 - b. The next insightful question is “What do the symbols in Daniel 8 represent?” Well, if the author has the ram and the he-goat in mind, they are both sacrificial animals, which would seem to indicate that chapter 8 has some relationship with the Old Testament system of sacrifices at the Israelite sanctuary. However, doesn’t this very emphasis on animal sacrifices make it extremely difficult to look for some kind of fulfilment of this prophecy in New Testament times?

- c. The next discerning question is probably the most discerning one, “Who is the little-horn power that arises after the break up of the Grecian Empire?” Indeed, since the author has already taken the pain of explaining that the “Grecian Empire” came to its end in 168 BC, after the battle of Pydna, who *exactly* was the “little horn” that appeared about that time?
 - d. The fourth question is perhaps the easiest one to answer, “What is the nature of his attack against God’s people and sanctuary?” Wouldn’t the obvious parallel between Dan. 8:14 and 11:31 seem to suggest that military force was somehow involved? Wouldn’t the saints’ *absence* in the context of Dan. 11:31 further prove that they play *no* role whatsoever in the contamination of the sanctuary? If so, what would the relevance of the *Yom Kippur* rituals be?
4. Unfortunately, the author asks an invalid question in Sunday’s lesson. The question is “How did the sin offerings defile the Old Testament sanctuary?” It is invalid because the evidence he presents, Lev. 4:17, 27-31, doesn’t show that the sin-offerings defiled anything at all. Doesn’t the Bible teach that sin itself defiles, but confession and God’s forgiveness undo the results of sin? Sacrificial blood *cleans*. Most notoriously, Christ’s blood *cleans*. Where exactly does the Bible say that sacrificial blood defiles anything?
 5. It is interesting that the author should point out that when a ruler or a common Israelite took a sin-offering to the sanctuary the blood of the animal, a male goat (in the case of a ruler), or a ewe or a female goat (in the case of a common citizen), “was placed on the horns of the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard”, which means that not even one droplet of it ever entered the holy place. In case this revelation should prove shocking for some of his readers, the author adds immediately “but the priest had to eat a portion of the sin offering (Lev. 10:17)”. Hasn’t he neglected to mention that the flesh had been fully bled? If atonement is in the blood (Lev. 17:11), what cultic import does the consumption of flesh carry? Hasn’t the author forgotten to mention other passages (Lev. 6:29; 7:6; 10:12-15; 21:16-23; 22:11) that indicate that the flesh was not just consumed by the priest himself, but by his whole family, including women, children, males ineligible for the priesthood because of mutilation or castration, and even slaves? If a private citizen’s sin was somehow transferred to the sin-offering, how did it manage to defile the sanctuary if not one drop of its blood entered the holy place? And how could the consumption of its flesh by someone in the priest’s household, or by the priest himself, effect the transfer of sin to the sanctuary if the flesh didn’t carry the sin that, supposedly, was in the blood? In any case, which Bible passage teaches that someone’s sin can be transferred to a sin-offering? Which Bible passage teaches that sin-offerings, even those of a priest or the whole congregation, defile the sanctuary?
 6. The author seems content to leave these matters to mere implication. According to him, all the previous presuppositions are “clearly implied in the language of Leviticus 16:16”. I would feel inclined to believe that doctrines should be established on something a little more consistent than mere implications, but, in any case, where does Leviticus 16 intimate that the rituals of the Day of Atonement were related to sins that had already been forgiven and atoned for throughout the year? If *unwitting* sin was confessed, was it forgiven and atoned for through the offering of a sin-sacrifice during the year, or was it not? Leviticus 4 says repeatedly it was forgiven and atoned for. If it was atoned for, as Leviticus 4 says it was, is there any evidence in Leviticus 16 that says otherwise? Where does Leviticus 16 say that the sins dealt with on the Day of Atonement were only unwitting sins? If it doesn’t say it, is it possible that the Day of Atonement had something

to do, at least, with *wilful* sins, that is, sins that couldn't legally be *ritually* atoned for by means of the daily ritual? Could it have something to do with unwitting sins for which no sin-sacrifice had been offered because of sheer economic or situational impossibility? If all these possibilities exist, and they most certainly do, what necessity is there of *inventing* the notion that the Day of Atonement took care of something that had already been taken care of, sort of sin revisited?

7. In Monday's lesson, the author states that "[w]hen Alexander died, power passed to his generals; yet, as the generals began to fight among themselves, the empire fell apart." Isn't it true that the empire fell apart when his generals proclaimed themselves kings of their respective territories even before they fought one another in earnest? Isn't it true that the "four generals" took prominence only after they had eliminated Antigonus, the only contender for unity?
8. Tuesday's lesson contains the observation that "[m]ost commentators *assume* that the little horn came out of one of four horns" (emphasis provided). One would have thought that trained theologians capable of reading Hebrew would do a little more than just *assuming* the meaning of the text they were commenting on, particularly when some of them are Jews who should be expected to know the specifics of their ancient language. Be that as it may, the author points out that what appears to be a minority takes an alternative view because of an implication of "Hebrew grammar". Isn't it true that the grammatical point that this minority of scholars raise is a question of gender? Isn't it true that a literal translation of Dan. 8:8,9 would be "And came up [plural, feminine] notable [singular, feminine] four in its place [feminine] toward four winds [feminine] of the heavens [feminine]. And from one [feminine] of them [masculine; there are textual variants where 'them' is also feminine] came [masculine] horn [feminine] one [feminine] little [feminine]"? Isn't it true that the best Hebrew grammars warn that sometimes Hebrew shows a somewhat erratic behaviour regarding gender agreement, like E. Kautzsch, editor, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd edition, 17th printing, translated by A. E. Cowley, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), §§ 110 k, 144 a, 145 p, t, u, 135 o? Isn't the notion of a horn coming out of a wind somewhat unexpected, both biologically and theologically? Is there any other occurrence of such a thing? Does the angel hint at such an understanding in the explanation to the vision? Is the inclusion of the expression "out of one of them" informative or *uninformative*? If Inspiration had wanted to convey the notion that the "little horn" was geographically unrelated to the other four kings, how would readers more easily get the idea, by adding "out of one of them" or by omitting it? Will the author resort to "the nearest antecedent" when analysing the 70 weeks along the customary Messianic interpretation? If not, why not?
9. Once again, the author resorts to just "history" to state that "the power that came after the four Grecian empires was Rome". It is interesting, though, that he should speak of four Grecian empires. Previous pages of this booklet somehow seemed to convey that there was only one "Grecian" empire, so we are making progress. Very good, but where does Daniel teach that the "little horn" would arise only after the downfall of all four "Grecian empires"? Doesn't the use of *'acharith* in 8:23 imply that it would arise in the *second half* of their existence, not after their downfall (*cf.* Job 42:12)? Besides, the author himself had stated several times already that Greece fell in 168 BC after Ptolemy IV, so, even according to his view, the "little horn" came into existence about that time. Who was ruling in each of the remaining "Grecian empires" at that time and what did they do? Did they do

something like what Daniel says the “little horn” would do? If so, how come we are not informed about it?

