

Rome Establishes the Vision - Number Five

Unveiling the Repeated Prophetic Controversies in Adventism: Understanding the Robbers of Thy People

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In the last article we identified six prophetic lines of controversy which have occurred in the history of Adventism from the Millerite time period until the present day. I contend the first and the last controversy over the “robbers of thy people” in verse fourteen of Daniel chapter eleven are prophetically identical. The Millerites understood the “robbers” to be Rome, and the Protestants taught the “robbers” were a Syrian king named Antiochus Epiphanes.

And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. Daniel 11:14.

Beginning in verse ten, and continuing through verse fifteen a warfare between the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria is represented. Egypt is the king of the south in the passage, and the Syrian king is represented as the king of the north. Verse ten identifies what the historians call the beginning of the Fourth Syrian war in 219 BC, verses eleven and twelve represent the battle of Raphia in 217 BC, and its aftermath. Then verses thirteen through fifteen identify the battle of Panium in 200 BC. In verses ten through fifteen the Syrian king is Antiochus Magnus, ruler of the Seleucid Empire.

Verse ten represents the history when Antiochus Magnus begins a war to regain territory that was taken from the Seleucid kingdom years before. In the verse he regains the lost territory in 219 BC, but he temporarily ceases his aggressions, and seeks to regroup his military strength. He had regained control of the lost territory, and made it all the way to the border of Egypt, the southern kingdom ruled by the Ptolemy dynasty. Between 219 BC and 217 BC, both the king of the south and the king of the north made plans for the approaching battle of Raphia.

The battle of Raphia took place in 217 BC, and the southern kingdom of Egypt, ruled by Ptolemy prevailed over the Syrian king Antiochus Magnus, king of the north in the prophetic passage. Then in verses thirteen through fifteen, seventeen years later in 200 BC, Antiochus Magnus, who had then formed an alliance with Philip of Macedon engaged Egypt in the battle of Panium. The southern kingdom of Egypt then had a child king of five or six years old, and Antiochus Magnus and Philip could not resist taking advantage of the child king of Egypt, and Antiochus Magnus prevailed in the battle of Panium. The three verses that represent the battle of Panium contain verse fourteen, where a new power is introduced into the prophetic narrative.

The robbers of thy people are a different power than the Egyptian king of the south, or the Seleucid king of the north, or Philip the Macedonian ruler. The Millerites recognized that Rome is the robbers of thy people. One of the Hebrew root words that is translated as “robbers,” means breaker. Pagan Rome is represented in prophecy as the power who would break in pieces.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. Daniel 7:7.

When Uriah Smith comments on the robbers, he quotes a historian who points out that robbers represent breakers.

“A new power is now introduced,—‘the robbers of thy people;’ literally, says Bishop Newton, ‘the breakers of thy people.’ Far away on the banks of the Tiber, a kingdom had been nourishing itself with ambitious projects and dark designs. Small and weak at first, it grew with marvelous rapidity in strength and vigor, reaching out cautiously here and there to try its prowess, and test the vigor of its warlike arm, till, conscious of its power, it boldly reared its head among the nations of the earth, and seized with invincible hand the helm of their affairs. Henceforth the name of Rome stands upon the historic page, destined for long ages to control the affairs of the world, and exert a mighty influence among the nations even to the end of time.

“Rome spoke; and Syria and Macedonia soon found a change coming over the aspect of their dream. The Romans interfered in behalf of the young king of Egypt, determined that he should be protected from the ruin devised by Antiochus and Philip. This was BC 200, and was one of the first important interferences of the Romans in the affairs of Syria and Egypt.” Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*, 257.

The prediction set forth in the verses was fulfilled in roughly twenty years from 219 BC unto 200 BC, but the prophets speak more about 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.

Although Daniel did not live in the twenty-year time period we are considering, inspiration through the writings of Sister White informs us that much of the history recorded in Daniel eleven is to be repeated in the final fulfillment of Daniel eleven.

“We have no time to lose. Troublous times are before us. The world is stirred with the spirit of war. Soon the scenes of trouble spoken of in the prophecies will take place. The prophecy in the eleventh of Daniel has nearly reached its complete fulfillment. Much of the history that has taken place in fulfillment of this prophecy will be repeated.” *Manuscript Releases*, number 13, 394.

Verses ten through fifteen of Daniel eleven represent the history of the last days which leads up to the soon-coming Sunday law, for verse sixteen identifies when Rome, for the first time, conquered the “glorious land.”

But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed. Daniel 11:16.

Daniel employs the expression “glorious land” twice in his writings. The first is verse sixteen, when literal pagan Rome conquered the literal glorious land of Judah.

