

The Book of Daniel - Number Forty-One

Paul's Prophetic Ministry: Connecting Ancient Israel to Spiritual Israel

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The apostle Paul was the connecting link between ancient Israel and spiritual Israel, for his ministry, his name, his personal circumstances and his prophetic work all testify to this truth. He identified himself as the least of the apostles, for he had persecuted God's people.

For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 1 Corinthians 15:19.

The name he was given at conversion was Paul, which means small or little, for he was the least of the apostles. Yet his original name was Saul, which means "selected".

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, Acts 9:13–15.

Saul was "a chosen vessel" to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, but he had to first be converted and humbled into Paul (small), for he was going to need to be powerful. Paul understood his strength was found in his smallness, or his weakness.

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.

Saul was "selected", but in order for him to be strong he was made small (Paul). He was chosen to take the gospel to the Gentiles, but he had been selected in part because of his knowledge of the Old Testament.

Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. Acts 26:3–5.

Saul had been trained by Gamaliel, who was considered one of the greatest teachers of the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

“The request was granted, and ‘Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people.’ The gesture attracted their attention, while his bearing commanded respect. ‘And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you.’ At the sound of the familiar Hebrew words, ‘they kept the more silence,’ and in the universal hush he continued: “‘I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.’ None could deny the apostle’s statements, as the facts that he referred to were well known to many who were still living in Jerusalem.” Acts of the Apostles, 408.

Saul had not been chosen at random, and one of the specific purposes of Paul’s ministry was to bridge the sacred history of literal Israel with the sacred history of spiritual Israel. In conjunction with this fact, he authored the majority of the New Testament. One chapter of his writings identifies the support for the framework of the first angels’ message and also for the framework of the third angels’ message. The passage is a monument in the history of Adventism that identifies the distinction between the wise and foolish in the beginning and ending of Adventism.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12.

The context of this passage is the consideration of when Christ would return the second time. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he has already answered that concern previously when he stated, “Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” Paul was attempting to prevent the brethren from being deceived upon the subject of “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.”

The historians identify that half of William Miller’s message was based upon his identification of the twenty-three hundred years of Daniel chapter eight, and verse fourteen. The other half of his message, that is sometimes not recognized, is his work of refuting the false teachings concerning the Second Coming of Christ.

Based upon the false Jesuit methodology there was (and still is) a prominent false teaching that William Miller consistently opposed. It was the false teaching that the Lord's second coming was preceded by a thousand years of peace called the "temporal millennium" which Sister White also opposed.

Miller's work was also establishing the truth of the literal return of Christ, in opposition to the various false ideas concerning the millennium that were prevalent in his history. Paul is addressing the Second Coming in 2 Thessalonians, so the passage was part of Miller's understanding of a literal Second Coming. The chapter was "Present Truth" for Miller.

Paul identifies an important sequence of events connected with the Second Coming, and also provides the logic of why the Thessalonians should not expect the return of the Lord in their lifetime. Paul says, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him." The word "beseech" means to interrogate. Paul is reasoning out the elements associated with the Second Coming and leading his audience through a type of interrogation, meant to produce analysis of his logic by his hearers.

The structure of his logic is that before Christ returns a second time, the papacy must be identified and reign, and that before the papacy arrives in history there must be a falling away. The falling away was yet future, so the arrival of the papacy was even beyond that. So how could anyone be deceived into thinking Christ's return was soon? He uses several symbols of the papacy in order to establish just who that power is that is revealed after the falling away. He calls the papacy the "man of sin," that "wicked," "the son of perdition" and the "mystery of iniquity." Sister White is clear these are all symbols identifying the papacy.

"But before the coming of Christ, important developments in the religious world, foretold in prophecy, were to take place. The apostle declared: 'Be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.'

"Paul's words were not to be misinterpreted. It was not to be taught that he, by special revelation, had warned the Thessalonians of the immediate coming of Christ. Such a position would cause confusion of faith; for disappointment often leads to unbelief. The apostle therefore cautioned the brethren to receive no such message as coming from him, and he proceeded to emphasize the fact that the papal power, so clearly described by the prophet Daniel, was yet to rise and wage war against God's people. Until this power should have performed its deadly and blasphemous work, it would be in vain for the church to look for the coming of their Lord. 'Remember ye not,' Paul inquired, 'that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?'

"Terrible were the trials that were to beset the true church. Even at the time when the apostle was writing, the 'mystery of iniquity' had already begun to work. The developments that were

to take place in the future were to be ‘after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.’