10. At long last, Wednesday’s lesson mentions Antiochus Epiphanes as a contender for the infamous title of “little horn”, only to be summarily dismissed because he wasn’t “exceedingly great” (NKJV). It’s a pity other translations don’t give the same idea of exceeding greatness. For example, Young’s Literal Translation has “it exerteth itself greatly”, whereas the NIV says that it “started small but grew in power”, so there’s no notion of comparative greatness as such. In Dan. 8:4, for Persia, we have a *hiphil* form of the verb *gadal* meaning “became great”. In Dan. 8:5 we have the very same *hiphil* form followed by *‘ad-m’od*, which means something like “up to muchness/force/abundance/exceedingly”, and this is applied to the he-goat. In Dan. 8:9 we have a *qal* form of the same verb, meaning “he grew”, followed by *yereth*, meaning “remainder/excess/pre-eminence”, used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible in Gen. 49:3; Exod. 4:18; 10:5; Num. 31:32; Jos. 13:27; 21:14; Jdg. 7:6; 2 Sam. 10:10; 12:28; 1 Ki. 2:5, 32; 2 Ki. 25:11; 1 Chr. 2:17, 32; 4:17; 6:42; 7:38; 19:11; Neh. 4:8, 13; Job 6:9; Ps. 11:2; 31:24; Prov. 12:26; 17:7; Eccl. 6:11; Isa. 38:10; 56:12; Jer. 27:19; 29:1; 39:9; 52:15; Dan. 8:9; Joel 1:4; Hab. 2:8. In which of these verses can we see *yereth* used as implying an all-encompassing military strength? In how many of those verses *can’t* we see such a thing? In any case, doesn’t Daniel qualify the comparative greatness of the “little horn” by adding “to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land”? Did Antiochus endeavour in important military operations against “the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land”, or did he not? He did, didn’t he? If so, what exactly is the problem in dwelling on this? In any case, even though the author claims that the greatness of the “little horn” disqualifies Antiochus, because he wasn’t that great, he then states that the chapter deals mostly with the pope, who wasn’t that great either to begin with! According to the Bible, the “little horn” started little, then he grew in certain particular directions, and then he was to be destroyed unexpectedly. In what sense does this fit the history of Rome, which, according to the author, started out being “exceedingly great”, then sunk into nothingness, only to be replaced by the bishop of Rome, who would grow great, once again, only to be destroyed at the Second Advent? Doesn’t it fit Antiochus’ history much better, since he started small, grew considerably in his attacks against Egypt and Israel, and died during a campaign to the east? Once again, where *exactly* is the problem?
11. The author uses Dan. 8:11, which, in the NIV rendering, mentions “the Prince of the host”. That is a most interesting expression. In Hebrew, it is *sar-hatsaba*. Besides Dan. 8:11, it occurs in 1 Sam. 17:55 (applied to Abner), in 1 Kings 1:19; 11:15, 21 (applied to Joab), in 2 Kings 4:13 (applied to a commander of the army in the days of Elisha), in 2 Kings 25:19 and Jeremiah 52:25 (applied to the “chief officer in charge of conscripting the people”), in 1 Chron. 19:18 (applied to Shophach), and in 1 Chron. 27:5, applied to “Benaiah son of Jehoiada the priest”. In which of these references is there a Messianic implication? Since 1 Chron. 27:5 witnesses to the possibility of a priest having the title of *sar-hatsaba*, would it be legitimate to suppose that Daniel predicted that the “little horn” would interfere with the Aaronic priesthood or that he would even eliminate one of the priests? There’s another set of texts that have the slightly different Hebrew expression *sar-tseba*. Besides Jos. 5:15, 16, where it is used for some supernatural envoy from God, it occurs in Judges 4:7 and 1 Sam. 12:9 for Sisera, in 2 Sam. 2:8 for Abner, in 2 Sam. 10:16 for Shobach, in 2 Sam. 19:13 and 1 Kings 2:32 for Abner and Amasa, in 1 Kings

- 16:16 for Omri, in 2 Kings 5:1 for Naaman, and in 1 Chron. 19:16 for Shophach. Again, how certain is the Messianic attribution of *sar-tseba*’?
12. Once again, the author insists that “it certainly seems to be a spiritual power doing things against God’s truth”. If we are to uphold “God’s truth”, shouldn’t the previous sentence be rephrased as “it certainly seems to be an *unspiritual* power doing things against God’s truth”?
 13. The author states that “Christ’s daily ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is coming under attack by the little horn”. Just four questions. Where does the Bible speak of “Christ’s *daily* ministry” in the heavenly sanctuary? How can a man attack something outside of this world? When the context speaks of compass directions and of the Beautiful Land, is it speaking of out-of-this-world realities, or about military operations in this old world of ours? When reference is made of the “little horn”’s attack on the sanctuary, is there any indication whatsoever in the text that we are dealing with anything less physical than the points of the compass?
 14. In Thursday’s lesson the author states that “[b]y placing the intercession for humans into the hands of the priests through the confessional and by sacrificing Christ anew in every Mass, the papacy has removed Christ’s heavenly ministry from the thinking of humanity.” That is a very interesting thought, but what does it have to do with Daniel? According to Dan. 11:31, “[h]is armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice”. Are these armed forces the Jesuits? Really? The antecedent of “[h]is” can be found in Dan. 11:21, “a contemptible person” who was to succeed the king who sent the “tax collector” of verse 20, almost universally recognised to have been Seleucus IV. Who was the “contemptible person” of Dan. 11:21? Full name, please. Who was the successor of Seleucus IV? Did he happen to do all the evil deeds ascribed to him in Daniel 8 and Daniel 11? What an extraordinary coincidence, isn’t it?
 15. What sort of exegesis is the following observation? “In the Old Testament, the sanctuary had an ‘army’ of ministering Levites. The little horn has its own army of ministers who serve the system.” Some Bible references to inform us about this “army” of Levites might have been enlightening. In any case, a previous question of mine presented evidence of one priest being a commander of the army, but that would be a literal army, one carrying physical weapons producing physical wounds and occupying physical territories. Where do we find a hint in Daniel that the armies that serve the “little horn” are anything else than physical literal armies?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 8 in lesson 10:

1. Sabbath’s lesson states that many Christians (in fact, most Christians and the overwhelming majority of scholars) recognise that Antiochus Epiphanes was the “little horn” predicted by Daniel. The author says, however, that, as Seventh-day Adventists, we should reject this interpretation because of many reasons. In his view, one of the reasons is that the description given by prophecy about the “little horn” cannot be applied to that Syrian king. Which specific details cannot be applied to him, and how exactly do such details fit some other contender?
2. The author goes on saying that, based on the principles of historicism, Adventists believe that Daniel 8:9-14 is about the great controversy between Christ and Satan. That’s very interesting. Anyone is entitled to their beliefs, of course. Shouldn’t the point, however, be about the meaning of Daniel 8:9-14 according to its own context and not about our presuppositions? In the language used by the author, it would appear as if ‘historicism’

was some kind of independent and respectable philosophical school that we had adopted for some more-or-less well-thought reason. Isn't it true, however, that, in practice, *no respectable interpreter* accepts such a "school" of interpretation today? Isn't it true that, in practice, 'historicism' is equivalent to Seventh-day Adventist prophetic *eisegesis* [*sic!*]? In any case, where, in Daniel, do we find a clear reference to the "great controversy" motif? Where do we find a coherent picture of such a controversy elsewhere in the Bible?

3. Sunday's lesson revisits the issue of the defilement of the sanctuary. We can remember very well that the author presented several possible scenarios which could cause the pollution of the sanctuary. Obviously, it would appear that each of those scenarios might require a different purification procedure. For example, we know that when the temple was neglected, or even desecrated, the sanctuary was purified, so to speak, with a wheelbarrow, not with blood (2 Chron. 29: 5, 15-18). Oddly enough, the author of these lessons somehow neglects to mention this and other possible remedial purification rites and centres his discourse, instead, in the rites of *Yom Kippur*, which were related to the atonement of the sins of the Israelites. However, since in Daniel 8 the *only one* effecting the pollution of the sanctuary is the little horn, wouldn't the rites of *Yom Kippur* be *entirely* irrelevant considering that the "little horn" had *suppressed* the daily rituals themselves? Where does the Bible teach that the evil deeds of enemy rulers required that they be atoned for on *Yom Kippur*? Isn't it true that mixing *Yom Kippur* with the "little horn"'s pollution implies that true worshippers, or our High Priest himself, are the "little horn"? Wouldn't that be blasphemy? If Daniel 8:14 is related to Leviticus 16, why does it use a form of the verb *tsadaq* instead of *taher*? Isn't it true that Leviticus 16 has no relationship whatsoever with Daniel 8? Isn't it true that the closest resemblance, by far, in our Old Testament to the remedy for the pollution effected by the "little horn" is the passage of 2 Chron. 29: 5, 15-18?
4. Next, the author dwells on the issue of the 2,300 "days" [*sic!*]. He claims that those who try to apply this figure to Antiochus Epiphanes need to contort the text. Don't historicists contort anything? Can they prove their enormous claims on the computation of Dan. 8:14 and 9:25-27? For example, can they *objectively* prove the *terminus* of the prophecy sometime in the 19th century? If it cannot be *objectively* proved, doesn't insisting on such scenario involve some kind of contortion? How honest is it to claim that some purported mathematical difficulties of one's opponents disqualify them when Adventists are in a presumably much worse position?
5. The author gives four reasons for interpreting that the 2,300 "days" [*sic!*] should be accepted as taking us approximately to our era:
 - a. Gabriel applies the vision to the "time of the end" (verses 17, 19). This is very interesting. A previous observation pointed out that, in the Old Testament, and in Daniel itself "time of the end" and similar expressions needn't be understood as referring to the end of *our* world. However, we'll do well to remember that the author insists so much that *the vision* is about the time of the end. Would that be *the whole vision* or just part of it?
 - b. The second reason is that the parallels involving several chapters in Daniel, particularly those in chapters 2 and 7 (it's a pity he's forgotten to mention chapter 11), show that the vision in chapter 8 ends approximately at the same time as those of previous chapters. That is an excellent point, well worth pondering. The issue is,

however, do those prophecies really take us to the end of this world? Isn't the author begging the question?

- c. The third reason is that there is a parallel between the judgment scene in Daniel 7 and the purification of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. Since the author claims that the purification here referred to is related to *Yom Kippur*, what passage in the Bible says that *Yom Kippur* involved an "investigative judgment"? Did the high priest open any books on that day? Did he blot out any names if he discovered that someone hadn't fully repented from past sins? In any case, if the judgment scene of Daniel 7 were not to take us to the end of this world, why should the supposedly parallel purification of the sanctuary (which might theoretically occur somewhat *later*) take us to the end of our world?
6. In any case, the author seems to have neglected mentioning the odd circumstance that the word 'days' is nowhere to be found in the original of Dan. 8:14. How come he applies then the "year-day principle"?
7. The author next turns his attention to Dan. 8:13, a verse that contains a question to which Dan. 8:14 is the answer. This is getting interesting. Why doesn't Mrs. White's thorough presentation of the 2,300 "days" in *GC* mention Dan. 8:13 once? Isn't it true that Dan. 8:13 is *hardly necessary* for SDA *eisegesis*? However, since the author wants to study Dan. 8:13, we should do so, by all means. In his view, we ought to consider that the question is not limited solely to the activities of the "little horn" because the word "vision" (the Hebrew is irrelevant, actually) necessarily involves the ram and the he-goat. This is getting a little bit confusing. Hadn't the author told us before, following Gabriel, that "the vision" was about "the time of the end"? How come now it is also about "the time of the beginning"? Following Gabriel as our guide, can we perhaps conclude that, although the vision begins in Daniel's days, *the most prominent part of it* takes us to a distant period as far as the prophet was concerned? If this interpretation should be accepted, and it is evident Gabriel would accept it, then, does the question of Dan. 8:13 take us back to Persian times? Even if it took us that back, which it most certainly doesn't, wouldn't that take us to the days of *Cyrus, not Artaxerxes*? But if it were to take us back to the days of Cyrus, what would the result be for the whole structure of the historicist interpretation of the 70 weeks and the 2,300 "days"? Now, seriously, isn't it the height of folly to place the beginning of the 2,300 evening-morning desecration of the sanctuary at the time of the Persian empire, considering that it was precisely that empire the one that allowed the rebuilding of the sanctuary in the days of Cyrus?
8. The author revisits the issue of the purification of the sanctuary at the end of this week's lesson. Once again, he mentions that there were several methods whereby the sanctuary could be defiled, but then entirely fails to explain how the rituals of *Yom Kippur* would provide a remedy for cleansing the sanctuary from desecration by an evil foreigner that brought chaos to its services. Would it be right to suggest that this might be a case involving a little bit of contortion of God's Holy Word?
9. The author next revisits his previous claims that time periods in symbolic prophecies should be understood as symbolic. Although we might suspect that no answer will be given to the observation that the symbolic vision of Dan. 4 contains a time period that *isn't* interpreted symbolically, let us grant that, through some unheard-of prodigy, that observation has been successfully refuted. Very well, then. In order for us to decipher "2,300 evenings and mornings" into something entirely symbolic we would need some kind of conversion key, wouldn't we? Well, taking into account that the word "day" is

