

1844 in Prophecy

Part 1

The martyrdom and 2300-year timeline
*“spoken of by Daniel the prophet...
...let him that readeth understand...”*
Mark 13:14

By John D. Nelson

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Cover photo – Carthage Jail. Copyright 1995, John D. Nelson

Abbreviations:

D&C = The Doctrine and Covenants (LDS version)

D&RCS = Daniel & Revelation Committee Series (SDA)

DBY = Discourses of Brigham Young

DHC = Documentary History of the Church (LDS)

JSH = Joseph Smith – History (Pearl of Great Price)

KJV = The Holy Bible – King James Version

MWM = Memoirs of William Miller

OBS = Sir Isaac Newton, “Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John”

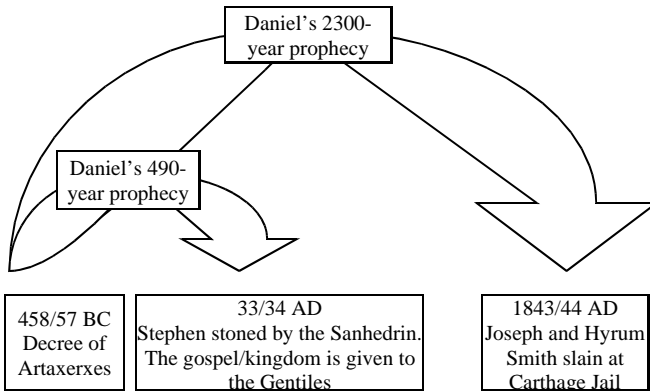
TPJS = Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith

In Memory of Preben

O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Daniel 10:11-12



(The year "0" does not exist in the Christian calendar.)

*And as all have not faith,
Seek ye diligently and teach one another
Words of wisdom,
Seek ye out of the best books
Words of wisdom;
Seek learning....*

... even by study...

...and also by faith.”¹

[a picture of William’s study]

[a picture of the sacred grove]

**The place of study which
launched the Second
Advent Movement
(1831-1844)**

William Miller frequently retired to the woods near his home to seek the Lord’s will in prayer.

**The place of prayer where
Joseph Smith received the
mantle of prophecy
(1820-1844)**

Joseph Smith’s faith to seek the Lord’s will in prayer was bolstered by scripture study (James 1:5)

¹ D&C 88:118. Revealed in 1832, the same year William Miller published his views about 1844 Bible prophecies.

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For the Pure in Heart

Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee.

Alma 31:35

In a distant country, two teenagers were invited into the home of a humble father. Their host was a kind and gentle man, who loved his family, loved the scriptures, and dearly loved the Lord. He was the spiritual leader of hundreds of believers, and had already heard the message that the two young men were prepared to share – that God had restored His church to the earth in the latter days. But that day, the father asked for something more than the standard missionary discussions – for in his life, the stakes had been raised.

After inviting the two guests into his study, the young father said that he was dying of cancer, and explained that he had declined surgery in accordance with his faith. Although the thought of leaving his family pained him, he trusted in the Lord to watch over them.

But before completely resigning himself to his fate, and his family to their loss, he first wanted to hear the message of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in clarity. More specifically, as a student of prophecy, he asked something along the lines of, “If the latter-day Restoration is as crucial to God’s plan as you claim, and since God truly does foretell all things in scripture,² where, according to His promises, can I look – to gather hope that the Mormon faith might just be what it claims?”

He wasn’t asking for proof or for a sign. He simply and humbly expected that if it was so important for God’s children to accept this latter-day message, that a loving Father in Heaven would at least have left hints or clues in His word to lead His children in the direction of the path He desired for them.

² It was the first time a non-Mormon had the faith to request instruction through an appeal to Amos 3:7.

I was one of those young missionaries. Humbled by the faith of this man, my companion and I proceeded to share the passages most familiar to us, drawing from the Old³ and New⁴ Testaments. We also bore testimony that we knew through the witness of the Holy Ghost that this work was ordained of God. Then, we invited him to prayerfully read the Book of Mormon.

He listened very attentively, and was very polite, but was frustrated, as precious moments of his fading life ticked away. He felt those few (and admittedly obscure) passages were not clear enough to foster hope. He suggested that there had to be more, and was convinced that if our message was as true as we testified it was, more would be found in the scriptures. Never before had we had an investigator remind us of the 9th Article of Faith.⁵

The young father invited us to return a few more times, affirmed that he felt what we described as the Spirit of God,⁶ but by about the third visit, his illness had progress so far that his family asked us not to return. I agonized – for him, for his family, and for my inability to wield the sword of truth sufficiently on his behalf.

Weeks later, galvanized by my failure to help Preben, I committed to lengthen my stride. I accepted the charge that if there was greater truth out there to assist sincere men like him in finding truth, then I would pray and study until I found and refined it. Yet during this long journey, the Master's touch has begun to refine me as well.

You now hold in your hand the first half of my answer for sincere people like Preben. This volume focuses on Daniel's writings as they relate to the events of 1844. The second volume examines the prophecies of John and the Savior, which also point to the 1844 martyrdom of God's latter-day messengers. Both volumes draw from the writings of prophets, ancient and modern. This work also draws from leading Christian scholars – many of

³ Fx. Isaiah 29, Ezekiel 37, and Amos 3:7

⁴ Fx. John 10:16, Acts 3:21, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

⁵ “We believe all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

⁶ Like some Christians, he was concerned that such impressions are unreliable.

whom failed to recognize Joseph Smith as a true prophet. As you will soon see, it is surprising how dramatically their studies serve to illuminate Joseph Smith's role in prophecy.

Long ago, wise men came to Jerusalem knowing who to look for, but not where to find Him. They were wise enough to filter helpful truth from the same scribes of Herod who sought to destroy the Christ-child. Likewise, we can learn about the Restoration from some who denounced Christ's messenger, Joseph Smith. As we shall see in the next two chapters, this is precisely what Joseph counseled us to do, for these latter-day scribes unknowingly bore testimony of the Restoration. Therefore, like the parable of talents where the Lord could reap where he did not sow, we'll examine a few interesting views of other humble Christians – that cast light on the 1844 prophecies. Thereby, we'll better understand why they rejected Joseph, and precisely where they stumbled in their interpretation – not so we can snicker at their stumbling, but rather so we can gratefully learn from their mistakes, and clearly mark their stumbling block as a stepping stone for those who follow.

Of course this study of prophecy *proves* nothing. It is merely a greenhouse of hope. It is written to help each of us serve and teach better, and to provide a clearly marked on-ramp whereby sincere individuals can grasp hold of scripture, and press forward in hope to seek a living testimony.⁷ It would not have convinced Preben of the truth of the Restoration, but I believe it would have provided what he was seeking – the prophetic incentive to prayerfully study the Book of Mormon. He was merely asking first to be taught in his own language, the language of prophecy.

If you do not yet know of the truth of the restoration, may our time together provide some of the hope and encouragement needed to nurture the faith to come to the Lord and ask Him for a testimony of His latter-day work.

This record is dedicated to the memory of Preben, and to others like him wherever they may be. May it also assist the rising generation, which struggles to understand their place in prophecy.

⁷ 1 Nephi 8:30

To fishers of men, who yearn to bring souls to Christ, may this also help you widen the Lord's net, and touch one or two hearts that otherwise might not be reached.

And also it is an imperative duty that we owe to all the rising generation, and to all the pure in heart—

For there are many yet on the earth among all sects, parties, and denominations, who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.

....Therefore, dearly beloved brethren, let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed.

D&C 123:11-12, 17

The Blessed Hope

But there were some who began to say that the time was past for the words to be fulfilled, which were spoken by Samuel the Lamanite.

And they began to rejoice over their brethren, saying: Behold the time is past, and the words of Samuel are not fulfilled; therefore, your joy and your faith concerning this thing hath been vain.

And it came to pass that they did make a great uproar throughout the land; and the people who believed began to be very sorrowful, lest by any means those things which had been spoken might not come to pass.

But behold, they did watch steadfastly for that day and that night and that day which should be as one day as if there were no night, that they might know that their faith had not been vain.

3 Nephi 1:5-8

One of the most stirring scenes in the Book of Mormon depicts the plight of Nephites as they faithfully awaited the promised signs of the Savior's birth. With firm faith in the prophecies of Lehi and Samuel, these early Christians pressed forward in faith – and were richly rewarded. A few generations ago, tens of thousands of Christians expected Christ to return in 1844. His coming was, and still is, a blessed hope.

Since William Miller was the most prominent Adventist leader in America, and was also a contemporary of the prophet Joseph, this record will dwell more on the interaction among those who followed these two men, and the striking similarities between their views.

William was a humble Baptist from western Vermont, who moved to New York state shortly after his service in the War of 1812. He accepted Christ during a local revival in 1816, which was during the same religious excitement that affected young Joseph.⁸

⁸ JSH – verse 5.

William's spiritual conversion sparked a thirst for truth. He plunged into the scriptures to better understand God's will, and found them to be a treasure. In 1826, after several years of study, William examined Bible prophecies, which, he believed, pinpointed the timing of the Savior's return – and concluded that it was less than 15 years away! Perhaps unknown to William, scores of other Bible students around the world had arrived at the same stirring conclusion.⁹

Although William was thrilled by the message, he was hesitant to share his views, in part because he feared leading any astray, and in part because of his humility. Like Moses, Enoch, Amos, and Isaiah, he felt, "Who am I to step forward and share?"

For several years, he begged ordained preachers to carry the message forward. But when the clergy declined to shoulder the task, William's worst fears crept forward. The burden would fall upon him.

In the summer of 1831, after heart-wrenching prayer, William began to warn his neighbors in earnest. The following year, he published his conclusions. Soon, he began receiving invitations to share his scriptural perspective throughout New England and eastern Canada. Everywhere he spoke, many were converted to repentance and faith in Christ. As a movement gathered momentum around him, priests and the local press rose up in his wake to question his conclusions and his character. He was slandered in the press, and stoned at the pulpit. In 1834, he received his first death threat, signed by men who promised to put him where no dog would find him.¹⁰ Relentlessly, William ignored the threatening waves and pressed forward, keeping his eye on the Savior's promised return.

The Second Advent movement was obviously gathering steam within the same region and time frame as the latter-day restoration. As Mormon and Millerite members and missionaries traversed North America, they encountered one another's

⁹ A similar interpretation had been circulating in Germany since 1769, in Ireland since 1787, in America and Scotland since 1810, and in Spain since 1812 (Maxwell, *God Cares*, 2:277. Longborough, 86, 103-105).

¹⁰ Doan, *The Miller Heresy*, 188.

teachings. For example, LDS apostles Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff attended Millerite lectures on the East Coast while on their missions,¹¹ while less seasoned Elders who had attended similar lectures returned from the East Coast puffed up with attitude and buzzing with excitement about William Miller's views.¹²

Beyond these encounters, it was rare for either group to encounter favorable treatment of the other group in the press, so, trusting what they read, both Mormons and Millerites often perpetuated the media's perception that their counterparts were simply raving fanatics. However, Joseph Smith stood above the rest.

In both 1843 and 1844, the prophet invited Millerite preachers to share their message in Nauvoo. In the wake of Miller's message, Joseph did what any true disciple should do. He sought wisdom directly from the Author of truth. "I have asked of the Lord concerning His coming," he reported. His prophet message, although disheartening to the hopeful, left no room for misunderstanding.

For example, in early 1843, after meeting with Millerite lay preachers, Joseph recorded:

*I showed them the fallacy of Mr. Millers data concerning the coming of Christ and the end of the world, or as it is commonly called, Millerism, and preached them quite a sermon; that error was in the Bible, or the translation of the Bible; that Miller was in want of correct information upon the subject, and that he was not so much to blame as the translators. I told them the prophecies must all be fulfilled; the sun must be darkened and the moon turned into blood, and many more things take place before Christ would come.*¹³

Two months later, in March of 1843, Joseph stepped forward to deliver the following prophetic counsel:

¹¹ Wilford Woodruff, His Life and Labors, p. 190. Brigham Young's History 1801-44, p. 142.

¹² Compare LDS Conference Report of Joseph Smith's morning sermon, April 8, 1843.

¹³ DHC Vol. 5, pgs. 271-272

I prophesy in the name of the Lord, that Christ will not come this year, as Father Miller has prophesied...and I also prophesy, in the name of the Lord, that Christ will not come in forty years; and if God ever spoke by my mouth, He will not come in that length of time. Brethren, when you go home, write it down, that it may be remembered.¹⁴

Although we don't know if word of this prophetic declaration ever reached Brother Miller's ears, at the April general conference of Adventists, Millerite leaders nonetheless issued a counter-declaration of their own:

We have no confidence whatever in any visions, dreams, or private revelations.¹⁵

So when the Prophet drew a clear line in the sand, the Millerites determined to remain in the opposite camp. Thereby, the Adventists, who professed to be children of the prophets, created a rift between the message of the Restoration and their movement – a rift that would last for generations.

It might be helpful to understand what led the Adventists to make such a stand against personal revelation.

From the very beginning, William Miller had established a level-headed message which appealed to the common-sense attitudes of his day. He struggles to preserve that rational but pious tone as a balance between order and fanaticism. However, by the time of the Millerite general conference in May of 1844, growing fanaticism within Adventist ranks had convinced Adventist leaders of the need for an official policy to halt the fringe actions that were making a spectacle of the entire movement.¹⁶

However, at this critical juncture, Millerite leaders went a step too far. By rejecting the validity of dreams, revelations, and

¹⁴ TPJS 340-341. DHC 6:254

¹⁵ George Knight, *Millennial Fever*, 172

¹⁶ (similar to the fanatical tendencies that cropped up in the early Mormon movement, which Joseph had denounced)

prophecy, they unwittingly severed the very taproots of their movement – for the very passages which they based their end-time hopes upon were the visions, dreams, and revelations recorded by Daniel¹⁷ and John.¹⁸

With their declaration, the Millerite movement unknowingly cast themselves adrift with only one oar – the oar of human interpretation. In doing so, our Adventist brethren parted company with their Nephite counterparts. For when the ancient Americans were faced with the timing of the Savior’s appearance, they displayed greater wisdom by humbly obtaining clarification from their Father in Heaven:

And it came to pass that he went out and bowed himself down upon the earth, and cried mightily to his God...¹⁹

Only after Millerite hopes were dashed in the following year would the humbled Adventist movement restore prayer as a means to understand the Father’s will. Although they would be led by Him to discover great truths, the true fulfillment of the prophecies they loved remained just beyond the vision of that generation. For they had donned partial blinders the day they rejected the messenger who came in fulfillment of the very prophecies they claimed to believe in.²⁰

The blessed hope declared by Joseph Smith was that our Father in Heaven literally hears and answers our prayers, and has set His hand in the latter days to gather and prepare His children for His

¹⁷ Ironically, Daniel testified in writing and by example: “there is a God in heaven, that revealeth secrets, and maketh known... what shall be in the latter days” (Daniel 2:28). Likewise, he taught by example that the Lord’s will can be known through prayerful petition.

¹⁸ Joseph Smith cut to the heart of John’s message regarding personal inspiration: “Many of the sects cry out, ‘Oh, I have the testimony of Jesus; I have the spirit of God; but away with Joe Smith; he says he is a prophet; but there are to be no prophets or revelators in the last days.’ Stop sir! The Revelator says that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; so by your own mouth you are condemned.” TPJS 312. John 16:13. Rev. 19:10.

¹⁹ 3 Nephi 1:11. This was also precisely Joseph’s response to William Miller’s message. TPJS 340-341.

²⁰ Compare Alma 12:10

Son's return. The Millerites, in their eagerness to get home, mortgaged that precious gift. They clung instead to the sweet but naïve hope that Christ would *reveal himself* so soon that no other *revelation* was needed.

Selling short God's promise of inspiration left the Adventists bankrupt at the very hour they needed heavenly guidance the most – when Father Miller's rational and carefully calculated predictions ended in bitter failure. But from the ashes of their failure, many humbled Millerites would arise with truths for our day.

May we look with compassion upon their mistakes, and love them all the more. For their faith in Christ's return was, and still is, a blessed hope.

Condemn me not because of mine imperfection...but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.

Mormon 9:31

Through a Glass Darkly

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

....For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I am known.

1 Corinthians 13:2-13

In the early 1600's, religious theories in Galileo's day began to crumble the moment he pierced the heavens. With a telescope, the aging scientist was able to bring heavenly subjects into clear focus for the first time. He could discern mountains on the moon, and distinct stars in far-away nebula. He observed the migration of sun spots across the stellar surface, and was thereby led to understand that the sun did indeed rotate, and later arrived at the heretical conclusion that the earth itself rotated around the sun.

Shortly after publishing what he had seen in the heavens, Galileo found himself attacked by those whose religious theories of the heavens were thereby threatened. In response, Galileo invited his critics to simply come and press their eye to the glass. Yet they would not look.

Instead, an assembly of mathematicians and clergymen examined his writings, and declared them dangerous. Galileo was summoned to appear before the Court of the Inquisition, and at the age of 69, was forced to kneel before lesser men and publicly renounce what he had clearly seen in the heavens. A gifted man and his writings were condemned by a generation that never mustered the courage to peer through the glass themselves.

Two centuries later, Galileo's experience was repeated in Palmyra, New York:

I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects – all united to persecute me...and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself.

However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it....²¹

²¹ JSH 1:22-25, emphasis added.

Now I ask your assistance in applying Galileo's experience to our present situation.²² As children of the Restoration, we have confidence that our basic needs will always be nurtured within the safe harbor of our own faith. It's a comforting belief, but one that also leaves room for the mistaken assumption that our Christian neighbors might have little or nothing to offer in exchange. The Savior,²³ Paul,²⁴ and Joseph Smith taught otherwise. For example, during the early months of William Miller's predictions, Joseph clearly laid out what our responsibility is toward other beliefs:

Have the Presbyterians any truth? Yes. Have the Baptists, Methodists, etc., any truth? Yes. They all have a little truth mixed with error. We should gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up, or we shall not come out true Mormons.

I do not dwell upon your faults, and you shall not upon mine. Charity, which is love, covereth a multitude of sins....Let us pour forth love – show forth our kindness unto all mankind, and the Lord will reward us with everlasting increase; cast our bread upon the waters and we shall receive it after many days, increased to a hundredfold.²⁵

Obviously, the same quest to treasure up truth applies to our Millerite neighbors. Joseph clearly declared that crucial truths lay hidden within the Millerite message:

Millerites believe [Christ] will make his 2nd advent in a few months, but they will find themselves mistaken. Misteakn as they

²² "...for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning." 1 Nephi 19:23

²³ For example, the end-time parable of talents depicts the Lord entrusting treasure to every man according to their ability. Their duty was to increase their treasure. In the author's view, the best way to accomplish that was through open exchange – sharing with and among our fellowservants, rather than wrapping our beliefs in a napkin out of fear that we might lose what we already had. Matt. 25:14-30.

