The Sanctuary to be Cleansed

So far we have covered the first 490 years of the 2300-day-for-a-year prophecy. There remains 1810 years from 34 A.D. Counting down 1810 years, we come to the year 1844, the time when the sanctuary was to “be cleansed” (Daniel 9:14).

What happened in 1844—one of the greatest religious awakenings recorded in history? It started with a baptist preacher by the name of William Miller. He and others in various countries began to preach a message based upon the prophecies of Daniel. The central focus of Miller’s preaching was the 2300-years-for-a-year prophecy which he believed would end around 1843. The accuracy and simplicity of his messages awakened multitudes. Even infidels were converted by a fulfillment of a day-for-a-year prophecy predicting the fall of the Ottoman Empire (see Revelation 9 study).

William Miller made only one mistake. The common view held among Bible scholars of his day was that the sanctuary was the earth. Therefore he taught and believed that Christ was to come to the earth at the conclusion of this time period to cleanse it by destroying sin and taking His faithful home to heaven with Him.

After some minor disappointments and recalculations, the final date was set for October 22, 1844. Thousands were anticipating the advent of their Lord. Crops went ungathered, fields were left unplowed. All who had heard and believed this wonderful message awaited the promise with sweet expectation. As morning turned to evening and then to midnight gloom, a bitter disappointment came upon even the most hopeful. Thus were fulfilled the words of prophecy, “And I took the little book out of the angel’s hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and, as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter” (Revelation 10:10).

The little book was the book of Daniel, once sealed but now open. Its prophecies had been prayerfully studied by multitudes of Bible students and scholars throughout the world. The message was sweet in their mouths, but the disappointment was bitter to the stomach. Only a small handful of the thousands who had believed remained faithful to the message. “What had gone wrong?” they wondered, while their former brethren betrayed the truth and the world mocked them.

They were to find the key which would unlock this heavenly message.

The Sanctuary in Heaven

“And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. . . . And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant” (Revelations 11:1-2).

The apostle Paul adds his endorsement to the placement of this time prophecy when he says, “For when we were yet without strength, at the time wherein we did notyet come” (John 7:6). And again, “My time is not yet come” (John 7:8).

It is important to note that each of the uses of the word time in these texts mean, “set, or proper time.” (see Strong’s #3254). Each one of these is confirming the application of the 2300-year prophecy that was set or properly established by God through the angel Gabriel in Daniel 8 and 9.

“In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:27). When Christ was crucified in 31 A.D., “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Matthew 27:51). This signified the end of the sacrifices in the earthly sanctuary service.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people” (Daniel 9:24). This takes us from 457 A.D. down to 34 A.D. In 34 A.D. Stephen was stoned, signifying the rejection of the gospel by the Jews as a nation. Before His departure Christ had told His disciples to go first to the house of Israel (see Matthew 10:5, 13-46). After the stoning of Stephen the early church was “scattered abroad” and went “every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

Placement Endorsed in New Testament

For what we were without strength, at the time wherein we did not yet come, but is now come unto us the right time, and our salvation.” (Romans 5:10). Paul taught that this was to come to the earth at the conclusion of this time period to cleanse it by destroying sin and taking His faithful home to heaven with Him.

“Then shall Messiah Be Cut off

Speaking to false christs and religious teachers bearing false messages, Jesus warned them to be on their guard. “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). The message was sweet in their mouths, but the disappointment was bitter to the stomach. Only a small handful of the thousands who had believed remained faithful to the message.

A Mighty Angel

The first picture we see is “a mighty angel” (Revelation 10:1). The word “angel” in the Greek denotes more than just a literal angel. It means one who is sent to “bring tidings; a messenger or pastor” (see Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, #32).

This means that there are occasions in Revelation when the word “angel” denotes a “pastor” (see Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). Also in the prophetic book of Daniel, Christ, the “Son of Man,” is represented as an “angel” (Daniel 3:25, 28; Revelation 11:13). And earlier in Revelation He is symbolized as an angel, though He is not a created being (see Revelation 8:2-5; John 1:1, 14).

