

APPENDIX THIRTY-SEVEN

Dr. K. Strand's "Philosophy Of History" And
The Apotelesmatic Principle

DR. K. STRAND'S "PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY" AND THE APOTELESMATIC PRINCIPLE

I wish to point out that my use of Dr. Strand's "philosophy of history" approach in support of the apotelesmatic principle may be in error. Dr. Strand has kindly sent me some observations on the matter, and to these our attention must be briefly directed.

Says Dr. Strand:

You have rightly noted in an earlier chapter as well as on page 490 of the present chapter that there is a similarity between what I refer to as "philosophy of history" and what you call the "apotelesmatic principle;" but the two are in reality far from the same, and I should not be cited (*ibid.*) as an example of one "who would affirm the validity" of your apotelesmatic approach.

The "philosophy-of-history" principle which I have in mind, and as illustrated by Ellen White in AA, 585-589 and other places, "may be considered," as you correctly quote me on page 419, as "essentially a variation of the continuous-historical mode of interpreting the book of Revelation." Actually — whether applied to Daniel or to Revelation — this sort of philosophy-of-history approach is grounded in the Bible's own view of history: it is a projection forward of the **historical demonstration** of God's **sovereignty and activity in history** as already illustrated in the past history of God's people as recorded in the books of Judges, Kings, and Chronicles. In the ongoing **continuum** of history (I noted in our last session that apocalyptic views history as a continuum), it is a further outworking of the "blessings-and-curses" formulation of Deuteronomy and a depiction of recurring patterns in the developments and processes within the great controversy. In its recurring patterns it bears witness to the realistic "ups and downs" of history and especially to God's constant care for, and work in behalf of, His people in His conquest and defeat of the powers of evil, leading up to the final culmination in the setting up of His own everlasting Kingdom.

Thus "philosophy of history", as I see the principle, is rooted squarely in the Bible's own "philosophy of history", and is fully in accord with the apocalyptic view of history as a continuum. It highlights repetitive patterns within that continuum, demonstrating the sovereignty of God, who "removes kings and sets up kings" (Dan. 2:21). (Letter to Desmond Ford, June 6, 1980.)

Let us observe that Dr. Strand defines the "philosophy of history" principle as involving "a depiction of recurring patterns in the developments and processes within the great controversy." "It highlights repetitive patterns within that continuum." Thus there is a similarity between what I refer to as 'philosophy of history' and what you call the 'apotelesmatic principle.'" The former is "illustrated by Ellen White in AA, 585-589, and other places."

Now, while Dr. Strand has difficulty in accepting what he thinks I mean by the apotelesmatic principle, I wish to stress that I have no difficulty whatever in accepting his "philosophy of history" approach as here defined. It is essentially this "depiction of recurring patterns" for which I am contending.

However, Dr. Strand has proceeded to delineate where he feels 'the great divide' exists. He points out that to his understanding "dual fulfilment is not a characteristic of apocalyptic," that the concept that "Christ could have come 'ere this" is not "a key for interpreting

apocalyptic," that there is no "evidence of any kind within the book that demands [Ford's] sort of apotelesmatic interpretation," that such a view would "repeatedly tantalize His people with the hope of Christ's coming," that such a view also rejects "the sovereignty of God — an essential element in the apocalyptic perspective", that it would destroy "the essential matter of hope and assurance," and that it misdirects "our focus concerning man's role in relationship to the setting up of God's Kingdom as depicted in Biblical apocalyptic." "Where in either Daniel or Revelation is there any indication that the faithfulness or faithlessness of God's people is a dominant factor in determining when Christ shall usher in the Kingdom?" Letter to Desmond Ford from Dr. K. Strand, June 6, 1980.

These objections have been clearly and fairly stated, and are worthy of close attention. First, we should observe that most of the objections are comprehended in the last one. My own discussion of prophecy, including apocalyptic prophecy, has stressed the conditional element which, if negatively fulfilled by God's people, delays the Kingdom, and therefore permits time to unfold a similar crisis or crises, to which God's people are called to respond aright. (See *Daniel*, pp. 48-54; 208-13.) Dr. Strand has reached for the "jugular vein," as he makes his several objections revolve around this one.