²⁴ In 1 Cor. 12, as Paul builds up to his crescendo on charity, he explains that the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man, to profit everyone. And that in the body of Christ, no member of the body can say it doesn't need the other. This author views other faiths as fellow tribes in Israel.

²⁵ TPJS 316 (paragraphs cited in reverse order on purpose)

*are, good will come out of the investigation. It will arouse the attention of multitudes to the facts as they exist or will open the minds of people to the truth when it shall be proclaimed by the elders of Israel.*²⁶

Multitudes!

As further testimony of the hidden gems within the Millerite movement, there is the testimony of many early Millerites, who, as 1844 approached, affirmed that the Holy Ghost descended powerfully upon them, confirming for them that God's hand²⁷ was in their movement. When their expectations failed, many refused to confess defeat, trusting that God had led them to that spot for a purpose. Millions of them to this day still affirm that 1844 is prophetic. It may surprise them, and you, to see just how prophetic it is.

I propose a brief experiment. For the next few chapters, let's take faith in the counsel of Christ, Paul, and Joseph to look briefly through William Miller's eyepiece. Let's examine the reasoning and the scriptures that formed the basis for his views. Perhaps a few items relating to the restoration might come into sharper focus. Perhaps we can thereby double our "talents", or see our bread increase an hundredfold. More importantly, perhaps we can live to see the day when this investigation will bless multitudes as it is taught by the Elders of Israel.

....If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

13th Article of Faith.

²⁶ Journal entry for April 17, 1843.

²⁷ "And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments." D&C 59:21

Understanding Daniel (Another Witness of Christ)

And it came to pass that I beheld my brethren, and they were disputing one with another concerning the things which my father had spoken unto them.

For he truly spake many great things which were hard to be understood, save a man should inquire of the Lord. And they being hard in their hearts, therefore they did not look unto the Lord as they ought.

1 Nephi 15:2-3

It may interest the LDS reader to learn that William Miller’s conclusions were based largely on his interpretations of Daniel – the same book which contains a blueprint for the Restoration.²⁸ As we’ll soon see, this was more than a coincidence, for Miller unintentionally bore testimony of the truth of the Restoration. In fact, William Miller’s views cast light on chapters and facets of Daniel which, until now, we have largely ignored.

In reference to Daniel’s writings, the Savior clearly admonished his disciples: “*let him who readeth understand.*”²⁹ In an attempt to understand the Savior’s intent, we can compare his counsel here with parallel passages in Daniel and James:

Daniel	James
<i>...none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.</i> ³⁰	<i>If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.</i> ³¹
Christ: <i>Whoso readeth, let him understand.</i>	

²⁸ See Daniel 2:43-44.

²⁹ Mark 13:14, Matthew 24:15. Which is similar to the Savior’s counsel to his Nephite disciples regarding the writings of Isaiah.

³⁰ Daniel 12:10

³¹ James 1:5

The path is clear. If we desire to understand Daniel (or any other passage), we must wisely seek our Father in prayer – which is, of course, God’s underlying intent with all scripture – to draw us to Him.³² It is also at the heart of Daniel’s words, and something he also taught by example:

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise and knowledge to them that know understanding.³³

In the generation after Galileo, Christians like Sir Isaac Newton began to take the Savior’s counsel here to heart. After prayerful study, Isaac Newton shared his view of Daniel’s importance in latter-day events:

The prediction of things to come relate to the state of the Church in all ages: and amongst the old Prophets, Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood;³⁴ and therefore in those things which must relate to the last times, he must be the key to the rest.³⁵

To better illustrate Daniel’s clear role in prophecy, we’ll draw from Nephi as a helpful comparison, since these two prophets had much in common. As contemporary inhabitants of Jerusalem,³⁶

³² 2 Nephi 26:24

³³ Daniel 2:17-21. Compare Nephi’s parallel experience with his father’s dream. 1 Nephi 10:17-19 (10:17-15:11).

³⁴ Compare Joseph’s statement: “The book of Revelation is one of the plainest books God ever caused to be written.” TPJS 1843-44 pg. 290.

³⁵ OBS 15.

both were delivered from the city's destruction, and both recorded the precise timing of the Savior's first coming.

As related in a previous chapter, it was Lehi's 600-year Messianic prophecy that gave ancient Americans a means to count forward to the birth of the Savior.³⁷ Since God treats all His children with fairness, He also provided a means for those in the Old World to prepare for the timing of the promised Messiah. Appropriately, this second prophecy was provided through Daniel. Bible commentators consider this passage in Daniel "one of the most important prophecies in Scripture."

As recorded in chapters eight and nine of Daniel's record, after Daniel received several visions and revelations from God, one of which he apparently only partially understood,³⁸ Daniel wisely turned to the Lord in prayer. Through scripture study, Daniel realized that the 70 years of Babylonian supremacy had ended, as prophesied by his contemporary Jeremiah.³⁹ But although Jeremiah's prophecy had been largely fulfilled by the overthrow of Babylon, the fate of God's rebellious covenant people still remained unresolved.

Stepping forward into the breach, Daniel fasted and prayed on their behalf, confessing their past wrongs and continual rebellions, asking that as He delivered their fathers from Egypt, the Living God might now gather them back to Jerusalem to restore the temple. In the middle of Daniel's plea, the angel Gabriel appeared and delivered the following distinct prophecy:

³⁶ The record of Nephi, which contains the prophecies of his father Lehi, was begun in the first year of Zedekiah's reign, only three months and ten days after the young prince Daniel was carried hostage to Babylon (2 Chron. 36:5-11; 1 Nephi 1:3-4). It is even conceivable that the young prince Daniel crossed paths with Lehi or Nephi, considering Lehi's former wealth, his family connection to a captain of the guard in Jerusalem, and his likely attendance to hear from the prophets Jeremiah, Urijah, and other contemporary prophets.

³⁷ Just as wise men were led to a star in the heavens, ancient Americans were promised heavenly signs that announced the Messiah's birth.

³⁸ Other translations of Daniel 8:27 render this passage, "*And I was troubled by the visions, and did not understand it.*" This rendering provides both sense and continuity to the later statements of angelic clarification in Daniel 9:21-23.

³⁹ Daniel 9:2; Jeremiah 25:8-13

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 the 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 many⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹

The Start Date for Reckoning Daniel's Prophecy

In the attempt to understand Daniel, several different starting points for his 70-week prophecy have been proposed in Christian and Jewish circles. According to Daniel's record, chapter 9 begins during the Medio-Persian empire. Gabriel clarifies in that chapter that his Messianic time prophecy was to be reckoned from a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.⁴² Therefore, most of the proposed starting points for Daniel's Messianic "70 weeks" revolve around one of four decrees made by Persian rulers, each of which are recorded in the Old Testament.⁴³

⁴⁰ Compare Matt. 26:28

⁴¹ Daniel 9:24-27

⁴² Daniel 9:25

⁴³ Nehemiah 1-2; Ezra chapters 1-2, 5, and 7. For a brief discussion of an alternative theory circulating in Christian circles, and its shortcomings, see Appendix C.

Most Millerites (and several post-Millennialists⁴⁴ and Restorationists⁴⁵) accepted the third Persian decree (458/57 BC⁴⁶) as the correct starting point for Daniel’s prophecy. As will be shown later in this chapter, this starting point synchronizes precisely with events in the New Testament.⁴⁷

The Day/Year Principle in Prophecy

Since we’ll need to understand Daniel’s terminology, let’s take a closer look at Daniel’s meaning of “seventy weeks.”

Many Bible students, including the Millerites, understand Daniel’s 70 weeks (490 days) to actually mean 70 weeks of years, or 490 years, with each day of prophecy symbolizing an actual year for Israel. We’ll draw upon this principle later in our discussion of 1844. Its acceptance by many Bible students is based in part on Ezekiel, another one of Daniel’s contemporaries:

*For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity,
according to the number of the days...
And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on
thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of
Juday forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.⁴⁸*

Another example of the day/year connection in prophecy was uttered by the Lord through Moses, shortly after the tribes of Israel rebelled against Joshua and Caleb:

⁴⁴ Those who believe Christ’s return would occur after the millennium.

⁴⁵ Those who believed Christ would soon restore his truths and/or his church – for example, a congregation of United Brethren in England that Wilford Woodruff baptized in the 1830’s.

⁴⁶ See Ezra 7. The usage “458/57 BC” does not reflect a question as to the year. Rather, since the Jewish year begins at a different point than the New Year familiar to Westerners, a slash dividing two years is akin to saying “the 86/87 school year”, since each Jewish year spans across portions of two Western years.

⁴⁷ As a point of interest, the acceptance of the third decree as ushering in the prophecy also patterns more closely after the Jewish method of reckoning time, which reckoned the start of the new day (i.e. sunset) with the appearance of the third star in the sky. All things are established by two or three witnesses.

⁴⁸ Ezekiel 4:5-6

And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.⁴⁹

As an additional assurance that each of Daniel’s weeks means seven years, and thereby each of Daniel’s days means a year, we can turn to the story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah in Genesis 29. Most of us are familiar with the story of Jacob serving seven years for the privilege to marry Rachel, only to be tricked into marrying her sister Leah. And then he worked another seven years for Rachel’s hand. In the King James translation, the word used to describe Jacob’s seven-year time period is translated as “week” in English. However, when we read that passage, we note that this “week” is a clearly a week of years, or seven years, rather than a week of days.

Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

...And he... served with him yet seven other years.⁵⁰

The Hebrew word for “week” here is the exact same word found in Daniel 9. So it is fitting, when reading Daniel’s prophecy of weeks, to understand each of his weeks to mean seven years.

So in time prophecies, when God’s covenant people rebelled, he provided them a fixed period of time to repent – and often described those “years” in figurative “days.”

To What Date do Daniel, the Persian Decree, and the Day/Year Principle Triangulate?

⁴⁹ Numbers 14:33-34.

⁵⁰ Genesis 29:27-30

If we tentatively accept the decree of 458/57 BC as a valid starting date of Daniel's prophecy, and also the Day/Year principle as being valid in Daniel's writings, his intention becomes clear. Daniel records divisions of time in chapter nine – a 70-week period, composed of a 7-week segment, a 62-week segment, and a final 1-week segment. Verse 25 tells us specifically that from the point of the decree until the Messiah, both the 7-week and the 62-week segments would pass (totaling 69 weeks). Since those first 69 weeks equal 483 days (69x7), and since the Day/Year principle suggests that a day equals a year, we should find verse 25 fulfilled 483 years after 458/57 BC.

Also, there was no year “zero” in the Christian calendar, since the concept of zero didn't reach the West until centuries after the Christian calendar was invented. Therefore, we should look for the Messiah's appearance, in fulfillment of Daniel's record, immediately after the 483rd year of 26/27 AD.

How Does that Conclusion Align with the Timing of the Savior's Ministry?

Most of us have unconsciously assumed that the Christian calendar is accurate, and that Christ's ministry began in 30 AD. A closer look suggests that the Christian calendar is off by several years. Luke provides the actual starting date for Christ's ministry, and his anointing at the River Jordan:

*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius
Caesar...the word of God⁵¹ came unto John the son of
Zacharias in the wilderness.*

*...Now when all the people were baptized, it came to
pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven
was opened.*

*And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a
dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou
art my beloved Son, in thee I am well blessed.⁵²*

⁵¹ Based on verbiage elsewhere in the New Testament, including the first chapter of John, “the word of God” found here is likely a reference to Christ, and is thus likely telling us precisely when Christ came to John to be baptized, as the rest of the chapter suggests.

⁵² Luke 3:1-2, 21-22.

Since the Emperor Tiberius ascended to the throne in 13/14 AD, the fifteenth year of his reign would fall during 27/28 AD, precisely when Daniel said the covenant people should look for the Messiah's appearance.

Is the Timing of His Ministry Merely a Coincidence, or did Jesus of Nazareth Actually Fulfill Daniel's Prophecy?

First of all, it is obvious from the words in Daniel 9 that the prophecy is Messianic. In fact, the same Gabriel who revealed this time prophecy to Daniel was the messenger to also return centuries later and alert Mary and Zacharias that Israel's Messianic hopes were about to be fulfilled through their children.⁵³ But to settle remaining doubts, let's review the Savior's own words to see if he viewed his coming as any fulfillment of time prophecy.

At the start of his ministry, following his baptism and anointing at Jordan, the Savior went to his local synagogue and publicly recited Isaiah 61:1-2, a passage which described both his anointing⁵⁴ and "*the acceptable year of the Lord.*" The Messiah then declared, "*this day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears.*"⁵⁵

According to Mark, Jesus then launched his ministry, testifying: "***The time is fulfilled...***"⁵⁶ This is apparently a reference to Gabriel's time.

Then, at the end of the Savior's mission, approximately three and a half years⁵⁷ after his baptism, the Savior wept, and declared that Jerusalem's pending desolation would come because "*they*

⁵³ Luke 1.

⁵⁴ Acts 10:37-38. Both the Greek title "Christ" and the Hebrew title "Messiah" mean "anointed."

⁵⁵ Luke 4:14-21

⁵⁶ Mark 1:15

⁵⁷ Not that Daniel 9:26 indicates Christ would be cut off sometime after the 483rd year. Then, verse 27 pinpoints the timing even more precisely to say it would in the middle of the last seven years (roughly 3 ½ years after the year 27/28 – or in the spring of 30 or 31 AD.) For a further discussion of why the Savior's crucifixion was likely not in 33 or 34 AD, as some have assumed, please reconsider the dates contained within the New Testament above, and other scriptural dates in Appendix A & B.

knew not the **time** of their visitation.”⁵⁸ Again, if not Gabriel’s time, then whose?

But for the ultra-skeptical, is there any specific mention of Daniel’s 70 weeks? Perhaps.

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.*⁵⁹

Most interpreters view these 70 sevens as a figurative term that bears no real meaning other than to convey the idea that Peter was to be very forgiving. I submit that it may be a direct reference to the Lord’s timeline recorded by Daniel, indicating how long the Lord would bear with the Jewish kingdom as His standard bearers. By the end of that appointed time, most of his covenant people failed to recognize His appearance, ministry, sacrifice and resurrection as the most pivotal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.⁶⁰ So the kingdom was given to the Gentiles.

Were the Covenant People Aware of Daniel’s Prophecy?

Shortly before John the Baptist was born, a Rabbi named Nehumias declared that the time appointed by Daniel for the appearance of the Messiah would be fulfilled within 50 years.⁶¹ Daniel was also frequently copied and cited in the Dead Sea Scrolls. By the time of John the Baptist, Jewish belief in Daniel’s timing was apparently widespread, for many of the scribes, priests, and humble Jews eagerly expected the appearance of the promised Christ or Messiah at the time appointed by Gabriel.

⁵⁸ Luke 19:44

⁵⁹ Matthew 18:21-22

⁶⁰ John 1:5,10

⁶¹ Cited by Grotius (Dutch theologian) per Cf. Delitzsch and Gloag in “The Messiahship,” Book 2, 226 (who were cited by John Ankerberg and John Weldon in “The Facts on Jesus and the Messiah,” page 39. Eugene: 1976, The Ankerberg Theological Research Institute.)

*And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not.*⁶²

Their expectations were fueled by signs in the heavens, angelic visitations, shepherds, wise men, John the Baptist, Daniel's prophecy,⁶³ and direct inspiration.⁶⁴ But although the covenant people as a whole were in expectation for their Messiah, the conflicting Messianic theories, creeds, or "doctrines of men" muddied the waters, and blinded many Jews from recognizing the humble Jesus of Nazareth as the Promised One. Only a relatively few came forward to accept him as the true fulfillment of Gabriel's promise.⁶⁵ The Jews who rejected him then were left to assume that either their calculation of Daniel's time had been in error, or that the Messiah had somehow come in secret, but was hidden from their view until some future day when they would prove worthy of His appearance.⁶⁶

As we shall soon see, history would repeat itself centuries later in 1844. In that year, God's covenant people would look to Daniel and again divide into three similar viewpoints:

- 1) those who acknowledged the literal fulfillment of Daniel's promises;
- 2) those who assumed their reckoning of Daniel must have been in error;⁶⁷

⁶² Luke 3:15. Compare John 1:41, which also illustrates that the apostles knew the timing was right to be actively looking for Christ to appear.

⁶³ Is it possible that the wise men from the east, among whose forefathers Daniel had served, were aware of the Messianic prophecy which Daniel had recorded centuries earlier in the land of Babylon?

⁶⁴ Compare Luke 2:25-38, Matt. 16:13-17

⁶⁵ See, fx. Galatians 4:1-4

⁶⁶ Which John was apparently inferring in the first chapter of his gospel. For the Jewish belief in an invisible coming of the Messiah, see John Ankerberg and John Weldon in "the Facts on Jesus the Messiah," page 39. Eugene: 1976, The Ankerberg Theological Research Institute. They cite the Talmud in general (no specific citation is stated) and Cf. Delitzsch and Gloag in "The Messiahship," Book 2, pg. 226.

⁶⁷ Which became the view of most Adventist after the passing of 1844.

- 3) and those who assumed Daniel's prophecy had been fulfilled in secret.⁶⁸

To conclude Daniel's Messianic prophecy, the following diagram depicts his 70-week prophecy as described in this chapter, and serves as a springboard for examining his 1844 prophecy.

⁶⁸ Which became the view of one branch of Adventism, now known as the Seventh Day Adventists.

[Placeholder for pending graphic]

Daniel's 1844 Prophecy

...And it cast down some of the host of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of this sanctuary was cast down.

And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered.

Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Daniel 8:10-14

William Miller noted the literal and accurate fulfillment of Daniel's 70-week prophecy, along with the precise fulfillment of other time prophecies.⁶⁹ This pattern of fulfillment fueled faith in thousands of Bible students that there would also be a precise fulfillment of Daniel's 2300 days. This hope became the foundation for several movements in the 1800's, including William Miller's Second Advent movement.⁷⁰

When William studied the 2300-day prophecy in Daniel 8, he proceeded with his traditional logic, carefully applying conclusions that had been both tested and, to his satisfaction, found trustworthy. He reasoned that the vision of chapter eight, which began in the Persian Empire (vs. 3 & 20) and spanned well beyond the Greek Empire (vs. 21-23), could not be referring to a

⁶⁹ Compare Abraham's 400-year prophecy (Gen. 15; Acts 7), Moses' 40-year prophecy (Num. 14), and Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy (Jeremiah 25; Daniel 9).

