

False Prophecy & Futurism in Adventism

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Futurism in Adventism and Other Confusing, False Prophetic Interpretations

In the times of ancient Israel, the more in apostasy they were, the more false prophets and misleading prophecy abounded. Look at the later end of Ahab, when 400 false prophets testified to the kings and some even had "multimedia presentations" to press home their word. Only one true prophet was brought into the picture and he gave a directly opposite message--and his word came true! One against 400! Friends, we are in the same boat today! Apostasy and false prophecy go hand in hand and it is essential we know the true from the false--Numbers are no criteria, neither are fancy multi-media presentations and satellites; there is only one way to know--the principles of prophetic interpretation must be followed and the prophets are subject to the prophets!

False Prophetic interpretations have done much harm in Adventism since the last quarter of the 1800s onward. Prior to this time period Adventism was largely involved in the struggle to survive and become established and there was not as much desire in the leadership to hold up some different view and thus cause all to look upon the holder as having greatly superior scholarship, far in advance of those pioneers who laid the foundations under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of Prophecy.

How false prophecy gained such a hold is a lengthy story and it is not the purpose of this article to tell it all, but merely to point out certain pitfalls that were fallen into. These pitfalls interfered with the correct unfolding of prophecy in Adventism for over a century and are still erupting today on every hand, as the devil pulls out every last weapon to keep God's professed people milling around in confusion, thus preventing a coming into the clear prophetic light and heading into the world with this light. True prophetic light, properly applied, leaves no loose ends and is in harmony with itself and the Spirit of Prophecy and carries a power that cannot be gainsaid.

Uriah Smith, while contributing much of value to prophetic understanding, slipped into speculation on the later verses of Daniel 11 and as a result of that speculation, also kept slipping, applying the Battle of Armageddon in the 16th chapter of Revelation as a literal war between nations fought in the literal land of Palestine after marching through the literal land of Turkey. It was pure speculation and violated rules of prophetic interpretation that he himself had been using to this point.

Why did such a slip come? Pride goeth before a fall. Animosity and personal pride, resentment and rejection of warnings that came from God to Smith from the Spirit of Prophecy, placed him in a position where Ellen White warned him that she saw Satan standing by him to mislead him. During this period, he made these changes of emphasis, stating to some that if future years did not continue to verify his stand, he would change it back to the pioneer understanding. Sadly, once a person takes a false position and many gather around him and applaud, it is almost impossible to then retrace one's steps and declare; "Oops! I am wrong about this, the pioneers were correct; I need to change my book that now has sold thousands of copies." Pride forbids this and he died without either seeing evidence that he was right, or confessing his error.

I recently read an article from a well-known writer of past years, where he was faithfully backing Smith's false ideas by stating that nearly all sda scholars supported this view. Sadly, that was true because nobody dared to stand up and declare that it had no foundation in correct prophetic principles! It was not because people had carefully re-studied the position and proven it correct. Most preferred to mill around with the herd rather than face the ridicule and ostracization that occurred to the very few who dared lift a finger and peep against the established Smith prototype. Those who wrote on prophecy did not go back to the principles and study them through themselves—they blindly followed into the pit of error. It was cozy in there with all the others.

Although the Spirit of Prophecy NEVER gave the least credence to these false views, no one seemed to be able to get the thought into their head that the Great Controversy, the inspired book given to warn the world and guide God's faithful through the last days, clearly shows that Rome is the final power in history, not Turkey! That Armageddon is the spiritual battle between those who are in rebellion against God and His law and those who obey it and keep the faith of Jesus.

Also the prophets MUST be subject to the prophets and all the parallel prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8 & 9 show the Roman power and nothing that could be interpreted as indicating this shift to Turkey.

Some are thrown off track by certain statements in Spirit of Prophecy advocating Smith's book, but nowhere in these statements are we led to believe that the book is infallible. She was indicating it was the best they had to use at that time. It was important to let the people of the world know that the prophetic books were not just mystical and unintelligible as their ministers were telling them, and Smith's Daniel and Revelation gets that point across.

In fact over and over, especially in the late 1800s and early 1900s Ellen White appealed to the leaders and people to study more deeply into the Bible books of Daniel & Revelation. If this had been done, the slip from proper prophetic principles of interpretation would have been seen and corrected. But every year that went by only entrenched Adventists more deeply in the 'follow the leader and don't dare think for

yourself' habit. Some even asked her 'why should they study for themselves when it was already laid out by ones like Smith?'

What were some of the deviations from principle that led into the Turkey trap? Briefly, he introduced a new power in Daniel 11:36 when there is no indication in the prophecy to justify the introduction of a new power. Another unfounded speculation was when he got to verses 37, and 38 he stated these could not apply to the Papacy when properly understood they clearly apply to it! Also in Revelation 16, he decides that the 'River Euphrates' reference must mean the nation where that river passes through—but nowhere else in prophecy do we have this idea, it was purely unfounded speculation. Because he was already switched over to thinking of literal battles in the literal nations, when the Bible is clear that after the Cross, the symbols are spiritual and world-wide in application—Israel being spiritual Israel and not the geographical nation, so he conjectured that because a literal river would not be a barrier to a modern army, so it must refer to the nation the river flows through. This stand was taken without any Biblical precedent to base it on.