“Especially solemn is the apostle’s statement regarding those who should refuse to receive ‘the love of the truth.’ ‘For this cause,’ he declared of all who should deliberately reject the messages of truth, ‘God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.’ Men cannot with impunity reject the warnings that God in mercy sends them. From those who persist in turning from these warnings, God withdraws His Spirit, leaving them to the deceptions that they love.” Acts of the Apostles, 265, 266.

Although Sister White directly identifies the “man of sin,” that “wicked,” “the son of perdition” and the “mystery of iniquity” from the passage of Paul, and calls it the “papal power,” she says more. She identifies that these symbols employed by Paul to identify the pope of Rome, was established from the book of Daniel, when she stated, “The apostle therefore cautioned the brethren to receive no such message as coming from him, and he proceeded to emphasize the fact that the papal power, so clearly described by the prophet Daniel, was yet to rise and wage war against God’s people. Until this power should have performed its deadly and blasphemous work, it would be in vain for the church to look for the coming of their Lord.” Paul was basing the portion of the message to the Thessalonians which identified the papacy upon Daniel chapter eleven, and verse thirty-six.

And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Daniel 11:36.

When Paul identifies the pope “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God,” Paul was paraphrasing the prophet Daniel’s description of the “king” that did “according to his will,” and exalted “himself and” magnified “himself above every god.” The pope is the king that speaks “marvelous things against the God of gods”, and the pope is the power that would “prosper till the” first “indignation” would “be accomplished” in 1798.

Daniel eleven, and verse thirty-six is absolutely essential to understand correctly if the increase of knowledge in 1989 is to be understood correctly. For this reason the false teaching that the king in the verse was France, as introduced by Uriah Smith, was introduced in the first generation of Adventism (1863 to 1888). Smith changed the text of verse thirty-six from “the” king (which is the papacy that was being described in the previous verses) to “a” king (any king) in order to ascribe to atheistic France the characteristics of Rome’s worship style, but that was just a jumping-off point to put forth his pet theory about Turkey being the king of the north in verse forty and onward.

Satan began early to obscure the fact that the king in the verse, is the papacy, and it is the apostle Paul who provides Daniel’s testimony with a second witness to this fact. Sister White provided the third witness.

Not only did Satan seek to obscure the truth about the king in the verse being the pope, but by misdirecting the truth contained in the verse, Satan also made obscure the significance of what the “indignation” in the verse represented. The papacy in the verse was to prosper until 1798 when it was delivered its deadly wound. 1798 is the end of the twenty-five hundred and twenty years of God’s indignation that was carried out against the northern kingdom of Israel, beginning in 723 BC.

If Adventism had defended and upheld the “seven times,” in 1863, it would have been virtually impossible for Uriah Smith to get away with such foolishness about verse thirty-six, for the “indignation” would have been understood as representing God’s first indignation of “seven times,” thus having no connection whatsoever with France. The increase of knowledge in 1989 is supported by Paul in the passage, and for this reason the warning of Paul in the passage concerning those who do not receive the love of the truth, but receive strong delusion, do so through their rejection of the truths Paul presents in the passage. One of those truths is the correct identification of the king of the north in Daniel chapter eleven, verses forty through forty-five.

In the passage, after Paul identifies the pope of Rome, he identifies a sequence of events at the end of the world leading up to the Second Coming of Christ, which is the subject of the passage. He states, “then shall that Wicked be revealed.” That “wicked” is the pope, “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” Then Paul says “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” Jesus is the one “whose coming is after the working of Satan.”

Satan’s miraculous working is the period of time from the soon-coming Sunday Law, until Michael stands up and human probation closes. Satan accomplishes no miracles during the Seven Last Plagues that are poured out from the close of probation until Christ returns.

“Says Christ, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ If those through whom cures are performed, are disposed, on account of these manifestations, to excuse their neglect of the law of God and continue in disobedience, though they have power to any and every extent, it does not follow that they have the great power of God. On the contrary, it is the miracle-working power of the great deceiver. He is a transgressor of the moral law, and employs every device that he can master to blind men to its true character. We are warned that in the last days he will work with signs and lying wonders. And he will continue these wonders until the close of probation, that he may point to them as evidence that he is an angel of light and not of darkness.” The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, 911.

Paul identifies that there would be a falling away that preceded the revealing of the papacy, and that Christ’s Second Coming would take place “after” the marvelous working of Satan. Satan’s marvelous working begins at the Sunday law in the United States, and ends at the arrival of the close of probation and the seven last plagues. Satan’s marvelous working begins at the Sunday law in the United States.

“By the decree enforcing the institution of the Papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When Protestantism shall stretch her hand

across the gulf to grasp the hand of the Roman power, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with Spiritualism, when, under the influence of this threefold union, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of Satan and that the end is near.”

Testimonies, volume 5, 451.

