

THE LONGEST PROPHETIC PERIOD

By Noel del Rosal

Ellen G. White wrote the following statement in the year 1888:

“The experience of the disciples who preached the "gospel of the kingdom" at the first advent of Christ, had its counterpart in the experience of those who proclaimed the message of His second advent. As the disciples went out preaching, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand," so Miller and his associates proclaimed that **the longest and last prophetic period** brought to view in the Bible was about to expire, that the judgment was at hand, and the everlasting kingdom was to be ushered in. The preaching of the disciples in regard to time was based on the seventy weeks of Daniel 9. The message given by Miller and his associates announced the termination of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, of which the seventy weeks form a part. The preaching of each was based upon the fulfillment of a different portion of the **same great prophetic period.**” *Great Controversy* 351

This statement is misunderstood by most Seventh Day Adventists.

If we were to ask in the average Adventist congregation what the longest prophetic period in the Bible is, what would the typical answer be? The 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, no doubt.

When sister white wrote that statement in 1888, what was commonly considered among seventh-day Adventists as the longest prophetic period?

Here are examples of respected pioneer authors commenting on the subject:

- **1877**, Uriah Smith “The period of 2300 days is the longest prophetic period given in the Bible” {The Sanctuary and the Twenty-three Hundred Days of Daniel 8:14, 273}
- **1899**, John N Loughborough. “The twenty-three hundred days is the longest prophetic period, coming down a little past the termination of all the others.” {Heavenly Visions, 22}
- **1919**, Steven N Haskell “Daniel is the only "little book" that gives the 2300 days,-the longest prophetic period in the Bible, which ended in 1844.” {Bible Hand Book, 54}

Brethren Smith and Loughborough were both converted to Seventh-Day Adventism in 1852, and Haskell in 1853, therefore none of them took part in the Millerite movement. Valuable as their contributions are to Seventh-Day Adventism they did not pass through the furnace under the First and Second Angels, leading up to the Great Disappointment of 1844.

Even prior to those statements- in the year **1872**- it was published in Battle Creek “A DECLARATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES TAUGHT AND PRACTICED BY THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS”, which contains the following article:

- IX. That the mistake of Adventists in 1844 pertained to the nature of the event then to transpire, not to the time; that no prophetic period is given to reach to the second advent, but **that the longest one, the two thousand and three hundred days** of Dan. 8:14, terminated in that year, and brought us to an event called the cleansing of the sanctuary. *1872 Fundamental Principles* 7

In the introduction of such declaration of fundamental beliefs we read:

“In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with **our people**, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a **brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them.**” *1872, FP1872* 3

Is it true that as a people, we have held “with great unanimity” that the two thousand and three hundred days is the longest prophetic period?

If by “our people” they are considering only the period of existence of the SDA church as a **denomination**, their estimation is probably fair because the SDA church was organized in 1863, while a simultaneous rejection of the validity of the 2520 was taking place. New charts were printed in that same year (1863) to replace the old 1843 and 1850 charts ordained by God.

The rejection became explicit when James White wrote in 1864:

“The prophetic period of Lev. xxvi, or what has been supposed to be such, has been no small object of study among prophetic expositors. It has been supposed that the expression, “seven times,” in verses 18, 21, 24, 28, denoted a prophetic period of 2520 years, and that this period covered the time during which the throne of Israel should be and remain subverted and trodden down by oppressing powers... Is there any prophetic period brought to view at all in Lev. xxvi? We claim that there is not, and will offer a few of what are to us very conclusive reasons for this position.” January 26, 1864 JWe, *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, 68

But what would our fathers in the Millerite movement have thought of the 2300 days as being the longest prophetic period in the bible?

We need not guess, for twenty years earlier they had been confronted with that specific argument and left their thoughts on print.

Notice the following statement made by Rev. Silas Hawley, Congregational minister, in his article published in the “Signs of the Times” on January 10th, 1844. (Although brother Silas was welcomed in the Millerite movement, he pressed on them some divergent ideas.)

