

Endorsements for **Prophecies of Daniel for Teens**

Let Seth Pierce guide you through the prophetic *Jurassic Park* to discover Bible prophecy. His insights—which range from martial arts to missions—will make the young and the young at heart who journey with him thankful they’ve taken the trip. I heartily recommend this book!

Michael W. Campbell

Lead pastor, Wichita Seventh-day Adventist Church

Exciting stuff about an exciting book. Seth has done it again, packaging timeless truths in language that meets teens on their own turf.

George R. Knight

Professor Emeritus of Church History, Andrews University

Clever, captivating, and clear, Seth Pierce’s *Prophecies of Daniel for Teens* offers an exceptional and understandable guide to Bible prophecy and end-time revelations. Seth is comprehensive yet concise, addressing many of the questions that naturally come to young minds about these profound passages. Seth’s wit is comical yet contextual, making the too often heavy topic of prophecy more approachable. I do not recommend *Prophecies of Daniel for Teens* to young people only. All ages will find his book fascinating and enlightening.

A. Allan Martin

Young Adult Ministries Coordinator

North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

Seth Pierce talks with young people in their lingo, touches on their interests and culture, and connects their world with that of the ancient prophets. This time the subject is Daniel and his visions, with illustrations from the humorous world that Seth’s alter ego (or is it Seth himself?) inhabits in youth land. The effect at times can seem a bit incongruous, but by the end of the book, the reader is provided with a serious and reflective overview of the mysteries of Daniel.

Nicholas P. Miller

Associate Professor of Church History

Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Affirming and engaging are two words I would use to describe *Prophecies of Daniel for Teens*. Pastor Seth Pierce is a dedicated Seventh-day Adventist who is committed to sharing our historical, biblical beliefs about the Bible's prophecies with the next generation. God has gifted him with the ability to illustrate beautifully the biblical principles found in the book of Daniel and to teach their relevance in our day. *Prophecies of Daniel for Teens* will grab your teen's attention and hold it. This book will be a great resource for academy Bible classes, Sabbath School classes, family worship, Bible studies, and more. It really is a book all generations will enjoy, and it is one I highly recommend.

John C. Freedman

President

Washington Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Seth Pierce has done it again. *Prophecies of Daniel for Teens* makes the Bible's prophetic and complex book of Daniel interesting and digestible. Seth's writing is impressively witty, simple, and practical.

Matthew Gamble

International Evangelist and Author of the book *Reboot Your Spiritual Life*

As expected, Seth has not only touched our church heritage as found in the book of Daniel, but he has also made it accessible to an entire new generation with evocative illustrations and personal testimonies. His fresh, honest approach brings Jesus to you through every page.

Japhet De Oliveira

University Chaplain

Andrews University

Seth J. Pierce

What We Believe



PROPHECIES OF

Daniel
for teens



Pacific Press® Publishing Association

Nampa, Idaho

Oshawa, Ontario, Canada

www.pacificpress.com

Cover design by Gerald Lee Monks
Cover design resources from SermonView.com
Inside design by Aaron Troia
Inside illustrations by Marcus Mashburn

Copyright © 2012 by Pacific Press® Publishing Association
Printed in the United States of America
All rights reserved

The author assumes full responsibility for the accuracy of all facts and quotations as cited in this book.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotation from *The Message*. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture texts credited to NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

You can obtain additional copies of this book by calling toll-free 1-800-765-6955 or by visiting <http://www.adventistbookcenter.com>.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Pierce, Seth J.

Prophecies of Daniel for teens / Seth J. Pierce.

p. cm. — (What we believe)

ISBN 13: 978-0-8163-3393-6 (pbk.)

ISBN 10: 0-8163-3393-9 (pbk.)

1. Bible. O.T. Daniel—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Seventh-day Adventists—Doctrines.
I. Title.

BS1555.52.P54 2012

224'.5015—dc23

2012005916

12 13 14 15 16 • 5 4 3 2 1

Dedication

To my father-in-law, “Dad John,” whose unwavering commitment to the Adventist message inspires me to commit my talents to preaching that message too.

Acknowledgments

Thank You, Jesus.

This project has been a wrestling match, and I am glad I can tap out and hand it over to others to wrestle with for a while. God has given me so many encouraging moments, both through the Holy Spirit and through His people.

