

The Book of Daniel - Number One-Hundred and One

The Messenger of the Covenant: From Purification to Purging

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The week that Christ confirmed the covenant represented the period from His baptism, until Christ in the heavenly sanctuary stood up at the stoning of Stephen.

But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7:55–60.

When Stephen was stoned and Michael stood up, the gospel went to the Gentiles, for until that time the gospel was restricted to the Jews.

“Then, said the angel, ‘He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [seven years].’ For seven years after the Saviour entered on His ministry, the gospel was to be preached especially to the Jews; for three and a half years by Christ Himself; and afterward by the apostles. ‘In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.’ Daniel 9:27. In the spring of A. D. 31, Christ the true sacrifice was offered on Calvary. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain, showing that the sacredness and significance of the sacrificial service had departed. The time had come for the earthly sacrifice and oblation to cease.

“The one week—seven years—ended in A. D. 34. Then by the stoning of Stephen the Jews finally sealed their rejection of the gospel; the disciples who were scattered abroad by persecution ‘went everywhere preaching the word’ (Acts 8:4); and shortly after, Saul the persecutor was converted, and became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.” *The Desire of Ages*, 233.

In the year 34, the sacred week (twenty-five hundred and twenty days), ended and ancient Israel was divorced from God, their probation had fully closed. At that point the retribution against ancient Israel for the rejection of the covenant, and for the crucifixion of the Son of God was subject to God's executive judgment. God in His longsuffering mercy deferred the destruction of Jerusalem until the siege and destruction in 66 AD through to 70 AD.

The verses in Daniel chapter nine, that identified the week Christ confirmed the covenant, also identifies that pagan Rome (the prince that shall come) would destroy the city and sanctuary, but

God in His longsuffering mercy, allowed the children of ancient Israel time to hear the gospel and make a decision as their fathers had done during the seven year period of Christ's and the disciples' ministry among them.

“For nearly forty years after the doom of Jerusalem had been pronounced by Christ Himself, the Lord delayed His judgments upon the city and the nation. Wonderful was the long-suffering of God toward the rejectors of His gospel and the murderers of His Son. The parable of the unfruitful tree represented God's dealings with the Jewish nation. The command had gone forth, ‘Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?’ (Luke 13:7) but divine mercy had spared it yet a little longer. There were still many among the Jews who were ignorant of the character and the work of Christ. And the children had not enjoyed the opportunities or received the light which their parents had spurned. Through the preaching of the apostles and their associates, God would cause light to shine upon them; they would be permitted to see how prophecy had been fulfilled, not only in the birth and life of Christ, but in His death and resurrection. The children were not condemned for the sins of the parents; but when, with a knowledge of all the light given to their parents, the children rejected the additional light granted to themselves, they became partakers of the parents' sins, and filled up the measure of their iniquity.

“The long-suffering of God toward Jerusalem only confirmed the Jews in their stubborn impenitence. In their hatred and cruelty toward the disciples of Jesus they rejected the last offer of mercy. Then God withdrew His protection from them and removed His restraining power from Satan and his angels, and the nation was left to the control of the leader she had chosen. Her children had spurned the grace of Christ, which would have enabled them to subdue their evil impulses, and now these became the conquerors. Satan aroused the fiercest and most debased passions of the soul. Men did not reason; they were beyond reason—controlled by impulse and blind rage. They became satanic in their cruelty. In the family and in the nation, among the highest and the lowest classes alike, there was suspicion, envy, hatred, strife, rebellion, murder. There was no safety anywhere. Friends and kindred betrayed one another. Parents slew their children, and children their parents. The rulers of the people had no power to rule themselves. Uncontrolled passions made them tyrants. The Jews had accepted false testimony to condemn the innocent Son of God. Now false accusations made their own lives uncertain. By their actions they had long been saying: ‘Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.’ Isaiah 30:11. Now their desire was granted. The fear of God no longer disturbed them. Satan was at the head of the nation, and the highest civil and religious authorities were under his sway.” *The Great Controversy*, 27, 28.

As the Messenger of the Covenant, Christ first dealt exclusively with the Jews. In the year 34, at the stoning of Stephen, the gospel then went to the Gentiles, and the time of God's executive judgment arrived, though God in His mercy deferred that point in time for about forty years.

As the Messenger of the Covenant, in fulfillment of Malachi chapter three, Christ twice cleansed the temple. He did so in a period that was especially set apart for the covenant people who were then being passed by and divorced, and also for those who would then become the new chosen people. When that period of time concluded, the time of God's executive judgment began. John the

Baptist was the messenger who prepared the way for Christ's work of raising up a new chosen people that He would enter into covenant with.

