

Revival and Reformation

Day 8. Sentence of the Divine Watcher

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“To the last ruler of Babylon, as in type to its first, had come the sentence of the divine Watcher: “O king, ... to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.” Daniel 4:31.

Every nation that has come upon the stage of action has been permitted to occupy its place on the earth, that the fact might be determined whether it would fulfill the purposes of the Watcher and the Holy One. Prophecy has traced the rise and progress of the world’s great empires – Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. With each of these, as with the nations of less power, history has repeated itself. Each has had its period of test; each has failed, its glory faded, its power departed.” Prophets and Kings, 533, 535.

Let Us Meditate Upon Psalm 119:113-120

Samech – Fifteenth Letter of the Hebrew Alphabet

“I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love. Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word. Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God. Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually. Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood. Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies. My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.”

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“While nations have rejected God’s principles, and in this rejection have wrought their own ruin, yet a divine, overruling purpose has manifestly been at work throughout the ages. It was this that the prophet Ezekiel saw in the wonderful representation given him during his exile in the land of the Chaldeans, when before his astonished gaze were portrayed the symbols that revealed an overruling Power that has to do with the affairs of earthly rulers.”

Upon the banks of the river Chebar, Ezekiel beheld a whirlwind seeming to come from the north, “a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber.” A number of wheels intersecting one another were moved by four living beings. High above all these “was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. “And there appeared in the cherubims the form of a man’s hand under their wings. The wheels were so complicated in arrangement that at first sight they appeared to be in confusion; yet they moved in perfect harmony.” Ezekiel 1:4, 26; 10:8.” 3
Prophets and Kings, 535.

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“Heavenly beings, sustained and guided by the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, were impelling those wheels; above them, upon the sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; and round about the throne was a rainbow, the emblem of divine mercy.

As the wheellike complications were under the guidance of the hand beneath the wings of the cherubim, so the complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of this earth.

The history of nations speaks to us today. To every nation and to every individual God has assigned a place in His great plan. Today men and nations are being tested by the plummet in the hand of Him who makes no mistake. All are by their own choice deciding their destiny, and God is overruling all for the accomplishment of His purposes.

Today the signs of the times declare that we are standing on the threshold of great and solemn events. Everything in our world is in agitation.” Prophets and Kings, 535, 536. 4

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“Before our eyes is fulfilling the Saviour’s prophecy of the events to precede His coming: “Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars.... Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences [pandemics], and earthquakes, in divers places.” Matthew 24:6, 7.

The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place – that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.

The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men’s hearts to fail them for fear.”
Prophets and Kings, 536, 537.

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“Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof; ... because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate.” Isaiah 24:1-6....

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” Jeremiah 30:7.... “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, either shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” Psalm 91:9, 10. “O daughter of Zion, ... the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel.” Micah 4:10-12.

God will not fail His church in the hour of her greatest peril. He has promised deliverance. “I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents,” He has declared, “and have mercy on His dwelling places.” Jeremiah 30:18. Then will the purpose of God be fulfilled; the principles of His kingdom will be honored by all beneath the sun.” Prophets and Kings, 537, 538.

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“The experience of Daniel as a statesman in the kingdoms of Babylon and Medo-Persia reveals the truth that a businessman is not necessarily a designing, policy man, but that he may be a man instructed by God at every step. Daniel, the prime minister of the greatest of earthly kingdoms, was at the same time a prophet of God, receiving the light of heavenly inspiration. A man of like passions as ourselves, the pen of inspiration describes him as without fault. His business transactions, when subjected to the closest scrutiny of his enemies, were found to be without one flaw. He was an example of what every businessman may become when his heart is converted and consecrated, and when his motives are right in the sight of God.

Strict compliance with the requirements of Heaven brings temporal as well as spiritual blessings. Unwavering in his allegiance to God, unyielding in his mastery of self, Daniel, by his noble dignity and unswerving integrity, while yet a young man, won the “favor and tender love” of the heathen officer in whose charge he had been placed.” Daniel 1:9.”
Prophets and Kings, 546.

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“The same characteristics marked his afterlife. He [Daniel] rose speedily to the position of prime minister of the kingdom of Babylon. Through the reign of successive monarchs, the downfall of the nation, and the establishment of another world empire, such were his wisdom and statesmanship, so perfect his tact, his courtesy, his genuine goodness of heart, his fidelity to principle, that even his enemies were forced to the confession that “they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful.”

Honored by men with the responsibilities of state and with the secrets of kingdoms bearing universal sway, Daniel was honored by God as His ambassador, and was given many revelations of the mysteries of ages to come. His wonderful prophecies, as recorded by him in chapters 7 to 12 of the book bearing his name, were not fully understood even by the prophet himself; but before his life labors closed, he was given the blessed assurance that “at the end of the days” – in the closing period of this world’s history – he would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place.” Prophets and Kings, 546, 547.

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“ It was not given him [to Daniel] to understand all that God had revealed of the divine purpose. “Shut up the words, and seal the book,” he was directed concerning his prophetic writings; these were to be sealed “even to the time of the end.” “Go thy way, Daniel,” the angel once more directed the faithful messenger of Jehovah; “for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.... Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” Daniel 12:4, 9, 13.

As we near the close of this world’s history, the prophecies recorded by Daniel demand our special attention, as they relate to the very time in which we are living. With them should be linked the teachings of the last book of the New Testament Scriptures. Satan has led many to believe that the prophetic portions of the writings of Daniel and of John the revelator cannot be understood. But the promise is plain that special blessing will accompany the study of these prophecies. “ Prophets and Kings, 547.

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“The wise shall understand” Daniel 12:10, was spoken of the visions of Daniel that were to be unsealed in the latter days; and of the revelation that Christ gave to His servant John for the guidance of God’s people all through the centuries, the promise is, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.” Revelation 1:3.

