

Daniel 11: “The Takedown of the USA and Adventism”

Part Five: 'Gideon's Men'

The use of Bible types can help us to see things in a different perspective than we would normally see. In today's world of Adventism, in terms of Bible study, I would venture to say that it is through the use of the many different translations of the Bible that most people arrive at their conception of Bible truth. Coupled with the various denominational books, television, and other popular ministries, we as a people form our conclusions on the best sounding, or most plausible explanations that seem to agree the closest with Scripture. In other words, we let others form the conclusions, and we simply pick the one we think is trustworthy, or most suitable.

In mention of the popular ministries, they sometimes remind me of the high profile basketball player, who a few years back, went to North Korea to negotiate the release of an American hostage. While he was recognized as an exceptionally gifted pro basketball player, those skills did not necessarily qualify him to be a high stakes negotiator, representing the most powerful nation in the world. You see this with other high profile personalities in the sports, media, and business sectors, who somehow come to believe they are qualified by their success, to engage in a realm in which they are actually just as highly unqualified to accomplish. Money and power can provide the platform, but it cannot provide the wisdom, experience, or knowledge.

The point to make is, that while these ministries can do a good work in their respective fields, they should not be permitted to take the place of our own personal study of the Scriptures, or be relied upon as our main expositor of the Scriptures.

The Test at the Water

“And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.” Judges 7:4-7

In the account of Gideon and his men found in Judges 7, the Bible clearly details a two-step testing process. The first three verses show a rather simple method that produces two classes of men. The army, composed of thirty-two thousand men, are given the freedom to choose whether or not they will go out and fight. Realizing that they are up against an immense force, twenty-two thousand men decide to go home and forgo the fight.

It is interesting to note that it was God Himself who decided that there were too many men in Israel's army, as He didn't want them to go out and somehow think that they were capable of defeating such a large and hostile army on their own.

Now they are down to ten-thousand men and God still insists that there are too many men for him to work with. So, he directs them to another test that will reduce their numbers even more.

This time however, God personally sets the rules of the test.

He orders Gideon to bring the men down to the water for the purpose of getting a drink before they engage in battle. There each man drinks, the majority of the men kneeling down and putting their face in the water, whereas a few dip their hand in the water and put it to their mouth, all the time keeping their eyes open for the enemy.

All of these men drank out of the same water, but it was how they each drank that determined whether or not they would go on to fight the battle.

In other words, God was looking to see what method each person would use to get the water out of the stream and into their bodies. The water could do them no good as long as it stayed in the stream, but it must somehow be withdrawn, and placed in their mouths and absorbed before it could be of any benefit to them.

Why did it even matter to God how they drank, just so long AS they drank? Wasn't that good enough?

Making it Personal

By now we should be able to see that the water is a type of the Word of God, the Bible.

We should also realize that it is just as important to us as it was to them, in this matter of how to drink, or in our case, of how to study. With both classes of men, it was essential that they have the strengthening, refreshing, vitalizing water before they could go on to the battle. But the fact remains that one group went on to fight, and the other sent home. All because of the method they each used to get a drink out of the same body of water.

Our Pioneers

If you are familiar with our past, just before the Adventist Church was formed, you will recall that there was something different between the Millerites and the rest of the churches of their day.

The difference was primarily in the way that they each studied the Bible.

It was because of the way in which our pioneers studied, that we as Adventists now have a firm platform of truth to stand upon. That platform of truth was given to us as a direct result of the establishment of a method of Bible study.

This platform is composed of truths such as the Three Angels Messages, the Investigative Judgment, the 2300 years, and even controverted points such as the Daily, and the 2520 prophecy.

Each prophecy or doctrine that is unique to us was arrived at by a careful study of the Bible using a specific method of study.

This method of study, called Miller's Rules, did not employ the use of Greek and Hebrew, or depend on a historical grammatical system, or a system based on higher criticism, but relied instead on the principles contained in Isaiah 28 where it details the concept of line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little.

