

The Book of Daniel - Number Fifty-Three

Prophetic Visions Unveiled: Understanding the Last Days Through Daniel's Experience

Jeff Pippenger

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All the prophets are speaking more of the last days than the days in which they lived.

“Each of the ancient prophets spoke less for their own time than for ours, so that their prophesying is in force for us. ‘Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.’ 1 Corinthians 10:11. ‘Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.’ 1 Peter 1:12

“The Bible has accumulated and bound up together its treasures for this last generation. All the great events and solemn transactions of Old Testament history have been, and are, repeating themselves in the church in these last days.” Selected Messages, book 3, 338, 339.

Daniel is representing God's people, who in the last days have discovered through the prophetic Word, that they have been scattered. When they awaken to that fact, they are required to fulfill the Leviticus twenty-six prayer, and also the prayer to understand the last prophetic secret that is unsealed just before probation closes, as represented by Daniel's prayer in chapter two. If and when, they enter into Daniel's experience, the angel Gabriel will touch, inform and speak to them, for the purpose of giving them “skill and understanding.” The wise are those who “understand” the “increase of knowledge” when a prophetic secret is unsealed.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Daniel 9:22, 23.

The vision which Daniel is told to consider is the “mareh” vision of the appearance. Gabriel had not finished the work he had been assigned in chapter eight when he had been told to make Daniel understand the “mareh” vision. In chapter nine he has returned to finish the interpretation. In chapter nine, Daniel is no longer living in the period of the kingdom of Babylon, but in the history of the Medo-Persian empire.

When Gabriel instructs Daniel to “understand the matter,” and to “consider the vision,” he is identifying a process of mental separation which he wants Daniel to exercise. The words translated as “understand” and “consider” are the same Hebrew word. The word is “biyn,” and means to separate mentally. The Hebrew word translated as “matter,” is “dabar,” and means “the word”. Gabriel is therefore informing Daniel, and those he represents in the last days to rightly divide the Word of truth.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15.

The word “matter” is also employed by Daniel in chapter ten, verse one where it is translated three times as “thing.”

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. Daniel 10:1.

In the verse, the word “vision” is the “mareh” vision of the appearance, and Daniel had understanding of both the thing (matter) and also the vision (“mareh”). In verse twenty-three of chapter nine, Gabriel instructed Daniel to rightly divide the matter and the vision, and in verse one of chapter ten he has understanding of both the matter (thing) and the vision (“mareh”). Gabriel is informing Daniel in chapter nine, to recognize the distinction (rightly divide) between the matter and the vision. The vision is the “mareh” vision and the “matter,” or the “thing” is the “chazon” vision.

In chapter eight both visions are identified, and a distinction is noted because Daniel wished to understand the “chazon” vision, but Gabriel was instructed to make Daniel understand the “mareh” vision. As Gabriel begins his work of making Daniel understand the “matter” and the “vision” he informs Daniel to take note that they are two different visions.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. Daniel 9:22–27.

Gabriel wished Daniel to recognize that elements of both the “chazon” vision and the “mareh” vision would be represented in the interpretation he provided for Daniel. The interpretation was going to address both visions, and it was Daniel’s responsibility to rightly divide the vision which addressed the trampling down of the sanctuary and the host, from the vision that led to the appearance of Christ in the Most Holy Place on October 22, 1844.

Gabriel identifies that from the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 BC, there would be four hundred and ninety years that were “cut off” from the twenty-three hundred years of the vision of the evenings and mornings, that was especially for the Jews. In the verses just cited, the word “determined” is identified three times, but it is two different Hebrew words that are both translated as “determined” in the verses. The first time “determined” is identified is in verse twenty-four, and that Hebrew word is “chathak” and means “to cut off”.

It identifies that Israel was given a probationary period that began with the third decree of Artaxerxes which would end at the stoning of Stephen in the year 34 AD. The four hundred and ninety years was “cut off,” and represented a shorter prophetic period within the longer prophecy of twenty-three hundred years. The number “four hundred and ninety,” is a symbol of probationary time, as witnessed to by Jesus.