“By Silas Hawley, Jr.

1. That, as the **2300 years constitute the longest prophetic period**, it must be regarded as the paramount one. To settle its termination, or the most probable period of its termination, is to gain the great point. If the other periods are parallel with this as far as they extend, or begin at a point of time after the commencement of this, and end with it, they must harmonize with it, though we may not have sufficient light to discern the harmony. At all events, the longest period is the most important one, and must constitute our main guide.” January 10, 1844 JVHe, *HST* 169.9

Editor Joshua V. Himes condescended to publish Bro. Silas article but on the same issue he attached the following remarks:

“We would apologi[z]e to our readers, for occupying so much room in our p[a]per, with articles relating to this question, to the exclusion of other matter... But as our brother attaches so much importance to his view, we have presented the whole of it, with the reasons of our dissent.” January 10, 1844 JVHe, *HST* 170.7

“There are a few points in the above, on which we will make a few remarks.

- “1st. One period cannot be paramount to another period, unless its commencement and termination are marked by a greater amount of evidence. Each period must be fulfilled with equal precision, ind[e]pendent of its length. **It is consequently not on one period alone that we rely, but on all the prophetic periods harmoniously terminating at about the same time**, proved by conclusive evidence independent of the termination of each other. **If the longest period was to be paramount, the seven times would take precedence of all others...**” January 10, 1844 JVHe, *HST* 170.8
- “4th. We regard the seven times as one of our strong evidences, a prophetic period which is **too important to be thus summarily disposed of**. It is certainly deserving of a candid hearing, and should not be rejected without the most weighty reasons. **We are as much astonished at the rejection of this period, as we should have been had he rejected the 2300 days**. Had we only the seven times for our guide, we should be continually looking for the Lord.” January 10, 1844 JVHe, *HST* 171.1

After the first disappointment and the Midnight Cry had taken place, the following statement was published in the same periodical, on September 25, 1844:

“Finally. That we have entered upon a most deeply affecting season, all must admit. That **the longest prophetic period which brings the end to view, the seven times, with which we may suppose all the others would be squared, in their termination**, ends with this autumn, appears very evident; that we are in the last of the last year of the 2300, is still more evident; and the whole aspect of the world around us, morally and politically, agrees very well with the inspired portrait of “the time of harvest.” September 25, 1844 JVHe, *HST* 62.7

And just before the great disappointment, the following statement was published on Oct 9, 1844:

“We have taken the position, that the time of the Advent of our Lord might be known. The reasons for this have been given in the columns of this paper, as well as the Advent Library, during the last four years. The dates, as given by Mr. Miller, and others, in those works, it is well known, expired last spring, when we expected our King in his glory. We were then disappointed. We could not then explain, neither can we now, where our error was, except in the fact, that the prophetic times were not all filled up. While with the best data the most of the periods were full, it was clear that **the seven times do not terminate until this Autumn; and as this number is the longest, and spans the whole arch**, we see no possible way to avoid the conviction, and even assurance, that the Lord will come this Autumn. The definite time, as to a month or day, cannot be determined by the prophetic periods, as no one of them, or all of them together, can be harmonized in any one month, or day of the month. If then we have definite time, we can get it only by the typical institutions, which were observed in a specified month, and day of the year. Of these we can only look to the Autumnal Festivals, in the seventh month of the Jewish year. This is the only month in which we can look for a fulfillment; and as the tenth day of this month is the only day in which the type of the coming of our High Priest can be fulfilled, we are shut up to this faith, and shall, by the grace of God, look for the event, and act accordingly. Our reasons are given more at length in another portion of this paper, to which we refer our readers. May the Lord prepare us all for this glorious event.

Joshua V. Himes, S. Bliss.
Boston, Oct. 1, 1844.” October 9, 1844 JVHe, *HST* 80.7

A handful of faithful believers who survived the great disappointment, including Sister White, came together to prayerfully study and examine the foundation of our faith (See 1SM, 206). Evidently, the validity of the 2520 was confirmed, for it was later included in the 1850 chart ordered by God (see 13MR 359, and 5MR 203), thus providing a second witness to the 1843 chart which also contains the 2520 (see EW 74).

