



**THE PLUTO
EFFECT**

Gregory John

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Introduction

When it comes to the prophet Daniel's timeline prophecies, there are different views of interpretation. Depending upon which view you subscribe to (preterist, futurist, or historicist), Daniel's timeline prophecies have either been fulfilled, partially fulfilled or are yet to be fulfilled during a seven-year period of time just prior to Jesus second coming.

William Miller, who started and led the Millerite (Adventist) movement in the early to mid-1800's, believed that Jesus would return at the end of Daniel's 2300-day (year) prophecy. In 1822, Miller had this to say: "I believe that the second coming of Jesus

Christ is near, even at the door, even within twenty-one years, – on or before 1843.”

¹ This end-date was later extended to the time period of the Jewish Karaite Calendar (March 21, 1843 to March 21, 1844). As for Daniel’s 1260, 1290, and 1335-day (year) prophecies, Miller further concluded that they must also have their fulfillment on or before Jesus’ blessed return—on or before March 21, 1844.

Seventh-day Adventists today continue to hold onto William Miller’s views for the 1260, 1290, and 1335-day timelines. Yet when it comes to the end of Daniel’s 1335-day prophecy, Miller’s predicted year of 1843 (Gregorian calendar) and later on the extended time period of March 21, 1844 (Jewish Karaite calendar) for Jesus antici-

1. Bliss, Sylvester (1853). *Memoirs of William Miller*. Boston: Joshua V. Himes, p. 79

pated coming, there is no clear indication or *blessed* event in history that Seventh-day Adventists can point to that shows the fulfillment of the angel's proclamation, "Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days." (Daniel 12:12, NIV).

Instead of defending 1843 or March 21, 1844, as the end date for Daniel's 1335-day prophecy, may we as Seventh-day Adventists allow prophecy in the light of history to reinterpret for us Daniel's conclusion. In doing so, may controversy and confusion be laid to rest!

The Pluto Effect

Growing up, I was always taught that our solar system consisted of nine planets, Pluto being the most distant planet from the sun.

The discovery of the planet Pluto came about in 1930 when astronomer Clyde Tombaugh, using a blink comparator and photographic plates, was able over time to uncover the hidden planet. It was classified a planet based on the traditionally held definition that planets are any geologically active bodies in space.

Fast forward to 2006, when the International Astronomical Union (IAU) made the

determination that Pluto is not a planet. According to the IAU definition of a planet, Pluto must be spherical, orbit the sun and not share an orbit with other objects. Long story short, Pluto has since been found to share its orbit with other objects called “plutinos.” Therefore, according to the IAU, Pluto is truly not a planet like the other eight planets in our solar system.

So why am I bringing this up?

Well, there are still people who firmly believe in the traditional view of Pluto being a planet, even in the face of astronomical evidence that clearly shows that unlike the other eight planets, Pluto holds the same orbit with other objects—plutinos. If Pluto is indeed a planet, then one must admit to there being many more “dwarf-like” planets in our solar system. Philip Metzger, a planetary physicist and proponent of Pluto being a planet, had this to say: “We think there’s

probably over 150 planets in our solar system.”

Unfortunately, like so many other beliefs, it is human nature to hold on to our ingrained and oftentimes biased beliefs, even in the face of facts, evidence or scientific discoveries that would suggest otherwise.

Why is that?

Truth be told, we don't like change, especially change that requires us to shift our traditional viewpoint or to admit that perhaps we got it wrong!

Case in point, the Millerite (Adventist) belief that AD 1798 historically marks not only the papacy's deadly wound (Rev. 13:3), but also the end of the papacy's dominion and rule as expressed in Daniel's 1260-day (year) timeline prophecy. William Miller, the founder of the Millerite movement, came to this conclusion on the premise that all of Daniel's timeline prophecies (1260,

1290, 1335 and 2300-day) must come to fulfillment prior to Jesus' anticipated return—on or before March 21, 1844.

In knowing that Jesus didn't return on either March 21, 1844 or later on October 22, 1844, it warrants the question, **Does AD 1798 mark both the papacy's deadly wound and the end of its of dominion as Miller predicted?**

As for the papacy's deadly head wound, history supports AD 1798 as being the correct date. Yet when it comes to the end of the papacy's dominion and rule, history clearly points us to another year—AD 1870 to be exact. After the papacy's deadly head wound in 1798, the pope's successor (Pius VII) regained temporal control over the city of Rome from Napoleon in 1800, and in 1815, under the congress of Vienna, further regained control over some of the original papal states in central Italy. It wasn't until October 1, 1870, that the last remaining pa-

pal state (the city of Rome) was incorporated into the kingdom of Italy, thus ending the papacy's long dominion and rule as predicted by Bible prophecy.

Why do Seventh-day Adventists ignore this vital part of papal history?

First and foremost, most Seventh-day Adventists have little to no knowledge of the papacy's history beyond what is commonly taught within the church or by the various independent SDA ministries such as *Amazing Facts*, *It Is Written*, or *The Voice of Prophecy*.

Second, Adventists see the start and end dates for Daniel's 1260-year prophecy beginning in AD 538 and ending in AD 1798. The reasoning for these dates is the pope's removal from the city of Rome in AD 1798 and the Ostrogoths failed siege and removal from the city of Rome in AD 538. The dilemma and unresolved issues with this

reasoning, are the facts that the Ostrogoth kingdom ruled in Italy until AD 553, and that the last papal state (the city of Rome) ruled until AD 1870.

History which affirms prophecy, speaks of two other pivotal events in the Church of Rome's history which shouldn't be overlooked or quickly dismissed when it comes to the setting up of the Roman papacy's civil rule. To learn more about these events and how they fit within Daniel's 1260-year prophecy, I invite you to read my book, *Three Angels in the Midst of Heaven*.

Third, and certainly not least, are Ellen White's writings (particularly her book *The Great Controversy*), which repeats William Miller's conclusions on Daniel's 1260-day (year) timeline for the papacy's dominion and rule. White's writings may be rightly seen as an authoritative source, yet when it comes to historical details and dates, William C. White had this to say, "Regard-

ing Mother's writings and their use as authority on points of history and chronology, Mother has never wished our brethren to treat them as authority regarding the details of history or historical dates" (*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 446).

Whether it's the debunked belief that the world is flat, that the sun revolves around the earth, or that Pluto is just one of 150 planets within our solar system, our inherent biases can become a real stumbling block to our understanding of what is *accepted* truth. Furthermore, when it comes to the timeline prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, let us not be of the Laodicean mindset that we have no more to learn, nor think that we are any less capable of believing or holding on to inherently biased errors.

The truth is, we still have lessons to learn and even more to unlearn as God's remnant people. Therefore, may we come before the Lord, humble ourselves, and pray with a

sincere heart, "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path" (Psalm 27:11). In doing so, may God's truth surely follow!

Ellen White's counsel to the SDA Church:

"I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested they know not their great ignorance. And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand singly

and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth..." (Maranatha 45).

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