nowhere to be found in Dan. 8:14, where exactly is the biblical key that, in prophecy, one evening plus one morning equals one year? What, no biblical reference? How come? Would this be another case involving just a tiny little bit of contortion? Don't we, as creationists, insist that the presence of the words "evening and morning" in Genesis 1 implies 24-hour days? How come we don't do exactly the same thing in Daniel 8:14? Something in the text itself? Something *outside* the text? Wouldn't that be a case of wishful thinking and blind obstinacy in error?

10. The author is perfectly right in his observation that 2,300 evenings and mornings isn't the normal way of expressing time. As known by almost all exegetes (there are those who prefer to ignore it, of course), "evening-morning" is an *adjectival* expression missing a noun that is used as an idiom for burnt offerings. Now, wouldn't 2,300 "evening-morning" "whatever_is_missing_here" require just half the number of days made up by one evening and one morning each? Just asking.

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 9 in lesson 11:

1. The author wants his readers to notice some special connection between the vision of chapter 8 and that of chapter 9. The points he remarks are:
 - a. Gabriel appears in both chapters. That is interesting. He also appears in the first chapter of the gospel of Luke. Are we to conclude that whenever Gabriel appears his mission is always the same, or a continuation of a former mission?
 - b. As shown in Dan. 9:21, Daniel remembered having seen Gabriel before. Isn't it reassuring to know that, after several years had gone by, Daniel didn't suffer from Alzheimer's disease and that he didn't have amnesia either?
 - c. Once again, Gabriel's mission consists in helping Daniel understand a vision (Dan. 8:16; 9:23). It is to be expected that he succeeded on both occasions, isn't it? Isn't this theme of "understanding" interesting in the book of Daniel, considering it also appears in 1:17, in 2:30 and in 12:8? Isn't it to be expected that Daniel must have understood many, many things, and that his angelic instructor will have taught him *various* matters? Or did he always teach the same thing? If so, would that imply that Gabriel was a sloppy instructor or that Daniel was a slow learner?
 - d. The time element wasn't explained in chapter 8. Wasn't it! What was there to explain? Time is time. What part of the figure 2,300 didn't Daniel understand? If Daniel failed to understand the figure, where exactly does Gabriel teach him about that figure in chapter 9?
2. Where do we find contextual evidence that would show that there is a difference in meaning between the Hebrew words *chazon* and *mareh*? Would it be wrong to suggest that, in Daniel at least, they are synonymous? Why would it be wrong?
3. The author seems to agree with many SDA expositors that Gabriel was sent back in chapter 9 to explain something supposedly left unfinished in chapter 8. However, doesn't Dan. 8:26 indicate that the vision was "sealed up" because it concerned "the distant future"? If so, is Gabriel in chapter 9 about to unseal a vision that was sealed up? Would that mean that "the distant future" arrived in the first year of Darius the Mede?
4. Where does Daniel say that there was something in the vision of chapter 8 that he didn't understand? Isn't it true that *w'eyn mebiyn*, at the end of Dan. 8:27, can be translated as "nobody knew", meaning that none of Daniel's acquaintances knew about his distress about the vision caused by his knowledge of the future evil deeds of the "little horn"?

5. Even if we were to adopt the *questionable* translation of the 70 weeks being “cut off” from some other longer period, would it be wrong to suggest that they may be a portion of the aeons of time in God’s foreknowledge without requiring that we imagine that God’s timetable has been revealed to any mortal? Besides, isn’t the very notion that *chathak*, a *hapax legomenon*, be understood as meaning “cut off from something bigger” a most objectionable basis for the foundation of a doctrine?
6. The author goes into considerable detail regarding a presumably Messianic fulfilment of Dan. 9:24, obviously implying that if the goals mentioned were fulfilled outstandingly by Jesus Christ they cannot possibly have had a previous partial fulfilment. So, by all means, let’s analyse Dan. 9:24 in its context, shall we? But first, let us notice that in the very verse mentioned by our author, the angelic interpreter makes it very clear that the beneficiaries of this prophecy were to be “your people and your holy city”, that is, *Israel and Jerusalem*, hardly what a gentile would expect from a universal Messiah!
 - a. One of the benefits mentioned by Gabriel was “to finish transgression”. Would it be appropriate to point out that the relevant Hebrew noun, *pesha’*, appears elsewhere in Daniel (8:12, 13, 23; cf. the cognates in 9:27 and 11:31) *exclusively* in connection with the work of the evil “little horn”? So, would it be right to interpret that the divine judgment and punishment of this evil character would take place sometime during the 70 weeks?
 - b. The second benefit mentioned by Gabriel was “to put an end to sin”. In a way, of course, Jesus put an end to sin, although it is painfully obvious that sin is still among us. However, would it be appropriate to point out that, in his prayer, Daniel had asked for the forgiveness of his people’s sin with rather limited scope in mind (verses 5, 8, 11, 15, 20). If so, why should we jump to conclusions that this refers to the cross?
 - c. The third benefit mentioned by Gabriel was “to atone for wickedness”. Of course, through his perfect sacrifice on the cross, Jesus has atoned for wickedness once and for all. However, Daniel had expressed his sorrow for his nation’s wickedness, which had brought about their pitiful situation, exiled in Mesopotamia as they were (verses 13, 16). If so, why should we jump to conclusions that this refers to the cross?
 - d. The fourth benefit mentioned by Gabriel was “to bring in everlasting righteousness”. We must accept wholeheartedly that this has been achieved by Jesus Christ, *and only by him*. However, it must be stressed that the benefits of the new covenant relationship with God were originally scheduled to have been granted to repentant Jews immediately after the Babylonian exile (Jer. 31:23-25, 31, 33, 38-40; Eze. 37:26-28; 39:11-14, 25-29). If at least two major prophets had originally foreseen the benefits of the new covenant being bestowed at the return from the Babylonian captivity, would it be wrong to say that Daniel had foreseen something similar for roughly the same era?
 - e. The fifth benefit mentioned by Gabriel was “to seal up vision and prophecy”. The verb “seal up”, *chatham* in Hebrew, appears only two other times in Daniel, namely in 12:4 and 12:9. In both cases, it is related to Daniel’s sealing up a portion of his book, the one dealing with distant times. When those times arrived, knowledge would increase. Could, perhaps, Gabriel be saying that Daniel’s prophecies would be understood at the close of the 70 weeks because they would all be fulfilled by then?
 - f. The last benefit mentioned by Gabriel was “to anoint the most holy” place. Well, this is very understandable. Since the work of the “little horn” involved desecrating the