⁷⁰ It is admittedly an oversimplification to call this William's movement, since preachers in foreign lands were teaching the same message years before him. However, he was the most prominent spokesman of the Advent hope in North America.

duration of 2300 literal days, since the duration of those empires spanned several centuries.⁷¹

Since Daniel's 70-week prophecy had confirmed the premise in Ezekiel and Numbers that a prophetic day could symbolize a literal year, William considered it consistent to also reckon⁷² Daniel's 2300 days as 2300 literal years. However, unlike Lehi's 600-year prophecy and Daniel's 70-week prophecy, the 2300-year prophecy initially appeared to have no starting date to reckon from – until William Miller and others located the missing puzzle piece in the adjacent 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9:25.⁷³

Linking chapter 8 with chapter 9, William thereby concluded that the starting point for Daniel's 70-week prophecy was also the starting point for Daniel's 2300-day prophecy. With a starting date of 458/457 BC, William and thousands of others concluded that Daniel's 2300-day prophecy would find its fulfillment in 1843 or 1844.⁷⁴

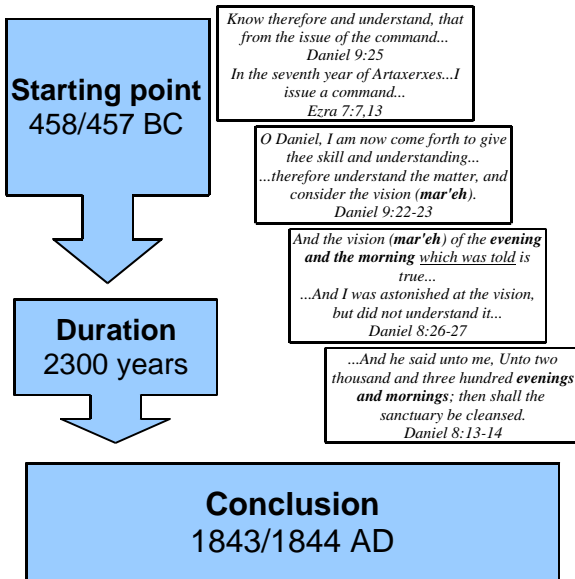
⁷¹ William thereby rejected the previous traditional view that chapter eight was fulfilled around 165 BC by Antiochus, which was the interpretation inferred in the books of Maccabees. Christ also dispelled the traditional Maccabean view in both Matthew 24 and Mark 13, where he confirmed that the true fulfillment had not been fulfilled by Antiochus, but would occur at some time after his own ministry.

⁷² Since the questions in D&C 130 were all generated by the Latter-day Saints, the question of reckoning time now embodied in D&C 130:4 is likely a by-product of curiosity aroused by William's message.

⁷³ Adventists assert that at the end of Daniel chapter 8, the prophet still did not understand the vision, and that Gabriel was sent in chapter 9 to have him “understand the matter and consider the vision.” Since there is no vision in Chapter 9, they asserted that the vision Daniel was supposed to consider in what we call Chapter 9 was the previous 2300-day vision of Chapter 8. Adventists also assert the belief that God wouldn't provide a vision that was indecipherable. Compare TPJS, page 291.

⁷⁴ Although 458/457 BC + 2300 seems to equal 1842/1843, that reckoning ignores the fact that the concept of zero, (and therefore a year 0), did not exist in the initial reckoning of the Christian calendar invented by the cleric Dionysian. With no year “zero”, we need to extend our count to the year 1843/44 in order to have a full duration of 2300 years. If that step seems unclear, count on your fingers 10 years starting at 8 BC – where 1 BC is immediately followed by 1 AD – and you'll see that you arrive at 3 AD, (not 2 AD, as you might have expected.) Likewise, the 2300 years extend a year beyond what we might initially expect – to 1843/44.

There is considerable support for the Adventist assertion that the decree referred to in Daniel 9 is also the starting point for Daniel's 2300 days. Adventist scholars point out that *mar'eh*,⁷⁵ a Hebrew word for “vision” used in the phrase “the vision of the evening and morning” of 8:26 is the same Hebrew term used in 9:23, where the puzzled Daniel is told to refer to the earlier vision. Likewise, the term “evening and morning” in Daniel 9 apparently refers the reader to the previous 2300 “evenings and mornings” in Daniel 8:14. The two chapters appear to be intentionally connected.⁷⁶



By following the links between the two chapters, we can see that when Gabriel returned in chapter 9 to help Daniel understand,

⁷⁵ Related to the English word *night-mare*.

⁷⁶ Although this third and final link between the two chapters is somewhat obscured in the current KJV translation, other translations show that the term “days” in 8:14 would read “evenings and mornings” if translated literally. For the linguistic links between Daniel 8 & 9, see DRCS Vol. 2, p. 228-229 & Vol. 3, p. 305-306.

he referred Daniel to the *earlier* “mar’eh”, or vision, specifically to the evening/morning time element of the 2300 days. Adventists therefore concluded that chapter nine of Daniel was given, in part, to address the unresolved time prophecy in chapter eight. Gabriel thereby fulfilled his commission to help Daniel understand more fully.⁷⁷

The Adventist discovery that chapter 9 clarifies the meaning of chapter 8 also strengthens the common view of Daniel's literary structure. Basically, many Bible scholars assert that subsequent visions and chapters in Daniel intentionally build upon and clarify the book's previous visions and chapters. Furthermore, this view of Daniel's literary structure adds an interesting undercurrent to our understanding of the kingdom rolling forth in the second chapter of Daniel.

With the decree of King Artaxerxes in 458/457 BC as a starting point, William Miller and thousands of others came to believe that Daniel's prophecy would find its fulfillment 2300 years later – sometime in the year 1843/1844. And with the timing figured out, now all Miller needed to do was to determine what the prophesied event would actually be. So he settled in to study what Daniel meant by the cleansing of the sanctuary.

*And I heard a man's voice between the banks of
Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man
to understand the vision.*

Daniel 8:16

⁷⁷ Of course Gabriel's second visitation also served to answer Daniel's prayer concerning the promised gathering of Israel and the restoration of the temple, and to reveal the time of the Messiah's coming. Even so, the Persian decree provided as a starting point couldn't completely resolve Daniel's own questions, since the specified decree would not take place until well after Daniel's death.

1844 – A Crossroads of Interpretation

If these days⁷⁸ are years...any school boy can see it; for if 490 terminated at the death of Christ,⁷⁹ the 2300 days would terminate in 1843;⁸⁰ and the world⁸¹ must end, unless it can be shown that some other event is to take place, and I do not see how that can be done.⁸²

Boston clergyman, early 1840's

William Miller's difficulty in accurately interpreting the meaning of Daniel's 2300-day prophecy is a difficulty shared by every Bible translator. A healthy portion of the challenge revolves around the Hebrew word “nsdq”, translated in the KJV as “cleansed”. (If your own scriptures aren't open by this stage, perhaps you're missing the point.) Please open to Daniel 8:13-14.

The key difficulty for Bible translators is that the Hebrew term “nsdq” appears nowhere else in the Bible in that configuration to confirm an intended meaning. Furthermore, with little clear context within Daniel 8 to triangulate a solid meaning, every subsequent Bible translation of this key passage has a different nuance, if not an entirely different meaning.⁸³ There is also wide disagreement in the same verse regarding what is meant by the term that is translated in the KJV as “sanctuary.”

⁷⁸ Referring to the 2300 days of Daniel 8:13-14.

⁷⁹ In accordance with Daniel 9:27, Adventists do not believe that the 70th week ended with the death of Christ. See Appendix C. They believe instead that Christ died in the middle of the 70th week, and that the 70th week ended with the stoning death of Stephen.

⁸⁰ The clergyman cited here apparently had not yet realized that the year zero did not exist, and therefore that the Jewish year 1843 extended into 1844.

⁸¹ The Greek term translated as “end of the world” in the KJV of Matthew 24:3 is translated as “end of the age” in other translations. Again, both William and his critics were in need of an accurate translation.

⁸² Great 2nd Advent, pgs. 110-111.

⁸³ This is one of the numerous times where Joseph's clarification that we believe the Bible to be the Word of God, as far as it is translated correctly, vindicates his calling, as does his statement that what Father Miller lacked was an accurate translation.

As alluded to earlier, 19th century America was a rerun of 1st century Jerusalem. God's covenant people were again in great expectation, but were in complete disagreement about what to expect. Scores of prominent Bible expositors around the world⁸⁴ agreed that Daniel's prophecy would find its fulfillment in the 1840's. However, there was no agreement among Christians as to what would happen at the appointed time. For example, Miller's contemporary, George Bush, a professor of Hebrew and Oriental literature of New York City University wrote of Father Miller's interpretation:

Whoever attacks Mr. Miller on his point of time, attacks him on his strongest point. His time is right; but he is mistaken in the event to occur.⁸⁵

Although Professor Bush confirmed the timing, his interpretations regarding the event only added to the Babel of confusion regarding what Christians would expect in 1844. As an illustration of the leeway of possible meaning contained in the underlying Hebrew/Aramaic, here are just a few possible renderings of the key passage in Daniel 8:14:

“Unto 2300 days...”

Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed – or
Then shall the sanctuary be made loyal⁸⁶ - or
Then shall the sanctuary be consecrated – or
Then shall the sanctuary be established – or
Then shall the sanctuary be vindicated – or
Then shall the sanctuary be set right -

And interestingly enough:

⁸⁴ Including Alexander Campbell (Great 2nd Adv., 87), who Sidney Rigdon parted company with to follow the prophet Joseph.

⁸⁵ Great 2nd Adv., 111.

⁸⁶ Acts 17:30-31. Daniel's key theme was rebellion vs. loyalty to the king of heaven. According to Adventist research, in Aramaic, the meaning of the main word in question implies loyalty, in reference to king and priest. (DRCS, Vol. 2, 478).

“Unto 2300 days...”

Then shall the church⁸⁷ be restored.⁸⁸

What muddled the waters for many, was that two translators might agree, for example, that the translation should read “sanctuary”, but they might still disagree as to what was meant by sanctuary (fx. the physical body, the earth, the body of true believers, a Church or the Christian church at large, the heavens, etc.).

But William Miller firmly believed that the prophecies were given for the purpose of being understood.⁸⁹ So, in his private study, William carefully analyzed the likely meanings for the “sanctuary” that was to be cleansed or restored. He narrowed the options down to two possible candidates: the earth and the church. **It was at this point that William came to his most critical juncture in interpretation.**

William noted that Daniel 9 had accurately foretold the Savior's first Advent, and concluded with hope that chapter 8 was a reference to Christ's second Advent. He therefore decided that the cleansing of the sanctuary was a reference to a “cleansing” of the earth by fire, which would accompany the Savior's return. Thereby, he set his movement barreling full speed ahead on a collision course with history.

⁸⁷ William acknowledged in 1842 that Christ's church was also a sanctuary. (Letter to Joshua Himes, “*on the Cleansing of the Sanctuary*”). In an interesting parallel variation, John Fletcher, the theologian hand-picked by the Wesleys to succeed John Wesley to lead the Methodist movement, interpreted Daniel to foretell a restoration of truth from papal error. Compare Daniel 8:11-14. (Martin Weber, *Some Call It Heresy*, p. 59. Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1985.)

⁸⁸ There were several “Restoration” groups in the 19th century from which many of the early LDS saints were gathered. This passage in Daniel was part of the foundation for the expectation among some of them that Christ would soon restore His truths, His Church, and/or His priesthood. (Alexander Campbell's 1829 Cincinnati debate with Robert Owen, see J.N. Loughborough, *Great 2nd Advent Movement*, pg. 87).

⁸⁹ Compare TPJS 291.

The prophet Joseph Smith heard of Miller's conclusion. After praying over the topic and receiving an answer, the prophet hoisted a warning in Nauvoo that William and his followers were setting themselves up for disappointment – and further explained that the cause for their error was a faulty Bible translation.⁹⁰ But the Millerite movement ignored his counsel with a shrug and steamed on ahead.

Although Joseph's counsel likely never reached the core Millerite leaders, those leaders never claimed to be infallible.

All pretensions to a spirit of prophecy, or to infallibility of the interpretation of prophecy, are utterly disclaimed. It has often been asked, - 'If the event does not come out as you believe, what will you think? Will it not destroy your confidence in the Bible?' To this it is replied, 'Not at all;' the writer has, in the course of his research on this subject, seen so much which has been literally fulfilled as predicted, that although all he has written on this subject should prove to have been founded in ignorance, he cannot doubt but that the prophecies have a meaning, and that they were written by direction and influence of the unerring Spirit of the Holy One, and will, in due time, be fulfilled. But at the same time, he must be permitted to express his firm conviction, that these calculations are founded in truth, and will stand the ordeal they must very soon pass – the unerring test of time.⁹¹

Unfortunately, their expectations failed the test of time. But were they completely wrong? Or, as Professor Bush stated, were they only wrong concerning the expected event? Based on Joseph's admonition about translation errors, what would a

⁹⁰ DCH 5:272

⁹¹ From William Miller, “The Probability of the Second Coming of Christ about AD 1843”, p. 204. Quoted in May 1844 by Josiah Litch in “The Advent Shield and Review”, Vol. 1, Nu. 1, p. 56.

reliable Bible translation⁹² actually lead us to expect to find in the year 1843/1844?⁹³

In 1843, a newspaper editor stumbled in jest upon the prophecy's literal meaning. That spring, as a wondrous new comet appeared in the heavens, the jesting newspaper editor contrasted what he viewed as Millerite superstitions with the perfect rational order of heaven. He imagined the Millerites nervously predicting “martyrdom at the tail of a comet.”⁹⁴ Although at least one prominent Millerite did believe that the comet was “the sign of the Son of Man in heaven,”⁹⁵ apparently neither William Miller nor his followers made any prediction of a pending martyrdom. However, with access to a more accurate translation of scripture, they likely would have.

Or, as the apostle Parley P. Pratt said in the Bowery in Salt Lake City on October 7, 1855:

*Are there any Millerites here who have been setting
a time for the Son of Man to come? . . .
O ye Millerites, ye made a great mistake; you
thought the first thing was the coming of the Lord in
power and great glory; you were going to have him
come immediately, without any kingdom to come to,*

⁹² This passage is not clarified in Joseph's translation of the Bible. In the final year of his life, the prophet did draw a specific connection between Daniel's prophecies and his own pending death, as shown on the following pages.

⁹³ While not a linguist, I offer my two cents as to the intended meaning of the term “tamid” of Daniel 8:11, translated in the KJV as “daily [sacrifices]”. Since the term “sacrifices” is found nowhere in the original text, and the noun “tamid” by itself means something akin to perpetuation”, or “continuance,” I suggest the actual meaning is long-suffering,” as in 1 Peter 3:19-20. In other words, perhaps God's long-suffering with His children would be taken away or withdrawn when the abomination of desolation was committed. See Chapter 7 for a scriptural exploration of Daniel's abomination of desolation.

⁹⁴ Christian Reflector, March 15, 1843, p. 43. Cited in Doan, The Miller Heresy, p. 111.

⁹⁵ Knight, Millennial Fever, 131. Notice that “Son of Man” is not only a reference to the Savior, but is also a term applied to prophets. See Daniel 8:17, and almost any chapter in Ezekiel.

without a forerunner in the shape of a Prophet, but just by men guessing, and predicting, and remarking, and commenting on the prophecies; but so far as the coming of the Lord being the first thing you knew, you will "begin to see these things come to pass, and then know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" and we have to be born again or we cannot see it.

People hear of "Joe Smith," as he is called, of the Book of Mormon, of angels coming from heaven again; of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; of modern Prophets and Apostles, and martyrs, and they think, "what under heaven does all this mean, we have no reason to look for anything of the sort, but we expect the Lord here every minute." They have no idea of a modern Prophet; of angels visiting the earth in the latter times; of modern inspiration; of a modern Church that will hearken to the voice of a Prophet in all things that he shall say unto them; it is all new to them, they are astonished, and say, "what does it mean, I wonder what is this Mormonism coming to?"

The Lord will never come until he has organized his kingdom on the earth, and prepared his people by sending a messenger to prepare the way before him; that messenger has come, and the man that delivered it has been slain, namely, Joseph Smith, and by the instrumentality of that messenger, here sit the Apostles and Prophets, ordained to hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

If the people had read the Scriptures they would have been looking for all this, if they had not listened to a set of blind guides, who have hired out for money to tell them the Scriptures mean something else.

Moving towards a more accurate translation, I invite the reader to first contemplate the passages on the following page, remembering that in 1844, Joseph and Hyrum sealed their testimony and their missions with their blood:

Daniel	Revelation	A Prophet In Chains
<p><i>How long shall be the vision concerning the daily, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden down?</i></p>	<p><i>And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the testimony that they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, <u>How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?</u> And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest</i></p>	<p><i><u>How long</u> shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries? Yea, O Lord, <u>how long</u> shall they suffer these wrongs and unlawful oppressions, before thine heart shall be softened towards them, and thy bowels be moved with compassion toward them? My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high,⁹⁶ thou shalt triumph over all thy foes...</i></p>
<p><i>And he said <u>unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days</u>; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.⁹⁷</i></p>	<p><i>yet for a little season, <u>until their fellowservants also and their brethren should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.</u>⁹⁸</i></p>	<p><i>...If thou shouldst be cast in to the pit, or into the hands of <u>murderers</u>, and the sentence of <u>death</u> passed upon thee...know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he? Therefore hold on thy way...for their bounds are set,⁹⁹</i></p>

⁹⁶ Compare the similar theme in Alma 14:10-13, specifically the passage which provides insight into D&C 121:8 “for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself in glory.”

⁹⁷ Daniel 8:13-14

⁹⁸ Revelation 6:9-11

⁹⁹ A reference to those who sought Joseph's life. Compare the bounds set regarding God's servant in the first two chapters of Job.

		<i>they cannot pass. <u>Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less.</u>¹⁰⁰</i>
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In the 1844 passage of Daniel 8, and in the martyrdom passage of Revelation 6, we have a contextual and thematic match. (Contextual) They both depict a heavenly eavesdropping by God's servants on earth, while heavenly servants yearn to know and understand “how long” God will allow an issue of persecution to continue. (Thematic) They both utilize a backdrop of temple themes – altar, blood, priesthood (the officiating temple host), and cleansing. The central core of both passages is the slaughter of God's servants.