Thank you to my wonderful girls, Angela, my love; Maddie, my princess; and Chloe, my “sweet chubbins” (don’t worry, I’ll change your nickname when you’re older), who allow me to be antisocial while working on these projects at odd hours. Your support is incredible, and I couldn’t do this without you.

Thank you to my elite and highly exclusive writer’s group that meets every Wednesday at “the place that shall not be named in this book.” Your insights and accountability have helped make sure this book crossed the finish line.

To all the scholars whose work I used—thanks for letting me stand on your shoulders.

Thank you, George Knight, for your teaching and encouragement and for being willing to read the manuscript. Thank you, especially, for liking the manuscript. It means a lot.

Thank you, Pacific Press®, for working with me—and forgiving my innovative grammar.

Tiger Paulsen, I appreciate your help in the marketing process. You do great work!

Thank you to my church’s families all over the place—especially in beautiful, exotic locations I haven’t visited yet. It’s been too long, so you need to have us out to speak again.

It is also important to acknowledge the role of Pepperidge Farm cookies, warm drinks, and YouTube, which lent their support to me while I wrote. And, of course, where would I be without the random influences of Angry Birds, iPhone, iPad, iMac, Taco Bell, the Wesleyan quadrilateral, the Bermuda Triangle, Batman, the Pythagorean theorem, Facebook debates, no. 2 pencils, North Face, Post-it Notes, *Firefly*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and anyone who gives this book five stars on Amazon.com.

Also by Seth J. Pierce

Camporee of Doom

The Day the School Blew Up

What We Believe for Teens

with Melissa and Greg Howell

Fusion: Where You and God Connect

Contents

Preface	9
Chapter 1 The Interpreter	11
Chapter 2 Genre	15
Chapter 3 Past, Present, Future—and All of the Above	21
Chapter 4 Eye Exams	26
Chapter 5 Captured	30
Chapter 6 Cosmic Bowling	36
Chapter 7 A Divine Awkward Moment	43
Chapter 8 Losing Your Mind	49
Chapter 9 Text Messaging	53
Chapter 10 Deadly Decisions	58
Chapter 11 Animal Kingdoms	64
Chapter 12 The Little Horn	69
Note: The Madman: A Short History	79
Chapter 13 Showdown at the Ulai Canal	81
Chapter 14 Church Interrupted: The Little Horn Returns	86
Chapter 15 Prayer of the Prophet	96
Chapter 16 VIP and the Beginning of the Last Vision	107
Chapter 17 Puzzles	114
Chapter 18 Knockout	120
Chapter 19 Judge Jesus	125

Preface

This book has been a beast to write. Maybe the T-shirt below reveals why. It features an early Adventist prophetic chart, complete with beasts, timelines, historical dates, and Bible texts.



PROPHECIES OF DANIEL FOR TEENS

That T-shirt makes a good point. Adventists have a tremendous wealth of excellent scholarship on the subject of prophecy—but sometimes the way we communicate it can be overwhelming. Prophecy is a daunting subject for many people, and too often we overestimate how much they already know, or we bury the prophecy's big idea in innumerable, long paragraphs that drown the reader. This book is my attempt to simplify Daniel's prophecies without watering them down. It's meant for young readers—or older ones who need a good starting place.

I expect some people will complain that I left things out or didn't go deep enough in certain places. To meet their needs, at the end of this book, I've recommended other books for further reading. Remember, this book is meant to be a stepping-stone to help people get into the conversations about the book of Daniel. My prayer is that those who read it will be able to see the big picture and then be drawn in to examine the smaller pieces of the prophetic puzzle.

Seth J. Pierce

Chapter 1

The Interpreter

One of the jobs I worked while attending college was covering the Prescott Hall front reception desk. It was a good job, as I'd usually get four short calls in a four-hour shift, and I could spend the rest of the time doing homework or chatting with friends who stopped by. However, one night I received a call that resulted in a crisis of international proportions. The phone rang, and I answered it: "Prescott Hall—how can I help you?"

A timid voice responded. "Jose?"

"I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't catch his last name. Is he a student here?"

"Jose?" asked the voice again.