So the result was that Adventist evangelists and preachers turned from the study of Bible and Spirit of Prophecy inspiration and began to use the newspaper to interpret prophecy and this resulted in decade after decade of false prophecy being preached from our pulpits. Oh how different things would have been had the Spirit of Prophecy counsel been followed way back there and the prophecies been studied according to their own principles and presented correctly!

And all the time the Spirit of Prophecy writings stood by giving clear voice to the truth and no backing to the false ideas at all. This, no doubt is where the ideas of 'pluralism' got going among us; people could say they believed Great Controversy and also back Smith and not see any problem with this. But if you read old evangelistic sermons, it was Smith's ideas and not Great Controversy's that were used to create the false excitement the speakers wanted in their messages. The false interpretations prevented Adventism from seeing that all the prophecies are really one and expound on one another, and the Spirit of Prophecy also fits perfectly into the one pattern, giving a clear picture of end-time events.

Another point to note is that many who reject the clear teaching of the Bible that the battle of Armageddon is a spiritual battle say that to take that stand is to make it something vague and mystical with no bloodshed involved—no, it does not! There will be plenty of bloodshed, BUT the fact is it is a spiritual battle and not a battle between nations over some spot of earth's real-estate. It is a spiritual battle that concerns you and me and our standing—either with the God of the Universe or against Him. A battle over some piece of Palestinian real Estate would have no meaning to our souls whatsoever. It was this that helped cause a lot of the deeper spiritual understanding to fall away from Adventism and it to become formal and ritualized, bereft of the waters of true spirituality.

Structure Guides Built in.

The Chiastic structure of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is a point that was not recognized by early writers such as Smith. Our dear Lord, Who is Wonderful in counsel, clearly knew that there could be problems with false interpretations arising and so He designed the whole book in a perfect pattern we find used as a literary device in Hebrew Scriptures. It is called a Chiasm and is similar, in a way, to the patterns we see in our poetry. The first and last sections line up and then the second and second to last and so on—in the center, which consists of chapters 10-17 we find clearly depicted the events of the final part of the Great Controversy including the pre-advent judgment. The chapters leading up to this are events that take place before the close of probation and the chapters that follow are events that take place after the close of probation.

This Chiastic structure forbids the taking of any section of prophecy and moving it in application into another part of the Chiasm—to do this is to break the structure and it results in confusion. To take the 7 Trumpets and apply them into the future, just before or after the close of probation breaks the structural rules of the book of Revelation—rules that were built into the book by Jesus Himself to prevent this very thing happening.

We also have a clear pattern that we can see in the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation that needs to be recognized as well. In the prophecies that apply to the time periods BEFORE Christ moves into the Most Holy Place and the antitypical Day of Atonement, we see specific time prophecies that line up events. The 70 weeks, the 2300 days, the 1260 days, the 2520 days and so on, but at the beginning of the central part of Revelation, in chapter 10 where the final Great Controversy section begins, we see an announcement: "Time shall be no more". This does not mean the close of probationary time, as there was still probationary time after that, because the end of the chapter says, "Thou must prophecy again". No sense to prophecy again if probation closed at the end of the 2300 days.

A careful reading of the wording of Daniel 12 also shows us that time prophecy was to meet its culmination in the date marked out by the end of the 2300 days, 1844. This is also referred to in Revelation 10, which is where the Book of Daniel intersects with the book of Revelation, as the 'The mystery of God. . . as He hath declared to his servants the prophets," which would be finished. The Spirit of Prophecy agrees with this also specifying the 'Time of the End' as the end of the time prophecies.

In the first section of the Chiasm in Revelation, we have day for a year time prophecies, the end of these brings us into the central part of the Chiasm where there are no time prophecies but rather events only, then after probation closes and the Second Coming we have a literal time prophecy of a thousand years. So we have time in the first part of the chiasm and the last, but not in the 'time of the end' which is the center part. This is where we are in our day and no time prophecies apply there. Our job is to show how they were fulfilled in the past.

When the Chiastic structure of Revelation, the witness of Daniel, and the guidance given in the Spirit of Prophecy, is all laid out, we find perfect harmony between them and a clear guide to the proper understanding of prophecy, but the minute we take

some part and stick it somewhere else, where we speculate it should be, we break that harmony and introduce confusion into prophetic understanding.