In reply, it should be first observed that Dr. Strand is not finding fault with a peculiar position set forth solely by myself. When Ellen White thought of prophecy and the advent it was particularly the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation which concerned her, and she very definitely made the point that such are conditional as to the fact of fulfilment and the timing of such. When the *SDABC* sets forth the characteristics of apocalyptic, and turns to its interpretation, it does not have the reservation about the apotelesmatic principle that Dr. Strand has. Note that it applies Rev. 2 and 3 to the first century, specific eras, and every age. Observe also that it sees that the apocalyptic prophecies could all have been fulfilled centuries ago. (See *SDABC*, 4:725-26; 7:729.)

In the first of the last two references, as the commentary discusses the interpretation of apocalyptic, another article is recommended — "The Role of Israel in O. T. Prophecy." (See particularly pages 25-37 of that article in volume 4.) This splendid treatise is undoubtedly the most accurate and comprehensive statement on the nature of prophecy to be found in our literature, and we recommend it to every reader. It makes it clear that the promises of Dan. 9:24-27 could all have been fulfilled in such a way as to have brought the kingdom of **glory** within the seventy weeks of years — had ancient Israel been faithful.

Dr. Strand, unlike the *SDABC*, appears to reject both the idea that apocalyptic prophecy can have more than one fulfilment, and that it has a conditional element. However, from talking with Dr. Strand, we believe he is actually denying not the fact of contingency, but its overt and obvious presence in apocalyptic. But it must be pointed out that the conditional element even in other prophecies (those not apocalyptic) is rarely overt. Jonah gave no hint of a condition when he cried, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

Let us enquire as to how our Lord applied apocalyptic prophecy.

His title of "Son of Man" which He used as recorded over eighty times, was taken from Dan. 7:13. The fact that He not only used that title, but placed it in the same setting as Dan. 7, makes it quite clear that it is the latter passage which was the source of the title. See Mt. 24:30; Lu. 22:69. But let us note that throughout the Gospels, Christ is not using it solely of His second coming, but chiefly of His first. And He saw, not only a dual application of Dan. 7:13 prophecy, but a repeated one. Thus Lu. 22:69 is correctly translated in the RSV "**From**

now on ye shall see. ..." Repeatedly the Son of Man comes in judgment as He came to Jerusalem in AD 70. Notice also that Mt. 28:18 applies Dan. 7:13, 14 to the first advent.

Furthermore, Christ's reference to "the kingdom of heaven" is also taken from the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel. The phrase is derived from Dan. 2:44 where the final kingdom is said to be that brought in by the God of heaven. In Dan. 7:27, it is "the kingdom under the whole heaven" which is given to the saints. Again when we compare Mt. 21:33-45 and Lu. 20:9-18, we find Christ drawing upon Daniel 2 as he speaks of the kingdom to be taken from Israel and given to the church. What makes it absolutely certain that Daniel 2 is His source is the reference to the stone.

The Greek expression translated in most Bibles as "grinding to powder" is a rare one and is borrowed from the Septuagint's translation of Dan. 2 regarding the stone that smote the image. *The Pulpit Commentary*, for example, comments on Matt. 21:44: "The idea is repeated from Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45. Christ in His humiliation is the Stone against which men fall, Christ in His glory and exaltation is the Stone which falls on them." Plummer's *Commentary on Matt*, 299, says, "It is from Daniel 2:44 that 'shattered into fragments' or 'scatter as dust' comes."

Note particularly the words of Lohmeyer:

What Daniel says of the Rock is here in Luke (20:17, 18 parallel to Matt. 21:44) described also as the Corner Stone. It is cut out of its place and breaks in pieces all upon whom it falls. And again, this Corner Stone is as immovably set in position as the Rock that holds up the temple; none of its assailants ... will prevail against it; "they will be dashed in pieces." *Lord of the Temple*, p. 46.

Wordsworth's Commentary states:

Our blessed Lord in adopting this phrase from the prophet Daniel, gives a tacit approval to the interpretation which had been given to this prophecy, and which was prevalent in the Hebrew church in his day. "Ask the Jews, what is meant by the Stone? They answer as one man, the Messiah."

The interesting fact is that the Hebrew word for Stone is almost identical with the Hebrew word for Son. As the stone and the mountain conclude the symbolism of chapter 2, and the sanctuary in chapter 8, so does "the Son of Man" in chapter 7. The Hebrews were very familiar with *paronomasia* in connection with the words "stone" ("*eben*"), "sons" ("*banim*"), and "to build" ("*bana*"). Matthew Black says, "The "*eben-ben*" word-play is one of the oldest and best-known in the Old Testament". "Christological use of Old Testament in New Testament," *New Testament Studies*, 18:12 (1971-72). For examples of this word-play see Ex. 28:29. Joshua 4:6, 7, 8, 20, 21; 1 Kings 18:31; Lam. 4:1, 2; Isa. 54:11-13.