OK, she doesn't speak English. That's easily fixed. There were only a few Joses in our dorms, and I knew most of them, so I knew I could find him by the process of elimination. Swiftly I punched the keys on the computer and located the mysterious Hispanic man known only as Jose.

"Here's your transfer, ma'am," I said while she asked again for what I presumed was her son. Then I transferred the call—only to be greeted by a busy signal.

"Uh, I'm sorry," I told the caller, "but his line is busy."

Now the timid voice transformed into something more irate. "JOSE!" the woman cried angrily.

She didn't understand what I was saying. The words I spoke bounced off her ears like bullets off Superman's chest. I had only one option left—I transferred her call to the women's dorm, muttering, "Let's see if they can get anywhere with this situation."

A few moments later, the phone rang again, and I answered dutifully. "Hello, Prescott desk. How may I—"

"JOSE!" the voice shrieked.

I was helpless. This caller wouldn't get off the line. I couldn't make the transfer, and apparently the only word in her vocabulary was "Jose," followed by what sounded like thirty or forty exclamation points. Panic ensued, and all was nearly lost—until my Spanish-speaking Hispanic friend Gil walked into the lobby.

"Gil," I cried, shoving the phone into his hand, "tell this woman what's going on! Her son's line is busy! She is screaming and probably thinks that we've done something to him or are hiding him somewhere, or worse!"

PROPHECIES OF DANIEL FOR TEENS

Gil grabbed the phone and in perfect Spanish translated what I had been trying to tell her. The crisis was defused, and eventually the anxious mother was reunited via telephone with Jose—who I hope has acquired call-waiting since then.

Sometimes we need an interpreter to understand the message.

The Bible's interpreter

In the book of Daniel, we see something that seems unlikely—a prophet confused by a message sent from God. The prophet says, “And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days; then I rose and went about the king’s business; but I was appalled by the vision *and did not understand it*” (Daniel 8:27; emphasis added).

Daniel was even more upset than Jose’s mother was because he couldn’t understand what God was telling him. It’s just as easy for us to become frustrated when trying to understand what God wants to communicate to us today through His Word. Thankfully, there’s a way that works.

The great Reformer Martin Luther once said, “Scripture . . . is its own light. It is a grand thing when Scripture interprets itself.” This concept has been echoed throughout history by great Christian leaders. As a Seventh-day Adventist, I find this concept supported by a man named William Miller. One of his top three principles for interpreting the Bible states: “Scripture must be its own expositor [explainer], since it is a rule of itself. If I depend on a minister or teacher to explain it to me, and they should guess at its meaning, or desire to have it so on account of their creed, or thought to be wise, . . . then their guessing, desire, creed, or wisdom is my rule and not the Bible!”¹

In seminary I took an exam in Hebrew and had to dissect each verb to make sure my translation was correct. It would have been easier if I could have used a Hebrew dictionary because it would have helped me with the translation. Using a German dictionary would have done nothing except score me a big fat F—and possibly a psychological evaluation. To understand Hebrew, I needed a Hebrew dictionary. So, if we want to understand Scripture, we need to look at Scripture.

Here’s an example. Early on in the book of Revelation, when Jesus is having John write letters to seven churches, the text tells us that Jesus is the One who “walks among the seven golden lampstands” (Revelation 2:1). What does that mean? Does Jesus like lampstands? I don’t see why He wouldn’t—but there’s a little more meaning here.

Golden lampstands were used in the Old Testament sanctuary (see Exodus 25:31). They symbolized light in darkness (the sanctuary had no windows). In describing the effect Jesus has on people, the Gospel of Matthew says, “the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death light has dawned” (Matthew 4:16).

Jesus also likens Himself to “light” (John 8:12), and He even tells His followers, “You are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). In other words, God and His followers bring light to a dark world. So when we get back to Revelation 2:1, we can see that Jesus is likening His churches to lights in a dark world—meaning we are supposed to be sharing the hope and love we have instead of hiding ourselves away where people can’t find us.

By looking at other places in Scripture that have phrases, images, and objects like those in the

THE INTERPRETER

passage we're studying, we can get a clearer sense of what that passage or that prophecy is saying to us and where things are taking place.