sanctuary, anointing its most holy place is the obvious equivalent of purifying it, something already mentioned in 8:14.

7. The author next turns his attention to the purported dates for the royal decree to have Jerusalem restored. He shows very persuasively that if someone were to start in some other date different from 457 BC, 490 literal years wouldn't take us to a date close enough to Jesus' ministry to be acceptable for a believer in this sort of math. That's a good point. The problem, however, is that Dan. 9:25 doesn't say anything about a *royal* decree. It mentions the "going forth" of the *dabar*, or word. So, the 70 weeks begin with the going forth of a word to have Jerusalem rebuilt. Is it just a coincidence that, according to Dan. 9:23 such a *dabar* "went forth" at the beginning of Daniel's supplication? Naturally, the *dabar* is God's word. Curiously enough, the going forth of God's word occurs immediately before Cyrus allows the return of the Jews to their homeland. As for math, especially when it's so error-prone for some apprentices of mathematician like William Miller *et al.*, who needs it?
8. The author mentions Ezra 4:12 as a proof that the city of Jerusalem was being rebuilt as a result of an authorisation by an Artaxerxes, presumably the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7. Even granting that the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4 is Artaxerxes I (something EGW doesn't admit, since she says the Artaxerxes of Ezra 4 is none other than "false Smerdis" [!], see *PK* 572-3; *cf.* 4 *SDABC* 1175-6]. This so-called "false Smerdis" reigned in Persia just before Darius I. I'm most willing to admit that she is utterly mistaken, but perhaps others won't be very willing to accept this position of mine!), Ezra 4:12 is part of a series of lying accusations by enemies of the Jews (EGW speaks of the Samaritans' "false reports" [4 *SDABC* 1175] being used to prompt Smerdis "to issue a decree forbidding the Jews to **rebuild their temple and city**" [*PK* 573, emphasis provided]). Besides, doesn't Ezra 4:6 show that Jerusalem had inhabitants well before that? So, if Jerusalem was inhabited at the time of Xerxes (Artaxerxes I's father; according to others, like EGW, this would be in the says of Cambyses!), it must have been restored by then, which would agree perfectly with Haggai's testimony of the days of Darius I, Artaxerxes I's grandfather, more than half a century before 457 BC! Doesn't EGW's "testimony" show that, no matter how you interpret it, either as being right or wrong, her modern "defenders" are, in any case, even more mistaken than she was?
9. In the previous lesson, the author had invited us to take all the time we need to study diagrams. So, by all means, let's do just that. As we do it, let's try to find an answer to these questions:
 - a. What exactly happened *in the latter part of 457 BC*, in the autumn (*Life Sketches*, page 57)? Was a decree issued then allowing the rebuilding of the *ruined* city of Jerusalem? Where is that decree? Isn't it true that Jerusalem had already been rebuilt by the time of Darius, Artaxerxes I's grandfather (Hag. 1:1-4)? It is true that Artaxerxes had something to do with the rebuilding of Jerusalem, since he authorised Nehemiah in 444 BC to rebuild its walls, but isn't it true that the rebuilding in Jerusalem came as a result of Cyrus' decree? Isn't it true that God himself had predicted that it would be Cyrus, his "messiah", the one who would have Jerusalem rebuilt (Isa. 44:28 and its context)? If so, taking into account that Ezra's trip to Jerusalem began, at the very latest, early in spring of 457 BC and ended, at the very latest, during the *summer* of 457, what exactly happened after 1 Tishri 457 BC (autumn) that might be considered as the beginning of the 70 weeks?

