

(17) ANCIENT MYSTERIES REVEALED: The Secret of The Sealed Scroll

Revelation 10 portrays a mighty angel standing over land and sea with a book open in his hand. Swearing by God the creator, he declares that time is up. After being told to take and eat the book, John finds that while it is sweet in his mouth it gives him a stomach ache. After this sweet-bitter experience he is told to prophecy again (Revelation 10:1-3,5-11). What is all this about?

Firstly, what is the book? The phrase, “*a little book open*,” in the original language means that this book was once shut, but has now been opened (Revelation 10:2). We need to go back to Daniel to understand, for this passage in Revelation 10 is a clear reference to Daniel 12:4-9.

As Daniel came to the end of his book, he was told, “*But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end*” (Daniel 12:4,9 KJV). So the book of Daniel was to be closed to human understanding until the time of the end. But more specifically, one of Daniel’s prophecies in particular was to be closed to human understanding until the time of the end.

In Daniel 8, after seeing the little horn stand against the Prince (the commanding officer) of the host, cast down the sanctuary, take away the temple services, and cast down truth and God’s people, Daniel heard the cryptic question, “How long is all this going to go on for” (Daniel 8:13)? The answer given was, “*And he said to me, For two thousand three hundred days (evenings and mornings); then the sanctuary shall be cleansed*” (Daniel 8:14 NKJV). When Gabriel appeared before Daniel, he declared, “*And the vision of the evening and the morning (the 2300) which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days*” (Daniel 8:26 KJV). Gabriel also stated that “*the vision refers to the time of the end*” (Daniel 8:17). In other words the 2300 day prophecy was to be sealed or not to be understood by God’s people until the time of the end.

It is so clear. The book of Daniel, and in particular the 2300 days, was to be closed to human understanding until the time of the end. When this time came many would run to and fro through the book to understand its messages. So when is the time of the end? Daniel’s last chapter - the very passage to which Revelation 10 alludes to - provides the answer: “*Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, ‘How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?’ And I heard the man*

*clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. 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**” (Daniel 12:5-9 KJV).*

The book of Daniel couldn’t be more clear - the time of the end is at the end of a period called a time, times & half a time. That period of time is defined in Revelation as 1260 days, which according to the Biblical year/day principle is a period of 1260 literal years (Revelation 12:14,6; Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34).

Because of events that took place in 538 AD, the declaration of the Roman Emperor Justinian, that the Bishop of Rome was “The head of the church, the true and effectual corrector of heretics,” was able to be set in motion. There followed at the hands of the Church of Rome 1260 years of persecution of God’s people. This period ended in 1798 when the Bishop of Rome was imprisoned by Napoleon’s forces. Thus “The Time of the End” began” in 1798.

In other words Daniel and John predicted that at the end of 1260 years (from 1798), the sealed portion of Daniel (the 2300 days) would be opened to human understanding. But there is more. John continued, “*So I went to the angel and said to him, ‘Give me the little book’... Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter. And he said to me, ‘You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings’*” (Revelation 10:9-11). God was predicting that after a sweet experience that turned bitter, a movement would rise to globally proclaim the sealed portion of Daniel’s book – Daniel 8:14 in particular.

History informs us that the French Revolution of the 1790’s was marked by violence, immorality and atheism. These things reminded Bible students at that time of the signs of Christ’s return. As a result they began to study the 1260 day/year prophecy. They knew of Justinian’s decree and what happened in 538 AD. When the Bishop of Rome was imprisoned by Napoleon’s forces under General Berthier, these students recognized in this event the fulfilment of the 1260 day/year prophecy. Bible scholars of many denominations then turned their attention to understand Daniel 8:14 – the 2300 day/year prophecy. Thus the sealed portion of Daniel, which Gabriel said

almost 2500 years ago would be sealed until “the time of the end” – 1798, now began to be “eaten” or studied.

Most of these Bible students, which included Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists and many other denominations, believed, based on Daniel 8:14 and Daniel 9:24-27, that something was to happen in 1843/1844. Many didn't know or say what would happen. However, William Miller, a Baptist farmer, came to believe that Jesus would return on Oct 22, 1844. His was an inter-denominational group of some 500,000. They began to herald the “sweet” news that Jesus was about to return.

But Jesus did not return on October 22, 1844 and they experienced what has become known as “The Great Disappointment!” Sadly many gave up their faith in God after this sweet/bitter experience. However some among this inter denominational group sought to discover what went wrong? They knew the date 1844 was correct because the 70 weeks or 490 years which were part of the 2300 day/year prophecy are a proven and precise fit – an exact fulfilment - because in 27 AD Jesus was baptized right on time; in 31 AD Jesus had died on time; and in 34 AD the 70 weeks or 490 years ended right on time when Steven was stoned and the gospel began to be proclaimed to non-Jews.

Jesus himself had acknowledged the fulfilment of this first part of the 2300 day prophecy when, after his baptism in 27 AD, He had declared: “*The time is fulfilled...*” (Mark 1:15). Since this part of the 2300 prophecy was absolutely correct, then they rightly concluded that the rest of the 2300 day/year prophecy, which ended in 1844, had to be correct.

Convinced that the date was correct, they more carefully examined the phrase “...then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14). Miller and his followers had taught that the sanctuary or temple was the Earth. Since the sanctuary (the Earth) was to be “cleansed” (Daniel 8:14), they believed that this must be a reference to Christ's return, when the Earth would be cleansed with fire.

However, as they studied Hebrews and Revelation, they discovered that there was a sanctuary or temple in heaven, which also needed cleansing (Revelation 11:19; Hebrews 9:23). Examining the sanctuary and its rituals in the Old Testament they discovered in Leviticus 16 & 23 that the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) or cleansing of the sanctuary, was regarded by the Jews as an annual Day of Judgment

Thus they saw that the cleansing of heaven's temple was a reference to God's end-time pre-advent judgment, and that 1844 marked the commencement of that judgment. A comparison of the parallel prophecies of Daniel 7 and 8 makes this obvious, because in each prophecy there appears a little horn doing similar things (casting down God's people and his truth or laws). At precisely the same point where in Daniel 7 the little horn is brought to account when heaven's judgment sits, in Daniel 8 the sanctuary is

cleansed (Daniel 7:8-10; 8:9-14). Clearly they refer to the same event.

But from Revelation 10 these people saw more than just the fulfilment of the prediction that the book of Daniel, especially the 2300 days, would be opened to human understanding in the time of the end, and the fulfilment of the prediction of a sweet/bitter experience. They discovered their mission – they were to “prophecy again.” They got it wrong the first time, now they saw they were to proclaim to the world that the judgment was now in session and that Jesus was soon to come. Their mission was to proclaim the everlasting gospel of God's gracious saving love in the context of His judgment that had commenced in 1844 (Revelation 10:11; 14:6,7). Their mission was to share God's three angel's messages that prepare the world for the soon return of Jesus (Revelation 14:6-12,14).

Those who heed and proclaim God's end-time final messages are called the remnant (Revelation 12:17; 14:6-12). They have heeded God's call to leave Babylon – all belief systems, world views & ideologies, including non-Christian and Christian religions that are not following God's word and commandments (Revelation 18:1-4). God's end-time remnant is a prophetic movement of God's doing. Won't you decide right now to be part of what God is doing? Won't you be one of His end-time remnant that shares His messages to prepare the world for the soon return of Jesus?