“Although Egypt could not stand before Antiochus, the king of the north, Antiochus could not stand before the Romans, who now came against him. No kingdoms were longer able to resist this rising power. Syria was conquered, and added to the Roman empire, when Pompey, BC 65, deprived Antiochus Asiaticus of his possessions, and reduced Syria to a Roman province.

“The same power was also to stand in the Holy Land, and consume it. Rome became connected with the people of God, the Jews, by alliance, BC 162, from which date it holds a prominent place in the prophetic calendar. It did not, however, acquire jurisdiction over Judea by actual conquest till BC 63; and then in the following manner.” Uriah Smith, Daniel and Revelation, 259.

The other verse where Daniel employs the “glorious land” is in verse forty-one.

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. Daniel 11:41.

Verse forty-one of course follows verse forty, and verse forty begins with the words “and at the time of the end.” In *The Great Controversy*, Sister White identifies 1798 as the “time of the end,” so verse forty-one is identifying history that follows after the time of the end in 1798.

“But at the time of the end, says the prophet, ‘Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.’ Daniel 12:4.... Since 1798 the book of Daniel has been unsealed, knowledge of the prophecies has increased, and many have proclaimed the solemn message of the judgment near.” *The Great Controversy*, 356.

The glorious land of verse forty-one is not literal ancient Judah of old, but spiritual modern Judah. The United States is spiritual modern Judah, and verse forty-one is identifying the soon-coming Sunday law in the United States.

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 1 Corinthians 15:46.

That Sunday law is typified by verse sixteen, for “much of the history that has taken place” in the fulfillment of Daniel eleven is to be repeated. Verses ten through fifteen in the last days, represents the history preceding and leading up to the Sunday law.

The king of the north in those five verses, as well as the king of the south who were fulfilled by the Seleucid king Antiochus Magnus and the Egyptian kings of the Ptolemaic kingdom, typify powers that are the focus of the history that leads to the soon-coming Sunday law. These verses identify the history of the movement of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, for verse ten identifies the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, and verse sixteen the soon-coming Sunday law.

Christ emphasizes these verses by aligning verse ten with verse forty and verse sixteen with verse forty-one. The direct reference to the literal glorious land which typifies the spiritual glorious land of verse forty-one is the end of the six verses, and verse ten is the beginning.

Just as Christ made sure verse sixteen has a direct connection with verse forty-one, and so too, verse ten has a direct connection with verse forty. The expression in verse ten “overflow, and pass through,” is the identical Hebrew phrase that is translated as “overflow and pass over,” in verse forty. The phrase is only found one other place in the Scriptures, but it is translated a little differently than verse ten and verse forty. Still, it is the same Hebrew phrase.

And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. Isaiah 8:8.

Isaiah’s “overflow and go over,” is the same as verse ten’s “overflow, and pass through,” and verse forty’s “overflow and pass over.” More than this, each of the three verses are describing an attack from the king of the north upon the king of the south. In Isaiah, the northern king of Assyria, Sennacherib, was attacking Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel. In verse ten Antiochus Magnus, the northern king of the Seleucid Empire was attacking the southern kingdom of Egypt. In verse forty, the king of the north, the papal power, who had received a deadly wound at the beginning of verse forty, was attacking the southern atheistic power of the Soviet Union. Each verse represents the same prophetic structure of a conflict between the kings of the north and south, and in each verse the northern king “overflows and passes over.”

Isaiah’s testimony and verse ten both identify that when the northern king attacks he ceases before entering into the capital of the southern kingdom. Sennacherib brought his warfare to the walls of Jerusalem, and no further. In 219 BC, Antiochus Magnus came to the border of Egypt and stopped. Then he lost the battle of Raphia that occurred two years later in 217 BC. Sennacherib came to the walls of Jerusalem and lost the battle as God intervened.

Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they

escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead. 2 Kings 19:32–37.

In 1989, the king of the north swept away the Soviet Union, but he did not overcome the capital of the Soviet Union. Russia was left standing. The next battle, typified in verses eleven and twelve, was the battle of Raphia, which was also typified by the overthrow of Sennacherib's army and his subsequent death which identifies a victory for the southern king, which was Judah in the testimony of Sennacherib, and Raphia in the testimony of Antiochus Magnus.

Verse ten provides a direct connection to verse forty and verse sixteen provides a direct connection with verse forty-one. Verses ten through sixteen represent the history of 1989 unto the Sunday law. The verse represents a hidden history in verse forty that begins with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 and continues unto the Sunday law. Verse ten also directly connects the "seven times" of Leviticus twenty-six to the hidden history, but that line of truth is outside what we are here setting forth.

