

ANTIOCHUS OR ROME?

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Throughout the history of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination there have constantly arisen men who have sought to undermine and overthrow its fundamental doctrines and teachings. But for nearly ninety years now those doctrines have stood the test, and survived every unholy attack, not one of them having ever been proved false or overthrown. And in spite of the fact that, at times, some of the most plausible and specious arguments known have been put forward, those truths which our opponents so earnestly sought to overthrow, have belted the world and found acceptance in many honest hearts in every country of this earth, with the result, that the membership of the denomination has been doubling every ten years. As one writer has stated, could we, some Sabbath morning, “race with the sun in its twenty-four hour circuit” we should –every thirty minutes, reach new groups of believers gathering north and south of the equator, as the Sabbath morning sun passes over” In other words we can say that “the Sun never sets” on the church of the Advent movement.

Once again however, we are called upon to defend our position with regard to the eighth and ninth chapters of the book of Daniel, especially with reference to the “little horn” and the 2300 days -doctrines which are fundamental to the very existence of the Seventh-day Adventist cause, being the very root. so to speak, out of which the denomination has grown.

While we regard the 2300 days as prophetic, and as representing a period of years rather than days of twenty four hours we are met with an ancient theory handed out from the Vatican three centuries ago, in which an endeavor is made to apply to this prophetic period the desolating work of Antiochus Epiphanes, and by which the prophecy would be robbed of its solemn import, and be reduced to a mere recital of an historical incident, with no special significance whatsoever.

In the pamphlet issued by our latest critic, it is easily seen that his matter has all been gleaned from other papers and pamphlets, there being nothing new or original with him, and if called upon to substantiate his statements with regard to the late Mrs. E. G. White, he would have to rely wholly upon the like malicious statements and writings of others. He most certainly had no personal knowledge of what he has published relative to her, as he never knew her, or even ever saw her.

Then it is an old story about the publishers of Conybeare and Howson’s book having threatened legal action unless Mrs. White’s “Life of Paul” was taken off the market. Some extracts from a letter addressed by Pastor C. E. Holmes, some years ago, to the Editor of the “Gathering Call” may be of interest here. He says:-

“I have just been looking over the April-May issue of the ‘Gathering Call’. I am surprised at the misrepresentation, limping logic, and inaccuracy which it contains.”

“As I opened its pages my eye fell on your statement regarding Mrs. White’s book ‘Sketches From the Life of Paul’. You proceed to give some facts, as you say; yet I find nothing but a few of your own assertions, and you would have me repudiate the work of Mrs. White on such flimsy evidence.”

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“You state that Mrs. White’s book was ‘such a perfect copy’ of ‘Life and Epistles of Paul’, published by Conybeare and Howson, of England, that the American publishers threatened ‘legal action’ unless it were taken off the market.”

“I studied Conybeare and Howson’s book in college and I have a copy of Mrs. White’s book in my library. To assert that Mrs. White’s work of 321 small pages, with no maps, illustrations or footnotes, is ‘such a perfect copy’ of a two volume set of 1400 pages, with maps and illustrations and extensive notes, as to provoke legal action, is the height of absurdity. This is just as true of the contents as of the general plan of the book, and the style is also entirely different.

“The English edition, published in London, does not show a copyright. This is further substantiated by the following letter to me, from Thomas Y Crowell Company of New York City

“We publish Conybeare’s ‘Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul’, but this is not a copyrighted book and we could have no legal ground for action against your book’. January 18, 1924.

“Furthermore, your claim is squarely denied by W. C White. In his reply to this, enquiry concerning this matter, he stated, in part ‘I do not know exactly how many copies were printed, but I think that two edition., of 5000 copies were printed. ‘Sketches from the Life of Paul’ was never suppressed. It simply went out of print when all the copies were sold, and the publication of another edition was delayed because of the desire of the author to present a more complete book. Such a book we now have in Acts of the Apostles, April 1, 1917

It is quite noticeable that the complaints are not made by the authors or publishers, but are limited to those who are enemies of Mrs. White and who are trying to discredit her God-given work. I notice that you have printed and are selling A Word to the Little Flock. Did you get permission from Elder James White or his legal successors to do this?