And as late as 1856, Hiram Edson published in the Review and Herald (January, 3, 1856) the article “THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES” expanding on the pioneer understanding of the 2520. Thus, the historical evidence prior to 1863, when the seven times were discarded, shows that our pioneers regarded the 2520 as the longest prophetic period in the bible.

With this in mind, let’s take a closer look to our initial quote from Great Controversy 351:

“As the disciples went out preaching, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand,” so Miller and his associates proclaimed that **the longest and last prophetic period** brought to view in the Bible was about to expire, that the judgment was at hand, and the everlasting kingdom was to be ushered in. The preaching of the disciples in regard to time was based on the seventy weeks of Daniel 9. The message given by Miller and his associates announced the termination of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, of which the seventy weeks form a part. The preaching of each was based upon the fulfillment of a different portion of **the same great prophetic period.**”
Great Controversy 351

When Sister White wrote this quote in 1888, it had become common belief that the 2300 days was the longest time prophecy, so Adventists at that time probably assumed that she was supporting their view. And because the quote appears to say that the 2300 days is the longest prophetic period, today many Adventists attempt to use it as an absolute statement to disprove the 2520. But a careful reading of the quote shows that this is not the case, because there is an alternative explanation that is consistent with (1) Millerite history, (2) the grammar or sentence structure used by Sister White, and (3) with the teachings of the bible.

1. Consistency with Millerite history

“... **Miller and his associates proclaimed that the longest and last prophetic period** brought to view in the Bible was about to expire...” {GC 351}

It has already been established that what the Millerites proclaimed as the longest prophetic period was the 2520, and not the 2300 days. Sister White, having joined the Millerite movement herself, would have understood this better than we. To suggest that the Millerites proclaimed the 2300 as the longest prophetic period is historically inaccurate.

2. Grammar or sentence structure used by Ellen White

Let's analyze the statement carefully. First, notice that the “longest and last prophetic period” is introduced in the phrase **without being identified by name**:

“As the disciples went out preaching, “The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand,” so Miller and his associates proclaimed that the longest and last prophetic period brought to view in the Bible was about to expire, that the judgment was at hand, and the everlasting kingdom was to be ushered in.”

Then Sister White mentions two prophetic periods by name:

“The preaching of the disciples in regard to time was based on **the seventy weeks** of Daniel 9. The message given by Miller and his associates announced the termination of **the 2300 days** of Daniel 8:14, of which the seventy weeks form a part...”

After informing us that the preaching of the disciples was based on the 70 weeks, and that the Millerites preached the 2300 days –and thus also the 70 weeks– then she adds the key phrase:

“The preaching of **each** (the 70 weeks **and** the 2300 days) was based upon the fulfillment of a different **portion** of the same great prophetic period.”

The word “**each**” indicates that there is more than one portion involved, and **portion means a part of a larger amount**. If the 2300 days is a portion of a larger amount, that period would be the 2520, according to Millerite logic. Because of the way in which the sentence is structured, to infer that the 2300 is the “great prophetic period” is problematic, for how could the 2300 be a portion of itself? It doesn't make sense.

This is a more coherent understanding:

“The preaching of each [the 70 weeks and the 2300 days] was based upon the fulfillment of a different portion of the same great prophetic period [the 2520].”

In simple terms, the 70 weeks and the 2300 days are **both** portions of the great prophetic period, the 2520.

3. Consistency with the teaching of the word of God

If Ellen White means 2520 as the “great prophetic period”, the sentence makes better sense and agrees with Millerite logic. But then we would have to ask:

- (1) How did the 2300 fulfill a portion of the 2520?
- (2) How did the 70 weeks fulfill a portion of the 2520?