What this slaughter signified was an outright rebellion of God's covenant people. In this vein, let's examine what modern prophets have said concerning the prophecies of Daniel, the martyrdom passage in Revelation 6, and their fulfillment in the latter days.

Daniel 2 & 8	Revelation 6
<p>Joseph Smith: “<u>I calculate to be</u> one of the instruments of setting up the kingdom of Daniel by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world. I once <u>offered my life</u> to the Missouri mob as a sacrifice for my people, and here I am.</p> <p>The ancient prophets [see Daniel 2] declared that in the last days the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, nor left to other people; and the very <u>time that was calculated on</u> [1843/1844] this people were struggling to bring it out...<u>God will always protect me until my mission is fulfilled.</u>”¹⁰¹ [slain in 1844]</p>	<p>John Taylor: “...And their innocent blood, [Joseph and Hyrum's] with the innocent blood of all the martyrs under the altar that John saw, will cry unto the Lord of Hosts till he avenges that blood on the earth.”¹⁰²</p>

¹⁰⁰ Liberty Jail, March, 1839. D&C 121:2-122:9. Note also the parallel suggested meaning between days and years, perhaps a divine nod to the day/year principal.

¹⁰¹ DHC 6:365-366 – paragraphs purposely cited in reverse order. The declaration was made in the spring of 1844 – at the very height of the Millerite excitement, and only six weeks before the prophet's death. As to whether Joseph consciously understood the meaning of Daniel's prophecies, and truly 'calculated' its meaning to refer to himself, consider his statement above (please read it in context, as Joseph prefaced that sermon by reading from Matthew 24 concerning the time of “the end” of verse 14 – a natural transition to Daniel in verse 15). Also, consider

If William Miller had learned of this scriptural evidence – and of other evidence which we will examine in following chapters, he might have been led to realize its truth – shortly after the death of a prophet.¹⁰³ William Miller had declared:

To know whether we have the true historical event for the fulfillment of prophecy: if you find every word of the prophecy (after the figures are understood) is literally fulfilled, then you may know that your history is the true event; but if one word lacks a fulfillment, then you must look for another event, or wait its future development; for God takes care that history and prophecy shall agree, so that the true believing children of God may never be ashamed.¹⁰⁴

Generations later, in an in-depth study of the biblical foundation for 1844, the largest denomination to grow out of the Millerite experience published a parallel conclusion. Their scholars concluded that historical events must fulfill apocalyptic prophecy in every detail, not just in principle, in order to be counted as a true fulfillment.¹⁰⁵ As we will soon see the Millerites' own standard of prophetic measurement, this interpretation of Daniel's

the Lord's counsel to Joseph when he was imprisoned in Missouri, the fact that Joseph knew what awaited him at Carthage in 1844, and that earlier, he had told others that he would not live to see the age of 40 (which means he would die before 1845). (DBY, 470).

¹⁰² D&C 135:6

¹⁰³ A few years back, the Seventh-Day Adventist church commissioned an in-depth study to demonstrate the prophetic validity of 1844, and published seven volumes of documentation. Curiously, in this 7-volume study, they acknowledge a link between Daniel's vision of 1844 and John's vision of the martyrs under the altar in Revelation 6, and even commented on an additional link between the passage in Revelation 6 and the martyrdom passage in John 16:2. In effect, these descendants of Miller's movement state clearly that A=B and B=C, yet deny or overlook the conclusion that A=C – that martyrdom was the fulfillment of Daniel's 1844 prophecy. See DRCS, Vol. 6; pgs. 234-236, 242.

¹⁰⁴ MWM, p. 70.

¹⁰⁵ DRCS Vol. 3, page 290.

prophecies will match their criteria more literally and more fully than any of their current theories.

Although the Millerite interpretation of prophetic timelines is clear and on solid footing, the true event which Daniel foretold is what Adventists and many other denominations still overlook. As mentioned earlier, in 1842, a Boston clergyman wanted nothing more than to correct the Millerite views, but admitted he lacked the one thing needed to accomplish that – a better answer.

If these days¹⁰⁶ are years...any school boy can see it; for if 490 terminated at the death of Christ,¹⁰⁷ the 2300 days would terminate in 1843;¹⁰⁸ and the world¹⁰⁹ must end, unless it can be shown that some other event is to take place, and I do not see how that can be done.¹¹⁰

He may not have seen, but perhaps we can see that some other event **did** take place. Through the spirit of truth, it *can* be shown. I pray that the day will soon come, when, through the elders of Israel, many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world will be brought to realize the actual fulfillment of the 1844 prophecies, and thereby be brought to repentance before our Father in Heaven.

In the early 1800's thousands of Millerites, Restorationists, and Post-Millennialists disagreed on many aspects of their faith, but agreed on one point – that prophecy would be fulfilled in one way or another in the year 1844. At that clear crossroads of their

¹⁰⁶ Referring to the 2300 days of Daniel 8:13-14.

¹⁰⁷ In accordance with Daniel 9:27, Adventists do not believe that the 70th week ended with the death of Christ. See Appendix C. They believe instead that Christ died in the middle of the 70th week, and that the 70th week ended with the stoning death of Stephen.

¹⁰⁸ The clergyman cited here apparently had not yet realized that the year zero did not exist, and therefore that the Jewish year 1843 extended into 1844.

¹⁰⁹ The Greek term translated as “end of the world” in the KJV of Matthew 24:3 is translated as “end of the age” in other translations. Again, both William and his critics were in need of an accurate translation.

¹¹⁰ Great 2nd Advent, pgs. 110-111.

interpretations, “X” clearly marked the spot. Yet they all looked beyond the mark. A century before their errors, Sir Isaac Newton knew that the time would come for the meaning of the prophecies to become clear:

These prophecies of Daniel and John should not be understood till the time of the end: but then some should prophesy out of them in an afflicted and mournful state for a long time, and that but darkly,¹¹¹ so as to convert but few. But in the very end, the prophecy should be so far interpreted as to convince many. Then, saith Daniel, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased....There must be a stone cut out of a mountain without hands, before it can fall upon the toes of the great image, and become a great mountain and fill the earth. An Angel must fly through the midst of heaven with the everlasting gospel to preach to all nations, before Babylon falls.

Sir Isaac Newton¹¹²

¹¹¹ See 1 Corinthians 13:11-12

¹¹² OBS 250-251

The Abomination that Causes Desolation

And verily I say unto you, the rest of my servants, go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reproving the world in righteousness of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days.

D&C 84:117

In previous chapters, we reviewed how the Savior specifically wanted us to understand Daniel.¹¹³ But how many of actually do? The Savior's injunction was stated in the context of the abomination of desolation. Later, in our dispensation, it was added that we are also to teach the desolation of abomination to our neighbors so they can understand it too. So let's review this phrase together so we can perhaps lengthen our stride and better fulfill the Savior's command.

I fondly recall one of the first foreign phrases I was taught as a new missionary in the Missionary Training Center. One of the younger language instructors enjoyed teaching the phrase to us rookies, somewhat like a rite of passage, because the phrase paired up two of the most intimidating words in the Danish language: “oddelaeggelsens vedderstyggelighed.” Translated, it means “the abomination of desolation.” However, when I asked its actual meaning, nobody, myself included, could translate the term into clear and understandable English.

A Review of Abominations

To begin, it might be helpful to know that the Hebrew word translated as “abomination” in the KJV actually signifies outright rebellion. With that as our backdrop, let's zero in on what Daniel and the Savior were specifically wanting us to understand and

¹¹³ Mark 13:14, Matthew 24:15

teach. First, let's review some of the actions the Lord previously identified as abominations:

- Consuming the meat of a sacrifice after the prescribed period of time (Lev. 7:18)
- Consuming specific creatures, including marine creatures that lack fins and scales; birds of prey; and creatures that fly and creep “on all fours”; anything that slithers on its belly; etc. (Lev. 11:10-42)
- Lying with mankind as with womankind (Lev. 18:22)
- Graven images or molten images, and the gold or silver from them (Deut. 7:25-26; 27:15)
- Human sacrifice (Deut. 12:13; Moroni 9:8-9)
- The worship of false gods (Deut. 13:12-14)
- Sacrificing defective offerings (Deut. 17:1)
- Witchcraft and sorcery (Deut. 18:10-12)
- Crossdressing (Deut. 22:5)
- Bringing the pay of a whore of the price of a dog as a vow in God's house
- Violations of the marriage covenant (Deut. 24:1-4, Ezekiel 33:26)
- Using two differing sets of weights or measures (Deut 25:13-16)¹¹⁴
- A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:16-19)
- Prayers from those who turn their ear away from hearing God's will, and sacrifice from wicked people, then “how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind”/intent (Proverbs 15:8; 21:27; 28:9)
- The thoughts of the wicked (Proverbs 15:26)
- When kings commit wickedness (Proverbs 16:12)
- Justifying the wicked, condemning the just, and scorning (Proverbs 17:15; 24:9)

¹¹⁴ Perhaps for those of us in modern times, this might be the equivalent of two sets of books, or perhaps even a double standard.

- Israel breaking its “wedding” covenant with God (Malachi 2)
- That which is highly esteemed among men (Luke 16:15)
- Oppressing the poor, persecuting the righteous, mocking sacred things, denying the spirit of prophecy and revelation, murder, plunder, contentiousness, adultery, deserting to the camp of apostates (Helaman 4:11-12)
- Manmade creeds and denying the power of God (JSH 1:19)¹¹⁵

Which of these Abominations was Spoken of by Daniel?

Of these abominations, which one(s) were referred to by Daniel and the Savior? An examination of the two desolations of Jerusalem (approx. 589 BC and 70 AD) will help suggest an answer.

What Caused the First Desolation of Jerusalem?

Let's first look at Daniel's explanation for why Jerusalem was laid desolate. Daniel's record opens with the siege of Jerusalem. At that time, Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, rebelled against God and against God's servants.¹¹⁶ Therefore, Jehoiakim lost his throne and was taken hostage to Babylon, along with young Daniel. Three months later, Zedekiah, who we also know from the Book of Mormon,¹¹⁷ was appointed to the Jewish throne. Scripture provides the reason why King Jehoiakim lost his kingdom: his terrible abomination¹¹⁸ which was the persecution and slaughter of God's prophets:

¹¹⁵ The rest of the verse suggests why these creeds are abominations. In effect, those statements of belief were awarded the place of respect, loyalty, and authority reserved for God alone. God's people were thereby encouraged by ministers to be loyal to their professed creeds, at the expense of seeking the Lord and trusting in his power to reveal His will. In effect, putting anything before God is a form of idolatry.

¹¹⁶ Note that even Nebuchadnezzar was a servant in the hand of God sent to chastise Judah and the surrounding nations (Jeremiah 27:6).

¹¹⁷ 1 Nephi 1:4

¹¹⁸ 2 Chronicles 36:8. Among the slain servants of God was the prophet Urijah (see Jeremiah 26:20-23).

“for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon.”¹¹⁹

Zedekiah, a successor, would also prove unworthy of the throne, and Jerusalem would be laid waste. Years later, Daniel confirmed that rebellion against God and his messengers was the reason for the desolation of Jerusalem.

O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

....Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.¹²⁰

When exploring the abomination of desolation, it is important to note that desolate simply means void of life. Perhaps it was not the armies of Babylon that made Jerusalem desolate. Instead, based on these passages, it appears to have been Jerusalem's pride, their rebellion against God's messengers, which caused the Spirit of God to withdraw from them, leaving them spiritually desolate and unable to discern the truth. Let's explore this theme, and the meaning of the abomination of desolation, further to see if it holds true with the second desolation.

¹¹⁹ 2 Kings 24:4

¹²⁰ Daniel 9:8-18

What Caused the Second Desolation of Jerusalem

We all know that in the generation after the crucifixion of Christ, Jerusalem itself was once again laid waste – this time by Roman armies. However, that desolation was merely the delayed physical manifestation of the city's spiritual condition. For it had been spiritually desolate for a full generation.

Since, as mentioned earlier, “desolate” means “void of life”, consider the following:

But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.¹²¹

Refusing to come to Christ, refusing to seek His voice or listen to I when clearly uttered is what led to Jerusalem's second desolation. The covenant people once again slew the messengers sent to them, and thereby proved themselves void of life, thereby reaping desolation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.¹²²

¹²¹ John 5:36-40

¹²² Matthew 23:37-38

Conclusion

What then is the abomination of desolation foretold by Daniel the prophet? What is it that the Savior would have all that read to understand, and have us teach to those around us? Based on these passages, it would appear that this abomination is the misrepresentation, rejection, betrayal, persecution, and/or slaughter of God's messengers. This rebellion is clearly what called down the desolation of Jerusalem shortly after 600 BC. And a similar rebellion led to the second desolation of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Last of all, a later rebellion was foretold by Daniel and the Savior that would climax in 1844 with the slaughter of their fellowservants.¹²³ Let him that readeth understand.

To confirm the intent of Daniel and the Savior when referring to “the abomination of desolation,” we can look closer at Daniel 8:13-14 – the passage which contains the 2300-day prophecy.

How long shall be the vision concerning the long-suffering,¹²⁴ and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”
[or church restored, or the saints vindicated, etc.]¹²⁵

In this passage, the first word in the term “transgression of desolation” is the Hebrew “pesa,” which literally means open rebellion or revolt.¹²⁶ What Daniel saw in vision was open revolt, which would leave God's covenant people desolate. That revolt,

¹²³ Consider again the terminology of Revelation 6:11 - “How long...?Until their fellowservants...should be killed.”

¹²⁴ KJV reads “daily sacrifice” instead of long-suffering. However, as mentioned previously, the term “sacrifice” does not exist anywhere in the original language of Daniel's text, and was added by English translators. While the term “daily”, which does appear in the text, can also be translated as continuance, which, in context, suggests long-suffering.

¹²⁵ Daniel 8:13-14

¹²⁶ DRCS Vol. 2, pg. 440

which continues to this day, would climax with the slaughter of God's appointed messengers in 1844.

Despite several scriptural warnings, in 1844, two servants of God were slain at the hands of a people which professed to be Christian. To this day, most branches of Christianity become accomplices, or accessories after the fact, to the rejection and murder of God's messengers. May we humbly and wisely seek the Lord, and receive counsel from His living prophets and apostles, rather than draw away in rebellion. Of the prophet who lives today, may we instead say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 23:37-39

The Millerites Pinpoint the Martyrdom

The predictions of things to come relate to the state of the Church in all ages: and amongst the old Prophets, Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood;¹²⁷ and therefore in those things which must relate to the last times, he must be the key to the rest.

Sir Isaac Newton¹²⁸

The day the Prophet Joseph was slain, several apostles and elders of the Restoration sensed that something significant was afoot, even though they were engaged in missionary labors in the eastern states, hundreds of miles from the events of Nauvoo and Carthage Jail.¹²⁹ They were not alone in their experience. On the exact same day, the Millerites published similar conclusions.

Appropriately, the testimonies we are about to review come from a people who had their hands on the pulse of Daniel's prophecies. These testimonies all come from the June 27th issue of "The Midnight Cry," a leading Millerite newspaper:

On the same day that a prophet of God was slain, Millerites in New England read the following in their June 27th paper:

And this very moment that I am now writing, is the moment that the vision (seems to) tarry,¹³⁰ but I bless God that it will not tarry, but at the appointed time it will speak.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Compare Joseph's statement: "The book of Revelation is one of the plainest books God ever caused to be written....What John saw and speaks of were things which he saw in heaven; those which Daniel saw were on and pertaining to the earth." TPJS, 290.

¹²⁸ OBS, 15.

¹²⁹ These include Parley P. Pratt, Erastus Snow, and several others. See, for example, Parley's autobiography, pages 331-334.

¹³⁰ This citation is apparently a paraphrase of Habbakuk 2 and Daniel 8, two passages which were frequently cited by Millerites trying to explain what they thought was the failure of the prophetic timelines.

¹³¹ New York City: Midnight Cry, June 27, 1844. "Brother C. Hersey and Daughter."

And at that very moment, it did speak loudly, but the Millerites did not have an ear to fully hear what the Spirit was saying to the churches. Although we will soon explore the significance of “the time appointed” alluded to above, let’s first explore another gem-laden passage from the June 27th Midnight Cry:

We know assuredly that we are near the fullness of the time, and as knowledge is to be increased, and the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets,¹³² it is our duty and privilege to seek and know his revealed will. We are admonished by the Lord not to be slow of heart to believe ALL that the prophets have spoken, and also, if any lack wisdom, to ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him¹³³ ...for we confidently believe that God has appointed, or made known, a day in which he will judge the world.¹³⁴

On the day that Christ's messenger was slain, Millerites published several stirring passages like this, which, unknown to them, not only emphasized key points of God's latter-day Restoration, but also serve as epitaphs of a true prophet. Still, the parallels between martyrdom and their June 27th conclusions are overlooked by all offshoots of the Millerite movement – including the more time-sensitive Seventh-Day Adventists. In fact, unknown to most Adventists, their current understanding of 1844's significance emerged from an article also published in the June 27th issue – an article which discussed “the termination of the prophetic periods.”¹³⁵ However, as their contemporary, Professor

¹³² Amos 3:7

¹³³ James 1:5-7, the message of hope which sparked the Restoration.

¹³⁴ New York City: Midnight Cry, June 27, 1844. C. S. Minor – “In the Midst of the Week.”

¹³⁵ Most references to the article by Samuel Snow have been oddly altered by Adventist historians. Adventist lore has shifted to a retelling of a dramatized Paul Revere-like story placed months after the June 27th article. However, this overlooked article, the foundation of their understanding of Daniel's 1844 prophecy, was referred to as “The True Midnight Cry” - a striking New Testament allusion that we will explore further in Volume 2.

Bush explained, the Millerites were right on the timing, and only mistaken concerning the event.

What was to Happen at “the Time Appointed”?

Another passage from the Millerite paper of June 27th can begin answering this question from a surprising source:

True, we have made on mistake on the time....and even now we know not where the mistake lies. No one has yet been able to show where, or in what respect we have erred: unless God's word reveals the secret....True, our opposers have told us, and still tell us our calculations are wrong; but as yet they have ben unable to tell wherein the mistake lie.

....The conclusion is that the signs have all been seen, that point of time has been reached in which all the divine numbers most harmoniously terminate: but the day and hour are wisely hid from mortals,¹³⁶ yet we are assured that this time of suspense will not be long, just long enough to humble our pride...to test our faith, love and integrity; or to purify and make us white... ”¹³⁷

If the Millerite author of the above article had studied the context of his last paraphrase further, his belief that scripture held the answer to the Millerite quandary would have been confirmed.