From the rise and fall of nations as made plain in the books of Daniel and the Revelation, we need to learn how worthless is mere outward and worldly glory. Babylon, with all its power and magnificence, the like of which our world has never since beheld, — power and magnificence which to the people of that day seemed so stable and enduring, — how completely has it passed away! As “the flower of the grass,” it has perished. James 1:10. So perished the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the kingdoms of Grecia and Rome. And so perishes all that has not God for its foundation. Only that which is bound up with His purpose, and expresses His character, can endure. His principles are the only steadfast things our world knows.”
Prophets and Kings, 547, 548.

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“A careful study of the working out of God’s purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, will help us to estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen, and to learn what is the true aim of life.

Thus, viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may, like Daniel and his fellows, live for that which is true and noble and enduring. And learning in this life the principles of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, that blessed kingdom which is to endure for ever and ever, we may be prepared at His coming to enter with Him into its possession.”

Prophets and Kings, 548.

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“The advent of the army of Cyrus before the walls of Babylon was to the Jews a sign that their deliverance from captivity was drawing nigh. More than a century before the birth of Cyrus, Inspiration had mentioned him by name, and had caused a record to be made of the actual work he should do in taking the city of Babylon unawares, and in preparing the way for the release of the children of the captivity. Through Isaiah the word had been spoken:

“Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; ... to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.” Isaiah 45:1-3.” Prophets and Kings, 551.

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“In the unexpected entry of the army of the Persian conqueror into the heart of the Babylonian capital by way of the channel of the river whose waters had been turned aside, and through the inner gates that in careless security had been left open and unprotected, the Jews had abundant evidence of the literal fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the sudden overthrow of their oppressors. And this should have been to them an unmistakable sign that God was shaping the affairs of nations in their behalf; for inseparably linked with the prophecy outlining the manner of Babylon’s capture.”

“Cyrus, he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.” “I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah 44:28; 45:13.”
Prophets and Kings, 551.

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“Nor were these the only prophecies upon which the exiles had opportunity to base their hope of speedy deliverance. The writings of Jeremiah were within their reach, and in these was plainly set forth the length of time that should elapse before the restoration of Israel from Babylon. “When seventy years are accomplished,” the Lord had foretold through His messenger, “I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.” Jeremiah 29:12.

Favor would be shown the remnant of Judah, in answer to fervent prayer. “I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.” Jeremiah 29:14.”
Prophets and Kings, 552.

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“Often had Daniel and his companions gone over these and similar prophecies outlining God’s purpose for His people. And now, as the rapid course of events betokened the mighty hand of God at work among the nations, Daniel gave special thought to the promises made to Israel. His faith in the prophetic word led him to enter into experiences foretold by the sacred writers.

After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon,” the Lord had declared, “I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return...I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:10-13.” Prophets and Kings, 553.

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“Shortly before the fall of Babylon, when Daniel was meditating on these prophecies and seeking God for an understanding of the times, a series of visions was given him concerning the rise and fall of kingdoms. With the first vision, as recorded in the seventh chapter of the book of Daniel, an interpretation was given; yet not all was made clear to the prophet. “My cogitations much troubled me,” he wrote of his experience at the time, “and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.” Daniel 7:28.

Through another vision further light was thrown upon the events of the future; and it was at the close of this vision that Daniel heard “one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision?” Daniel 8:13. The answer that was given, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” Daniel 8:14, filled him with perplexity. Earnestly he sought for the meaning of the vision. He could not understand the relation sustained by the seventy years’ captivity, as foretold through Jeremiah, to the twenty-three hundred years that in vision he heard the heavenly visitant declare should elapse before the cleansing of God’s sanctuary.” Prophets and Kings, 553, 554.

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“Still burdened in behalf of Israel, Daniel studied anew the prophecies of Jeremiah. They were very plain – so plain that he understood by these testimonies recorded in books “the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” Daniel 9:2. With faith founded on the sure word of prophecy, Daniel pleaded with the Lord for the speedy fulfillment of these promises. He pleaded for the honor of God to be preserved. In his petition he identified himself fully with those who had fallen short of the divine purpose, confessing their sins as his own.

“I set my face unto the Lord God,” the prophet declared, “to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession.” Daniel 9:3, 4. Though Daniel had long been in the service of God, and had been spoken of by heaven as “greatly beloved,” yet he now appeared before God as a sinner, urging the great need of the people he loved. His prayer was eloquent in its simplicity, and intensely earnest” Prophets and Kings, 554, 555.

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“And now, just at the time God had said He would cause His temple at Jerusalem to be rebuilt, He moved upon Cyrus as His agent to discern the prophecies concerning himself, with which Daniel was so familiar, and to grant the Jewish people their liberty....

In a written proclamation published “throughout all his kingdom,” Cyrus made known his desire to provide for the return of the Hebrews and for the rebuilding of their temple. “The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth,” the king gratefully acknowledged in this public proclamation; “and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, ... and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (He is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering.” Ezra 1:1-4. “
Prophets and Kings, 557, 558.

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Let Us Meditate Upon Psalm 119:121-128

Ain – Sixteenth Letter of the Hebrew Alphabet

“I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors. Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me. Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness. Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes. I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law. Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.”

Let Us Pray

“A careful study of the working out of God’s purpose in the history of nations and in the revelation of things to come, will help us to estimate at their true value things seen and things unseen, and to learn what is the true aim of life.

Thus, viewing the things of time in the light of eternity, we may, like Daniel and his fellows, live for that which is true and noble and enduring. And learning in this life the principles of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, that blessed kingdom which is to endure for ever and ever, we may be prepared at His coming to enter with Him into its possession.” Prophets and Kings, 548.