

Program: SS Panel 2024 2 Q

Quarterly title: The Great Controversy

Quarterly author: Mark Finley

Lesson Title: #7 Motivated by Hope

Section title: Tuesday - William Miller and the Bible

Record date: Tuesday January 23, 2024

Motivated by Hope

Read for This Week's Study: *1 Thess. 4:13–18; Matt. 24:27, 30, 31; 2 Pet. 1:19–21; Dan. 8:14; Dan. 9:20–27; Ezra 7:7–13.*

Memory Text: "And it will be said in that day: 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation' " (*Isaiah 25:9, NKJV*).

Tuesday

May 14

William Miller and the Bible

******READ******

Just as God used the Protestant Reformers to rediscover the truth about justification by faith in Christ alone, He used William Miller to rediscover the truth about the manner of Christ's second coming. As Miller studied Scripture, he discovered a Christ who loved Him more than he could possibly imagine. With his

Bible, a pen, and a notebook, he began reading at Genesis and read no faster than he could understand the passage at hand. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, he allowed the Bible to explain itself.

Who was William Miller - From: Memoirs of William Miller

William Miller was born at Pittsfield, Mass., Feb. 15, 1782. He was a Baptist farmer. The **country was then new**, and his means of education, **till nine years of age**, were very small. **His mother, however, taught him to read, so that when he was sent to the common school, he could read in the Bible**, Psalter, and an old Hymn Book, which at that time constituted the whole of his father's library. After his ninth year, he was sent to school three months in the year, till he was fourteen. MWV1 7.1 Memoirs of William Miller

At the age of fourteen, he became anxious to obtain books to read. The first history he obtained was Robinson Crusoe; and the first novel he ever saw was Robert Boyle. He read them with avidity, and being so much interested in them, he read them many times over. He then became still more anxious to obtain books, especially histories and journals of travelers. MWV1 7.1

******READ******

I was never settled and happy in mind, until I came to Jesus Christ. While I was a Deist, I believed in a God, but I could not, as I thought, believe the Bible was the word of God. MWV1 9.2

******READ******

The history of religion as it had been presented to the world, and particularly by the historians of the eighteenth century, was but a history of blood, tyranny, and oppression; in which the common people were the greatest sufferers. I viewed it as a system of craft, rather than of truth. **Besides, the advocates of Christianity admitted that the Bible was so dark and intricate that no man could understand it.** Reveal his will, which we cannot understand, and then punish us for disobedience! How can such a being be called either wise or good? MWV1 9.2

These, and the like, were my arguments against the Bible. In the mean time, I continued my studies, storing my mind with historical knowledge. The more I read, the more dreadfully corrupt did the character of man appear. I could discern no bright spot in the history of the past. MWV1 10.1

My life became too monotonous. I had lost all those pleasing prospects, which in youth I expected to enjoy in riper years. It appeared to me that there was nothing good on earth. Those things in which I expected to find some solid good had deceived me. I began to think man was no more than a brute, and the idea of hereafter was a dream; annihilation was a cold and chilling thought; and accountability was sure destruction to all. The heavens were as brass over my head, and the earth as iron under my feet. ETERNITY! What was it? And death, why was it? The more I reasoned, the further I was from demonstration. The more I thought, the more scattered were my conclusions. I tried to stop thinking; but my thoughts would not be controlled. I was truly wretched; but did not understand the cause. I murmured and complained, but knew not of whom. I felt that there was a wrong, but knew not how, or where, to find the right. I mourned, but without hope. I continued in this state of mind for some months; at length, **when brought almost to despair, God by his Holy Spirit opened my eyes. I saw Jesus as a friend, and my only help, and the word of God as the perfect rule of duty. Jesus Christ became to me the chiefest among ten thousand, and the Scriptures, which before were dark and contradictory, now became the lamp to my feet and light to my path. My mind became settled and satisfied. I found the Lord God to be a Rock in the midst of the ocean of life. **The Bible now became my chief study; and I can truly say I searched it with great delight.** I found the half was never told me. I wondered why I had not seen its beauty and glory before, and marvelled that I could ever have rejected it. I found everything revealed that my heart could desire, and a remedy for every disease of the soul. I lost all taste for other reading, and applied my heart to get wisdom from God. MWV1 10.1**

******READ******

“I laid by all commentaries, former views and prepossessions, and determined to read and try to understand for myself. I then began the reading of the Bible in a methodical manner; and by comparing scripture with scripture, and taking notice of the manner of prophesying, and how it was fulfilled, (so much as had received its accomplishment,) I found that prophecy had been literally fulfilled, after understanding the figures and metaphors by which God had more clearly illustrated the subjects conveyed in said prophecies. MWV1 11.1

Read Isaiah 28:9, 10; Proverbs 8:8, 9; John 16:13; and 2 Peter 1:19-21. What principles of Bible interpretation do you discover in these passages?

Isaiah 28:9, 10 “Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those *just* weaned from milk? Those *just* drawn from the breasts?

10 For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.”

Proverbs 8:8, 9 All the words of my mouth *are* with righteousness; Nothing crooked or perverse *is* in them.

9 They *are* all plain to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge.

God will teach the humble (meek)

Psalms 25:9 The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

10 All the paths of the Lord *are* mercy and truth, To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.

11 For Your name’s sake, O Lord, Pardon my iniquity, for it *is* great.

12 Who *is* the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.

13 He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the Lord *is* with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.

John 16:13 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

2 Peter 1:19-21 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

2Pe 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

2 Peter 1:20-21 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

******READ******

As William Miller compared Scripture with Scripture, the mysteries of the Bible were opened to him. He searched as one searching for a hidden treasure and was richly rewarded. The Holy Spirit opened the Word of God to his understanding. He approached prophecy with the same diligence in Bible study as the other biblical passages he was studying.

Read Daniel 1:17; Daniel 2:45; 1 Peter 1:10, 11; and Revelation 1:1–3. What do these passages teach us about understanding the prophecies of the Bible?

Daniel 1:17 17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel 2:45 45 Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.”

1 Peter 1:10-11 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you,

11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Revelation 1:1–3 1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants—**things which must shortly take place**. And He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John,

2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time *is* near.

******READ******

The symbols in the prophetic books are not locked in mystery. A loving God has given us His prophetic Word to prepare us for the climactic events soon to unfold in this world. **William Miller clearly understood that prophecy was its own best interpreter.** The symbols of prophecy are made clear by the Bible itself. Beasts represent kings or kingdoms (*Dan. 7:17, 23*). Wind represents destruction (*Jer. 49:36*). Water represents peoples or nations (*Rev. 17:15*). A woman represents the church (*Jer. 6:2, Eph. 5:22–32*). The time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are also given in symbolic language, with one prophetic day representing one literal year (*Num. 14:34, Ezek. 4:6*). As William Miller applied these principles of biblical interpretation, he was startled at what he discovered regarding what he believed to be the timing of Christ's return.

******READ******

I found, on a close and careful examination of the Scriptures, that God had explained all the figures and metaphors in the Bible, or had given us rules for their explanation. And in so doing, I found, to my joy, and as I trust with everlasting gratitude to God, that the Bible contained a system of revealed truths, so clearly and simply given that the 'wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein.' And I discovered that God had in his word revealed 'times and seasons;' and in every case where time had been revealed, every event was accomplished as predicted, (except the case of Nineveh, in Jonah,) in the time and manner; therefore I believed all would be accomplished. MWV1 11.1

Psalms 25:9 The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

Jeremiah 33:3 3 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

Why is a correct understanding of prophetic symbolism so important for our faith?