Never has any false prophetic understanding arisen that it does not in some way violate one or more of the Biblical Rules of Prophetic Interpretation discovered by Miller. Even later when he himself got off track, these rules were used to show him his error. The clear answer to those who advocate the idea that 'well it can be one way or it can also be another way' falls apart when the principles are followed—the Bible allows of only one view being correct and in harmony with itself and the Spirit of Prophecy.

Even the false view of the 'Daily', that it is Christ's ministry and not paganism as advocated by our pioneers, brings in mass confusion and destroys the perfect pattern of prophetic understanding, making obscure what is otherwise plain.

Then we have those who take the two time prophecies of Daniel 12 and try to stick them into the future, which is a natural result of the wrong view of the Daily. I will here list a few quotes that show more reasons that these re-settings of the 1335 and the 1290 day/year prophecies into the present or future are without any validity.

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:---And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, **that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.**" Revelation 10:1, 6, 7.

This is where the start of the center part of the Chiasm, that part where time reckoning is not part of the prophecies, is announced. We see plainly here to those who have eyes to see and any prophetic understanding of Daniel & Revelation that this Mighty Angel, which we know by His description is Christ—is saying that after the little book of Daniel had done its work in 1840-1844, which are the events indicated by the Seven Thunders, that the 'Mystery of God' (the prophetic time prophecies) was finished and prophetic time would never again play a part in the messages of the future until after Christ's coming. Below I have listed just a few of many quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy that plainly say the same thing.

"I plainly stated at the Jackson camp meeting to these fanatical parties that they were doing the work of the adversary of souls; they were in darkness. They claimed to have great light that probation would close in October, 1884. I there stated in public that the Lord had been pleased to show me that there would be no definite time in the message given of God since 1844."--2SM 73 (1885).

"Our position has been one of waiting and watching, with no time-proclamation to intervene between the close of the prophetic periods in 1844 and the time of our Lord's coming."--10MR 270 (1888).

"The people will not have another message upon definite time. After this period of time [Rev. 10:4-6], reaching from 1842 to 1844, there can be no definite tracing of the prophetic time. The longest reckoning reaches to the autumn of 1844."--7BC 971 (1900).

"This is the testimony I have borne ever since the passing of the time in 1844: 'Time after time will be set by different ones which will pass by; and the influence of this time-setting will be to destroy the faith of God's people.' . . . The great test on time was in 1843 and 1844; and all who have set time since these great periods marked in prophecy were deceiving and being deceived." LS80 221

"I have seen that the 1843 chart was directed by the hand of the Lord, and that it should not be altered; that the figures were as He wanted them; that His hand was over and hid a mistake in some of the figures, so that none could see it, until His hand was removed."

Note: the mistake was in the 1843 date for the 'cleansing of the sanctuary', this was because they didn't allow for the fact that there is no year 0 between BC and AD. This was corrected on the 1850 chart but the 1335 and 1290 remained the same. [they don't cross over from BC to AD.]

God also directed in the 1850 chart: In 5MR 203 she speaks of the guidance from God getting out the 1850 chart, that it should have all 3 angel's messages on it and that the 1335 days were ended. (There was someone trying to re-apply them back then also.) In 5MR a bit of confusion is brought in by the editors inserting the word [other] in the MS. It does not belong there and you can see that in 6MR 251. She was telling the man that the 1335 was ended—as indicated on both charts—he was trying to apply it in the future after 1844.

A correct prophetic understanding is a tremendous boost to faith and trust in our times and a powerful aid to setting a clear warning message before a confused and dying world. This is why Satan wants every and all false views on the go at once because false views lead to a confused and false message and a mixture of views cause people both inside and outside Adventism to shrug their shoulders and declare, 'No use to bother with this, even the 'experts' can't agree on what they mean.' Thus Christ, who gave the prophecies to be a part of His end time work for the earth, is dishonored—people basically saying that it doesn't matter or cannot be understood and so on.

What is the answer to these false prophecies? It is to prayerfully take the Biblical rules of interpretation and apply them in careful study, as soon as you see an interpretation that violates even one of the principles; it should be laid aside as invalid. Instead people seem determined to lay aside the principles so they can present their own views and

when shown their error clearly, then the retort is that it doesn't matter it can be A and it can be B. No friends, the same applies to prophecy as to doctrine:

"But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea." 2 Corinthians 1:18, 19. Prophecy, like doctrine is not yea and nay, it is yea and Amen.

So then we have well meaning folk who say we should not be dogmatical about unfulfilled prophecy, that we can't really know for sure until it happens—friends, that gives the lie to the very words of God: "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets." Amos 3:7

It says He reveals the secret before hand—what would be the good if it could not be understood until it happens—is that revealing a thing? No! That would be concealing it. It is revealed, and it is up to us to study carefully enough to see the clear golden thread that links the prophecies into a harmonious picture. It is time to stable the hobby-horses, old and new, and use the inspired principles only to guide our interpretation and presentation of prophecy. When this is done—harmony will be seen. We do need unity-- but NOT on Error!

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