In Millerite history the first of six primary controversies within Adventism concerning the correct identification of Rome occurred, and it was over who the robbers of verse fourteen represented. The Protestants held they represented Antiochus Epiphanes, and the Millerites identified them as Rome. In the last controversy of Adventism concerning the correct identification of Rome it is also over the robbers of verse fourteen. One class, represented by the Millerites, is upholding the foundational understanding of the Millerites, which was endorsed by the Spirit of Prophecy.

"I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them; that His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures, so that none could see it, until His hand was removed." Early Writings, 74.

That sacred chart identifies the controversy with the notation of 164 BC.

"164 Death of Antiochus Epiphanes, who of course, stood not up against the Prince of Princes, as he had been 164 yrs. dead before the Prince of Princes was born."

The reference of that controversy upon the sacred chart represents the only truth represented upon the sacred chart that is not based upon a prophetic passage from God's Word. In doing so it identifies a waymark, not of biblical history, but of Advent history, and "it should not be altered," for the controversy identifies how the prophetic vision is established. To reject that foundational truth is to simultaneously reject the authority of the Spirit of Prophecy's endorsement of the sacred chart.

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God. 'Where there is no vision, the people perish' (Proverbs 29:18). Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. He will bring in spurious visions to mislead, and will mingle the false with the true, and so disgust people that they will regard everything that bears the name of visions as a species of fanaticism; but honest souls, by contrasting false and true, will be enabled to distinguish between them." Selected Messages, book 2, 78.

The last controversy of “the robbers of thy people”, is the same as the first, and without an understanding of the symbol which establishes the vision, “the people perish.” They “perish” because they “make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God.”

The other class claims that the United States is represented as the robbers of verse fourteen. That class is unable or unwilling to see that Antiochus Magnus in verses ten through fifteen represents the United States. Just as the Protestants of Millerite history claimed the robbers were Antiochus, the class who is unwilling to see identifies the robbers as the power (the United States) that is typified by Antiochus.

Sennacherib’s attack upon Judah that reached to the capital, Jerusalem, and that failed, was led by Sennacherib’s general, the Rabshakeh.

Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it. Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews’ language in the ears of the people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you? Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews’ language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. 2 Kings 18:23–28.

The Rabshakeh was presenting not his words, but the words of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. In Daniel eleven verse forty the king of the north is the papal power who at the time of the end in 1798 received a deadly wound at the hands of atheistic France, the southern king. In the verse the king of the north ultimately retaliates and overflows the southern kingdom (the USSR) in 1989. When the king of the north accomplished that work, he brought with him “chariots, and with horsemen, and many ships.” “Chariots and horsemen” represent military might and “ships” represent economic power. Those symbols identify the United States as papal Rome’s proxy army in the victory of 1989, as typified by Rabshakeh. Antiochus Magnus in verse ten through fifteen represents the United States, and as William Miller correctly identified that the word “also” in verse fourteen establishes a new power entering the prophetic narrative, the “robbers” must represent a power distinct from either the Ptolemaic kings of the south, or Antiochus the king of the north or Philip of Macedon.

“The king of the south, in this verse, without any doubt, means king of Egypt; but what the robbers of thy people means remains yet a doubt perhaps to some. That it cannot mean Antiochus, or any king of Syria, it is plain; for the angel had been talking about that nation for a number of verses previous, and now says, ‘also the robbers of thy people,’ etc., evidently implying some other nation. I will admit that Antiochus did perhaps rob the Jews; but how could this ‘establish the vision,’ as Antiochus is not spoken of anywhere in the vision as

performing any act of that kind; for he belonged to what is called the Grecian kingdom in the vision. Again, 'to establish the vision,' must mean to make sure, complete, or fulfill the same." William Miller, Miller's Works, Lecture 6, 89.

"Antiochus" was a name selected by many of the kings of the Syrian Seleucid Empire. The founder of that empire was Seleucid Nicator, and somewhere between twenty-six to thirty kings made up the entire list of Seleucid kings. Many of those kings chose the name "Antiochus", just as the many popes choose throne-names when they are selected as popes. The popes are all "antichrist," which means "against Christ". The word "anti" meaning "against". As antichrists they have taken the name of their spiritual forefather, who is Satan. Satan and the popes are both identified as the antichrist in inspiration.

"The determination of antichrist to carry out the rebellion he began in heaven will continue to work in the children of disobedience." Testimonies, volume 9, 230.

A pope is a representative of Satan, and thus they are both against Christ, and therefore are the "antichrist." They choose a name when they take the position as pope, and become Satan's earthly representative.

"To secure worldly gains and honors, the church was led to seek the favor and support of the great men of earth; and having thus rejected Christ, she was induced to yield allegiance to the representative of Satan—the bishop of Rome." The Great Controversy, 50.

By their works you shall know them, and the popes carry on the same work as Satan.