Examining the source for the paraphrase “to purify and make us white” actually unlocks the meaning behind Daniel's 1844 cleansing. This paraphrase, and the clarification to Daniel's 1844 prophecy, comes appropriately from another chapter in Daniel. There it reads:

And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them

¹³⁶ Compare D&C 121:12,24

¹³⁷ New York City: The Midnight Cry, June 27, 1844, “Who is Mistaken” (emphasis added).

*white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.*¹³⁸

We have four key elements here - (i) a few who understand, (ii) who will somehow “fall”, (iii) which established a trial or cleansing for them and/or others, (iv) and is related to the time of the end.

If we recall from a parallel purification/cleansing passage, Daniel taught in his closing verses that only the wise would understand.

And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?

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: none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.*¹³⁹

From James 1:5, we can infer that those of understanding are those who have inquired of the Lord for their wisdom. So, since those who “fall” and are “cleansed” or “made white” at “the time of the end” or “time appointed” mentioned in chapters 8, 11 and 12 are actually those of understanding, what is meant by their “fall”? Again, Daniel's context provides the key:

*And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.*¹⁴⁰

Daniel provides both the timing and the event that we recognize as the culmination of Joseph's mission. His prophecies also appear to include a nutshell description of the events of Carthage and Nauvoo. If the Millerites had stopped to notice Daniel's context,¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Daniel 11:35

¹³⁹ Daniel 12:8-10

¹⁴⁰ Daniel 11:33. This sequence parallels the events of Carthage and Nauvoo.

they might have discovered why they did not see¹⁴² the Lord return in 1844. It was largely because the passage in Daniel 8:13-14, which they mistakenly¹⁴³ assumed to be a Second Advent prophecy, was instead a promise of latter-day restoration, martyrdom, and cleansing.¹⁴⁴ That passage contained a promise to send latter-day messengers to prepare the way¹⁴⁵ for the Savior's return. This prophetic message would be both a trial that would condemn the wicked, and would purify the pure in heart. While some would heed the call and repent, others would slay the messengers or rejoice in their murder.

A Brief Review of “the Time Appointed”

Since the connections we just hurried through are crucial to an understanding of Daniel's martyrdom prophecies, and since some might not see them clearly at first glance, let's review once more the bread crumbs Daniel left to help us follow his meaning. “The time appointed,” based on the context of Gabriel's statement in Daniel 8:17-19, is the 2300 “days” in the previous few verses (13-14).

<p><i>So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, <u>Understand</u>, O son of man: for <u>at the time of the end shall be the vision</u>.And he said, Behold, I will make</i></p>	<p><i>And they that <u>understand</u> among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the <u>sword</u>, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and <u>to purge</u>.</i></p>
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¹⁴¹ Adventist scholar William Shea, in a brilliant study of the unity of Daniel's writings, noted a strong unity between chapters 8, 9, and 11, and even commented that Daniel 11:33-34 is directly linked to the prophecy of Daniel 8. However, he did not acknowledge the final link between those chapters – that martyrdom was part of the prophecy's 1844 fulfillment. DRCS, Vol. 2, “The Unity of Daniel”, p. 222, 247.

¹⁴² “Ye shall not see me henceforth until ye shall say, 'Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.’” Matthew 23:9. Compare the “when saw we thee” of Matthew 24:46.

¹⁴³ Oddly enough, the article cited bore the title: “Who is Mistaken?”

¹⁴⁴ In a later review of Revelation 10, we will more closely examine what God's professed people were to be cleansed from.

¹⁴⁵ A review of Malachi 3 and 4, the closing chapters of the Old Testament, can further clarify the Lord's latter-day intent.

<i>they know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for <u>at the time appointed the end shall be.</u></i> Daniel 8:17,19	<i><u>and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.</u></i> Daniel 11:33,35
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This understanding of “the time appointed” also helps us appreciate the literal meaning behind the Lord’s reassurance to Joseph in Liberty Jail that his “days” were known and his “years” would not be numbered less.¹⁴⁶

So in 1844, the Lord certainly did not lie, as some critics of William Miller would later claim. In 1844, God’s promises were merely misunderstood and misconstrued by those who wished for the speedy return of Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁷

Although the Millerites prayed for inspiration, they were granted only as much truth as their rejection of Joseph Smith could allow. In accordance with the end-time parable of the Savior, they were given talents “according to their ability.” So while the Millerites teetered on the edge of the truth about 1844, the Lord saw fit in His wisdom to withhold a full interpretation from their generation.¹⁴⁸

Although the Saints of Nauvoo suffered a terrible loss with the murder of Joseph and Hyrum in 1844, the Millerites arguably suffered an even greater disappointment when the time appointed ended, and Christ did not return to bring them home. As an example of their grief, one Millerite father died shortly before Christ’s expected return, and in the midst of 1844, his children had been consoled with the reassurance that they would meet Daddy in the sky in only a few short weeks. But when the time passed, the heart-broken widow had no answers for her own grief, let alone for her children. As the final day passed for Christ’s

¹⁴⁶ D&C 122:9

¹⁴⁷ Which was not new. The rejection of the Savior by the Jews also stemmed from faulty prophetic expectations. Uninspired Jewish teachers had spread doctrines of men, disguised as commandments from God. So even though many of the Jews knew the right timing, they looked for an incorrect fulfillment.

¹⁴⁸ Centuries earlier, a generation of Israel forfeited the blessings of the land of Canaan due to their rebellion against Moses, Caleb, and Joshua. See Numbers 13-14.

prophetic return, another farmer recorded that he and his fellow Millerites “wept until the day dawned.”

The heart-wrenching experience of the Millerites is one that perhaps could have been avoided, had they listened to a living prophet's voice. Rather than condemn them, may we be grateful for their sincerity and devotion, and for the truths that are illuminated by their attempt to see Christ. If we look closer, we might learn that their failure to see the truth was perhaps no fault of their own, but their inability to see could instead have been part of the Lord's grand design – that His works might eventually be made manifest through them.

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

John 9:1-3

William Miller's Dream

*But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets,
and maketh known...what shall be in the latter days.
Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed,
are these.*

*....The dream is certain, and the interpretation
thereof sure.*

Daniel 2:28,45

Since the Millerites officially rejected all dreams, visions, and personal inspiration in the spring of 1843, it is fitting that we wind down this volume of their history with a final dream of William Miller himself. For it embodies a poetic paradox, and offers beautiful closure.

In the wake of the Millerite disappointment of 1844, the Adventist movement disintegrated into numerous splinter groups as new leaders squabbled over doctrinal difference, and fought for control of the movement.¹⁴⁹ Miller was in agony of soul to see his former companions war with one another in the press and from the pulpit. Some even turned and attacked him. Shortly before his death in the last half of the 1840's, he recorded the following glimpse of his despair:

*...Some brethren, whom I had loved in the gospel
with a deep and intense interest, had become
alienated from me, as well as from each other, and
were trying to supplant and injure the characters,
usefulness, influence, and abilities of other brethren
and myself, and had become like the obscene fowls of
the air who live only on carcasses and putrid flesh; it
seemed to me that I should be obliged to give up all
confidence¹⁵⁰ in men, and all love for them; so that,
like David, I had no Jonathan left.*

*....While in this deplorable state of mind, when I
was about to believe in the total depravity of all men,
and that all profession of religion was nothing but*

¹⁴⁹ Ephesians 4:11-14 – God sent prophets to keep that from happening.

¹⁵⁰ An interesting counterpart to Joseph's early dilemma in JSH 1:12.

*hypocrisy, I received comfort and consolation from the following, which may pass for a dream.*¹⁵¹

I include the full account of his dream:

I dreamed that God, by an unseen hand, sent me a curiously wrought casket, about ten inches long by six square, made of ebony and pearls curiously inlaid. To the casket there was a key attached. I immediately took the key and opened the casket, when, to my wonder and surprise, I found it filled with all sorts and sizes of jewels, diamonds, precious stones, and gold and silver coin of every dimension and value, beautifully arranged in their several places in the casket; and thus arranged, they reflected a light and glory equaled only by the sun.

I thought it was my duty not to enjoy this wonderful sight alone, although my heart was overjoyed at the brilliancy, beauty, and value of its contents. I therefore placed it on a center-table in my room, and gave out word that all who had a desire might come and see the most glorious and brilliant sight ever seen by man in this life.

The people began to come in, at first few in number, but increasing to a crowd. When they first looked into the casket they would wonder and shout for joy. But when the spectators increased, every one would begin to trouble the jewels, taking them out of the casket and scattering them on the table.

I began to think the owner would require the casket and jewels again at my hand; and if I suffered them to be scattered, I could never place them in their places in the casket again as before; and felt I should never be able to meet the accountability, for it would be immense. I then began to plead with the people not to handle them, nor take them out of the casket; but the more I plead, the more they scattered; - and now they seemed to scatter them all over the room, on the floor, and on every piece of furniture in the room.

¹⁵¹ MWM, 361.

I then saw that among the genuine jewels and coin they had scattered an innumerable quantity of spurious jewels and counterfeit coin. I was highly incensed at their base conduct and ingratitude, and reproved and reproached them for it; but the more I reproved the more they scattered the spurious jewels and false coin among the genuine.

I then became vexed in my very soul, and began to use physical force to push them out of the room; but while I was pushing out one, three more would enter, and bring in dirt, and shavings, and sand, and all manner of rubbish, until they covered every one of the true jewels, diamonds, and coins, which were all excluded from sight. They also tore in pieces my casket, and scattered it among the rubbish. I thought no man regarded my sorrow or my anger. I became wholly discouraged and disheartened, and sat down and wept.

While I was thus weeping and mourning for my great loss and accountability, I remembered God, and earnestly prayed that he would send me help.

A Consoling Answer to William's Heartbreak

Immediately, the door opened, and a man entered the room, when the people all left it; and he, having a dirtbrush in his hand, opened the windows, and began to brush the dust and rubbish from the room.

I cried to him to forbear, for there were some precious jewels scattered among the rubbish.

He told me to 'fear not,' for he would 'take care of them.'

Then, while he brushed, the dust and rubbish, false jewels and counterfeit coin, all arose and went out of the windows like a cloud, and the wind carried them away. In the bustle I closed my eyes for a moment; when I opened them, the rubbish was all gone. The precious jewels, the diamonds, the gold and silver coins, lay scattered in profusion all over the room.

He then placed on the table a casket, much larger and more beautiful than the former, and gathered up the jewels, the diamonds, the coins, by the handful, and cast them into the casket, till not one was left, -

although some of the diamonds were not bigger than the point of a pin.

He then called upon me to 'come and see.'

I looked into the casket, but my eyes were dazzled with the sight. They shone with ten times their former glory. I thought they had been scoured in the sand by the feet of those wicked persons who had scattered and trod them in the dust. They were arranged in beautiful order in the casket, every one in its place, without any visible pains of the man who cast them in. I shouted with very joy, and that shout awoke me.”¹⁵²

Like the dreams which Daniel interpreted, William accepted the following interpretation of his dream:

Original Treasures = True Bible Doctrines

The Jewels, diamonds, precious stones, etc., were the doctrines of the Bible, which, each sparkling and bright like precious gems, glittered in the casket as they were unfolded to view.¹⁵³

The Scattering of God's Treasures = Apostasy

The scattering of those gems was the sad havoc which the unstable, and those turned about by every wind of doctrine, made with certain portions of revealed truth; preaching for doctrines the imaginings of their own hearts, and placing precious doctrines of God's grace and providence among the rubbish, dirt, shavings, and sand, of the great apostasy; wresting them to their own destruction.¹⁵⁴

The Larger Container = God's Complete Word

The casket was the volume of God's truth, - his whole revealed Word.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² MWM 361-363

¹⁵³ MWM 364

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*

Notice that the second container, or “volume of God's truth” was placed on the table to hold God's restored truths in their proper place and proper light, and that it was “**much larger** and more beautiful than the former” container. Those who compare Miller's scriptures (Old and New Testaments) with those of the Latter-day Saints (Old and New Testaments, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price) will note a possible fulfillment of William's dream. The truths of modern-day revelation bring the Millerite movement into its proper light.

William said that this larger container brought by the man in his dream was “**curiously wrought.**” In parallel with latter-day fulfillment, the eight eyewitnesses said of the golden plates, “we did handle [them] with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of **curious workmanship.**” Latter-day revelation fulfills the dream of William Miller.

As a fitting capstone to William Miller's dream, and to his life's testimony, William agreed that, “**the restoration of the jewels to their place was the ushering in of the kingdom of God,** when each diamond truth will be separated from the dust and mist with which the ignorance, unbelief, or depravity of man has encumbered it, to shine in the Savior's diadem.”¹⁵⁶

Exploring other connections between William's dream of the restoration of the kingdom of God, we find a final telling parallel to the other dreams and visions of restoration recorded by Daniel.

Miller's Account

Daniel's Account

¹⁵⁶ Ibid

I cried to him to forbear, for there were some precious jewels scattered among the rubbish. He told me to 'fear not,' for he would 'take care of them.'

Then, while he brushed, the dust and rubbish, false jewels and counterfeit coin, all rose and went out the windows like a cloud, and the wind carried them away.

....He then called upon me to 'come and see.' I looked into the casket, but my eyes were dazzled with the sight. They shone with ten times their former glory. I thought they had been scoured in the sand by the feet of those wicked persons who had scattered and trod them in the dust. They were arranged in beautiful order in the casket, every one in its place, without any visible pains of the man who cast them in. I shouted with very joy, and that shout awoke me.¹⁵⁷

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.¹⁵⁸

....Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.¹⁵⁹

William Miller truly was correct concerning the time. The events of Daniel unfolded in 1844 according to God's promises. Miller was simply mistaken as to the event.

I consider William Miller to be a humble saint. I believe that the true friends he longed for will be found among the Latter-day Saints, and that the help he earnestly prayed for has already been rendered and fulfilled by latter-day prophets, especially by the Prophet Joseph Smith. We should be grateful for William's contribution to our understanding of our own place in prophecy, and for how his record adds to the significance of our own history.

I believe that William Miller faithfully fulfilled his charge to share the talent or degree of truth with which the Lord entrusted to him. Like Columbus, he was led by the Spirit to discover

¹⁵⁷ MWM 361-363

¹⁵⁸ Daniel 2:34-35

¹⁵⁹ Daniel 8:13-14

something important for posterity. Like Columbus again, the thing he discovered was something quite different from what he expected or was willing to admit.¹⁶⁰ And like Nephi, he stepped forward in faith, not knowing beforehand the things that he would do.¹⁶¹

The prophet Gordon B. Hinckley said something of the Mormon pioneers, which relates just as well to our neighbors, the Millerites, who sought (and still seek) to establish Bible truth:

*It is good to look to the past to gain appreciation for the present and perspective for the future. It is good to look upon the virtues of those who have gone before, to gain strength for whatever lies ahead. It is good to reflect upon the work of those who labored so hard and gained so little in this world, but out of whose dreams and early plans, so well nurtured, has come a great harvest of which we are the beneficiaries.*¹⁶²

To those who hunger for truth and love the word of God, come feast at our overflowing table. To those who acknowledge the hand of God in William Miller's life, come benefit from the literal fulfillment of his dream. To those who love the sweet assurance of the Holy Ghost, come hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. In the words of a living prophet of our day, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley invited:

We would not take from men of goodwill anywhere the standards of truth by which they live. But we say to all, "Come, feast upon that which the Lord has offered in our day. To that which you have and cherish, we invite you to add that which your Father

¹⁶⁰ Columbus reportedly believed that he had reached Asia.

¹⁶¹ 1 Nephi 4:6. There have been a few who have had difficulty with Nephi's actions in that chapter of the Book of Mormon. They revert to the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 to protest Nephi's actions. However, one should also take into context Moses' very next chapter – Exodus 21:12-14, a promise of protection which was fulfilled when they arrived in the Promised Land.

¹⁶² Ensign, November 1974, p. 99. Cited in his biography, *Go Forward With Faith*, by Sheri L. Dew, p. 102.

*has further offered, for there is a prophet in the land today as certainly as there was in ancient Israel.*¹⁶³

To the testimony of that servant of God, I humbly add a resounding amen. May we learn from the errors of God's professed people who rebelled throughout history, and may we instead receive the Lord's appointed servant, saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

Most importantly, to those who seek truth, please hearken to the resounding call of all true prophets, ancient and modern, "Seek ye Him."

And I seal up these records, after I have spoken a few words by way of exhortation unto you.

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down unto the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

....And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth—that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief.

And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be none that doeth good among you, no not one. For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God.

¹⁶³ Conference Report, April 4, 1964, Gordon B. Hinckley.

....And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?

I declare these things unto the fulfilling of the prophecies. And behold, they shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the everlasting God; and his word shall hiss forth from generation to generation.

And God shall show unto you, that which I have written is true.

....And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen.

Moroni 10:2-34

The Traditional Cleansing of the Sanctuary

...and at the time they proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, or, at the time the book proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, the things which were written were plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men.

1 Nephi 14:23

In the earlier discussion of the challenges involved in the translation of Daniel's 2300-year prophecy, the Millerites offered more possible clues towards its interpretation. In 1843, William Miller pointed out that the rendering "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" found in the King James Version suggested the annual cleansing of the Jewish temple on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), which occurred near harvest time. William saw a compelling connection between the end-time harvest¹⁶⁴ of the world and the end-time Day of Judgment.

Yom Kippur is not a minor holy day under the Mosaic law. Instead, it was the hub of the ritual Jewish calendar, and followed right on the heels of the annual Day of Judgment. Some Jews consider Yom Kippur as the culmination of the Day of Judgment. Even to this day, Jews around the world maintain the tradition of Yom Kippur, although they have had no temple to cleanse since 70 AD. Within these modern services, we can find remnants of the ancient temple tradition. The Lord declared this day to be the holiest day of the year, a Sabbath of Sabbaths, instituted as an "everlasting statute" unto the children of Israel, because of all their sins, once in the year."¹⁶⁵ Any Israelite who did not humble himself in repentance before the Lord that day was cut off from the Lord's people.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Compare D&C 4

¹⁶⁵ Leviticus 16:34

¹⁶⁶ Leviticus 23:29

According to Leviticus 16,¹⁶⁷ there were three unique sacrifices for the annual temple cleansing ritual that set this practice apart from the rest of the daily sacrificial cycle of temple worship. The reader should keep in mind the theme of the sanctuary/temple/altar utilized by Daniel and John for the background of Daniel's 1844 prophecy and for the martyrdom prophecy of Revelation 6. On that note, let's review the annual cleansing ritual as prescribed by our Father in Heaven.