- b. What exactly happened in 408 BC, a date nobody seems to be willing to say anything about? Might this be because nothing can be shown to have happened at that time? Would it be wrong to suppose this involves a little bit of contortion to the passage of Daniel 9:25-27?
- c. According to the passage of the 70 weeks, when is the “messiah” figure of Dan. 9:26 cut off, after 62 weeks and a half or just after 62 weeks? If this “messiah” figure is our Lord Jesus Christ and if the 70 weeks are really 490 sequential years, and if they started in 457 BC, was he actually killed in AD 27? Might this involve just another little bit of contortion?
- d. Once again, the very same verse that mentions the cutting off of a “messiah” figure, Dan. 9:26, mentions immediately afterwards the people of an enemy ruler who will cause devastation in the city and the sanctuary. Might this be the Romans? Is this a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70? However, since the 70 weeks purportedly end in AD 34, can someone explain what a reference to AD 70 is doing in the middle of a prophecy that ends in AD 34? Might this involve just another little bit of contortion?
- e. In Dan. 9:27, who is it that confirms a covenant with many for one week and puts an end to sacrifice and offering? Is it the “messiah” figure or the wicked ruler of Dan. 9:26? Wouldn’t the closest antecedent rule previously appealed to by the author suggest that here we are dealing with the evil ruler and not with Jesus Christ? Might this involve just another little bit of contortion? Did Jesus make a covenant with the Jews for half a week after his death? Where can we read about that covenant?
- f. If the “messiah” figure of Dan. 9:26 were to be the one responsible for the confirmation of the covenant and the abolition of sacrifices and offerings, surely he would also be responsible for setting up “an abomination that causes desolation”. Was this effected by Jesus Christ? Would we need to jump antecedent to avoid such horrific prospect? Might this involve just another little bit of contortion?
- g. According to the Hebrew original, was an end put to sacrifices and offerings in the middle of a week or for half a week? Isn’t it true that the proposition “in” is missing in Hebrew?
- h. Can we really prove that Jesus’ ministry began in AD 27? Can we really prove it ended in AD 31 and not, say, in AD 30?
- i. Can we prove the Stephen’s stoning took place in AD 34? How is Stephen related to the 70 weeks once again, please?
- j. Why should the 2,300 evenings and mornings of Dan. 8:14 start at the same time as the 70 weeks? Where does Daniel say so? Why can’t both periods *end* at the same time?
- k. Objectively, what really happened in 1844? Did anything happen to the “little horn” at that time? Can we find anything worthy of mention that happened to the papacy at that time? No? How come? Would this involve just another little bit of contortion? Just a tiny little bit?
- l. Taking into account that in 1844 the moon crescent was observable a few hours after the onset of spring, in late March, and that according to *both* Rabbinic and *Karaite* Jews *Yom Kippur* was on September 23, how exactly was the date October 22 arrived at? Can anyone show a Karaite almanac, or any other Jewish almanac, with *Yom Kippur* falling on that date? Would this be another case of a tiny little bit of fraud and deception for unsuspecting fools?

- m. Why do *at least half* even of conservative translations in most modern languages appear *not* to read Daniel 9:24-27 as Messianic?
- n. Have I studied the diagram well enough, or should I dig deeper?

[From this line on, the original questions have been amplified. All those appearing with this typeface are substantially new. The others are identical or have suffered minimal changes relative to those asked in the email referred to above]

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 10 and 11 in lesson 12:

1. In various places throughout the lesson the author admits the obvious parallelism between Daniel 11 and previous chapters like 2, 7, 8 and 9. It's odd that, in his analysis of those chapters, he shouldn't have considered chapter 11 at all. In the lessons in which those chapters were presented, the author simply assumed that they reached the end of our world because of their usage of the expression "last days". Now he claims that the parallelism of chapter 11 with previous ones implies that chapter also comes to its close with the end of the world. Isn't this a vicious circle? Since, in Monday's lesson, the author admits that, in the Bible, "last days" is applied to many different moments throughout history, how can he claim that in Daniel "time of the end" means not just 'future' but the end of days? Even if Daniel speaks of God's eternal kingdom, hasn't God's kingdom existed *from the very beginning*? Doesn't David speak, centuries before Daniel, of God's eternal kingdom *in the present tense, not in the future tense* (Psa. 145:13)? In any case, doesn't the Adventist church teach that, in the Bible, such things as the eternal covenant of circumcision, the eternal fire that destroyed Sodom or the eternal fire of hell lasted or will last for as long as the circumstances that surround them? Isn't it the same with the Danielic eternal kingdom? Why not?
2. In Tuesday's lesson, the author defends the idea that in Daniel 10 the concept of a "great controversy" between good and evil is being presented. That concept would be clearer if the text said, for example, that "Michael" was on the side of the children of Israel and that Satan or some of his co-operators lead all other nations. However, isn't it true that the fact that, apart from "prince" Michael (10:21), the reference to the "prince" of Persia (10:13, 20) and the "prince" of Greece (10:20) seems to link this passage in Daniel to an early form of angelology that was to develop into the full-fledged version in the book of Jubilees? Isn't it true that in that book the "angels" in charge of the direction of Gentile nations weren't demons, but good angels who simply didn't do their job as well as they should have, or whose efforts were thwarted by the wickedness of the men who heeded the demons?
3. The author recognises that, even within our church, most scholars agree that Daniel 11 deals with wars between the monarchies that established themselves in the territories previously occupied by Alexander's empire. He himself admits that "some" (!) references to such struggle can be found in the chapter but then he adds that this "cannot" (!) be the main theme of the whole chapter. How extraordinary! Even though the angelic instructor gives detail after specific detail about different individuals along the royal lines of the king of the south and the king of the north, the last of whom is none other than the "little horn" himself, we're told to imagine that the chapter is about something else. How come?
4. Regarding the fascinating theory that the individual in verse 22 known as "a prince of the covenant" might be Christ, isn't it true that the expression "prince of the covenant" occurs only here? Isn't it true that the identity of the prince will depend on the identity of the

covenant? In any case, isn't it true that the one establishing the covenant in Dan. 9:26, 27 is the evil enemy prince that ruins the city and the temple, and not an anointed one? Could the covenant of Dan. 11:22 have something to do with the human alliances of Dan. 2:43 and with the marriage alliance of 11:17? Dan. 11:22 says that such a prince would be destroyed together with "an overwhelming force". What "overwhelming force" was destroyed at the time of Christ's death? Verse 23 seems to convey the thought that there are two people that come to an agreement, so it is tempting to think that one of them is "a prince of the covenant". If so, the other one must be the one who would "act deceitfully". Did Tiberius reach an agreement with Jesus only to act deceitfully afterwards? Isn't it a pity that the gospels don't say anything about that agreement, which must have been very juicy indeed?