It is the same in Revelation 10. The “mighty angel” represents Jesus, symbolized as such because He is coming as a “messenger” to “bring tidings.” Here are some reasons why this “messenger” represents Christ and not a literal angel:

1. The angel comes “down from heaven clothed with a cloud” as Christ is pictured as doing (see Numbers 12:5; 1 Corinthians 10:4).
2. “A rainbow is upon his head” as Ezekiel sees the “glory of the Lord” (Ezekiel 1:28).
3. “His face was as it were the sun” as Christ’s (see Revelation 1:16).
4. “His feet as pillars of fire” as Christ’s (see Revelation 1:15).

A Little Book Open

Next we notice that this mighty Messenger has “a little book open” in “His hand” (Revelation 10:2). In the Old Testament book of Daniel, we find a parallel theme which will help unlock the meaning of this open book.
In Daniel 10, Daniel sees a “certain man” whose appearance is similar to Jesus when described in Revelation 10:1 and 1:13-16 (see Daniel 10:5-6). Daniel is then given a vision. At the close of this vision, he is told “to seal up the book” (Daniel 12:4). Then this “certain man” appears again “upon the waters of the river” (Daniel 12:5). He lift up his hands “unto heaven” and “swear by Him that liveth for ever” (Daniel 12:7). Following this He gives a series of parallel prophetic time periods, during which the book of Daniel is to be sealed (Daniel 12:7, 11-12). The parallel between these two visions looks something like this:

**The Seven Thunders**

The central focus of Revelation 10 is the “little book” that is described as being “open” (Revelation 10:1-2). It reveals a message, symbolized as the “seven thunders,” which “a voice from heaven” tells John not to “write” (Revelation 10:3-4). In verses 8-10 the “little book” is mentioned again. This time John is told by the same “voice” from heaven “to take” the “little book” and “eat it up” (Revelation 10:8-9). Though we are not told directly what the “seven thunders” are, if we follow the logical sequence we can come to a pretty good conclusion.

1. The “seven thunders” are a message from a “little book” that was sealed and is now open (Daniel 12:4; Revelation 10:2, 4-10).
2. They are a message that was not to be understood by John written it out, but rather by experience, by taking the book and eating it (Revelation 10:8-10).
3. The message of the seven thunders was going to be a “bitter,” “sweet” experience (Revelation 10:9-10). (This is probably the reason why John was not to write it out, for a bitter experience denotes a test of faith. Therefore those who experienced this test were not to be told about it ahead of time.)
4. The message of the seven thunders was a bit sweet experience which was to be preached again before “many peoples, and nations and tongues, and kings” (Revelation 10:11). Therefore, it was an important message that was to be shared with the world.

It makes sense to conclude that the “seven thunders” were not just an accidental slip of the tongue. It is mentioned not just to be sealed up and forgotten. God revealed an important truth to John.

Thunder is a symbol of the voice of God or a message from God (see Job 37:2, Job 40:9). And seven is a number that indicates completion or perfection as in Genesis when God completed or finished His work on the seventh day (see Genesis 2:1-3). Given this symbolism and the context, it would be safe to conclude that the “seven thunders” have a close connection with the “mystery of God” that He prophesied that He would finish before the seventh trumpet sounds (Revelation 10:7).

The Bible says that this mystery of God is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27, 28). Therefore the seven thunders reveal a message from God that is to finish the work of God upon this earth. What is this message?

**Time No Longer**

Another clue to unlocking this vital message of Revelation 10 is found in understanding the phrase, “time no longer” (Revelation 10:6). Some Bible translations may render this passage, “there will be no more delay” (Revelation 10, NIV). However, “time” is the preferred translation because it is consistent with the understanding of the same Greek word in the New Testament.

The Greek word chronos being translated as “time” also gives added indication to the linkage of this chapter with Daniel 12 and the prophetic periods. These prophetic time announcements of Daniel 12 link up with Daniel 8 and the taking away of the daily (see Daniel 8:10-14, 21:12-11). Daniel 8 speaks of a prophet time period of “2300 years” (Daniel 8:14). Once we understand this prophet time period and where it fits in history, we can find the meaning of the bittersweet experience.

