

2,300 Evenings and Mornings

Messiah in Daniel 8:14

Background

In a previous article we pointed out that the summary of the vision is found in Daniel 8:19 and that it concerned 1) a time of wrath, 2) a sacred feast and 3) a time of the end. The first one was fulfilled by Christ who took God's wrath on Himself at the cross; the feast referred to His crucifixion at the Passover; and the time of the end pointed to the end for Israel as God's Old Testament Covenant people.

We also saw how the four conditions in Daniel 8:13 that define the content of the vision, all point to the Messiah's death on the cross in 31 A.D. If this is the true interpretation, we should find further support for it in Daniel 8:14:

And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed." (NKJV)

2,300 Days

Let us first look at the expression 2,300 days. In the New King James Version that is quoted above, the original literal wording is only given as a footnote. In the Hebrew language it does not say "days" but "evenings and mornings." That is the reason why all translations, except the King James Version, use "evenings and mornings" in Daniel 8:14. If we, however, go to Daniel 8:26 all translations, *including* the KJV, use "evenings and mornings" in agreement with the Hebrew. Thus, the word "days" in the KJV is an *interpretation* and not a translation! The correct translation should be "2,300 evenings and mornings."

The second fact is that Daniel many times used the word "days," referring to regular 24-hour-periods. In the same verse (8:26) he wrote that the vision refers to many "days" in the future. The word for "days" is *not* the same Hebrew word as used in the expression "evenings and mornings." In the next verse (v. 27) Daniel said that he was sick for many "days" and again the phrase "evenings and mornings" was *not* used in the Hebrew.

In the time prophecies in Daniel 12:11-12 he also used the Hebrew word for "*days*" and not the phrase "evenings and mornings." Daniel wrote about 1,290 "days" and 1,335 "days." If he would have meant literal days in Daniel 8:14, as we think of 24-hour-periods, he would have used that word there also. The fact that he used a different expression shows that he had a special time perspective in mind. Thus, Daniel used the words "evenings and mornings" for a specific reason.

One or Two Units?

Does "evenings and mornings," in Daniel 8:14 constitute a single composite unit or two separate units? From this verse alone it is hard to say but in the interpretation-part, in Daniel 8:26, the direct translation from the Hebrew actually says, "*the* evenings and *the* mornings." Since the definite article is used before both "evening" and "morning," it shows that they are two separate units!

According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, we find the following comment about "ereb," the word translated to evening: "This word represents the time of the day immediately preceding and following the setting of the sun." And the word "boqer," usually translated to morning: "This word means 'morning,' though not the period of time before noon. Rather it indicates the point of time at which night is changing to day or that time at the end of night. Other words for evening and morning would consequently be "dusk" and "dawn.""

It is even more interesting to notice that this combination of "evening and morning" also is used in the creation story, Genesis 1:5:

God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. (NKJV)

In this verse, just like in Daniel 8:14, (in contrast to Daniel 8:26) there is no definite article in the original language. Thus, word-by-word translation of the last sentence would be, "So evening and morning were the first day." But did you notice something else? They are counted as two units and therefore the verb is not "was," as in singular, but "were" as in plural. King James did it in the same way! Grammatically it is two units and the plural verb "were" should be used. Let's make a mathematical check and count the units:

Day one:	1 evening	+	1 morning
Day two:	1 evening	+	1 morning
Day three:	<u>1 evening</u>	+	<u>1 morning</u>

Total 3 evenings and 3 mornings

This means that after three days there have been three evenings and three mornings. If you add them together, three evenings and three mornings make six "evenings and mornings," equaling three full days or three 24-hour periods. Maybe you are surprised at this, but this way of thinking and counting is common practice even today. Let's look at a few examples.

If you have a fruit bowl with "five apples and oranges" you might have two apples and three oranges; but you don't have five apples *and* five oranges! Let's in another example assume that you are a teacher. When someone asks you how many boys and girls you have in your class, you might answer that you have "ten boys and girls." With that answer you could have five boys and five girls or four boys and six girls, etc. but your answer would certainly not indicate a total of twenty students. If you really had twenty students in your class, you would have said that you had "ten boys and ten girls!"

These practical examples from everyday life are given to show that we use the same concept on a daily basis. Therefore, the grammatically correct way to translate Genesis 1:5 is: "So evening and morning *were* the first day" as both KJV and NKJV do.

The following was promoted by Dr. Raymond F. Cottrell, a respected theologian and a good friend of mine, who passed away a few years ago. He devoted 40 years of his life to study the Book of Daniel and especially Daniel 8. What he wrote and gave to me personally is in harmony with our study above. He wrote the following:

KJV Mistranslations of the Hebrew Text.

The traditional Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14 is based on three erroneous KJV renderings of the Hebrew text. (1) In a sanctuary context, as here, erev boquer ("evening morning") always, without exception, refers to the evening and morning sacrificial services. Erev never designates night, or the dark portion of the day, but the decreasing light of late afternoon, and boquer the rising light or early morning, not the light portion of the day.¹

Here is another quote from Dr. Raymond F. Cottrell:

"With two continual burnt offerings each day, one ereb and one boquer, 2,300 of them would be offered in 1,150 twenty-four-hour days."

What Dr. Cottrell wrote is in harmony with the Bible and with what I have written above. In conclusion, the time period in Daniel 8 refers to a 1.150-day prophecy and *not* a 2,300 day period!

Cleansing of the Sanctuary

¹ Writings that Raymond F. Cottrell gave me personally.

So, what will happen when the 2,300 evenings and mornings or 1,150 days have come to an end? At that time the sanctuary shall be “cleansed” or “restored as most Bible versions write.” But let’s look at the Hebrew word for “cleansed” somewhat closer. We are in for a surprise again. Below are the possible translations of the Hebrew word according to the dictionaries:

to be just	to justify	to have a just cause
to be justified	to be just (of God)	to do or bring justice
to vindicate the cause of	to justify oneself	to be righteous
to be in the right	to be put or made right	to make righteous
to appear righteous	to declare righteous	to make someone righteous
to save	to turn to righteousness	to make right (in moral or forensic sense)

The words “reconsecrated,” “cleansed,” “restored,” which the translators use in the NIV, the NKJV, the KJV, the NAS, the ASV, etc. are not even mentioned In the Brown-Driver-Brigg’s Hebrew Lexicon or Strong’s Dictionary! That means those words are not translations but interpretations. The translators use the words “cleansed” and “restored,” etc. with the purpose to focus our attention on the temple *building*.

But if you use the suggestions found in the dictionaries, every translation fits perfectly to Jesus Christ and to what He accomplished on the cross!! Thus the translations in the lexica are pointing to Christ’s achievement on the cross and not to the Temple building as such! This understanding is in full harmony with the previous article about Daniel 8:13. Let’s therefore again read Daniel 8:14:

“He said to me, ‘It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings (1,150 days); then the sanctuary (Jesus Christ) will be consecrated (declared righteous).’” (NIV with my additions in parenthesis)

Jesus with His perfect life and His sacrificial death is the epitome of the fulfillment of the “2,300 evenings and mornings.” From that time onwards Jesus has the right to declare everyone righteous who comes to Him! He is the One who will bring justice to this world! Did you see that one possible translation is “to save?” How wonderful!

With this insight, *Jesus Christ* becomes the fulfillment of Daniel 8 just as He is in Daniel 9. But if the “2,300 evenings and mornings” ended at the cross – when did they start?

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