5. In Wednesday's lesson the author unabashedly states that we have to look for Rome's appearance on stage in this fascinating drama "somewhere" between verses 4 and 21. He ventures to affirm that "[m]ost Adventist interpreters see the change from the Grecian kingdoms to Rome in either verse 14 or verse 16." Dandy. Which optician do they go to, to see such a thing? Do they use mud as a salve? What are their spectacles made of? Solid wood? Isn't it true that the whole chapter speaks of the kings of the north and the kings of the south? Isn't it true that, according to the angel interpreter himself, the king of the north is the dynastic successor of one of the nations that resulted from the partition of Alexander's empire? Isn't it true that the same holds true for the king of the south? Where is Rome, if not in Dan. 11:30, in a role *opposing* the king of the north? Isn't it true that the "ships of Chittim" (KJV) of 11:30 are translated as "Romans" in the Septuagint?
6. Friday's lesson presents the only serious consideration of this lesson. The author states that Matt. 24:15 and Mark 13:14 imply that Jesus admitted that the abomination of desolation was future, not past. Although Luke 21:20 doesn't exactly confirm that, even if we are to suppose that Jesus pronounced his words exactly as Matthew renders them—a dangerous thing to assume, considering Matt. 23:35; cf. Zec. 1:1, 7; 2 Chron. 24:20-21—, then we would have to admit that what Isaiah stated in Isa. 6:9, 10 was not fulfilled in his own days, but rather only when the words recorded in Matt. 13:14-15 were pronounced.
7. The lesson summary states that "[i]n Daniel 11, detailed prophecies are given concerning the history of nations from the Persian Empire until the end of time." No kidding! In those so "detailed" prophecies that reach the end of time, where are the details that mention the rise of Islam? And those that mention the conquest of America? What about some details regarding the Protestant Reformation? Some verse that alludes to the British empire? Some little paragraph about the rise of the United States? Something about the exploration of space? Some news about Islamic terrorism? No? Perhaps this certainly detailed prophecy doesn't contain any of such details because its end occurred much earlier than any of these things came to pass?
8. In verses 6, 8 and 11 of Daniel 11, parts of a prophetic vision, reference is made of "years". Should we apply here that purported day/year "principle", according to which each "year" lasts for more than a third of a millennium? Shouldn't we? Why not? Why should we apply it elsewhere?

Questions regarding your presentation of Daniel 11 and 12 in lesson 13:

1. Throughout the 11th chapter, the king of the north is the ruling monarch of the Seleucid empire, whereas the king of the south is the king of Ptolemaic Egypt. However, the author insists that the prophecy speaks about the time of the end, presumably our time, beginning in verse 40. Since the Seleucid empire and Ptolemaic Egypt are long gone, he says that the king of the north and the king of the south after that verse must stand for some other reality, the king of the north being the papacy and the king of the south being some indefinite power that opposes true religion. These two powers, we are informed, fight each other in some kind of war. How fascinating! Shouldn't this insight make headline news? If the papacy promotes false religion and the indefinite "king of the south" power opposes true religion, why should it oppose the papacy? Shouldn't it rather be its ally?
2. Edom, Moab and Ammon have also disappeared from the political scene nowadays. And yet, Daniel mentions them in Dan. 11:41. Isn't it a pity that Daniel didn't take better care of these details that might confuse us? After all, these baffling disappearing acts of the main actors from the scene may cause someone to lose track of this fascinating drama. So, who can Edom, Moab and Ammon be today once again? Former enemies of the church, but now her allies, is that it? Before mentioning Edom, Moab and Ammon, Daniel speaks of the Beautiful Land. Is that also imaginary, or does he mean Israel? If he means Israel, is he saying that the papacy will invade the Near East? What are the Israelis doing to counteract this impending menace? Verse 42 says that the king of the north will extend his power over many countries, including Egypt. Does that mean that the papacy will manage to destroy all the powers that oppose true religion? That would be good, wouldn't it? It then says that the king of the north would get hold of the riches, not only of Egypt, but those of Libya and Nubia as well. Would that be some confederacy of Christian camel salesmen and Christian Negro tribesmen? No? I must be getting all mixed up.
3. The author tells us that these things are not easy to understand (no kidding!), which only reveals that, at the time of the end, the world will be chaotic. Just as chaotic as his "commentary", perhaps?
4. According to Dan. 10:13, Michael is "**one** of the chief princes". Is Jesus Christ just "one of the chief princes"? Who are the others? Should they be worshipped? Have any of those princes eventually become kings?
5. What is the theological weight of the significance of Michael's name? If, just because Michael means "Who is like God?" we have to suppose that Michael is Christ, shouldn't we suppose that Isaiah ("Yahweh's salvation") or Jeremiah ("Chosen of Yahweh"), to mention just two, are Christ as well? That, on occasion of his second coming, Jesus should return with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God doesn't seem to mean very much regarding the nature of the archangel Michael if we consider that Christ won't come back alone, but with the whole heavenly host. Or should we consider that Jesus is the trumpet player of that grand expedition?
6. In Dan. 12:1 reference is made of "your people". Is there an indication in the book of Daniel that "your people" may be somewhat broader in scope than the Jewish people? In addition, the passage seems to identify "your people" with "everyone whose name is found written in the book". Is that group written in the book made up by living or dead individuals? Isaiah speaks of a time when "[t]hose who are

left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, **all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem**. The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire” (Isa. 4:3f). If those “recorded among the living” in Isaiah were living people, why exactly should the ones “written in the book” in Dan. 12:1 be deceased individuals?

7. Dan. 12:2 states that “[m]ultitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.” Are these people who “sleep in the dust of the earth” alive or dead? Doesn’t Psa. 113:7 state that God “raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap”? Does that mean the dead or the living? If this is a reference to the resurrection on occasion of Christ’s second coming, how come these awoken ones are just “multitudes”? Shouldn’t they be all? What happens with those who don’t wake up? Is there an indication that those who wake up for shame and everlasting contempt will wake some time later than those who wake up to everlasting life? In Ezekiel 37 we have a magnificent chapter devoted to resurrection, but it is a resurrection of the living (v. 21). What evidence is there that in Dan. 12:2 those who wake up have been dead?
8. Why **didn’t** Jesus use Dan. 12:1-2 as a proof in his discussion with the Sadducees about the resurrection?
9. In Monday’s lesson the author says that even a cursory survey of Dan. 12:1ff shows that a judgment is being presented that includes the worshippers of God. Isn’t it true that such a concept can *only* be arrived at with a *most cursory* survey of the text?
10. The author claims that Daniel’s sealed-up predictions were to be opened in 1798. Interesting. However, doesn’t Jesus’ reference to the book of Daniel in Matt. 24:15 imply that it was already open, at the very latest, early in the first century? Further, if the book of Revelation is, in part, based on Daniel, how come the book of Revelation was never sealed up (Rev. 22:10), whereas that of Daniel was purportedly to remain sealed for a further seventeen centuries?
11. In Wednesday’s lesson the author speaks of his “sadness” because most of the Protestant world applies the bulk of Daniel’s prophecies to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. He affirms such an interpretation is “ridiculous”. What is truly ridiculous is that those who reject the manifest truth that Daniel deals fundamentally with Antiochus Epiphanes are unable to answer even one of the dozens of objections that have been presented for a long time. In William Miller’s days nearly all the Protestant world, and a good deal of the Catholic world, was historicist, an interpretive current invented by a Catholic monk in the Middle Ages. Millerism was actually the swan song, or rather, the last braying of historicism. Isn’t it true that the complete disrepute of historicism has come about by the overwhelming evidence against it and in favour of conditional preterism?
12. In the “exposition” that was previously made about Dan. 8:14 and its purported connection with the 70 weeks, the period of Dan. 8:14 is made to begin not much later than the chronological beginning of the vision in chapter 8 itself. Why exactly should the periods mentioned at the end of the book of Daniel begin in the Middle Ages? Why can’t they begin roughly with the vision itself, that is, from the days of the Persian empire? Which Bible verse speaks of Clovis?