1. The 2300 as a portion of the 2520

Sister White says, "The message given by Miller and his associates announced the termination of the 2300 days of **Daniel 8:14...**"

So let's turn to Daniel 8 verses 13-14.

13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long *shall* be the vision *concerning* the **daily sacrifice**, and **the transgression of desolation**, to give **both** the **sanctuary** and the **host** to be trodden under foot?

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Our pioneers identified **two** manifestations of satanic persecuting power:

- The **Daily** or paganism (persecuting God's church from without)
- the **transgression of desolation** or the papacy (persecuting God's church from within)
The vision mentioned in Daniel 8:13 covers these two phases of persecution, or treading under foot. Each of these two satanic powers treads down two Godly powers:
- The **sanctuary**
- The **host** (God's people)

Notice that Daniel 8:14 answers partially the question asked in 8:13 "how long shall... the sanctuary and the host... be trodden under foot?" because the treading down connected with the 2300 deals with the **sanctuary**, but the treading down of the **host** is connected with the 2520.

The 2300 fulfills a portion of the 2520 since it is part of the treading down prophecy. Both periods end simultaneously in Oct 22, 1844 when God has gathered a **host** (covenant people) in a restored spiritual **sanctuary**.

2. The seventy weeks as a portion of the 2520

Sister White says "The preaching of the disciples in regard to time was based on the seventy weeks of Daniel 9." So let's turn to Daniel 9.

Dan 9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

For what causes had Jerusalem been desolated?

Dan 9:5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

In verses 11-13 the punishment is described as the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses:

11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the **curse** is poured upon us, and the **oath** that is written in the law of **Moses** the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the law of **Moses**, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

Daniel is referring to the curse that resulted from breaking God's covenant. In Leviticus 26 (verses 18, 21, 24 and 28) it is expressed as the **seven times**:

Lev 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you **seven times** more for your sins.

21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring **seven times** more plagues upon you according to your sins.

23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;

24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet **seven times** for your sins.

25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

Lev 26:27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you **seven times** for your sins.

Verses 31-33 contain the desolations predicted by Moses that Daniel recognized as taking place in his day, these being part of the seven times curse:

31 And I will make your cities waste, and **bring your sanctuaries unto desolation**, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.

32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

33 And I will **scatter you among the heathen**, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

And verses 34, 35 address the specific reason why they were scattered into heathen nations and their own land remained desolate:

34 **Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate**, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; **because it did not rest in your sabbaths**, when ye dwelt upon it.

According to Leviticus 25, the land was supposed to rest every seven years. This was a statute given by God, and the safety of the people depended on the obedience to these statutes.

Lev 25:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD.

3 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.

Lev25:18 **Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety.**

19 And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.

Disobedience to the statutes and judgments brought the desolations that Daniel recognized in his earnest prayer of confession. Only after Daniel had fulfilled the conditions for reinstatement set forth in Leviticus 26: 40-45, which includes accepting the seven times punishment, that Gabriel came to him and delivered the prophecy of the 70 weeks. Thus we see a connection between the 2520 and the seventy weeks prophecies.

Finally, according to Daniel 9: 27, during the seventieth week the Messiah confirmed "the covenant with many for one [prophetic] week" (or seven years = 2520 days) "and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," through His death on the cross.

Thus, within the structure of the seventy weeks, there is a period in which Christ confirms the covenant with many for 2520 literal days, evidencing the close connection between both prophetic periods.

Note by The Little Book

In the newer spanish versions of *The Great Controversy* the editors have added a paragraph which was not written by Ellen G. White (and is also not marked so that the reader must believe it is written by the author) in order to defend the theory that the 2300 years are the longest prophetic time period. This is a twisting of her words and dishonest procedure in order to produce an argument against the 2520 with the help of the inspired word. In the image taken from egwwritings.org of the Ellen G. White Estate you can see a passage - referring to the 2300 years - where it says "Este período profético, el más largo de la Biblia" (This prophetic period, the longest in the Bible); this paragraph doesn't exist in english - neither in the GC nor in any other of her writings. We marked the added paragraph with a blue background. The problem is also obvious by noting that the EGW application doesn't provide the english link for CS 327.1 and 327.2 while it does so for all others (as a little bubble behind each paragraph).