1. The first unique sacrifice atoned for was the accumulated sins of the priesthood (those sons of Levi who performed the services and thereby provided instruction in the Lord's house). For this portion of the ceremony, the Lord required the slaughter of a bullock. Note that this first event was performed near the altar.¹⁶⁸
2. A pair of goats was then brought before the temple congregation, and lots were cast, one for the Lord, and the other for the scapegoat. As the second unique cleansing sacrifice of the day, the Lord's goat was slain for the people of Israel.
3. Lastly, the other goat, the scapegoat, was brought before the high priest. He then confessed "over him all the iniquities of the children of Isreal, and all their transgression in all their sins." Then, the goat was sent away "by the hand of an appointed man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited; and he shall let go the goat¹⁶⁹ in the wilderness."¹⁷⁰

At the core of the Day of Atonement was the reminder that the Lord was the sovereign king in their lives. It was, in effect, a day

¹⁶⁷ Other direct references to the Day of Atonement are found in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 29.

¹⁶⁸ Eidersheim, 311

¹⁶⁹ Brother Eidersheim, swimming against the stream of common belief, set aside many of the theories of his day, and concluded that the Savior himself fulfilled the role of the scapegoat. (The Temple, 320-321).

¹⁷⁰ Leviticus 16:21-22

set aside to come before the throne of God and pledge annual fealty and submission to His will. For centuries, many Jews worshiped regularly in their temple, while perhaps only a few saw beyond the ritual of the temple service, or stopped to ponder why God would have them repeat these rituals.

Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.¹⁷¹

Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of the goats.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.¹⁷²

In this passage, the Israelites were obviously missing one of the main points of their temple instruction. Ancient temple instruction, as prescribed by the Lord, served as a fulcrum in space and time. On this holiest day of the Jewish calendar, His

¹⁷¹ Compare this passage with Jeremiah 5:1 and Genesis 18:16-19:12

¹⁷² Isaiah 1:9-17

instruction pointed not only to the future and to the present, but perhaps also to the past – as a striking contrast between mankind's rebellions¹⁷³ and God's loving patience and long-suffering.

What was the Lesson Behind Ancient Temple Instruction?

Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf recently wrote, "...the entire temple service was a stage teeming with images which served to edify our knowledge of ourselves and how to draw closer to G-d."¹⁷⁴

God may have chosen these images for a specific instructional purpose. Let's carefully examine the temple icons selected for temple instruction that day – the bullock, and the goats.

The Bullock (Calf)

The bullock, which was to make atonement for Aaron and his house (the priesthood) may have been chosen with historical leverage. For the calf may have been intended as a humbling reminder that while Moses was up on Mount Sinai receiving God's will, Aaron was in the valley below giving in to the whims of the people, and constructing a golden calf. This event was perhaps the most humbling example of the failure of the priests of Israel to lead their people to seek the true and living God. As the designated teachers of truth, it was their task to keep the people from apostasy.

In fact, the golden calf episode was so embarrassing to later Jews that Josephus, in his history of the Jews, omitted all mention of it from the written history of his people. I believe it may have been similar motivation which could have led Jewish priests to obscure the meaning of this humbling reminder of priestly failure

¹⁷³ Daniel 9 contains the longest prayer in the Bible, where Daniel confesses the continual rebellions of his people. The very context of Daniel's prayer implies the Day of Atonement. Jewish tradition claims that the greatest events and revelations throughout the history of Israel took place on, or immediately preceding this pivotal day, including the Creation, the betrayal of Joseph to Egypt, and the reception of the tablets at Mount Sinai.

¹⁷⁴ "G-d" is a common Jewish method of avoiding the spelling of God or his name, similar to their aversion to pronounce God's name in Hebrew. Shimon Apisdorf, Rosh Hashanah Yom Kippur Survival Kit, p. 95.

from their temple instruction.¹⁷⁵ In doing so, the warning reminder against apostasy was also removed.

The Goat

The goat may also hold instructional meaning. It may have represented the goat that the ten jealous sons of Israel slew, and whose blood was smeared on Joseph's coat of many colors, to convince their father that Joseph was dead.¹⁷⁶ After first plotting to murder their own brother, the brothers sold him off into bondage. Thus, the image of the slain goat represents¹⁷⁷ Israel's most glaring, historical betrayal of brotherly love. Fittingly, the sacrifice of the goat was directly connected to the sins of the congregation of Israel.

In a similar vein, in the current Yom Kippur liturgy, immediately after a description of these temple sacrifices is recounted, the liturgical poem "These things I do remember" is then recited by the congregation. "These things" is a reminder of the rejection of Joseph into Egypt, and also of Jewish martyrdom which, in Jewish ritual, is connected to the cleansing of that day:

*We pour our hearts out supplicating Thee.
Lord, Lord, give ear;
O pitying, merciful,
Look from Thine height
Upon the blood outpoured
Of all Thy Righteous.
Make an end of blood.
Poured out and wasted;
Wash the stain away.
God, King, who sittest*

¹⁷⁵ As an example of this priestly trend, the Mosaic "law of jealousy," whose pivotal symbolism we will explore in the second volume, was abolished by the Jewish High Priest shortly after the Atonement of Christ. These are perhaps but a few of the many "plain and precious" covenants which have been obliterated by previous generations. (See 1 Nephi 13-14). Understanding the obscured symbols contained in Mosaic Law helps to clarify the meaning of Jewish prophecy.

¹⁷⁶ Genesis 37:31

¹⁷⁷ Philip Goodman, *The Yom Kippur Anthology*, pg. 15.

*On a gracious throne.*¹⁷⁸

As a remnant of the role of the goat in the ancient Yom Kippur temple service, this poem recounts the betrayal of Joseph by his brothers. The poem also goes on to recount a further betrayal by Christian bishops and emperors, who used the story of Joseph in Egypt as a pretext for slaying Jews. The Jewish people are thereby reminded each year of the failure of ancient and modern Israel to learn the lessons of Yom Kippur.

A recent Adventist study uncovered linguistic links between biblical passages referencing the goat (used in the cleansing of the sanctuary) and Joseph's story in Genesis 50:17. They concluded:

“...the sacrifice of the Lord's goat on the Day of Atonement was in favor of the sanctuary and was an act of vindication for it. In this manner the Day of Atonement was an affirmation of innocence so far as the sanctuary itself was concerned.”¹⁷⁹

The whole instructional issue apparently pivots around the responsibility of being a true brother.

Along that vein, since, according to Paul or John, each of us is, or can become, a “living stone” or pillar in the true sanctuary,¹⁸⁰ consider our brotherly responsibility according to the following counsel:

Ezekiel	William Miller
<i>Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor</i>	<i>With the solemn conviction that such momentous events were predicted in the Scriptures to be fulfilled in so short a space of time, the question came home to me with mighty power regarding my duty to the world in view of the evidence that had affected my own mind. If</i>

¹⁷⁸ Philip Goodman, *The Yom Kippur Anthology*, pg. 72.

¹⁷⁹ DRCS, Vol. 3, p. 244-245.

¹⁸⁰ 1 Peter 2:5; Rev. 3:12

*speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.*¹⁸¹

the end was so near, it was important that the world should know it.

*....This text [Ezekiel] was constantly occurring to me....I felt that, if the wicked could be effectually warned, multitudes of them would repent; and that, if they were not warned, their blood might be required at my hand.*¹⁸²

Elder Orson Pratt

*We had gone forth according to our best ability, to publish glad tidings of great joy, for thousands of miles, upon this continent. After this we were called in, and this washing of hands and feet was to testify to God that we were clean from the blood of this generation.*¹⁸³

Elder Warren Foote

*Now my brother I must close. I have faithfully warned you, and from henceforth my garments are clean from your blood. If you perish, you perish with your eyes open.*¹⁸⁴

The Intent of Temple Instruction on the Day of Atonement

In short, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar retained the central core of Christ's message – that those of the covenant are to love God and our fellow man.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

¹⁸¹ Ezekiel 3:17-18. Compare D&C 88:81.

¹⁸² MWM, 81, 91

¹⁸³ Journal of Discourses, 19:18-19

¹⁸⁴ Warren Foote, Autobiography, BYU, 79.

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*¹⁸⁵

For each of the Levite priests, the first sacrifice was apparently a reminder to love the Lord – highlighted in stark contrast by the lesson of Aaron's golden calf. To the rest of Israel, the Day of Atonement was a reminder to love one another – highlighted in contrast to the lesson of their forefathers' hatred and rejection of their brother Joseph.

Understanding the connection between Levite stumbling and brother betrayal may assist the reader in grasping the painful irony in the fulfillment of Daniel's cleansing prophecy. For 1844 reveals the low-water mark of established Christianity's departure from God's loving commands.

A True Cleansing

Our Jewish brothers have also pass on further instruction concerning the central principle “behind our purification” on the Day of Atonement.

*For as long as seedlings are attached to the earth they are clean. When plucked from the earth they can become unclean. But if they are attached to their source again, their uncleanness stops.*¹⁸⁶

Since we are merely the branches, may we humbly ask to be grafted into our source, the Vine Himself,¹⁸⁷ and may our Great High Priest thereby cleanse each one of us, and engrave his covenant upon our hearts.

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary – A Reminder of Revelation

¹⁸⁵ Matthew 22:37-40

¹⁸⁶ Avignon, Days of Awe, p. 207.

¹⁸⁷ John 15:1-11

The Jews record that the Day of Atonement is the anniversary of the day Moses came down from Sinai with the tablets.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, this day is also a reminder of revelation. Its 1844 connection to the prophet Joseph Smith is therefore even more interesting.

Although there are more gems to be culled from the Jewish understanding of the cleansing service, we will close this chapter on the following note. Jewish author S. Y. Avignon noted that at the conclusion of the temple cleansing, the High Priest would command “a smith to make a gold tablet” and engrave upon it a record of his faithful service on behalf of Israel.¹⁸⁹

Words are curious things. As the backdrop to Daniel's 1844 prophecy, we have the reminder of a “smith” commissioned to produce an engraved golden record to commemorate the service of his High Priest. And with Christ as our High Priest, he commanded a certain Joseph SMITH to produce the Book of Mormon, another testimony of the atoning ministry of Jesus Christ. To those who doubt the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith, I invite you to humbly and prayerfully read the Book of Mormon.

I will say nothing further concerning the Day of Atonement at this time, except that in connection with the cleansing passage of Daniel 8:13-14, the Lord prophesied that the day would come when He would *cleanse* “the sons of Levi.” And these sons would, in the latter days, offer an acceptable sacrifice unto the Lord.¹⁹⁰

And almost all things are by law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remissions. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices¹⁹¹ than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which

¹⁸⁸ Avignon, 194

¹⁸⁹ Compare D&C 1:17. From Avignon, Days of Awe, p. 258.

¹⁹⁰ Malachi 3. See also TPJS 171-172.

¹⁹¹ Note Paul's curious use of the plural here. Compare John's symbolism of the altar in Rev. 6:9-11.

*are the figures of the true; but unto heaven itself, now
to appear in the presence of God for us.*

Hebrews 9:22-24

A New Testament Conclusion to an Old Testament Message

...the things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out.

Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity – thou must commune with God.

How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than the vain imaginations of the human heart!¹⁹²

Joseph Smith

As a missionary in a distant land, only a few months after my encounter with Preben, I stood on the door of another fellow Christian. She treated me and my companion with kindness, but had little interest in our message, or in the book we were offering her to prayerfully study. She had a strong faith of her own, and hurried off to her parlor to bring something back for us in exchange. Little did I know that her small gift would have repercussions upon my life for years to come.

When she returned to the front door, she had a small book in her hand, written in her native tongue. It told about the beliefs she cherished. She opened excitedly to one page that had a full-spread chart across it, depicting Daniel's prophetic timelines. The first half of the chart depicted the Savior's sacrifice in the midst of Daniel's 70th week and the stoning of Stephen at the end of the week. On the opposite page, at the far end of the chart, was a depiction of the conclusion of Daniel's 2300-day prophecy, showing a small congregation gathering at its terminus in 1844.

At that point in my life, I had never studied Daniel in earnest, and had likely never even read the eighth chapter of Daniel, but on the doorstep of that sweet woman, as she rattled on enthusiastically about what she *thought* the prophecies meant, the

¹⁹² TPJS, 137

Spirit bore overpowering testimony to my soul, and engraved forever on my heart, that the martyrdom of a true prophet fulfilled her incomplete chart, and that the name of Joseph Smith rightfully belonged at its 1844 termination.

It took over fourteen years of diligent searching to discover through scripture and history what the Spirit was able to teach in a mere heartbeat.

I mention this for a distinct reason. Let the Holy Spirit lead. It would pain me to see this volume used in a manner not intended. The Restoration was brought about through direct revelation in order to teach us one central thing – to turn to our Father daily and continually for guidance, clarification and gratitude. The purpose of the Restoration was NOT to create a generation of scribes and scholars. It was brought about that faith might increase. It was established to create a generation of prophets, who all know the Lord.

*But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world. That faith also might increase in the earth.*¹⁹³

The message of 1844 is not a rod with which to impatiently hit others over the head. It is instead intended as a rod of iron, a temporary handrail, to give hope to those who want to press forward in faith to pluck from the tree of life themselves. It is for sincere-hearted people like Preben.

*And straightway, the father...cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*¹⁹⁴

May we please teach these things by the Spirit, according to the New Covenant, and not by the cold logic or dry ritual of the Old Covenant. May we please only share these things as led by the Spirit.

¹⁹³ D&C 1:20-21 (17-28)

¹⁹⁴ Mark 9:24

*And if ye receive not the Spirit, ye shall not teach.*¹⁹⁵

In wise counterbalance to the ongoing search for truth and its accompanying motto “the glory of God is intelligence,” the inspired leaders of the Church have also counseled us against the misuse of knowledge. In the words of Brigham Young:

*I had only traveled a short time to testify to the people, before I learned this one fact, that you might prove doctrine from the Bible till doomsday, and it would merely convince a people, but would not convert them. You might read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and prove every iota that you advance, and that alone would have no converting influence upon the people. Nothing short of a testimony by the power of the Holy Ghost would bring light and knowledge to them – bring them in their hearts to repentance. Nothing short of that would ever do. You have frequently heard me say that I would rather hear an Elder, either here or in the world speak only five words accompanied by the power of God, and they would do more good than to hear long sermons without the Spirit. That is true, and we know it.*¹⁹⁶

It is vastly more important for each of us as missionaries and for our full-time missionaries to have a conversion of the heart than it is for them to have a conversion of the intellect.

Teaching the Old Testament According to the New Covenant

The terms “Old Testament” and “New Testament” spill out of our mouths, usually without a moment's thought as to what the words actually mean. We often consider these two phrases to refer to a division of scripture. But if that is true, why the terms Old and New? So at the conclusion of this Old Testament exploration of Daniel's meaning, let's briefly explore what it is about the Testament that is Old, what it is that is New, and how that might impact how we should teach (or not teach) the truth of 1844 to our family and friends.

¹⁹⁵ D&C 42:14

¹⁹⁶ DBY, 330

In modern terms, a testament is a document that conveys an individual's possessions to his or her appointed heirs. This applies directly to each of us:

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,
that we are the children of God.*

*And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-
heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,
that we may be also glorified together.*¹⁹⁷

More generally, “testament” also means law or covenant. The prophet Jeremiah, a contemporary of Lehi and Daniel, explained the difference between the old testament (or covenant) and the new covenant:

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not, according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.¹⁹⁸

When God writes on our hearts, the chaff of human cares and doctrine fall away. This volume contains a large amount of citations and historical tidbits. As such, the events used to paint this portrait might distract some to believe that those “facts” were the main point. However, verses and historical quotations are not

¹⁹⁷ Romans 8:16-17

¹⁹⁸ Jeremiah 31:31-34

the point of this book. What is the point is the importance of a living, growing relationship with our Father in Heaven, of communing with Him. Our mission is not to convince people that we are right. Our mission is to bring souls literally to Christ – to help them have the courage to inquire of Him.

*Shall not a people seek the Lord?...If they speak not according to **this** word, there is no light in them.*¹⁹⁹

Unlike those who violate the covenant and reject God's messengers,²⁰⁰ may we stand true to what the Spirit teaches. May we also teach in the proper manner. Then, like Daniel, we may stand in our lot “at the end of the days.”²⁰¹

I testify that God lives, and that his Son died for us, and rose again. I also testify that Joseph Smith was a true prophet, and that a true prophet directs the Restored Church today. These things I know with assurance, for our Father in Heaven has taught me those truths through the Holy Spirit, and has written them upon my heart.

If you do not yet know these things to be true, you have a choice. You can spend fourteen years analyzing the details on the leaves, and thereby learn a few things about the truth. Or you can go straight to the vine – and ask Him to teach you through His Spirit.²⁰² I pray it is the latter.

Thank you for allowing me to share. Now it's your turn.

*Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine....
....So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*
John 21:12,15

¹⁹⁹ Isaiah 8. Most Christians mistakenly interpret Isaiah's intent in this passage as a call to scripture – when in fact it is a call to seek God. Compare John 5:35-39.

²⁰⁰ Daniel 11:32-35

²⁰¹ Daniel 12:13

²⁰² John 15:4-5

Appendix A – Altered Landmarks

Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Daniel 7:23-27

In this section, we'll focus on part²⁰³ of the fulfillment of verse 25 of Daniel's prophecy. The changing of the times and laws was a multi-tiered process that blinded many to overlook God's most crucial acts: the Creation, the Atonement, and the Restoration. However, as Daniel had recorded, God foresaw, and for His own purposes, allowed this propaganda to occur – perhaps so that when the drama was completed and the truth was unveiled, all would confess that His judgments were just.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ The other half of the treatment of this prophecy follows in the next volume, which shows how later adjustments to the calendar obscured the fulfillment of a New Testament prophetic timeline.

²⁰⁴ Amos 3:6-7 – compare Jeremiah 25:29

Tier 1 – The Julian Calendar Conceals God's Act of Creation

In the days of Julius Caesar, an Alexandrian astronomer exposed drastic inaccuracies in the early Roman calendar. In response, Julius Caesar ordered a complete overhaul of the Roman calendar. This new calendar is therefore known as the Julian Calendar. It dates to 46 BC.

Caesar's five major changes were so radical that his subjects termed the first year of his modifications “the year of confusion.”