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Matthew 18:22.

There is an end to forgiveness, and that end is represented by the number “four hundred and ninety.” The “four hundred and ninety” years represents a period of probation for the Jews from their deliverance until they filled the cup of their probationary time at the stoning of Stephen. The “four hundred and ninety” years is also connected with the curse of the “seven times” in Leviticus twenty-six. There are only two places in the Bible that reference the land enjoying her sabbaths. The first is found in Leviticus twenty-six.

And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. Leviticus 26:27–35.

The punishment of the “seven times,” which is referenced four times in chapter twenty-six, identifies that when God’s people are scattered, the land will then “enjoy her sabbaths.” Daniel and the three worthies had been scattered into the enemies’ land in fulfillment of the curse of Moses, and that the scattering of seventy years, was a symbolic object lesson of the scattering of the twenty-five hundred and twenty years. It was a prophetic object lesson, similar to Elijah’s three and a half years of drought during the persecution of Jezebel. That three and a half years represented three and a half prophetic years, that equaled twelve hundred and sixty years of papal rule from the year 538 until 1798. The seventy years was a symbol of the “seven times,” just as the

three and a half years was a symbol of the wilderness of twelve hundred and sixty years. The seventy years of Daniel's captivity identified by Jeremiah, represented "four hundred and ninety" years.

And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up. 2 Chronicles 36:15-23.

The only two references in the Bible of the land enjoying her sabbaths are in relation to the scattering of God's people, and the seventy years of captivity, which represented a period of time that would allow the land to enjoy its sabbaths. It equaled the amount of sabbaths that the Jews did not allow the land to enjoy rest. The land resting for seventy years, represented the total years that the rebellion against the commandment to allow the land to rest had been accomplished. Simple math identifies that in "four hundred and ninety" years of rebellion, there would be a total of seventy years that the land had not rested.

Four hundred and ninety years were cut off from the twenty-three hundred years, as a probationary period for the Jews, and that "four hundred and ninety" years has a direct connection with the scattering of the "seven times" of Leviticus twenty-six.

The "chazon" vision of the trampling down and the "mareh" vision of the appearance at the end of twenty-three hundred years are distinct from each other, but they have a direct connection. As with Daniel, God's people are to rightly divide the two visions, while simultaneously recognizing their connection with one another. The seventy years of captivity which led to the three decrees allowing the Jews to return and rebuild Jerusalem, represented "four hundred and ninety" years of rebellion by the Jews against the covenant of allowing the land to rest.

When the third decree identified their opportunity to return and rebuild, they were given “four hundred and ninety” years of probationary time, as they were tested by the same period of time in which their disobedience led to the destruction of Jerusalem and their scattering. At the end of the second “four hundred and ninety years,” their disobedience would once again bring the destruction of Jerusalem and their scattering among the Gentiles.

The scattering of the seventy year captivity was preceded by “four hundred and ninety” years of rebellion, and then that seventy year captivity was followed by another “four hundred and ninety years” of further rebellion.

The first “four hundred and ninety” year period, which brought about the seventy years of the land resting, had reached a conclusion with the destruction of Jerusalem. At the ending of the “four hundred and ninety” years that was cut off from the twenty-three hundred years, Jerusalem was once again destroyed, for Jesus always illustrates the end of a thing with the beginning of a thing.

The seventy year captivity of literal Israel in literal Babylon was a symbol of the scattering of “seven times,” and Sister White identifies that the seventy years of captivity of literal Israel in literal Babylon was a type of the twelve hundred and sixty years of captivity of spiritual Israel in spiritual Babylon.

“God’s church on earth was as verily in captivity during this long period of relentless persecution as were the children of Israel held captive in Babylon during the period of the exile.” Prophets and Kings, 714.

