

Men's Discipleship

False Religions: Seventh Day Adventist Part 2

Miller's Interpretive Framework

1. Day-Year Principle

Miller used the **historicist method** and applied the **day-year principle**, a concept drawn from Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34, where prophetic "days" are interpreted as **years**.

- Therefore, **2,300 days = 2,300 years**.
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2. Start Date: 457 BC

He linked the 2,300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14 with the **70 weeks prophecy** of Daniel 9:24–27, which begins with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

- Miller interpreted **Artaxerxes' decree** in **457 BC** (Ezra 7) as the starting point of both prophecies.
 - This was a crucial move because Daniel 8:14 does not explicitly state the start date, but Daniel 9 provides it.
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3. End Date: 1843–1844 AD

- **457 BC + 2,300 years = 1843** (Miller's initial calculation).
 - Later refined by **Samuel Snow** to **October 22, 1844**, using the Jewish calendar and Day of Atonement typology.
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Cleansing of the Sanctuary

Miller's Understanding:

- He interpreted "the sanctuary" to mean **the Earth**.
- "Cleansed" referred to **purification by fire at Christ's return**, paralleling the **Day of Atonement** (Leviticus 16), when the earthly sanctuary was cleansed.
- Thus, Miller believed Daniel 8:14 predicted the **Second Coming of Jesus** to cleanse the Earth of sin.

Typology:

- **Day of Atonement** → High priest enters the Most Holy Place to cleanse the sanctuary.
 - Miller equated this with **Christ returning to Earth** (the "sanctuary") to execute final judgment.
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Christ's Return (Not Investigative Judgment)

- Unlike later Adventist theology, **Miller did not teach an Investigative Judgment in heaven.**
 - He believed the event in 1844 would be **Christ's visible, bodily return to Earth.**
 - He expected this would trigger:
 - The **resurrection of the righteous**
 - The **destruction of the wicked**
 - The beginning of the **millennial reign**
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Theological Assumptions

Assumption	Explanation
Scripture interprets Scripture	He viewed the Bible as self-interpreting, especially prophetic texts.
Literal fulfillment of prophecy	He expected exact chronological and visible outcomes.
Reformational Hermeneutic	He inherited Protestant views on the papacy, Antichrist, and historical fulfillment.
End-time urgency	He viewed prophetic fulfillment as imminent , urging personal repentance and preparation.

Criticisms and Legacy

- **Problem:** The Earth is never called the "sanctuary" in Scripture.
 - **Oversight:** He ignored the **heavenly sanctuary** imagery in Hebrews 8–10.
 - **Result:** The predicted event did **not occur**, leading to the **Great Disappointment.**
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Adventist Reinterpretation (Post-Miller)

- **Hiram Edson** and others, after the disappointment, re-examined Daniel 8:14.
- They concluded the “sanctuary” referred to the **heavenly sanctuary**, not Earth.
- **Cleansing** meant Christ entering the **Most Holy Place** to begin the **Investigative Judgment**, not His return.

Summary

William Miller interpreted **Daniel 8:14** as a prophecy predicting **Christ’s return in 1843–1844** to cleanse the **Earth (sanctuary)** by fire. His view depended on:

- The day-year principle (2,300 days = 2,300 years),
- A start date of 457 BC,
- And the assumption that the cleansing of the sanctuary meant **the Second Coming**.

While sincere and methodical, Miller misunderstood the nature of the sanctuary and event, leading to the **Great Disappointment**. However, his framework laid the foundation for later **Seventh-day Adventist theology**, which reinterpreted the 1844 event as a **heavenly investigative judgment** rather than Christ’s physical return.

The **Reformed Protestant interpretation of Daniel 8:14** differs sharply from **William Miller’s interpretation**, particularly in its **rejection of date-setting, symbolic prophetic timelines**, and **Miller’s use of the day-year principle**.

Daniel 8:14 – The Text

"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." — Daniel 8:14 (KJV)

Reformed Protestant Interpretation (Summary)

View	Reformed Protestant	William Miller / Millerite
Prophetic Days	2,300 literal days (not years)	2,300 years (day-year principle)
Timeframe	2nd century BC, during the Maccabean period	457 BC–1844 AD

View	Reformed Protestant	William Miller / Millerite
Sanctuary	The Jewish temple in Jerusalem	The Earth (Miller) → later SDA: heavenly sanctuary
Cleansing	Restoration of temple worship after desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes	Christ's Second Coming (Miller) or heavenly Investigative Judgment (SDA)
Hermeneutic	Historical-grammatical method, avoids speculative timelines	Historicist method, links distant texts typologically
Second Coming	Not related to Daniel 8:14	Directly tied to 1844 (Millerite)

Reformed Protestant View in Detail

1. Literal 2,300 Days

- The **2,300 days** are seen as **literal** 24-hour days (not symbolic years).
- Represent about **6.3 years**, matching the period of desecration of the Jewish temple by **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** (a Seleucid king).