1. Over forty days were added to the first Roman year to reconcile the accumulated drift of the seasons.
2. Caesar decreed that the beginning of each year would now begin the first day of January, rather than at the vernal or autumnal equinox.
3. Roman subjects were now commanded to disregard the moon in reckoning the months. Instead, Caesar arbitrarily assigned 28, 30, or 31 days to each month.
4. The day would now begin at midnight, rather than sunset (Jewish) or sunrise (Babylonian).
5. Every fourth year would have an additional day added to February, except century years (such as 100, 200, 300, etc.)²⁰⁵

In summation, the Roman Empire altered the method of marking the start and end of each day, the beginning and end of each month and the beginning and end of each year. (The only thing Caesar could have done more to alter the reckoning of time would have been to modify the 7-day week – which both Romans and Hebrews used.) What the Emperor's decree pronounced defiantly was basically the message: “IGNORE THE HEAVENS. The times, seasons, months and days change when I say they do.” Contrast Julius Caesar's man-made attempt to reckon days and months to that intended by God in the first chapter of His Word:²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Although these minutiae might seem irrelevant now, in Volume 2 they will become vitally relevant in the fulfillment of other prophecy.

²⁰⁶ Note in this context that the latter-day gospel message of the angel of Rev. 14:6-7 reminds, “worship him that made the heavens and the earth....”

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.²⁰⁷

Although the Julian Calendar ignored God's creations in the reckoning of time, it was a reasonably close impostor of God's solar cycle. However, his counterfeit was not as accurate as he trusted it would be. Centuries later, scientists reported to the Popes that the Julian calendar was driving three days every four centuries, and needed reform to better match the solar year. In the words of a recent almanac, "While Caesar could decree that the vernal equinox should not be used as the first day of the new year, the vernal equinox is still a fact of Nature that could not be disregarded."²⁰⁸ As we'll explore in Part II, Popes would later attempt to perfect that error.²⁰⁹

Tier Two – The So-called “Christian Calendar” Conceals God's Promise to Atonement for His People

In the early 500's AD, Pope John the 1st commissioned his greatest scholar, Dionysius Exiguus, to create a new Christian calendar which would, so the theory went, establish the birth of

²⁰⁷ Genesis 1:14-19

²⁰⁸ The 1994 Information Please Almanac, pg. 584.

²⁰⁹ That point is better suited to the context of the New Testament, which is addressed more fully in the next volume.

Christ as the pivotal point in the history of mankind. Up until that time, Christians in different nations had been reckoning time by the year of the reign of the current king or Emperor, by the Olympiads, or, like the Jews, by the number of years since the creation. Apparently, the only people who had already introduced a Christian calendar was the Nephite/Lamanite nation in ancient America, nine years after the birth of Christ.

...the ninety and ninth year [of the reign of the judges]

And also an hundred years had passed away since the days of Mosiah, who was king over the people of the Nephites.

And six hundred and nine years had passed away since Lehi left Jerusalem.

And nine years had passed away from the time when the sign was given, which was spoken of by the prophets, that Christ should come into the world.

Now the Nephites began to reckon their time from this period when the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ; therefore, nine years had passed away.²¹⁰

Unlike the act of Julius Caesar, the calendar of Dionysius and Pope John I was supposed to raise Christ's advent from obscurity. By attempting to accomplish that, however, the scholarly monk and the papacy actually accomplished the opposite, for their calendar not only drew scripture into serious question, but obscured the fulfillment of the very prophecies that identified Jesus of Nazareth as the Savior of mankind.

First, let's explore how this new decree brought people to question the biblical account. Dionysius was apparently a few years off in his reckoning. For centuries, critics of God's word have claimed that the story of the nativity was a falsehood, since, according to the Christian calendar, Christ was supposed to be born in 1 AD. However, King Herod, who spoke with the wise

²¹⁰₃ Nephi 2:4-8

men, feared a young upstart, and ordered the slaughter of children, apparently died years earlier in 4 BC.

This was a prime opportunity for the papacy to admit and correct the error in reckoning. But rather than stepping forward to protect scripture, the doctrine of papal infallibility kept that institution from admitting their error, thereby painting themselves into a corner. Left defenseless, the scriptural record was left open to ridicule.

This same compounded error effectively threw Daniel's 70-week prophecy out the window, since the new Christian calendar no longer lined up with the actual chronology of Christ's life. Daniel, whose Messianic prophecies the Savior had said, "whoso readeth, let him understand" thereby became unintelligible for generations. And the Savior's appearance in "the meridian of time" became just a figure of speech. The potent truthfulness of God's word became diluted – through the universal acceptance of a man-made device.

The multi-layered decrees of Roman Emperors, Popes, Parliaments, and Kings also obscured a key fulfillment of God's latter-day prophecies for centuries. However, since God sets up over the kingdom of men whomever he will, we might do well to follow the example of Daniel.

Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellow should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.²¹¹

Daniel's passage clarifies the following question and answer provided by Job:

²¹¹ Daniel 2:17-19

*Why, seeing times are not hidden from the
Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?
Some remove the landmarks...²¹²*

Landmarks are the things that help wayfarers gain their bearings. Julius Caesar and the papacy fulfilled Daniel's prophecy to change the times. By doing so, they inadvertently became landmark movers. Because of this, many have difficulty finding their way, as did scribes and Pharisees, blinded by their own assumptions.

*They are of those that rebel against the light; they
know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths
thereof.*²¹³

The downfall of such was clarified through the prophet Joseph Smith. While detained in a cold, damp prison cell, the saints he loved were being plundered, raped, and driven from their homes and unruly mobs. At this time, the Lord delivered the following parallel to Daniel's prophecy of landmark alterations:

*And they who do charge thee with transgression,
their hope shall be blasted, and their prospects shall
melt away as the hoar frost melteth before the
burning rays of the rising sun;*

*And also that God hath set his hand²¹⁴ and seal to
change the times and seasons, and to blind their
minds, that they may not understand his marvelous
workings; that he may prove them also and take them
in their own craftiness;*

*....Behold, mine eyes see and know all their works,
and I have in reserve a swift judgment in the season
thereof, for them all.*²¹⁵

²¹² It is enlightening that William Miller considered the rules of scriptural interpretation handed down from the Protestant fathers as one of the crucial "ancient landmarks." The fulfillment of prophecy in 1844 has been obscured for over 150 years by false interpretations, and by movement of chronological landmarks.

²¹³ Job 24:1-2, 13

²¹⁴ See also Daniel 2:21; Amos 3:6-7

Their judgment came upon them in an hour that they knew not. Consider the earlier type, that in ancient Israel, the proper reckoning of time was crucial. The Bible Dictionary explains:

The law also directed that at the New Moons special sacrifices should be offered....As the days of the celebration of all the great Feasts of the Jews were reckoned by the moon, the exact time of the appearance of the new moons was a matter of importance. Watchers were placed in the heights around Jerusalem to bring the news of its appearance with all speed to the Sanhedrin, who proclaimed it as soon as satisfactory evidence was given. Watchfires on the hilltops told the news to distant cities. It is said that the Samaritans, to cause confusion, lighted fires at wrong times.²¹⁶

As critical as it was for them to know the times and seasons, it is also critical for those who profess to be modern-day Israel to know and declare “the time of their visitation.”²¹⁷

Part of our role is to restore the ancient landmarks or waymarks.²¹⁸ Then, more of Ephraim, and the pure in heart among other tribes can clearly find their way. This is a duty we owe to God, to the rising generation, and to the pure in heart²¹⁹ - to testify “clearly and understandingly” that the God of our fathers has stretched forth his hand in these last days to lead his children out of bondage, and to gather them to his bosom.²²⁰

And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

²¹⁵ D&C 121:11-12, 24

²¹⁶ LDS Bible Dictionary, p. 674

²¹⁷ Luke 19:44. Compare D&C 68:7-11.

²¹⁸ Jeremiah 31:20-21

²¹⁹ D&C 122

²²⁰ Compare D&C 133:16-34

Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man,

And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.

Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man:

And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel:

That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones?

Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

Joshua 4:1-9

Appendix B – Dating Christ's First Coming

It is obviously more important to know Christ than it is to explore the minutiae of *when* he may have been born. And although his birth year is of *relatively* little importance, it is a matter of some importance, for there is value to be gained from exploring the timing of the nativity – for it vindicates God's Word.

At face value, as we will soon see, ancient and modern revelation *appear* to disagree. But under closer investigation, these discrepancies can be resolved. To this end, we'll first take a brief look at the passages that relate to the timing of this event. Then, we'll examine the apparent difficulties those passages present. Finally, we'll explore two approaches of how these dates can be understood and reconciled.

Here are the scriptural assertions at the core of the issue:

- In the Old Testament, Daniel testified that Christ would be anointed in the final 7 years of his 490-year prophecy.
- In the Book of Mormon, Lehi prophesied that Christ would be born 600 years after he left Jerusalem – which, according to Nephi, appears to be reckoned from the start of King Zedekiah's reign.
- In the New Testament, the Gospels reveal that Christ was born during the reign of King Herod – as early as two years prior to Herod's death, and was anointed at about age 30, during the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius.
- In the Doctrine and Covenants, it appears to state that Christ was born in 1 BC.

Zedekiah and Lehi

Historians and astronomers²²¹ agree that Zedekiah's reign began in 597 BC. However, adding Lehi's 600 years to that date *appears* to land us unexpectedly in 4 AD for Christ's birth – several years from where we might otherwise expect to find ourselves.

Herod and the New Testaments

However, scripture is clear that Christ was born during Herod's reign, and perhaps as early as two year prior to Herod's decree to slay the children in Bethlehem. Most historians and astronomers conclude that Herod's reign ended in 4 BC, which, if accurate, would place Christ's birth as early as 6 BC – a far cry from the 4 AD date above.

Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants

In 1830, Joseph Smith received a revelation concerning the organization of the Church. In the opening verse of the revelation, the date is stated as being 1830 years “since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh.” This preamble *appears* to place Christ's birth firmly in 1 BC.

Daniel and King Artaxerxes – Luke and Emperor Tiberius

Although Daniel provides no timing for Christ's birth, he and the New Testament do agree on the timing of Christ's anointing at the River Jordan, and thereby provide an approximate date for his birth. Luke reveals the date of Christ's anointing as the 15th year of Tiberius' reign. According to our current understanding of the reign of Tiberius, this falls in the year 27/28 AD. Likewise, Daniel's prophecy and the reign of King Artaxerxes bring the conclusion of Daniel's his prophecy in the same year.

The reference to Christ's birth is provided by Luke, who clarified that at his anointing, Jesus “began to be about thirty years of age” - which leaves several years of leeway for his birth.

²²¹ For clarification, we refer here to astronomers, not astrologers. Astronomers are scientists who can mathematically provide dates for the comets and eclipses that were recorded by ancient historians. Most of our ancient historical dates are based on their calculations. Astrologers, on the other hand, represent a religion based on supposed connections to celestial alignments. We add no credent to their beliefs.

So at face value, we have a lineup of scriptural dates that appear to compete and conflict over the timing of Christ's birth – spanning the decade from 6 BC to 4 AD. Let's examine two different approaches to deal with the apparent discrepancies.

One Approach

In his book, *Jesus the Christ*, James Talmage shared his belief that D&C 20 provides a literal date for Christ's birth. Elder Talmage consciously admits to making no attempt to reconcile the reigns of kings and emperors, for he saw no need to do so. He simply suggested there were errors in the temporal reckoning of their reigns. Several LDS conclusions follow this line of thought, dismissing the discrepancies as immaterial and irreconcilable due to previous errors in human reckoning.

This is only one of the various approaches available. Not everything uttered or written by a General Authority need be taken as bedrock truth. As Joseph Smith stated long ago:

This morning I read German and visited with a brother and sister from Michigan, who thought that 'a prophet is always a prophet;' but I told them that a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such.²²²

The same applies to an apostle, a patriarch, a bishop, or an author. A God-given truth should only be accepted as such when it is truly God-given.

Another Way to Resolve Chronologies

The prophet Joseph may never have intended the passage in D&C 20:1 to be taken as an endorsement of the Christian calendar. He could simply have been employing 19th-century language to state that the current year was 1830 – and was probably understood as such by his 19th-century audience. It is not until the 20th and 21st centuries that we find this verse interpreted literally. Elder Hyrum M. Smith, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, and

²²² DHC 5:265

President J. Reuben Clark have all suggested that our European Christian calendar (the system using BC and AD reckoning) was off a few years in its attempt to pinpoint the time of Christ's birth, and have stated that D&C 20 was never intended as an endorsement of the Christian calendar.²²³ As the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants clearly explains:

Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding.²²⁴

Based on the Lord's clarification for His own revelations, on 19th-century language, on statements by other General Authorities, and on the Old and New Testament passages that we have explored and will yet explore, there is perhaps no need to force the preamble of Section 20 to mean anything other than what it likely meant for most 19th-century readers – that the year was 1830.

There is a strong similarity between the issue raised by D&C 20 and that of Joshua 10:13, where it clearly states that the “sun stood still.” In Joshua's case, it is unlikely that the sun literally stood still, since it is the earth that moves around a relatively stationary sun. Instead, Joshua was more likely describing how time appeared to have passed from his perspective. This passage in Joshua was the Catholic Church's key justification for persecuting astronomers who taught the supposed “heresy” that the earth moved around the sun. But the papacy's fears were misplaced, because knowing a little about the solar system doesn't make us doubt Joshua's calling, or the Bible. Likewise, learning a little bit about the Christian calendar²²⁵ certainly doesn't make me question Joseph's prophetic calling, or the revelations.

The restored Church of Jesus Christ is led today by men who are led by Christ. However, as long as we as a people cling to

²²³ McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, pgs. 349-350. See also Nelson, 1844 in Prophecy – Book 1, pgs 20-29, 90-99.

²²⁴ D&C 1:24

²²⁵ See Appendix A

beliefs and interpretations instead of to living truths, we will have a hard time fulfilling Joseph's prophecy of convincing "multitudes" about the truth hidden in the Millerite message. So my answer to the question: "What about D&C 20?" is "Before reaching a conclusion, how about first comparing it with D&C 1, Joshua 10, Daniel 9, Ezra 7, Luke 3 and John 2."

So, since there must be two or three witnesses in all things, let's start comparing – and we'll see how this approach can actually reconcile the initial discrepancies between Daniel's prophecy, Lehi's prophecy, and New Testament chronology.

Christ's Birth and Herod's Death

The New Testament testifies that the Savior was born during the reign of King Herod.²²⁶ An eclipse recorded by the Jewish historian Josephus suggests that King Herod died in the year which we now call 4 BC, which, if accurate, means that the so-called Christian calendar is off by a few years, as many now agree.²²⁷

On his deathbed, King Herod fretted about how deeply he was hated by his subjects. So he contrived a monstrous means that would force his subjects to mourn the time of his death "such as never any king had before him, for then the whole nation would mourn from their very soul." He secured commitments from his family that upon the hour of his death, "one out of every family should be slain."²²⁸

Although Josephus records that several victims locked up were saved at the last minute, it is likely that Herod's dying wish was nonetheless fulfilled in the outlying regions. Matthew records the likely counterpart to this event:

*Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by
Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'In Rama was there a*

²²⁶ Mathew 2:1-19

²²⁷ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVII, Chapter VI, 4. Josephus was born in Jerusalem in 37 AD, so his family and neighbors were intimately acquainted with the events he recorded. See also Appendix A.

²²⁸ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVII, Chapter VI, 5-6. A haunting reminder of the first Egyptian Passover. More slaughter took place later that year at the hands of Roman troops: *ibid*, chapter X.

*voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.*²²⁹

Now let's consider the points that can be reconciled with this approach:

The Date of Christ's Baptism and Anointing

Bible Account	Secular History
According to Luke, John the Baptist began to preach in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. ²³⁰	Since Tiberius ascended to the throne in 13/14 AD, ²³¹ the fifteenth ²³² year of his reign would be the year 27/28 AD.
According to Luke, at about this time, Jesus “began to be <u>about</u> thirty years of age.” ²³³	With 4 BCE, the year of Herod's death, as the latest possible year for the Savior's birth, ²³⁴ Jesus would have turned 30 years old by 27 AD. ²³⁵

²²⁹ See Matthew 2. However, it is certainly possible that the event recorded by Matthew and the event recorded by Josephus were two similar yet separate events under Herod's reign.

²³⁰ Luke 3:1

²³¹ Using the autumn-to-autumn regnal calendar – as opposed to the spring-to-spring calendar.

²³² Note that Luke's words are “in the fifteenth year,” not “fifteen years later.”

²³³ Luke 3:23

²³⁴ The Savior could have been born earlier (fx. 7, 6, or 5 BC). There is nothing that states he was born in the final year of Herod's reign. In fact, Matthew implies that there may have been up to two years between his birth and the wise men's arrival in Herod's court, and Luke remains somewhat vague about his age at the time of his anointing, using the term “about thirty.”

²³⁵ The Christian calendar was invented in the sixth century, long before the concept of zero reached Europe. (It was through later contact with Muslims during that Crusades that the concept of zero was imported into European thought.)

Daniel declared that after the decree to return to Jerusalem, the Messiah's appearance ²³⁶ would be after seven weeks plus another sixty-two weeks. These sixty-nine weeks (of years) = 483 years.	Since the Persian decree was issued in 458/457 BC, ²³⁷ its Messianic counterpart can be anticipated in 27/28 AD. ²³⁸
Paul declared: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son." ²³⁹	

After His anointing, Christ's first public sermon²⁴⁰ pinpointed his "anointing" in "the acceptable year of the Lord," and began his ministry declaring, "the time is fulfilled."²⁴¹

The Beginning of Christ's Ministry & Temple Construction

Bible Account	Secular History
According to the apostle John, during the first Passover of Christ's mortal ministry, the current Temple project had been in process	Herod ascended to the throne in 37/36 BC, a dominion he received as a grant from Rome. Josephus records that Herod had

²³⁶ See Daniel 9:24-27.

²³⁷ See Ezra 7.

²³⁸ The phrasing in Daniel appears to mean that the 483rd year would pass before the Messiah would appear. The year 26/27 AD was the 483rd year, so His appearance should be found in 27/28 AD, in exact agreement with Luke.

²³⁹ Galatians 4:4

²⁴⁰ Luke 4:19 (16-21)

²⁴¹ Mark 1:15

for forty-six years.²⁴²

announced his plan to rebuild the temple in the eighteenth year of his reign²⁴³ – 20/19 BC.

Forty-six years after Herod's announcement brings us to the year 27/28 AD.

So John's record of the Savior's first Passover matches the time prophecy of Daniel and confirms the timing provided by Luke. The dates provided by the New Testament authors take on new significance. As we will soon see, so will their terminology.