The two temple cleansings were object lessons identifying Christ's work of cleansing the soul temple. When the Messenger of the Covenant suddenly arrives in Malachi chapter three, He purifies and also purges the sons of Levi, for the purpose of creating an offering, as in days of old.

But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. Malachi 3:2-3.

Malachi chapter three, and the two temple cleansings represent a perfection of the faith of the sons of Levi that is accomplished by the Messenger of the Covenant. The perfection of the faith of the sons of Levi is represented by the purification of the gold.

“There must be, with all who have any influence in the sanitarium, a conforming to God's will, a humiliation of self, an opening of the heart to the precious influence of the Spirit of Christ. The gold tried in the fire represents love and faith. Many are nearly destitute of love. Self-sufficiency blinds their eyes to their great need. There is a positive necessity for a daily conversion to God, a new, deep, and daily experience in the religious life.” Testimonies, volume 4, 558.

Malachi chapter three, and the two temple cleansings represent a perfection of the understanding of the increase of knowledge within the wise, who are the sons of Levi, that is accomplished by the Messenger of the Covenant. The perfection of the sons of Levi's represented by the purification of the silver.

The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Psalm 12:6.

The Messenger of the Covenant was to purify the sons of Levi as silver and gold. The Word of God is what purifies, for to be purified is to be justified and sanctified.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. John 17:17.

John the Baptist was the messenger that prepared the way for the Messenger of the Covenant in the first fulfillment of Malachi chapter three, and his message in that regard was fourfold in nature. His work included the identification of the work of purification that was to be accomplished by the Messenger of the Covenant, and that the work of purification accomplished was represented as an act of sweeping a threshing-floor. He identified that the former chosen people were then in the process of being passed by. He also presented the Laodicean message to God's people, thus showing them their sins and the sins of their fathers. He placed all these realities in the context of the “wrath to come.” The work of the messenger who prepared the way, represented a work by one who had never received an education in the educational system of the people who were being passed by.

“In John the Baptist the Lord raised up for Himself a messenger to prepare the way of the Lord. He was to bear to the world an unflinching testimony in reproof and denouncing sin. Luke, in announcing his mission and work, says, ‘And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord’ (Luke 1:17).

“Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to the baptism of John, and addressing these, he said, ‘O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire’ (Matthew 3:7–12).

“The voice of John was lifted up like a trumpet. His commission was, ‘Shew My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins’ (Isaiah 58:1). He had obtained no human scholarship. God and nature had been his teachers. But one was needed to prepare the way before Christ who was bold enough to make his voice heard like the prophets of old, summoning the degenerate nation to repentance.” Selected Messages, book 2, 147, 148.

William Miller was the second messenger that prepared the way for the Messenger of the Covenant, and Miller’s person and work had been typified by John the Baptist.

“Thousands were led to embrace the truth preached by William Miller, and servants of God were raised up in the spirit and power of Elijah to proclaim the message. Like John, the forerunner of Jesus, those who preached this solemn message felt compelled to lay the ax at the root of the tree, and call upon men to bring forth fruits meet for repentance.” Early Writings, 233.

The quibbling Jews in the time of Christ had been led to trust in a false message of the Messiah. “Messiah” is the Hebrew word for the Greek word “Christ” which means “anointed”.

The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. Acts 10:36–38.

Both “messiah” and “Christ” mean “the anointed one”. Christ was anointed at His baptism, so technically He was not the Messiah or the Christ until His baptism. His baptism prophetically aligns with the descent of the angel in Revelation chapter ten, that descended on August 11, 1840, and it also aligns with the descent of the mighty angel of Revelation chapter eighteen, who descended on September 11, 2001. The three prophetic waymarks identify the manifestation of the

Holy Spirit in the latter rain.

The quibbling Jews held to a misconception, a false prophetic message that the Messiah would bring about a literal earthly kingdom where the nation of Israel would govern the world. It was a false message that promised “peace and prosperity”.

William Miller’s message had two major elements. The first was the application of the time prophecies that identified the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the second was his rejection of the Catholic interpretation of the thousand-year millennium that the Protestants were prone to believe. That false view of the millennium identified as a thousand years of peace and prosperity, had been represented by the false view of the Messiah’s kingdom that was held by the quibbling Jews.

Those two witnesses identify a counterfeit latter rain message promising “peace and prosperity” in the third and final fulfillment of the history of the messenger who prepares for the Messenger of the Covenant to suddenly come to His temple. That false latter rain message is identified as a “peace and safety” message, in contrast to the message of John the Baptist who identified that “every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire,” when “the wrath to come” arrives. It was also represented by Miller’s identification that there would be no thousand years of peace, as Catholicism teaches, for when the Lord returns, He will destroy the earth with the brightness of His coming.