"Desde la salida de la palabra para restaurar y edificar a Jerusalén hasta el Mesías Príncipe, habrá siete semanas, y sesenta y dos semanas", es decir sesenta y nueve semanas, o sea 483 años. El decreto de Artajerjes fue puesto en vigencia en el otoño del año 457 a. C. Partiendo de esta fecha, los 483 años alcanzan al otoño del año 27 d. C. (véase el Apéndice, así como el diagrama de la página siguiente). Entonces fue cuando esta profecía se cumplió. La palabra "Mesías" significa "el Ungido". En el otoño del año 27 d. C., Cristo fue bautizado por Juan y recibió la unción del Espíritu Santo. (CS 326.2) [↗]

Los 2.300 días (CS 327.1)

Este período profético, el más largo de la Biblia, había de extenderse, según la profecía de Daniel, desde "la salida de la palabra para restaurar y edificar Jerusalén" hasta la purificación del santuario. La orden de reedificar a Jerusalén se dio en 457 a.C. Setenta semanas (490 años) debía cortarse para los judíos, y al fin de este período, en el año 34 de nuestra era, se principió a predicar el evangelio a los gentiles. Desde que comenzó el período, en 457 a. C., hasta el Mesías Príncipe, iba a haber 69 semanas (483 años). Precisamente en el momento predicho, en el otoño del 27 d. C., Jesús fue bautizado en el Jordán por Juan el Bautista. Fue también ungió por el Espíritu Santo, e inició su ministerio público. "A la mitad de la semana" (3 años y medio más tarde) el Mesías fue cortado. El período completo de los 2.300 días se extendía de 457 a. C. hasta 1844 de nuestra era, cuando se inició en el cielo el juicio investigador. (CS 327.2)

El apóstol Pedro testifica que "a Jesús de Nazaret: [...] Dios le ungió con el Espíritu Santo y con poder". Hechos 10:38 (VM). Y el mismo Salvador declara: "El Espíritu del Señor está sobre mí; por cuanto me ha ungió para anunciar buenas nuevas a los pobres". Después de su bautismo, Jesús volvió a Galilea, "predicando el evangelio de Dios, y diciendo: Se ha cumplido el tiempo". Lucas 4:18; Marcos 1:14, 15 (VM). (CS 328.1) [↗]

From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks"—namely, sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years. The decree of Artaxerxes went into effect in the autumn of 457 B.C. From this date, 483 years extend to the autumn of A.D. 27. (See Appendix.) At that time this prophecy was fulfilled. The word "Messiah" signifies "the Anointed One." In the autumn of A.D. 27 Christ was baptized by John and received the anointing of the Spirit. The apostle Peter testifies that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Acts 10:38 [↗]. And the Saviour Himself declared: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor." Luke 4:18 [↗]. After His baptism He went into Galilee, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, *The time is fulfilled.*" Mark 1:14, 15 [↗]. (GC 327.1) [↗]

"And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." The "week" here brought to view is the last one of the seventy; it is the last seven years of the period allotted especially to the Jews. During this time, extending from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34, Christ, at first in person and afterward by His disciples, extended the gospel invitation especially to the Jews. As the apostles went forth with the good tidings of the kingdom, the Saviour's direction was: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 10:5, 6 [↗]. (GC 327.2) [↗]

"In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." In A.D. 31, three and a half years after His baptism, our Lord was crucified. With the great sacrifice offered upon Calvary, ended that system of offerings which for four thousand years had pointed forward to the Lamb of God. Type had met antitype, and all the sacrifices and oblations of the ceremonial system were there to cease. (GC 327.3) [↗]

The seventy weeks, or 490 years, especially allotted to the Jews, ended, as we have seen, in A.D. 34. At that time, through the action of the Jewish Sanhedrin, the nation sealed its