Dr. Phillip Carrington discussing Mark 12:10 in his commentary on that book, declares the same word-play is present. Thus we would have the Rejected Son (12:6) paralleling the rejected Corner Stone. Luke's Gospel links with these two symbols of the Son and the Corner Stone yet another, namely the stone of Dan. 2. And Carrington makes the illuminating suggestion that "already in Daniel the Stone conceals the word for 'Son'; it is a cryptogram for Israel corresponding to the 'Son of Man' at chapter 7." *Ibid*. Matthew Black gives several examples from rabbinical sources of this recognized relationship between "stone" and "son," and concludes his article with the view that "the Christological stone *testimonia* presuppose an exegetical tradition interpreting Dan. 2:34, 35; 7:13 of Israel, as the

Son-Son of Man, which may already have been messianically interpreted in pre-Christian Judaism; it supplied the second strand in the Son of God Christology of the New Testament. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Thus Dan. 2, in its symbolic portrayal of the coming of the kingdom of God, applies first to the building of the church temple (Matt. 16:18), and ultimately to the sacred temple of a new world wherein God Himself visibly dwells (Rev. 21:3).

DA, 600 should also be studied in this connection. When Ellen White comments on the words "On whomsoever it shall fall, to grind him to powder" she proceeds to make reference to "Christ their Rock of offence will then appear to them as an avenging mountain." Here in the one sentence Ellen White unites two symbols in Dan. 2, the Stone or Rock and the Mountain. It seems that anyone who will closely study this passage in Matt. 21 and the parallel passage in Lu. 20, will find it easy to distinguish between Christ's references to the corner stone as found in Psalms and his reference to the Stone of Dan. 2, which is referred to in Mt. 21:44 and Lu. 20:18. See also the footnote and marginal reference in the Jerusalem Bible for Dan. 2:28, 45, which are emphatic that Christ's statement does reflect Daniel's.

The evidence to most writers seems overwhelming that Christ applied the kingdom of heaven of the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel to the first advent as well as the second — in short, He gave these prophecies a dual application.

Let us next ask, "Did Christ also see a conditional element in the apocalyptic prophecies? Mt. 24:34 compared with 24:14 (the condition for the coming) suggests that it was even so. But let us consider a more obvious example. What means the plaintive cry recorded in Lu. 19:42? If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes."

In *DA*, 576-578, Ellen G. White has summarized our usual understanding of this passage. She emphasizes that Jerusalem could even then have received Christ and stood forever. But what does Lu. 19:42 have to do with apocalyptic? The following verses foretell the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in harmony with Daniel's predictions. "The time of trouble," "the times of the Gentiles," "the end," "the abomination of desolation," "the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven" — all concepts employed by Christ in connection with Jerusalem's fall — all have their original statement in the apocalyptic visions of the seer of Babylon. Mt. 24:15 and Mk. 13:14 are direct references to Dan. 9:27 and 8:13.

Was Dan. 9:26, regarding the destruction of the city and the sanctuary, conditional? See the SPA commentary *Daniel*, pp. 211-213. It is certain from Lu. 19:42; Mt. 23:37 and Jer. 17:24-18:10, that had Israel been faithful to the Sabbath of the Lord, and the Lord of the Sabbath, the prophecies from Daniel regarding Jerusalem's destruction would have never been fulfilled.

Is there anything strangely heretical in the foregoing? The *SDABC* said it all over a score of years ago. Furthermore, the Sabbath School quarterly on Daniel in the 1960s took the same position. See our appendix on this manuscript.

In his letter commenting on this chapter of the manuscript Dr. Strand repeatedly speaks of apocalyptic prophecy as setting forth a continuum, and contrasts this with "dual fulfilment" which he suggests "is not a characteristic of apocalyptic." Subsequently he inquires, "Where can you find evidence of any message within the book that demands your sort of apotelesmatic interpretations?" Dr. Strand points out that "Daniel 8 parallels Daniel 2 and

Daniel 7" and "portrays the historical continuum culminating in the Messianic victory and establishment of God's Kingdom." The letter advised me to read chapter four of his *Perspectives in the Book of Revelation*, which has bearing on the same issue. There I read, "Both Daniel and the Synoptic Apocalypse give evidence of treating history as a continuum; they do not treat history as simply jumping from the contemporary scene directly to the end-time, with intermediate time left unaccounted for." (p. 35)

Previously we have fulfilled the request to furnish evidence of apotelesmatic messages in Daniel by referring to Christ's use of the fourth kingdom of Dan. 2 and Dan. 7 for both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, and His employment of Daniel's "Son of Man" in connection with both advents and the times between. But we wish to speak more now to the issue of the "continuum" which Dr. Strand suggests is contrary to what the *SDABC* calls "dual fulfilment."