Miller's Rules of Interpretation, are simply an expansion of these principles put into a form that we can understand and utilize. They are the way that God has given us that enables us to come to a correct understanding of the truths contained in the Bible. Remembering that both the oil and the wheat must be put into a usable form before we can expect a good loaf of bread; the oil—a symbol of the Holy Spirit, helps us to correctly understand through a specific method by which to grind the wheat. Put in a different way, these rules are the way that God has chosen to let the Bible speak for itself.

No dead languages chained to a desk, that the common people cannot understand.

No interpreters.

No commentators.

Just 14 simple rules that anyone can apply.

Those who are engaged in proclaiming the third angel's message are searching the Scriptures upon the same plan that Father Miller adopted. In the little book entitled "Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology," Father Miller gives the following simple but intelligent and important rules for Bible study and interpretation:— {RH, November 25, 1884 par. 23}

The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon

The many different methods of study, along with the numerous versions of the Bible, bring confusion to the truth rather than clarity. All of the modern versions of the Bible came into existence after 1850, and most, if not all were produced by the Protestant denominations and publishing houses. While we should never be unkind in our critique, we must always remember that these institutions are numbered with those that fell when the door was shut to them in 1844. They experienced a moral fall, and have continued falling lower and lower. (GC 389.2) Their methods and versions will not produce a movement to call us out of Babylon, rather, it was and will be, the other way around.

In considering this, it is highly interesting to understand just how the Midianites and Amalakites were destroyed. The Bible tells us that *“The Lord set every man’s sword against his fellow.”* As with the water, (John 4:1-15) so the sword also represents the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17) It is these two precise things, the Protestant methods of study—the Historical Grammatical and Higher Critical reasoning, coupled with the different versions of the Bible—which led to their original and continued rejection of the Three Angels messages. As a result, they have many conflicting ‘swords’ of interpretation in the various denominations that will be responsible for the loss of many souls. The point to make, is that somehow we as Adventists think we can incorporate these into our study of Daniel 11, or any prophecy for that matter, and somehow escape from the sure results.

Gideon and his men came against the Midianites with a trumpet in their right hand, and lamps in their left hands. In other words, through the lens of the type, the Millerites came with a correct interpretation of Bible prophecy, that was arrived at by the correct method of study, utilizing the correct version (KJV) of the Bible, thus giving the trumpet a certain sound. The vessels were broken, allowing the lamps (The Bible) to shine without human speculation. *“Of all the great religious movements since the days of the apostles, none have been more free from human imperfection and the wiles of Satan, than was that of the autumn of 1844.”* (GC 401.3)

Christ always demonstrates the end from the beginning, and it will yet be seen in the study of Daniel 11:31-45 that if we employ the same principles in our study, we will also arrive at the correct conclusion. Those who do this must also contend with the popular misconceptions and long standing errors held in our church.

Conclusion

As we have seen, Gideon’s men all drank out of the same water, but it was how they drank that counted. Considering the context of these articles, it is interesting to note that it was the class of men who drank deeply of the water who were sent home. These represent those who are stuck in the endless minutiae of the process itself.

In other words, they drink so deeply of the actual methodologies themselves, that they [the methodologies] are no longer able to produce truth that is either useful or instructive. They have become bloated, as the process has become the end, rather than a means to an end.

In the first step, there were 32,000 men who initially responded to the call to war, but when given the opportunity to actually count the cost, 22,000 of them simply chose to go back home and not engage. Now two classes of men are developed, or identified—those who had the heart to fight, and those who did not. But another test was necessary to qualify those who would actually be used in battle. In that test, there was another division, again resulting in two classes of men—those who were qualified, and those who were not; the qualifier being the way they drank out of the water.

Jacob helps us see the same thing put in a different way. Jacob's sheep drank out of the same watering trough, just as Gideon's men all drank out of the same water; but this time something is added when a certain class of sheep drink of the water. This is the subject for part six.