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

The first two messengers who prepared for the Messenger of the Covenant to enter into covenant with a new chosen people, demonstrate that a false “peace and safety” latter rain message, which was formulated in the third generation of Laodicean Adventism, has been designed by Satan to prevent Laodicean Adventism in the fourth generation from recognizing the role of Islam, as represented in the third Woe.

In the purification process that is accomplished for those represented by the sons of Levi, the one who comes after John the Baptist was to thoroughly sweep and “purge” His floor, with the fan that is in His hand. That work is accomplished by His Word.

“Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner.’ Matthew 3:12. This was one of the times of purging. By the words of truth, the chaff was being separated from the wheat. Because they were too vain and self-righteous to receive reproof, too world-loving to accept a life of humility, many turned away from Jesus. Many are still doing the same thing. Souls are tested today as were those disciples in the synagogue at Capernaum. When truth is brought home to the heart, they see that their lives are not in accordance with the will of God. They see the need of an entire change in themselves; but they are not willing to take up the self-denying work. Therefore they are angry when their sins are discovered. They go away offended, even as the disciples left Jesus, murmuring, ‘This

is an hard saying; who can hear it?” The Desire of Ages, 392.

The message of the latter rain is the “debate” of Habakkuk chapter two, and it is the words of truth, that separate the chaff from the wheat. That separation is the purging accomplished by the Messenger of the Covenant. In Millerite history, the message of Daniel chapter eight, verse fourteen, produced a purging when it first failed and brought about the tarrying time of Habakkuk chapter two and the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew chapter twenty-five. When the message of the Midnight Cry was ultimately fulfilled on October 22, 1844, it produced an even greater purging. Then it was that the Messenger of the Covenant suddenly arrived and began the final purging and purification. The movement that had passed through the first two of three purifications and purging’s, failed the third and was sent to the wilderness of Laodicea in 1863.

In the Millerite history the Protestants were first purged by the words of truth, thereafter the movement of the first angel was purged at the arrival of the third testing message. But those who had been the builders of the Millerite temple during the forty-six years from 1798 unto 1844, failed the third test, which arrived on October 22, 1844, though they perfectly fulfilled the parable of the ten virgins.

“Many who went forth to meet the Bridegroom under the messages of the first and second angels, refused the third, the last testing message to be given to the world, and a similar position will be taken when the last call is made.

“Every specification of this parable should be carefully studied. We are represented either by the wise or by the foolish virgins.” Review and Herald, October 31, 1899.

The prophetic history that began at the arrival of the third angel on October 22, 1844, was a failure, and it ended with the rebellion of 1863. By 1850 Sister White penned the following message.

“The Lord gave me a view, January 26, which I will relate. I saw that some of the people of God were stupid and dormant; and were but half awake, and did not realize the time we were now living in; and that the ‘man’ with the ‘dirt-brush’ had entered, and that some were in danger of being swept away. I begged of Jesus to save them, to spare them a little longer, and let them see their awful danger, that they might get ready before it should be forever too late. The angel said, ‘Destruction is coming like a mighty whirlwind.’ I begged of the angel to pity and to save those who loved this world, and were attached to their possessions, and were not willing to cut loose from them, and sacrifice them to speed the messengers on their way to feed the hungry sheep, who were perishing for want of spiritual food.

“As I viewed poor souls dying for want of the present truth, and some who professed to believe the truth were letting them die, by withholding the necessary means to carry forward the work of God, the sight was too painful, and I begged of the angel to remove it from me. I saw that when the cause of God called for some of their property, like the young man who came to Jesus, [Matthew 19:16–22.] they went away sorrowful; and that soon the overflowing scourge would pass over and sweep their possessions all away, and then it would be too late to sacrifice earthly goods, and lay up a treasure in heaven.” Review and Herald, April 1, 1850.

In 1850, the dirt-brush man had already arrived. On October 22, 1844, the Messenger of the Covenant had suddenly come to His temple, and He began the work of purging and purifying the sons of Levi.

We will continue this study in the next article.

“Today souls are being tested and tried, and many are passing over the same ground trodden by those who forsook Christ. When tested by the Word, they reject the divine Teacher. When rebuked because their lives are not in harmony with truth and righteousness, they turn from the Saviour; and their decision, like that of the offended disciples, is never reversed. They walk no more with Christ. Thus are the words fulfilled, ‘Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner.’” Signs of the Times, May 15, 1901.