Let us take Daniel 8, as Dr. Strand suggests, and enquire whether it really gives us a continuum, or does it jump from one scene to the end-time, "with intermediate time left unaccounted for."

Dan. 8 speaks first of Medo-Persia, then of Greece. From the Greek beast comes four horns, and from one of these four Greek horns another little horn. It is typical of Daniel to refer to major empires as beasts and to subsidiary kingdoms as horns. The Roman empire in chapter 7 is presented as a beast, not as a horn. We are distinctly told in the chapter that the four horns represent four kings to spring out of Greece, and then we are told that from one of these will come another king. Observe that according to the symbolism all these subsequent kings belong to the Greek beast. The Roman empire did not spring up from the midst of Greece, it came from Italy. Neither does this little horn power of chapter eight spring up in the midst of the others as the papacy is pictured in the preceding chapter. In this case, the horn springs up "out of one of them" — i.e. it comes from one of the four kingdoms of the Greek world. While Rome existed before the divisions of the Greek world, that is not the case with the power here represented by a horn that follows and originates with the Greek horns. Uriah Smith has the little horn begin by an eastward move to Syria, but the prophecy of Daniel eight has the little horn power first move southwards to Egypt. We stress here the original application to Antiochus, not because we think **that** the application which is relevant to us, but because it demonstrates that an apocalyptic prophecy is not always a direct continuum, but rather can offer a near typical fulfilment which must later be made the mirror of a subsequent, widely separated fulfilment.

It is not a matter of which interpreter shall we follow, but whether we will accept God's own interpretation. Daniel 11 and 12 cover the same ground as Daniel 8 as any cursory survey will show, and they interpret the Dan. 8 vision for us. Medo-Persia, Greece, the first great king of Greece, the four-fold division, the emerging from one of these four of one who would attack the south, and the pleasant land with its sanctuary prior to his fall in the east — all this is found in both prophecies. The scope of eleven and twelve is thus identical with the scope of eight. And the key pronouns which dominate 11:21-45 are "he," "him," and "his." **In at least thirty of the approximately thirty-five usages of these pronouns, it is the same power under consideration.** Thus only by interpreting the chapter apotelesmatically can we create our own continuum embracing successive "antichrists" like pagan and Papal Rome, doing the same work, but in different eras.

Antichrist is the one that springs from the kingdoms of the north (as made clear in vv. 15-21), and is himself called "the king" (v. 36) or "the king of the north" (v. 40). Observe the parallel

in Dan. 8, where the same pronouns are found about ten times after the introduction of the little horn. Note their prominence in vv. 22-25. Observe also that the description found in Dan. 11:21-45 pictures "him," "the king of the north" as doing precisely what the little horn does, and being in character exactly what the little horn was. Cf. 8:9-13 with 11:29-33.

In each instance a power from one of the Grecian divisions attacks the south and then the holy land. The sanctuary is profaned, the daily is taken away, and a desolating abomination is placed. See also the comparison between 8:23-25 and 11:36, 45. In both cases, this Antichrist is called "a king" — one who magnifies himself, does unholy work, and then is brought to his end by God.

Having gone through this background material, we wish again to ask,

"Is it true that we have in Daniel 8 and 11 a continuum rather than an apotelesmatic application of prophecy? **Does Dan. 8 picture the war of pagan Rome against literal Israel and its literal sanctuary and sacrifices, and then continue with a description of the rise of spiritual Rome and its attack on a spiritual sanctuary and spiritual sacrifice!** Is there any hint of such a succession, or is every Adventist interpreter forced to grant at least a dual application of the prophecy of Antichrist and to affirm that what happened with pagan Rome also happened again spiritually with spiritual Rome? While we grant with other Adventist expositors [see our quotations from the 1919 Bible Conference on this] an initial application to Antiochus, we see in him but a shadow of recurring applications of Antichrist, particularly Rome, but the vital question for us at this time is whether we have given here a continuum, or a prophecy that requires at least a double application? Furthermore, **if we deny the conditional element** to this apocalyptic forecast, how do we drop Israel from the picture and introduce the church? Are we still to look for events in the middle east to fulfil the last verses of chapter eleven? Is the glorious holy mountain that unholy den of warring nationalists that is Jerusalem today? And if so, on what grounds can we suddenly switch from this description of Daniel's literal "holy" city, to his spiritual people — Christian believers in the next verse? (Dan. 12:1 speaks of "thy people" — Daniel's people. Compare Dan. 9:24, where the phrase means literal Jews.)