**The 2300-Day Time Prophecy of Daniel**

This time prophecy of the 2300 years is the longest prophetic time line in the Bible. It so clearly reveals the first coming of Christ in that in some schools of Jewish thought it is considered an inerrant. Yet we will find that, while it is long and somewhat drawn out, it is both simple and compelling in its understanding. Daniel, to whom the vision was given, had difficulty understanding it (see Daniel 8:27). So he prayed earnestly for understanding and God sent the angel Gabriel to give Daniel further enlightenment. This insight is found in Daniel 9 (see Daniel 9:21-27). Therefore we will study both Daniel 8 and 9 in connection with this 2300 year time prophecy.

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1. When comparing the appearance of the “certain man” in Daniel 10:5-6 with the “Son of man” in Revelation 1:13-16 and the “mysterious angel” in Revelation 10:1, it becomes clear that these verses are describing the same being, Jesus Christ. We should not conclude from this that Christ is a created being or angel but rather that He, being the Son of God and thus God in the person of His Son, is also a “mysterious” messenger between heaven and earth. This is consistent with the Greek renditions for “angel” and with other descriptions of Christ in the Bible where Jesus is identified as “Michael” the “great prince” which stands up for his people (Daniel 12:1; 10:13, 21). The angels of heaven are called “His angels” and He is called the “arch” or chief angel (Revelation 12:7; Jude 19; compare John 5:27-28 with 1 Thessalonians 4:16). Yet this does not make Him a created angel, just like the Paraclete, the advocate, or the messenger which do not detract from His Deity but rather give insight to His Lordship of the earth. This is consistent with the Greek rendering for “angel” and with other descriptions in the New Testament (see Revelation 10:1-2). It reveals a message, symbolized as the “seven thunders,” which is to be preached again before “many peoples, and nations and tongues, and kings” (Revelation 10:11). Therefore, this is an important message that is to be shared with the world.

2. The key Greek word involved is chronos. . . . Chronos is translated “time” in some thirty places in the New Testament, as in Matthew 2:7; “what time the star appeared” and Luke 1:17, “the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered.” Chronos is rendered “delay” only once, in the passage that we’re looking at (God Cure, pp. 304-305).

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Another principle of prophetic interpretation that will help is the “day for a year” principle (see Ezekiel 4:6, margin; Numbers 13:34). (The history of the “church of Smyrna,” their “ten days” of “tribulation,” historically being ten years, helps to confirm this “day for a year” understanding. See our study on Revelation 9.)

The day-for-a-year principle applies to the 2300-year prophecy for a number of reasons which we will consider as we move through the prophecy.

**The Seventy Weeks**

In Daniel 9 the angel Gabriel broke the 2300-year prophecy down into smaller time frames marked off by various events. First we should note that this prophecy is NOT about what God expects to see or to do in the future. In fact He Promised to the Messianic nation, the Israelites, to “finish the work,” to anoint the most Holy” (Daniel 9:24).

Erza 7 records the most comprehensive of several decrees given in relation to this prophecy. According to accurate historical records, King Artaxerxes issued this decree in 457 B.C. With this starting point, Gabriel now unfolds with amazing accuracy the most important history ever to be considered by mankind. It is a prophecy depicting the time of Christ’s baptism by John, the length of His public ministry, His death on the cross and the ultimate rejection of the gospel by the Jewish nation. All are revealed over 500 years in advance.

**Messiah the Prince**

From the going forth of the decree, 457 B.C., “unto the Messiah the Prince shall be cut off,” and yet is not an enlisted soldier. Revelation also uses the “angel” terminology to picture Christ ministering before God in behalf of the saints (Revelations 8:2-3). Christ is represented in numerous symbols; i.e., a shepherd, bread, manna, messenger, which do not detract from His Deity but rather give insight to His ministry in behalf of mankind.