In the light of real facts, your charges against Mrs. White and her book are shown to be untrue

MRS. WHITE’S FINANCES

Now with reference to the wonderfully detailed statement which our critic gives regarding the financial affairs of the late Mrs. E. G. White, one would suppose that he must have been most intimately associated either with her or those who had charge of her affairs, but the fact are that he has never been within ten thousand miles of her or of her home, yet he feels himself fully competent to make such sweeping statements as though he personally knew those things to be true. And true or untrue it is clear that the thousands of miles of sea rolling between him and the representatives of the late Mrs. White embolden him in the prosecution of his nefarious work of circulating any malicious story whatever that Dame Rumor supplies.

He even goes so far as to say that Mrs. White “has been the cause of more trouble in the church than all other things combined” and adds that Seventh-day Adventists, in order “to defend her, have to do as she did-lie, hide, suppress, cover up, and deceive-and the Conference is now finding this out, much to their sorrow and discredit.”

A most sweeping statement, the whole of which is positively false, both as regards Mrs. White or any S. D. A. Conference. The statement is not only ridiculous but malicious in the extreme, and displays a rashness, a recklessness that is born only of ignorance and inexperience.

There is one thing that is very certain, the late Mrs. E. G. White was an honorable and God-fearing woman, and those who knew her best can testify that whatever money she received was not used selfishly. but in helping the poor and needy, and in furthering the cause of God and as to her ever paying her son’s debts (if it were trite) would that be anything to her discredit?

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We wonder if our critic would regard it as discreditable to have his mother find money to get him out of a difficulty, or would he think it derogatory to have a woman find money to pay his debts? Perhaps he would not so regard things in his own case. Yet he would endeavor thus to cast a reflection upon a dead woman, whose only object in life was to help others both spiritually and materially.

Now we will deal with the views expressed by this latest critic concerning the eighth and ninth chapters of Daniel relative to the “little horn- and the 2300 days.

ANTIOCHUS AS THE LITTLE HORN

In rejecting Uriah Smith’s interpretation of the prophecy concerning the little horn of Daniel 8:9 he makes much of the fact that Uriah Smith shows that the little horn first “goes east toward Syria whereas the prophecy says that it would go south. The Roman horn then goes south to Judea, whereas the prophecy says it would go east. And again, Rome goes further south to Egypt, whereas the prophecy says that the little horn would then go to the Pleasant Land (which is a westerly direction)”.

Let it be noticed particularly, that for the fulfillment of the prophecy, he regards the exact order of the events outlined therein to be necessary, which we admit, of course, to, be quite right.

In another place in his pamphlet he purports to give (and what he would like us to believe to be) the real fulfillment of the prophecy. He says, “According to the prophecy the ‘little horn’ was first to go to the south”, and then after quoting 1 Maccabees 1:17-19 to show that Antiochus went to war with Egypt. He says “Thus did Antiochus Epiphanes wax great toward the south-to Egypt in the 143rd year”. But he stops short of giving the ultimate result of that invasion. The simple fact of Antiochus going to war would not necessarily be a reason for regarding him as waxing “exceeding great”. On one occasion Pyrrhus of Macedonia, though he proved to be victor in two furious battles, had to confess, “One more such victory and we are inevitably ruined”. Then we might also notice that Antiochus Magnus (Antiochus the Great) the father of Epiphanes, was, as history says, the most illustrious of all the Syrian kings, and this in contrast with his son Epiphanes, who was nicknamed by his subjects, Epiphanes the madman. Nothing very “great” in being regarded as a madman

Our critic then says “The next direction was toward the east”, and again he quotes 1 Maccabees 3:31-37 to show that Antiochus went over to Persia in the 147th year, and once more he says. “Again Antiochus fulfils the prophecy!” But again he fails to say what happened on this occasion. But we shall see later

And now he goes on to say “The last direction which is toward the Pleasant Land, I shall fully explain after showing another fulfillment of prophecy which comes in here”

GARBLED HISTORY

He then jumps over the remainder of that verse (verse 9) which gives the third direction of the “little horn”, and goes on to deal with verses 10-12 which, he says, “comes in here.” Now why does he do this? Because he very well knows that in giving Maccabees history which tells of Antiochus going to the Pleasant Land. It also gives the year in which he went, viz., the 143rd year, which reveals the fact that his going there was not in the order of the prophecy.