2. Historical Fulfillment in the 2nd Century BC

- Antiochus IV desecrated the Jewish temple around **167–164 BC** by:
 - Sacrificing pigs on the altar,
 - Setting up an idol of Zeus,
 - Prohibiting Sabbath observance and circumcision.
- The **cleansing** occurred under **Judas Maccabeus** in **164 BC**, celebrated as **Hanukkah**.

3. The “Sanctuary” Is the Jerusalem Temple

- Reformed interpreters identify the “sanctuary” as the literal **temple in Jerusalem**, which was desecrated by Antiochus and later restored.

4. No Date Setting or Second Coming Prediction

- Daniel 8:14 is not seen as referring to Christ’s return.
- Reformed theologians **reject using Daniel to predict specific future dates**—especially for Christ’s return (cf. Matthew 24:36).

5. Christ-Centered Typology Reserved for Clear Texts

- While some Old Testament temple imagery is **fulfilled in Christ** (see Hebrews), Reformed theology is cautious about using apocalyptic texts to build doctrine without New Testament confirmation.

- Daniel 8:14 is not cited in the NT, so its **Christological application** is limited in Reformed theology.

Reformed Hermeneutical Approach

- **Grammatical-historical exegesis:** Emphasizes original audience, context, and language.
- **Sola Scriptura:** Interprets unclear passages using clearer Scripture, not speculative systems.
- **Progressive revelation:** Views Old Testament prophecies as **partially fulfilled** in redemptive history, often typologically, and **fully revealed in Christ**.

Contrasting William Miller

Element	Miller’s View	Reformed View
2300 days	Symbolic years (2300 years)	Literal days (~6.3 years)
Timeframe	457 BC to 1844 AD	167–164 BC
Cleansing	Earth cleansed at Christ’s return	Temple rededicated after Antiochus
Method	Day-year principle, historicism	Literal-historical, immediate context
Outcome	Second Coming (or heavenly judgment)	Restoration of Jewish worship
Doctrinal Impact	Sparked a movement (Adventism)	Applied historically; Christ not directly connected

Summary

The **Reformed Protestant interpretation** of Daniel 8:14 understands the **2,300 days literally** as referring to the **desecration and eventual cleansing of the Jerusalem temple** under **Antiochus Epiphanes**, with no link to the Second Coming or a symbolic prophetic timeline. In contrast, **William Miller misapplied the day-year principle**, projected the prophecy over 2,300 years, and concluded that **Christ would return in 1844**, an interpretation later revised by Seventh-day Adventists into the doctrine of the **Investigative Judgment**.

SDS Doctrine Compared to the Protestants’ Perspective

1. Heavenly Sanctuary (Hebrews 8–9)

SDA View:

There is a literal sanctuary in heaven, patterned after the earthly one, where Jesus ministers as High Priest in two phases—He moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place in 1844.

Reformed Response:

Reformed theology affirms Christ as High Priest in the heavenly realm but **rejects the two-apartment, two-phase model** as unbiblical. Christ entered **once for all** into the heavenly Holy of Holies at His ascension, not centuries later.

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest... he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood.”
— **Hebrews 9:11–12 (ESV)**

“There is no intimation in the NT that Christ’s work in heaven follows a two-phase pattern. Rather, His atonement is once-for-all and complete.”
— *Anthony A. Hoekema, The Four Major Cults*, p. 113

2. Day of Atonement Typology (Leviticus 16)

SDA View:

Leviticus 16 prefigures a heavenly "cleansing of the sanctuary" that began in 1844, when Jesus moved into the Most Holy Place to perform the antitypical Day of Atonement.

Reformed Response:

The Day of Atonement is a **type fulfilled completely at the cross**, not in 1844. Christ, our High Priest, entered the true Holy of Holies once, offering Himself for sin—**there is no continuing cleansing or investigative phase**.

“Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified... but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”
— **Hebrews 9:23–26**

“The ceremonial law is abrogated under the New Testament. Christ's sacrifice fulfills and replaces all OT types.”
— *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 19.3

3. 2300 Days Prophecy and 1844 (Daniel 8:14)

SDA View:

The 2,300 “days” are symbolic of years, beginning in 457 BC and ending in 1844, when the Investigative Judgment began.

Reformed Response:

The **day-year method** is **arbitrary** and **not justified by the text** of Daniel 8. Reformed interpreters see the 2,300 evenings and mornings as **literal days** referring to the desecration of the Jewish temple by **Antiochus Epiphanes** (~167–164 BC), not an end-time event.

“The 2,300 days are not symbolic years but actual evenings and mornings—i.e., daily sacrifices. The desecration ended when temple worship was restored.”

— *E.J. Young, The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 176

“The cleansing of the sanctuary refers to the rededication under Judas Maccabeus, not to some distant heavenly event.”

— *Calvin’s Commentary on Daniel*, 8:14

4. Investigative Judgment / Books of Record (Daniel 7:9–10; Revelation 20:12)

SDA View:

God is reviewing the lives of professed believers in heaven to determine who is truly worthy of salvation—this precedes Christ’s return.

Reformed Response:

This contradicts the **doctrine of justification by faith alone**. There is **no pre-advent judgment** for believers in Scripture—those in Christ **already have assurance** of salvation. The final judgment occurs at Christ’s return, not before.

“There is therefore now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

— **Romans 8:1**

“He who hears My word and believes... **has passed from death into life.**”

— **John 5:24**

“To say believers face an investigative judgment to determine their worthiness is to undermine the sufficiency of Christ’s atonement.”

— *Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology*, p. 529

5. Jesus as Advocate (1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25)

SDA View:

Jesus intercedes for believers during this judgment phase, offering His righteousness in place of their sin.

Reformed Response:

Reformed theology **fully affirms Christ's intercession**—but sees it as **based on a completed, not ongoing or conditional, atonement**. Christ's advocacy **secures salvation**, not a review for potential disqualification.

“He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near... since He always lives to make intercession for them.”

— **Hebrews 7:25**

“If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

— **1 John 2:1**

“Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight.”

— *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q.33

6. Call to Judgment (Revelation 14:6–7)

SDA View:

This angelic message announces the beginning of the investigative judgment in 1844.

Reformed Response:

The “hour of His judgment” is interpreted as either:

- The **final judgment at the end**, or
- The **ongoing reality of God's sovereign justice**.
It does **not announce a heavenly phase of judgment beginning in 1844**.

“It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.”

— **Hebrews 9:27**

“There is not a hint of a pre-Advent judgment in the text. The urgency is evangelistic, not predictive.”

— *Dennis Johnson, Triumph of the Lamb*, p. 204

7. Purpose of the Judgment: Demonstrating God's Justice

SDA View:

The judgment shows God's fairness to the universe before Christ returns.

Reformed Response:

While God's justice will be manifest, Scripture never portrays a **cosmic audit** to vindicate God before the unfallen beings. God's **justice and mercy are both revealed in the cross**.

“God put [Christ] forward... to show God's righteousness, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

— **Romans 3:25–26**

“The cross is the public vindication of God's justice, not an investigative judgment process.”

— *R.C. Sproul, The Holiness of God*, p. 127

8. Salvation and Assurance

SDA Implication:

Since judgment is based on review of works, assurance is conditional, and believers must live faithfully to “pass” the judgment.

Reformed Response:

Reformed theology teaches that **assurance of salvation** is grounded not in our performance, but in **Christ's finished work** and the indwelling **Holy Spirit**.

“These things I have written to you who believe... that you may know that you have eternal life.”

— **1 John 5:13**

“The practical effect of the investigative judgment is uncertainty. This undermines the doctrine of assurance.”

— *Anthony Hoekema, The Four Major Cults*, p. 115

Summary Table

SDA Investigative Judgment	Reformed Response
Began in 1844 based on Dan. 8:14	No biblical basis for 1844; 2,300 days = literal
Christ entered Most Holy Place in 1844	Christ entered once for all at ascension (Heb 9:12)
Judgment reviews believers' lives	Justification is complete in Christ (Rom 5:1)
Assurance is conditional	Assurance is certain in Christ (1 John 5:13)
Day-year principle used	Unwarranted prophetic method
Purpose: vindicate God to universe	God's justice is vindicated at the cross (Rom 3:26)

1. Fundamental Teaching on Salvation

Seventh-day Adventist	Reformed Protestant
Salvation is by grace through faith , but it must be maintained by obedience to God's law (including the Sabbath).	Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone , and is entirely secured by God's sovereign work .

