

Daniel 1b – Themes to Learn in the Book of Daniel

There are four prophetic outlines given in Daniel-chapters 2, 7, 8 to 9 and 10 to 12. William Miller and James White took pains to emphasize that the four lines of prophecy cover the same ground and enforce the same truth. They were right.

The prophecies of Daniel are a unit

Not only are the four lines of prophecy parallel, but they have one great theme. Ellen G. White wrote: "Consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies of Daniel were given." Testimonies to Ministers, p. 113. The armies of Nebuchadnezzar had descended upon the kingdom of Judah: kingdom, king, sanctuary and people were swept away by the Babylonians. Daniel was among those forlorn captives who hung up their harps beside the river of Babylon and refused to sing the songs of Zion. Along with every true-blooded Hebrew, he longed for the restoration.

The Restoration

In one word this is the theme of Daniel's prophecies. Through a series of visions, God revealed to Daniel both the time and manner of the restoration:

- -Restoration of the kingdom
- -Restoration of the king
- -Restoration of the sanctuary
- -Restoration of the people

Daniel 2

Restoration of the Kingdom

The restoration of the kingdom of David was the great hope of the Jews. Daniel and his compatriots expected that God would restore the kingdom at the end of the seventy years' captivity in Babylon. (See Daniel 9:2.) Then King Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream about an image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay. God gave to Daniel the interpretation of the dream. Three more world empires must succeed Babylon (Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome). The fourth and last empire must be divided as the toes of a man, and a stone, representing the kingdom of God, would smite the image and break it in pieces. Then God would restore the kingdom to Israel.

Daniel 7

Restoration of the King

Concerning Zedekiah, the last king of Israel, God had said : "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high . I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." Ezekiel 21:25-27. Never again would Israel have a king until Christ would come to take the throne. In the vision of Daniel 7, the prophet was shown that the king would not be restored at the end of Babylonish captivity. The four great empires, represented by the lion, bear, leopard and nondescript beast, must have their period of dominion. Then the Papal horn must continue for 1260

years. After that, Christ would enter the investigative judgment to receive the kingdom from His Father. Says the prophet:

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Daniel 7:13, 14. Clearly, then, the theme of Daniel 7 is THE RESTORATION OF THE KING.

Daniel 8

Restoration of the Sanctuary

To the Hebrew mind the restoration of the kingdom and the king would be unthinkable without a restored sanctuary. In the vision of Daniel 8, the prophet was shown that the sanctuary would be "cleansed" ("restored" R .S .V.) at the end of the 2300 prophetic days. Daniel was greatly troubled about this information, for he could not understand the relation between the 2300 years and the seventy years spoken of by Jeremiah: (See Prophets and Kings, p. 554). He sought the Lord in prayer that God would not defer to restore the sanctuary. In the explanation given in chapter 9, Daniel is assured that the Jewish sanctuary would be restored at the end of the seventy years. But this was not the real and final restoration that God envisioned, for Daniel was told that the Jewish temple would again be destroyed (Daniel 9:26). It was the real sanctuary, even the one in heaven, that would be restored. Just as the everlasting kingdom and the King would be infinitely more glorious than the little kingdom of Judah, so the true sanctuary of the Israel of God would be infinitely superior to the earthly. The partial restoration at the end of the seventy years would only be a little model or type of the final restoration that would take place at the end of the 2300 years: (See Prophets and Kings, p. 714). The theme of Daniel 8 is THE RESTORATION OF THE SANCTUARY.

Daniel 10 to 12

Restoration of the People

It has been pointed out how the first three prophetic outlines deal with the restoration of the kingdom, the king and the sanctuary, in that order. But one important aspect of the restoration has not been dealt with specifically-the restoration of the people from the dominion of oppressing powers. It is fundamental to know that, above everything else, God is dealing with His people. The book of Daniel, like the entire Bible, is the story of the restoration of God's people. In Daniel's last vision, which was shown him by the side of the river Hiddekel, he saw the restoration of the people. At the opening of this last vision, the angel said to Daniel: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days." Daniel 10:14. At the close of the vision, the angel described the climax of the drama in these words: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Daniel 12:1.

The restoration of the people of God is the theme of Daniel's last vision-not Turkey, not Russia, not the Papacy. What a great mistake to indulge in some tangent interpretation of political events when God is spelling out the event of all events in His great gospel plan: the restoration of His people! It is the theme of the vision by the Hiddekel, and the entire prophecy will come alive with thrilling vitality when this is realized. The interrelation of the fourfold restoration. The focal point of Daniel 2 is the restoration of the kingdom. This foundation prophecy may be represented by a circle. But the kingdom cannot be restored until the King is restored. The restoration of the King is the focal point of Daniel 7. Daniel 7 can be illustrated by a circle within the first. Just as the kingdom cannot be restored unless the King is restored, so the King cannot be restored until His sanctuary is restored (Daniel 8:14). Jesus cannot become King until His sanctuary is cleansed, for while the sins of God's people are yet in the sanctuary and are still being transferred into the sanctuary, Jesus must remain in His high-priestly attire. He cannot put on His kingly robes until He has laid off His priestly robes, and this He cannot do until He has cleansed His sanctuary. So the restoration of the King depends upon the restoration of the sanctuary. Daniel 8 may be illustrated by a circle within the second.