In the case of Daniel, we are greeted with a myriad of time prophecies. Take a look at this important one in Daniel 8:13, 14: "Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to the one that spoke, 'For how long is the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot?' And he said to him, 'For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.'"

You may be tempted to think of these 2,300 days as twenty-four-hour days and come up with the time in this prophecy being somewhere around six years. Problem is, the sanctuary wasn't in its "restored" or its "rightful state," or "cleansed," as some translations have it, six years after this prophecy was given.

So now what?

As we will discuss more in the next chapter, prophecy uses lots of symbols for its descriptions, and symbols aren't to be taken literally. I mean, can you imagine reading Daniel 7:3—which pictures four horrible beasts emerging out of the sea—and thinking Daniel's prophecy means that at some point four monsters will run amok around the planet, ravaging everything in their path?

Maybe you do. But while I agree that it would be incredibly exciting to have a sort of prophetic *Jurassic Park*, I'm going to let you in on something. *Shhh*—hold this book up close to your face, and I'll whisper it to you:

They aren't literal beasts. They represent something else.

OK, back to the timeline in Daniel 8. The point is that the time periods in Daniel's prophecies aren't literal either. We need a different formula so we can understand when the events in these prophecies will occur. When we search Scripture for the answer, we find two texts that help us understand Daniel's time prophecies: "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, *for every day a year*, you shall bear your iniquity, forty years" (Numbers 14:34; emphasis added). And, "I assign to you *a number of days, three hundred and ninety, equal to the number of the years* of their punishment" (Ezekiel 4:5; emphasis added).

Both these passages come in the context of judgment decrees—as does Daniel 8 and the 2,300 days. These passages indicate that the 2,300 days are actually 2,300 years. When those years start and end is the subject of another chapter. For now, just remember that this way of calculating time is referred to as the "day for a year principle."

Because I am a pastor, I get a lot of weird phone calls, some of them about people's interpretation of the Bible's prophecies. People have called to tell me that the locusts in Revelation 9 are helicopters and that the mark of the beast in Revelation 13 referred to none other than President Franklin Delano Roosevelt—who died sixty years prior to that bizarre call. Other people have suggested the mark of the beast is a computer chip, and that the knowledge that Daniel 12:4 says shall

PROPHECIES OF DANIEL FOR TEENS

increase refers to the latest gadget at the Apple store. I'm still waiting, though, for a call from a nut who goes to Yellowstone Park, and sees a bear with three ribs from an unfortunate deer in its mouth, and thinks he or she has spotted a prophetic beast wandering around (see Daniel 7:5).

At the time I'm writing this chapter, a popular piece on YouTube features a hippie videoing a double rainbow. While steadying his video camera, he marvels, weeps, and yells about the beautiful sight. After regaining his composure, he asks in hushed tones, "What does it mean?"

Biblically speaking, the rainbow is God's way of reminding us that He won't destroy the world via a flood again. In this guy's case, however, my first thought was, *I'll tell you what it means—it means, "Time to lay off the marijuana, my friend."* People tend to want to look for hidden and obscure meanings in various areas of life. That's true of prophecy too. But when we allow Scripture to interpret itself by giving us the clues we need, we avoid coming up with something crazy and making our faith (and our God) look dumb, unreasonable, and unstable.

CHAPTER 1 IN BRIEF

The study of prophecy is not a quest for some secret, mystical meaning—though this isn't to say that God doesn't know things we don't know or that He has no mystical qualities. Instead, God uses prophecy to reveal things to us. Matter of fact, in the Greek language in which the New Testament was first written, the word translated "Revelation" is *apokalupsis*, which means "disclosure" or "a revealing." In other words, prophecy is about God revealing His message to us in Scripture, not about His hiding it from us.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of ways people interpret the Bible without using the Bible?
2. What's your opinion about why there are so many versions of the Bible?
3. What are the tools listed below, and how can they help you study Scripture?
 - a. Concordance
 - b. Parallel Bible
 - c. Bible dictionary
4. What is the "day for a year principle"?
5. How do you study the Bible? How does the way you study it help you to find the meaning of difficult Bible texts? What could you do to make your study deeper?

ENDNOTES

1. William Miller, "Rules of Interpretation," *Midnight Cry*, November 17, 1842.