13. In Friday's lesson, the author quotes a paragraph from *Early Writings* in which Ellen White speaks of the "prophetic periods", in plural, that were supposed to come to and end in 1843, although they were then said to terminate in 1844. Are those "prophetic periods" the fifteen chronological criteria invented by Miller in order to buttress the prophetic significance of 1843? Why have 14 of those "prophetic periods" been long forgotten?
14. Ellen White states that in the error made by the Millerites in 1843 "the hand of the Lord" intervened. It's a pity she didn't say that the hand of the Lord brought them out of their mistake. On the contrary, her words convey the idea that the error they made was the result of the Lord's hand hiding it. Only when "the hand of the Lord was removed from the figures" was the "mistake... explained". Isn't this tantamount to turning God into an accomplice of error?
15. Ellen White affirms that Hab. 2:3 reveals that there was to be a "tarrying of the vision" of Dan. 8:14. What passage in Habakkuk shows that he is speaking of the vision in Daniel?

[The remainder of this letter is exactly like the original]

If you've been patient enough to reach this point, perhaps there's a chance that you might feel inclined to respond in some way. How you respond is another matter. You might possibly resort to some kind of probing response, more or less trying to psychoanalyse my words. Well, that would be up to you, of course, but there's hardly the need for such an exercise. My words are very clear, and it doesn't take a great exegete to figure out their meaning. Perhaps you might wonder what I'm doing in the SDA church thinking the way I obviously do. Well, to that I can give a straightforward answer. There are both historical and religious reasons for my being a SDA. The historical reason is that, when I was presented the SDA interpretation of the Bible as a young man, I was deeply impressed by it and by the obvious godliness of my instructors, so I decided to join their ranks. The religious reasons are mainly related to my belief in the importance of the doctrine of the Second Coming and in the abiding nature of Sabbath observance, so, in a true sense, I consider myself a Seventh-day Adventist. There's another religious reason: I think I can better serve my good, simple, sincere SDA brethren as a church member than as an outsider. Most of them have never had the privilege of studying God's Word with a minimum of rigour. Although it would be quite foolish of me to imagine that I had reached a perfect understanding of the Bible, I know what I know, and I would utterly fail in my *duty* if part of what I know wasn't used for the benefit of others, saving them from what they might perceive as the need of believing in what is nothing but bankrupt theories.

You are entitled to doubt it, of course, but I'm a quiet man. I don't want to cause scandal. I don't go around promoting dissent. As soon as I finished my MA in Theology sixteen years ago, I decided I had better become a computer programmer in order not to hurt anyone, and so I've kept quiet all this time. It would never occur to me to go to this or that brother or sister and tell them about the meaning of *ta hagia* in the book of Hebrews. I would be perfectly content with things as they are if no *conscious* effort was made by anyone to promote *untenable* views (like those defended in the truly infamous Sabbath School booklet on Hebrews in the summer of 2003); however, when such views are upheld with arguments that would *never* be accepted in any Seminary worthy of the name, I can't keep quiet and I am compelled to speak, although moderately and only to people who won't be shocked.

Neither have I associated myself with well-known “dissenters”, like Dr. Desmond Ford, whom I have read only recently, and less than 20 pages worth of material.

Please, Dr. Pfandl, do me the courtesy of seriously considering the vigour of most of these questions. I am no neophyte and I think I’ve done my homework regarding the perusal of our denominational literature, including, of course, both EGW’s writings and the DARCOM series, particularly Dr. William Shea’s essays. So, if you consider replying, I would very much appreciate your providing *serious* answers to these *serious* questions and not the usual stuff which I happen to know *extremely* well, and of whose weaknesses I am all too *intimately* familiar with. As evident from the questions, I have very profound foundational objections to the whole historicist scenario of so-called “apocalyptic” prophecy. I think most SDA scholars would *privately* agree with me on this, but, alas, some of our leading brethren, and I consider you one of them, are adamant in their decision not to let regular church members know about these things. The latter are fed, instead, with the usual completely useless and irrelevant stuff that is *entirely* contrary to the most elementary and universally accepted rules of biblical exegesis. Dr. Pfandl, knowledge is increasing, thank God. More and more of our young people will come to know these things. It’s inevitable. How many more generations will have to pass before our brethren learn these things from the ones in trusted positions? Should they learn them traumatically, instead, from the Internet? Someone who isn’t interested in knowing these things or in reading books, or even the Bible, I’m sure, can sit on our pews for many, many years. The point is, however, how long do you want to keep *educated* church members as church members? Didn’t we deserve a better Sabbath School booklet, one that honestly dealt with the real issues in the book of Daniel as carefully as possible so as not to shock simple believers who have grown old listening to fairy tales totally unrelated to the actual teachings of Daniel? Perhaps few church members have studied your booklet as minutely as I have, but, even so, I think we all deserved better.

Dr. Pfandl, I can’t think for a moment that you got your PhD at a raffle. But then, how can you have honestly produced such a pervasively misleading Sabbath School booklet, full throughout of considerations that are patently false? I want to believe that you’ve tried your best to achieve an *impossible* task, as the late Dr. Raymond Cottrell characterised it: reconciling the usual SDA understanding of Daniel with scholarly study. I don’t think anyone could have done a better job at it than you have, honestly. However, was it worth it? Anyone who places their faith in this material you’ve produced will effectively be immunised against causing dissent, but will also be shielded from understanding the book of Daniel for as long as they maintain faith in your unacceptable misinterpretation. Reminds me of the time when the self-appointed keepers of truth did their job so well that they chained bibles to the walls. All who behave in such a way will have one day to give an account of their deeds. Will you do something to remedy this situation?

Yours in the blessed hope,
Eduardo Martínez-Rancaño