The twelve hundred and sixty years from the year 538 to 1798, was a type of the “seven times.” At the end of the seventy years, the Jews returned to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Their return during the three decrees marked the beginning (457 BC) of the twenty-three hundred years of the “mareh” vision that led to the appearance of Christ in the Most Holy Place on October 22, 1844. The three decrees marked the beginning of the prophetic period, and it required all three decrees to begin the prophetic period, though they began to return and rebuild with the first decree of Cyrus.

“In the seventh chapter of Ezra the decree is found. Verses 12-26. In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, 457 BC. But in Ezra 6:14 the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is said to have been built ‘according to the commandment [‘decree,’ margin] of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.’ These three kings, in originating, reaffirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years. Taking 457 BC, the time when the decree was completed, as the date of the commandment, every specification of the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks was seen to have been fulfilled.” The Great Controversy, 326.

From 1798 until 1844, the three angels of Revelation arrived into prophetic history, and just as the three decrees marked the beginning of the prophecy of twenty-three hundred years, those three angels marked the conclusion of the prophecy. The prophetic period ended with the arrival of the third angel, just as it had begun with the arrival of the third decree, for Jesus always identifies the end of a thing, with the beginning of a thing.

The Jews began to return under the first decree, and in the history of the second decree they finished the temple. The third angel arrived on October 22, 1844, and before that date the Millerites had finished the spiritual temple they had come out of spiritual Babylon to rebuild. It was to be completed, for on October 22, 1844 the messenger of the covenant was to come suddenly to his temple. That temple was the Millerite people who entered into covenant on October 22, 1844, and who Peter identifies were a temple.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:5.

The Millerite temple was built from 1798 to 1844, which is forty-six years, or prophetically three days, for Christ identified that it takes three days to raise up a temple.

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. John 2:13-21.

Sister White identifies that when the messenger of the covenant suddenly came to his temple, as represented in the book of Malachi, that the prediction had been fulfilled when Christ cleansed the temple, as just identified in the passage from John.

“In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. ‘Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. 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. Malachi 3:1-3.’” *The Desire of Ages*, 161.

The temple in John chapter two, took forty-six years to build, and Jesus said He would erect the destroyed temple in three days. 1798 unto 1844, is forty-six years, and it identifies the arrival of the three angels (days), of Revelation fourteen, that had been typified by the three decrees which began the twenty-three hundred year prophecy. The forty-six years is the period in which Christ raised up the Millerite temple, for prior to that time the spiritual sanctuary and spiritual Israel had been trodden down by spiritual Babylon.

When Christ cleansed the temple at the Passover in the beginning of His ministry, He was fulfilling the prophecy of the Messenger of the Covenant suddenly coming unto His temple as set forth in Malachi. On October 22, 1844 Christ suddenly came to His temple, and it had taken Him forty-six years to erect His destroyed temple.

“The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.” *The Great Controversy*, 426.

The first indignation ended in 1798, and the end of the last indignation was 1844. The beginning of the forty-six year period, where Christ raised up the Millerite temple illustrated the end, for both the beginning and ending were marked by the conclusion of God’s indignation against His people, for Jesus always identifies the end of a thing, with the beginning of a thing.

We will continue our study of Gabriel’s instruction to Daniel in the next article.

“The book of Revelation must be opened to the people. Many have been taught that it is a sealed book, but it is sealed to those only who reject truth and light. The truths that it contains must be proclaimed, that people may have an opportunity to prepare for the events which are so soon to take place. The Third Angel’s Message must be presented as the only hope for the salvation of a perishing world.

“The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes that prophecy has revealed are soon to take place be left untouched. We are God’s messengers, and we have no time to lose. Those who would be co-workers with our Lord Jesus Christ will show a deep interest in the truths found in this book. With pen and voice they will strive to make plain the wonderful things that Christ came from heaven to reveal.” *Signs of the Times*, July 4, 1906.