2. How an SDA Believes They Are Saved (Steps)

Seventh-day Adventists teach that salvation involves:

1. **Repentance and Faith in Christ** – accepting Jesus' atonement for sin (John 3:16, Acts 2:38).
2. **Obedience to God's Law**, including Sabbath observance and dietary laws (John 14:15; Rev. 14:12).
3. **Sanctification** – the believer must **overcome sin** by cooperating with the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:12–13).
4. **Endurance to the End** – final salvation is conditioned on **remaining faithful** and passing the **Investigative Judgment** (Matthew 24:13, Rev. 3:5).

“Those who accept the Savior, however sincere their conversion, should never be taught to say or to feel that they are saved... Those only who endure to the end will be saved.”
— *Ellen G. White, Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 155

SDA Key Texts:

- **Revelation 14:12** – “Here is the patience of the saints... who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

- **Matthew 24:13** – “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”
 - **John 14:15** – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
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3. How Reformed Protestantism Teaches Salvation Happens

Reformed theology teaches:

1. **Election** – God sovereignly chooses those whom He will save (Ephesians 1:4–5).
2. **Justification by Faith Alone** – the sinner is declared righteous **solely by faith** in Christ’s finished work, not by works (Romans 3:28, Galatians 2:16).
3. **Regeneration and Sanctification** – new life is given by the Holy Spirit, who then produces fruit in the believer (Titus 3:5, Philippians 1:6).
4. **Perseverance of the Saints** – those who are truly saved **will never be lost** (John 10:28–29, Romans 8:30).

“Faith is a firm and certain knowledge of God’s benevolence toward us... founded on the freely given promise in Christ.”

— *John Calvin, Institutes*, 3.2.7

“We are justified by faith alone, apart from the works of the law... This faith is a gift from God, not a result of our merit.”

— *Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians*

“Those whom God effectually calls, He also freely justifies... not for anything wrought in them, but for Christ’s sake alone.”

— *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 11.1

Reformed Key Texts:

- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – “By grace you have been saved through faith... not a result of works.”
 - **Romans 5:1** – “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God.”
 - **John 10:28–29** – “No one will snatch them out of My hand.”
 - **Galatians 2:16** – “A person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.”
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4. Role of Obedience and Good Works

SDA View

Obedience to the Ten Commandments (especially the Sabbath) is **part of salvation** and tested in the **Investigative Judgment**.

Reformed View

Good works are the **fruit of salvation**, not the basis or condition of it (James 2:18). They are evidence of true faith.

“Let us hear the conclusion... Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

— **Ecclesiastes 12:13** (commonly cited in SDA literature)

“Faith alone justifies, but the faith that justifies is never alone.”

— *John Calvin, Institutes*, 3.11.20

“Good works... are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith.”

— *Westminster Confession*, 16.2

5. Assurance of Salvation

SDA

Assurance is **not guaranteed**. Believers must strive to remain faithful and pass the judgment.

Reformed

Assurance is a gift from the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16), grounded in Christ’s finished work.

“No one can say, ‘I am saved’ until the judgment is past.”

— *Ellen G. White, Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 314

“The assurance of our salvation rests in Christ’s righteousness, not ours.”

— *R.C. Sproul, Saved from What?*

“My sheep hear My voice... I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.”

— **John 10:27–28**

Summary Table

Doctrine	Seventh-day Adventist	Reformed Protestant
Salvation Source	Grace + faith + obedience	Grace alone through faith alone
Basis of Justification	Faith in Christ + commandment keeping	Faith alone in Christ’s finished work
Role of Law	Law (including Sabbath) is binding for salvation	Law is fulfilled in Christ; good works follow salvation

Doctrine	Seventh-day Adventist	Reformed Protestant
Final Judgment	Investigative judgment to determine worthiness	Final judgment reveals, not determines, salvation
Assurance	Conditional, uncertain until judgment	Certain in Christ, confirmed by Spirit and fruit
Key Texts	Rev. 14:12, John 14:15, Matt. 24:13	Rom. 3:28, Eph. 2:8–9, John 10:28, Gal. 2:16
Reformers		Quote: “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17)