The Sunday law is the end of the sixth kingdom, the earth beast of Revelation chapter thirteen. The earth beast began to reign at the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years of papal rule in 1798. The papacy was therefore revealed in the year 538, though her work to take control of the world was already active when Paul penned his words. Before the year 538, there would be a falling away that preceded the revealing of the man of sin, sitting in the temple of God.

The falling away was represented by the church of Pergamos when the Christian church compromised with the religion of paganism, as symbolized by the emperor Constantine. Paul was identifying the prophetic waymarks that must occur before the Second Coming of Christ. After rehearsing what he had previously taught the Thessalonians, he then asks if they did not remember that he had previously taught them these truths? He then reminds them they should also remember that he taught them that a power would “withholdeth” the papacy “that” the papacy “might be revealed in his time?” The word “withholdeth” means to restrain. The word “withholdeth” is later in the same passage translated as “now letteth.”

The passage is therefore correctly represented as; “And now ye know what restrains the papacy, that the papacy might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity (the papacy) doth already work: only he who now restrains the papacy, will continue to restrain the papacy until he be taken out of the way.” When William Miller recognized this passage in Thessalonians he realized that the power that prevented the papacy from ascending to the throne of the earth in the year 538, was pagan Rome, and that pagan Rome would restrain the rise of the papal power, until pagan Rome was “taken out of the way.”

“During, the twelve years I was a deist, I read all histories I could find; but now I loved the Bible. It taught of Jesus! But still there was a good deal of the Bible that was dark to me. In 1818 or 19, while conversing with a friend! To whom I made a visit, and who had known and heard me talk while I was a deist, he inquired, in rather a significant manner, ‘What do you think of this text, and that?’ referring to the old texts I objected to while a deist. I understood what he was about, and replied—If you will give me time, I will tell you what they mean. ‘How long time do you want?’ I don’t know, but I will tell you, I replied, for I could not believe that God had given a revelation that could not be understood I then resolved to study my Bible, believing I could find out what the Holy Spirit meant. But as soon as I had formed this resolution the thought came to me—‘Suppose you find a passage that you cannot understand, what will you do?’ This mode of studying the Bible then came to my mind:—I will take the words of such passages, and trace them through the Bible, and find out their meaning in this way. I had Cruden’s Concordance, which I think is the best in the world; so I took that and my Bible, and set down to my desk, and read nothing else, except the newspapers a little, for I was determined to know what my Bible meant.

“I began at Genesis, and read on slowly; and when I came to a text that I could not understand, I searched through the Bible to find out what it meant. After I had gone through the Bible in this way, O, how bright and glorious the truth appeared! I found what I have been preaching to you. I was satisfied that the seven times terminated in 1843. Then I came to the 2300 days; they brought me to the same conclusion; but I had no thought of finding out when the Savior was coming, and I could not believe it; but the light struck me so forcibly I did not know what to do. Now, I thought, I must put on spurs and breeching; I will not go faster than the Bible, and I will not fall behind it. Whatever the Bible teaches, I will hold on to it. But still there were some texts that I could not understand.’

“So much for his general mode of studying the Bible. On another occasion he stated his mode of settling the meaning of the text before us—the meaning of ‘the daily.’ ‘I read on,’ said he, ‘and could find no other case in which it was found, but in Daniel. I then took those words which stood in connection with it, ‘take away.’ He shall take away the daily, ‘from the time the daily shall be taken away,’ etc. I read on, and thought I should find no light on the text; finally I came to 2 Thessalonians 2:7–8. ‘For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked be revealed,’ etc. And when I had come to that text, O, how clear and glorious the truth appeared! There it is! that is ‘the daily!’ Well, now, what does Paul mean by ‘he who now letteth,’ or hindereth? By ‘the man of sin,’ and ‘the wicked,’ Popery is meant. Well, what is it which hinders Popery from being revealed? Why, it is Paganism; well, then, ‘the daily’ must mean Paganism.”

William Miller, Apollos Hale, *The Second Advent Manual*, 65, 66.

Without an understanding that “the daily” in the book of Daniel was a symbol of paganism, Miller would have been hard pressed to develop the framework that he assembled his prophetic structure upon. “The daily” is found five times in the book of Daniel, and it is always followed by a symbol of papalism. The evidence that “the daily” in the book of Daniel is paganism is located in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians. One of the most severe warnings in God’s Word is located there, for there Paul clearly states that those who do not love the truth will be sent strong delusion. The truth that was purposely located in Thessalonians was the identification of paganism’s connection with papalism, and to reject that truth is to guarantee that strong delusion will be the consequence of that rejection.

We will continue this subject in the next article.

Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of

their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? Isaiah 29:9–16.