Now comes the crucial point. Adventists realize that Jesus entered the Most Holy place of the heavenly sanctuary at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14. That was more than 170 years ago. Why the delay that now extends to the fourth generation of Adventists? Upon what does the restoration of the sanctuary depend? It depends upon the restoration of the people! This is the theme of Daniel 10 to 12. Thus the final circle illustrates the hub of the mighty message of Daniel. Just as there can be no restored kingdom without a restored King, and no restored King without a restored sanctuary, so there can be no restored sanctuary apart from a corresponding restoration in the hearts of the saints. This is because the condition of the sanctuary is directly related to the spiritual condition of the saints. They worship and dwell in the heavenly temple (Revelation 11:1; 13:6), not in their flesh, but in spirit-in the thoughts of their minds and the affections of their hearts. Therefore the sanctuary cannot be cleansed and restored until every mind which worships and abides there is restored in the moral character to the image of God. This relationship between sanctuary and people was the great lesson of the Hebrew tabernacle. When the people were defiled, the sanctuary was defiled at the same time: (Cf. Leviticus 20:1-3; Ezekiel 5:11; Numbers 19:13, 20) and the final cleansing of the people coincided with the final cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement: (See Leviticus 16:15-17, 30.) Sin and sinfulness on the part of God's people keep the sanctuary defiled.

There must be an end of sin in the experience of the church before Jesus can restore His sanctuary. Looking at the illustration of the four concentric circles, it should be perfectly clear that the restoration does not start from without; it must start from within. Only the restoration of God's people to a state of absolute freedom from sin will make the restoration of the sanctuary a possibility. Only the restoration of the sanctuary will enable Jesus to become King. And only when He becomes King can the prayer be answered, "Thy kingdom come." Should it be a surprise that the enemy of God and man has done everything possible to blind the minds of God's people to the truth of Daniel's last prophecy? Yet the truth revealed in the last vision is the denouement to the whole drama of restoration! Unless the people of God realize their part in the cleansing of the sanctuary, no restoration is possible. Was it not sin in the hearts of Israel that caused the desolation of their sanctuary, the

removal of their king, and the destruction of their kingdom? This point is obvious. Then should it not be just as obvious that only a restoration in the hearts and minds of the saints can enable Jesus to restore all that was lost through sin!

The four great prophetic outlines of Daniel present a logical and beautiful arrangement of truth. Restoration is the theme. Restoration of God's people is the crowning and concluding theme. One point that should not be forgotten is that the key player in the Book of Daniel is "The Prince of thy People" aka Micahel the Christ as it is in the Book of Revelation too as the Lamb.

The Judgment

The focal point of history in the drama of restoration is the judgment. The name Daniel means "God is my judge." The book of Daniel tells about God's work of judgment for His people. It is in the judgment that the stone of Daniel 2 is cut out of the mountain without hands before it smites the image upon its feet. It is in the judgment that King Jesus is restored to the throne. (Daniel 7). It is in the judgment that the sanctuary is restored (Daniel 8). So also it is in the judgment that God's people receive the seal of God, signifying that they are restored to the full moral image of God in their characters: (See Daniel 11). Daniel 11 relates the judgment and cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, brought to view in chapters 7 and 8, to the earthly experience of the living saints.

Four Great Lessons

As there are four prophetic outlines in Daniel, so there are four historic chapters which provide four great lessons about earthly authority.

Lesson one is contained in Daniel 3:

God gave dominion to Nebuchadnezzar, but that authority did not include the consciences of his subjects. Earthly rulers must not enforce any kind of worship.

Lesson two is contained in Daniel 4:

Earthly rulers should recognize that their power is given them by the will and providence of God. Power and authority must not become an occasion for self-exaltation.

Lesson three is contained in Daniel 5:

Earthly dominion places in the hands of rulers the responsibility to serve their subjects. Power and position must not be used as an opportunity to indulge selfish-gratification.

Lesson four is contained in Daniel 6:

Earthly powers must not use their authority to forbid worship. These are the great principles by which one may understand God's dealings with the nations. Each great power is given its period of test. When it uses its God-given power to enforce worship, to exalt itself, to indulge itself, or to forbid worship, it thereby rejects God's principles and works its own ruin. Its place is then occupied by another. Finally, when all nations pass the limit of divine forbearance, Christ takes His great power and reigns: (See Daniel 12:1). All history moves forward to this climactic event.

Blessings