The Savior's Atoning Sacrifice in the “Meridian of Time”

According to the New Testament, after Christ's mission of approximately three and a half years, he offered his life as a sacrifice for sin. The trumpet blast of the angel Gabriel had declared to Daniel that the Messiah would be cut off in the midst of the 70th week, i.e. In the middle of the last seven years. Appropriately, this same Gabriel appeared both to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and to Zacharias,²⁴⁴ the father of John the Baptist. But God's covenant people, Israel, did not know the hour or the means of their visitation. The “meridian of time” and “the midst of the week” appear to be parallels.

Stephen's Martyrdom and the End of Daniel's 70th Week

The stewardship of the Jews ended at the time appointed. Bishop Ussher²⁴⁵ dates the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, to 34 AD. With a starting date of 458/457 BC, Daniel's 490 years end in the year 33/34 AD.²⁴⁶ This is apparently more than coincidence.

Stephen was the first witness of Christ to be slain by the Sanhedrin. Immediately after Stephen's martyrdom, the Jews

²⁴² John 2:20

²⁴³ Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*: Boox XV, Chapter XI, 1-2.

²⁴⁴ Luke 1

²⁴⁵ 17th-century British Archbishop

²⁴⁶ Remember, there is no year “0”.

stirred up a great persecution against the Christians, driving them out of Jerusalem.²⁴⁷

At this juncture, the gospel, which was now fully rejected by the Jewish leaders, was opened to the Gentiles. Paul (Saul) was still unconverted when he witnessed Stephen's death.²⁴⁸ Internal evidence in Paul's epistles and in Acts date Paul's conversion to no later than 35 AD. At about the same time as his conversion, the gospel was preached to the Gentiles,²⁴⁹ whereby the time of the Gentiles²⁵⁰ was begun, wherein the Gentiles would receive a turn to prove if they could be faithful stewards, the same opportunity which the Jews had received.

With strong foundation, Millerites viewed the end of Daniel's 70-week prophecy as a final curtain call for Judah's stewardship over God's people and message, and therein saw God's role as an accurate timekeeper.²⁵¹ In effect, the ax of warning laid against the root of the tree of Judah, rightly toppled its target shortly after the rejection of God's son, and after the first martyrdom among His witnesses, Stephen.²⁵²

Today, Adventists view the Jewish rejection and murder of Stephen as the watershed event that triggered Jewish forfeiture of the kingdom, and caused their stewardship to be passed to another.²⁵³ This interpretation is paralleled by one of the core messages of Daniel – which outlined in almost every chapter a distinct succession of kingdoms, with each wave unrolling

²⁴⁷ Acts 8:1-4. For a broader understanding of how the two events are related, read the Arbinger Institute's "The Leadership Deception."

²⁴⁸ Acts 7:59-8:1

²⁴⁹ Acts 9:10

²⁵⁰ Luke 21:24. Compare Genesis 15:13-14 for Israel and Daniel 9:24 for Judah.

²⁵¹ It appears that the Savior's statement that Peter should forgive offenses "until seventy times seven" was beyond figurative, and may have been alluding to the nearing close of the Jews' 70-week stewardship over God's house. This perhaps implies that his disciples should be forgiving unto death. Or, in Stephen's final words at the close of those 70 'weeks', "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

²⁵² Of course, prior to the Savior's death, others had given their lives for Him. However, Stephen is the first to be slain for his testimony of Christ after the institution of the New Covenant.

²⁵³ See Acts 7, Matthew 21:43.

according to the timelines of God, who sets up over each kingdom “whomever he will.”²⁵⁴

Lehi's 600-Year Prophecy

Despite initial appearances to the contrary, Lehi's prophecy confirms the timing provided by Daniel, Ezra, Luke, and John. Nephi's account opens at the start of King Zedekiah's reign, which, according to historians, began in 597 BC. However, 600 years from that date appears to force us into 4 AD to look for Christ's first advent. That conclusion, however, is only valid if Lehi's timeline was based on our modern reckoning of time. Lehi may have reckoned by a different calendar.

Recent studies in Meso-American writings show that ancient Americans actually reckoned time according to at least three different measurements: (i) the first measurement matches our solar year; (ii) the second reckoning was based on a 360-day year, and parallels early Babylonian reckoning; (iii) and the third measurement was based on a 260-day year. The question is, was Lehi reckoning time by any of these methods?

As John L. Sorenson recently pointed out,²⁵⁵ if we consider that Lehi's 600-year prophecy may be resolved by the Meso-American 360-day calendar, the passage of Lehi's time would translate into 591 of our years (plus a few months). So if we count 600 of these shorter years from the beginning of Zedekiah's reign (597 BC), that time period would end in the year we know as 6/5 BC.

That timing is a perfect match with our other dates. As we may recall, before Herod's death, he ordered all children under the age of two years old to be slain. Those two years contain an important clue, since Herod's vile command immediately followed his examination of the wise men to learn “the exact time”²⁵⁶ of the star's appearance. So if Herod truly did die in 4 BC, and if the slaughter of the innocent children occurred in that last year of his

²⁵⁴ In fact, it was King Belshazzar's failure to learn that very lesson which was the final downfall of Babylon. Daniel 4:17, 25, 31-32; 5:21-30. We'll discuss John's vision of the parallel fall of another “Babylon” in Volume 2.

²⁵⁵ John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, 273.

²⁵⁶ Matthew 2:7 NIV translation – emphasis added.

reign, then a 6 BC birth for the Christ-child would match perfectly – both with the New Testament account and with Lehi's prophecy.

In other words, if the premise of the Meso-American calendar is valid, it reconciles and bridges the testimonies of Daniel, Ezra, Lehi, and the New Testament.

Appendix C – Late Start for Daniel's 70 Weeks

Some branches of Christianity have shifted away from King Artaxerxes' decree of 458/457 BC, the decree which we have already shown to match New Testament chronology. Curiously, this recent shift in Christian theory asserts that Artaxerxes' later decree of 444 BC is the correct starting point, even though it doesn't match established New Testament dates. Perhaps they move away from 458/457 BC to distance themselves from the Millerite movement – or from 1844 events. However, shifting to the decree of 444 BC leaves them with several challenges, the greatest of which – they have more prophecy than they know what to do with, and are jump through several hoops to shoehorn prophecy into a workable timeline.

1. First, they must shorten each year to 360 days. This portion of their interpretation is the only part that has reasonable scriptural support.
2. In order for their interpretation to fit, they then assert a birth date for Christ of 1 AD, a date that falls a few years after Herod's apparent death. This is in direct contradiction to Matthew 2, which clearly states that the Savior was born during the lifetime of King Herod. Of course, our date for Herod's death depends largely upon the reliability of Josephus, the Jewish historian who noted that a comet appeared in the heavens in the last year of Herod's reign. It also depends on the reliability of modern astronomers, who can date a visible comet to 4 BC. However, in the vacuum of evidence to the contrary, the more straightforward conclusion, in my opinion, is to accept New Testament testimony that a light in the heavens actually DID appear during Herod's reign – which then helped guide the wise men of Matthew 2.
3. The main reason against a 444 BC start date is that Daniel's time prophecy is too long for the above start date to match actual events of the Savior's life. Left with

more “weeks” of prophecy than actual chronology, interpreters who support the 444 BC start date are forced to snip off Daniel’s last “week” of years. They then claim that this 70th week must be a detached 7-year prophecy, intended for some time in the distant future. However, Daniel gives no basis for anyone to dissect Gabriel’s timeline.

A closer examination of Daniel’s description of his 70th “week” shows why the final week belongs with the other 69. That final week foretells the closing events of Christ’s earthly ministry. In Daniel 9:27, at the conclusion of Daniel’s Messianic passage, the prophet notifies God’s covenant people that during that 70th week of prophecy, the covenant would be confirmed with many. To confirm that this week belongs with Christ’s ministry, compare Matthew’s testimony of the Savior’s final hours:

Daniel’s Messianic 70 Weeks	Matthew
<p><i>Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon the holy city, <u>to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation²⁵⁷ for iniquity,</u> and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.</i></p> <p><i>....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....²⁵⁸</i></p>	<p><i>And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.</i></p> <p><i>For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.²⁵⁹</i></p>

Daniel states clearly in his closing Messianic verse that sacrifice would come to an end in the midst of the 70th “week.”

²⁵⁷ i.e. atonement

²⁵⁸ Daniel 9:24-27

²⁵⁹ Matthew 26:28 – for confirming the covenant, compare 3 Nephi 15:5-8

Which is precisely what the Messiah accomplished at Golgotha,²⁶⁰ a fulfillment which proponents of the 444 BC start date apparently overlook.

A closer examination of Daniel's passage provides a clearer indication of why the 70th week belongs with the other 69, and its connection with Jesus Christ.

4. Those who overlook the 458/457 BC start date for Daniel's prophecy have difficulty providing a viable context for the final phrase of Daniel's Messianic promise. As such, their translations add several unwarranted words to the Hebrew text in the attempt to establish their notion of a future 7-year prophecy. First, let's examine the King James translation of the final phrase of the last verse of Daniel 9.

...and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Instead of the KJV “for the overspreading of abominations,” the NIV translation reads “and on the wing of the temple he will set up an abomination....” However, the phrase “of the temple” does not exist in the Hebrew text, and has been added by the translators to fit their view of a detached 70th week. They believe in, and thereby promote, the notion that the starting point for the 69 weeks was 444/445 BC, and attempt to promote the future fulfillment of some separate, future 70th week.²⁶¹

Let's take a closer look at the meaning of this text. The Hebrew term “kanaph” is the source for the NIV term “wing” and for the KJV “overspreading.” However, the word also means a border or hem of a garment. In this case, the translators may have failed to understand Daniel's meaning. But his contemporary, Jeremiah,

²⁶⁰ See Mosiah 13:27, Alma 34:13, 3 Nephi 9:19, Hebrews 8-11.

²⁶¹ The NIV version on my desk asserts both views not only in the rendering of the translation, but also in its provided keynotes in Daniel 9.

apparently provides a clearer explanation for Daniel's meaning of the 70th week:

In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correctin: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.

O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I ben a wilderness unto Isreal? A land of darkness? Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?

Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? Therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.

Also in thy skirts²⁶² is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.²⁶³

Daniel was apparently not speaking about any wing in any detached 70th week. Instead, he was apparently referring to the spattered skirts of murderers in the 70th immediately following the first 69 weeks. Note once again the Savior's parallel statement made during the middle of that 70th week:

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee,

²⁶² Jeremiah uses a plural version of “kanaph” here - the same term used at the end of Daniel.

²⁶³ Jeremiah 2:30-34

*how often would I have gathered thy children
together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under
her wings, and ye would not!*

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

*For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth,
till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name
of the Lord.²⁶⁴*

With powerful imagery, Jeremiah, Daniel, and the Savior taught that the blood of all the prophets would splatter the skirt of many of the covenant people who claim to be innocent of any wrongdoing in Daniel's 70th week. For in that week, the Messiah of the world was slain, and at the end of that week, God's ancient covenant people stoned Stephen, a messenger of the risen Christ. The 444 BC starting date is seriously flawed. Instead, the 458/457 BC starting date is the correct starting date for Daniel's prophecies.

For twenty centuries, some Christians have derided the Jews for slaying the Messiah sent to them. However, the Savior's teachings and Daniel's other time prophecy clarify the danger of focusing on the mote in another's eye. For, as Daniel foretold in his previous chapter, an apostate covenant people would stumble once again in 1844, and be found spotted with the blood of Christ's latter-day messengers.²⁶⁵

In closing, we should be aware of the origin for the theory of a future 70th week. The source may raise a few eyebrows.

In the 1500's, as the Protestant Reformation gained momentum, the Reformers loudly denounced the papacy as both the persecuting apostate beast described in Revelation and the persecuting power mentioned in Daniel. In response, the Catholic church launched the counter-Reformation, which attempted to regain the countries lost to the Reformation.

As part of this campaign, Francisco Ribera, a Jesuit priest, dissected and reformulated the prophecies of Daniel and

²⁶⁴ Matthew 23:29-39

²⁶⁵ A study of Revelation and Isaiah clarifies this meaning. See Volume 2.

Revelation into a version where the persecuting power was completely still in the future.²⁶⁶ Of course, Ribera and many Catholic allies quickly supported this new view of the persecuting beast in Daniel and Revelation because it removed their organization from the bull's-eye of prophecy.

Despite widespread Catholic support, the leaders of the Protestant movement were not swayed by the new version of Bible prophecy.

However, over the centuries, Ribera's interpretations have quietly infiltrated many branches of Christianity. In a bizarre twist of irony, those interpretations now lead millions of Protestants and non-denominational Christians to believe in a future fulfillment of Daniel's 70th week – a prophecy which was fulfilled two thousand years ago by Jesus of Nazareth.

For these reasons and more,²⁶⁷ a 444 BC start date for Daniel's 70-week prophecy, along with any claim of a future 7-year period from Daniel, have a very shaky foundation. In place of these man-made theories, the Messenger of the Covenant, the Messiah himself, bled and died for all mankind in the midst of the 70th week.

Behold, my brethren, he that prophesieth, let him prophesy to the understanding of men; for the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls. But behold, we are not witnesses alone in these things; for God also spake them unto prophets of old.

Jacob 4:13

²⁶⁶ Maxwell, God Cares, Vol. 2, 518. Also, DRCS Vol. 2, 340-343.

²⁶⁷ For the central reasons, review Chapter 4 and Appendix A.

Appendix D – A Christian Assault on Daniel

*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.*

*....But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou
shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*

Daniel 12:9-10, 13

The end-time struggle foretold by Daniel rages on today – and Daniel stands in the middle of that battle. Although the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Seventh Day Adventist Church firmly trust in Daniel's writings, there is a growing movement within other branches of Christianity that supports a direct assault to undermine Daniel's promises.

Many Christian pastors and teachers are teaching the souls in their care that Daniel has little or no Christian value. And many of those who belittle Daniel's importance are also among the loudest to question the Christianity of Mormons and Adventists. The irony of that correlation will soon become clear.

Attacks on Daniel's trustworthiness have infiltrated a surprising number of Christian publications, congregations, homes, and colleges. These attacks have also assumed different guises – from the subtle, to the more blatant.

For a blatant example, a few years ago, I was browsing through a denominational Christian bookstore, and picked up a study guide that focused on the book of Daniel. I assumed it would aid the reader in understanding God's intent with Daniel. Instead, that “guide” boldly promoted the theory that Daniel was written by an impostor during the Maccabean revolt, centuries after the events recorded in Daniel. The book also asserted the view that Daniel was a fictional character who existed only in the impostor's heroic imagination. Surprisingly, this theory is rapidly gaining momentum in many Christian circles.

Before addressing that theory, let's first unmask its source. The author of this theory was a pagan philosopher named Porphyry, who lived under the Roman Empire when Christianity was rapidly encroaching upon the ancient pagan faith of the empire. To thwart the spread of the Christian faith, Porphyry wrote a multi-volume work entitled "Against Christianity." Book twelve of that account revolved entirely around Daniel – in an attempt to directly undermine the credibility of Daniel's promises. In this book, Porphyry, who chose as his premise that no man can know the future,²⁶⁸ claimed that Daniel was a pseudographical work, written in the Maccabean period, centuries after the events described and "foretold" in Daniel, and claimed that the impostor of Daniel merely couched his history in prophetic language to seem authoritative.²⁶⁹

That's the surprising pedigree of the growing assault on Daniel. It began with an anti-Christian writer, and is sustained today by ordained ministers within the Christian faith. Furthermore, the premise that Daniel was questionable rests on the supposition that NO ONE could know the events of history in advance. Many who promote this theory doubt God's ability to communicate to man. Please take note of that.

Now let's look at the stability of the theory itself. Major fault lines come into sharp focus immediately after its proponents admit that the book of Daniel predates the time of Christ. (The Dead Sea Scrolls and other recent findings affirm this reality.) This is where the theory self-destructs, because, as we have seen in a previous chapter, the *supposed* impostor of Daniel somehow foretold the precise timing of Christ's appearance. Immediately, their theory collapses under its own weight. Either the author could know the future and foretell the timing of Christ, or he couldn't. Either he was a prophet or he wasn't. They can't have it both ways. The truth is, God knows world history from beginning to end, and can dictate it to be written by whomever He appoints. Or, in the words of Daniel, He "rules in the kingdom of men, and

²⁶⁸ Compare the parallel teaching and history of the anti-christ Sherem, recorded in the Book of Mormon – Jacob 7.

²⁶⁹ See William Shea's study in DRCS 2:289-305.

appointeth over it whomsoever he will.” Daniel was a true prophet.

But we're not quite done kicking this dead horse yet. The most glaring discrepancy in a “Christian” attack upon Daniel is Jesus Christ's clear endorsement of Daniel. As recorded by both Matthew and Mark, Christ clearly taught that Daniel was a prophet. Therefore, those who profess to believe in Christ with one breath, and cast doubt on Daniel with the next, don't trust Christ's assurances. So much for the frontal attacks on Daniel.

But there is a more damaging attempt to erode Daniel's words that is quietly raging in Christianity. It should come as no surprise that this attack comes from a more subtle direction – from those who claim to believe that Daniel was a true prophet. Their attack consists of a soothing insistence that although Daniel's writings are true, it's not important for a Christian to study or understand them. While friends, pastors, or family might cling to that half-truth, Christ clearly declared otherwise. He made it crystal clear that it was important for His followers to understand Daniel. And Daniel taught the same. It then becomes our choice to decide whose assurances we want to follow, and who we most want to please.

If Christ's clear invitation to understand isn't enough incentive, it should be. We simply cannot separate Daniel from the New Testament. Christ testified of him. Paul alluded to Daniel as an exemplary model of faith. And Christian scholars have discovered that almost every chapter in Revelation references Daniel's writings.

So, my Christian neighbors, we each have a clear choice. We can accept Daniel as a reliable source and prayerfully seek to understand his promises. Or we can ignore or dismiss him based on the theories of men.

However, due to the words of Christ, Paul, and John, which are intentionally interwoven with assurances about Daniel, none of us can consistently dismiss Daniel without thereby dismissing half of the gospels, the writings of Paul, and Revelation. In other words, by dismissing Daniel, you'll reject the testimony of the Christian New Testament. My prayer is that you'll ignore the theories of

men, and instead prayerfully trust in God's assurances, as you seek out Daniel's meaning.

*But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets,
and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what
shall be in the latter days.*

*...the great God hath made known to the king
what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is
certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.*

Daniel 2:28,45

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