We submit that to make sense of this prophecy and to relate it to the Christian church, we must grant both the apotelesmatic principle, and the conditional nature of the forecast. And this approach agrees with that of our Protestant forebears. They believed that both Dan. 8 and 11 pointed first to the typical Antichrist, Antiochus Epiphanes, who desolated the sanctuary and reared an abomination, and secondly to pagan Rome which destroyed Jerusalem, and thirdly to papal Rome which warred against the spiritual sanctuary.

It is of great interest to learn that E.G. White did not so much see a continuum in this prophecy of Dan. 11 as a case of recurring fulfilment. We quote her letter 103, 1904, which after citing verses from the last portion of the Daniel chapter, declared, "Much of the history that has taken place in fulfilment of this prophecy will be repeated." See *RH*, July 8, 1976. What we have in Daniel 11 is not so much an uninterrupted continuum, but a presentation of an ancient typical crisis which applies again with greater force to eschatological events and intervening crises.

If Dr. Strand insists that all apocalyptic offers a continuum, we would ask, where in Dan. 7, on his principles, **does the first advent of Christ appear on the continuum"? And where does that advent appear on the continuum of Dan. 2**, if we reject the dual application here of "the kingdom of heaven"?

Is Mt. 24 a continuum as *Perspectives* (p. 35) suggests, or does it pass from the terrible tribulation of AD 70 to the final tribulation — the “time of trouble” forecast in Dan. 12:1? Let us perceive that immediately after speaking of the Roman armies around Jerusalem (v. 15), Christ spoke of the Judean flight (vv. 16-20), and then quoted Dan. 12:1 regarding the time of trouble such as had never been since the world began. The context of Dan. 12:2 as well as its wording, makes it certain that this prophecy particularly applies to the end of the world, and can only be projected back to the Middle Ages on the principle of apotelesmatic fulfilment. As with Dan. 8 and 11, it is not possible to find a continuum here in the Olivet discourse. Like the Daniel chapters, having introduced a great crisis which applied to literal Israel, our Lord passed direct to the crisis at the end of the world typified by Jerusalem’s terrible siege.

Must we really insist on an uninterrupted “continuum” rather than recurring fulfilment (in principle) of ancient crises? Ellen White found no difficulty in applying the concept of “the time of trouble” to AD 70, the Middle Ages, and the end of time. Just as she could affirm that many of the events foretold in Daniel 11 had been fulfilled and would be fulfilled again. See also *DA*, 628, where she says that the deceptions predicted by Christ came to pass before the fall of Jerusalem, again during the middle ages, and will finally occur in the last days.

Is it not on this same principle that our commentary can apply Paul’s use of Dan. 9:27 (first fulfilled in AD 70) in 2 Thess. 2:3, 4 to Paul’s own day, the middle ages, and the last crisis? See vol. 7:270. If, as the Adventist commentary contends, all of Revelation could have been fulfilled in the first century, must it not have been so written that crises which would have occurred in the apostolic decades would mirror similar crises throughout the centuries of the delay? We submit that the evidence for the apotelesmatic application of prophecy, even apocalyptic prophecy, is abundant.

It is possible, even yet, that I have misunderstood Dr. Strand. May I therefore in paying tribute to him as a Christian gentleman and a great scholar urge all to read his excellent studies on apocalyptic, including *Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Ann Arbor, 1976), which has been of great interest and help to the present writer. One thing I am sure of — both Dr. Strand and myself would urge upon others the truthfulness of the following quotation from E.G. White as a valuable aid in the study of prophecy:

God’s work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. *PP*, 388.

Because of the nature of God, of Satan, and of men, which remains the same throughout all time, prophecy of a special crisis may find fulfilment on more than one occasion. Seventh-day Adventists, in seeing the little horn of Dan. 8 as representing at least two historical fulfilments (pagan and papal Rome), and likewise Mt. 24 (A.D. 70 and the end of the world), and Joel 2:28 (Pentecost and the latter rain), and the Day of the Lord prophecies, have thereby always acknowledged the apotelesmatic principle.

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