"Through the pope of Rome the same work has been carried on here on earth as was carried on in the courts of heaven before the expulsion of the prince of darkness. Satan sought to correct the law of God in heaven, and to supply an amendment of his own. He exalted his own judgment above that of his Creator, and placed his will above the will of Jehovah, and in this way virtually declared God to be fallible. The pope also takes the same course and, claiming infallibility for himself, seeks to adjust the law of God to meet his own ideas, thinking himself able to correct the mistakes he thinks he sees in the statutes and commands of the Lord of heaven and earth. He virtually says to the world, I will give you better laws than those of Jehovah. What an insult is this to the God of heaven!" Signs of the Times, November 19, 1894.

Though Seleucus Nicator established the Seleucid Empire, many of the following kings chose the name "Antiochus," in honor, not of Seleucus, but of his father. Seleucus' father, Antiochus, was a nobleman and a general in the service of King Philip II of Macedon, who was the father of Alexander the Great. This noble status and military background helped establish the foundation for Seleucus's own prominent role and subsequent rise to power after the death of Alexander the Great.

Seleucus' kingdom was established when he took control of three of the four areas of Alexander's kingdom. Rome also conquers three geographical powers in order to take control and become the king of the north. When Seleucus had secured the east, the west and the north he became the king of the north in the historical narrative, and his capital was the city of Babylon. Many of the

following kings chose the name “Antiochus” when they took the northern throne in order to honor their political forefather. The parallel is easy to see, if you choose to see. If you don’t, you don’t.

The name “Antiochus” (Ἀντίοχος in Greek) comes from the Greek elements’ “anti” (meaning “against” or “opposite”) and “ocheo” (meaning “to hold fast” or “to maintain”). The northern kings chose the name to maintain their political heritage with the father, just as the antichrist (popes) choose names when they begin to rule. Just as the popes are representatives of their father, the devil, so too the Antiochus’ of the Syrian Empire typify representatives of their father. In this application Antiochus represents a proxy of their father. The proxy of the papal power in 1989 was the United States, and the secular testimony upholds the relationship between the antichrist, Pope John Paul II, and Ronald Reagan in their work to bring down the former Soviet Union.

In verses ten through sixteen, the first and last verse possess direct references to verses forty and forty-one. Verse ten directly represents verse forty. Verse sixteen directly represents verse forty-one. The verses represent the portion of the prophecy of Daniel that relates to the last days.

“The book that was sealed was not the book of Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days. The Scripture says, ‘But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased’ (Daniel 12:4). When the book was opened, the proclamation was made, ‘Time shall be no longer.’ (See Revelation 10:6.) The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the increase of knowledge a people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days....

“In the first angel’s message men are called upon to worship God, our Creator, who made the world and all things that are therein. They have paid homage to an institution of the Papacy, making of no effect the law of Jehovah, but there is to be an increase of knowledge on this subject.” Selected Messages, book 2, 105, 106.

At the time of the end in 1989 the last six verses of Daniel chapter eleven represent the “portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related to the last days.” It was recognized when it was then unsealed, and that unsealing produced an increase of knowledge on the “institution of the Papacy, making of no effect the law of Jehovah.” The Alpha and Omega always illustrates the end with the beginning, and the testing process that began in 1989, was designed to produce two classes of worshippers.

And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. Daniel 12:9, 10.

We are now in the final period of that testing process, for the controversy of the robbers at the beginning of Adventism is now being repeated. To identify the robbers as the United States is to identify Antiochus as the robbers. It is the identical controversy of the Millerites and Protestants.

At the end of the testing process, just as in the beginning of the testing process, which began in 1989, the Lion of the tribe of Judah unseals “that portion of the prophecy of Daniel which related

to the last days.” In 1989 it was the last six verses of Daniel eleven, and at the ending it is the hidden history of verse forty, that is typified by verses ten through sixteen.

We will continue our consideration of the six lines of controversies within the history of Adventism in the following articles. The first of those six controversies illustrates the last of those six controversies. We will use the first and last controversies to overlay the other four controversies as we unfold the elements involved with the efforts of the enemy of righteousness to prevent God’s people from rightly dividing “the vision”, which is established with the symbol of Rome.

“Unless we understand the importance of the moments that are swiftly passing into eternity, and make ready to stand in the great day of God, we shall be unfaithful stewards. The watchman is to know the time of night. Everything is now clothed with a solemnity that all who believe the truth for this time should realize. They should act in reference to the day of God. The judgments of God are about to fall upon the world, and we need to be preparing for that great day.

“Our time is precious. We have but few, very few days of probation in which to make ready for the future, immortal life. We have no time to spend in haphazard movements. We should fear to skim the surface of the word of God.” Testimonies, volume 6, 407.