The prophecy sets out that the “little horn” would go in the following order:-

First	South
Then	East
Lastly	To the Pleasant Land (Palestine)

But history shows that Antiochus DID NOT GO in that order, but went as follows:-

First	South
Then	To the Pleasant Land

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Lastly East

And there was very good reason for his not going in the order given in the prophecy and not going to the Pleasant Land last of all, for after going to the east he became greatly incapacitated and did not return. HE WAS DEAD.

The Maccabees history and other records show that he died in Persia following his failure at Elymais in the east, and consequently it would have been impossible for him to have gone into Palestine after his incursion into Persia.

So, in the endeavor to show that Antiochus went to the east next after going to the south, so as to make it appear that he fulfilled the prophecy. The purpose of it is defeated, for if it were true that he went to Persia after going into Egypt and before going to Jerusalem, that circumstance alone would at once very conclusively settle the question as to whether or not Antiochus was the "Little Horn," for being dead, he could not in such a case fulfill the next part of the prophecy—that of waxing great toward the Pleasant Land—or in fact, any of the remaining portion of it.

But he did go to the Pleasant Land, Jerusalem, but it was immediately after going toward the south (Egypt) and in the self-same year and before he went to the east (Persia) as is revealed in the Maccabees and other histories. But in so doing, he did not fulfill the prophecy in the order that the prophecy calls for. Nevertheless our critic would fain make us believe that he did, and in quoting Maccabees history in the order that he has, nothing could be more obvious than that he has deliberately attempted to deceive his readers by quoting it out of its setting. His quotations are in the following order:-

1 Maccabees 1:17-19-To show that Antiochus went south to Egypt. And this was in the 143rd year of the Greek kingdom.

Then he quotes:-

1 Maccabees 3:31-37-To show that he went east to Persia. And this as in the 147th year.

And lastly he comes back to

1 Maccabees 1:21-24-To show that he went to Jerusalem. But Maccabees history shows that this was in the 143rd year, four years before he went east, in the 147th year.

Thus has he taken the history out of its proper setting and fitted it into the prophecy in order to make his point, and then to emphasize it he says. On page 27 of his pamphlet, "After going south, THEN east we find that he did wax exceeding great toward the Pleasant Land."

That there can be no mistaking his intention in regard to this will be seen from further statements. On page 22 of his pamphlet he says. "Antiochus Epiphanes did wax great toward the south - Egypt, towards the east - Persia; and towards the Pleasant Land - Judea and Jerusalem. Thus again fulfilling the prophecy, TO THE LETTER. And again on page 28 he reiterates, "Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled ALL this prophecy IN EVERY DETAIL."

And these statements that he has made, the very quotations that he gives, when used in their correct setting, not only give the actual and correct order in which Antiochus went to these three places, but also give the very years, and in such a definite way that there could be no mistaking it.

ANTIOCHUS DOES NOT FULFIL THE PROPHECY

Now as we go further and examine more closely the experience of Antiochus, we shall see that in no way did he fulfill the prophecy.

From the very first when Antiochus came to the throne, and all through his reign, he was under heavy tribute to Rome. Moreover, he himself, had been held by Rome as an hostage for the due payment of that

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tribute. To begin with, then, we do not find anything very great about that. Such an experience was anything but great.

When he invaded Egypt, it is clear that he did so in a somewhat surreptitious manner. Rome was at the time engaged in a war with Perseus, and taking advantage of this engagement of the Roman forces, Antiochus, regarding the time opportune, determined to invade Egypt. But so as to avoid any possibility of interference on the part of Rome, and to conceal his real objective, it is stated in history that "In the meantime, to observe measures with the Romans, he sent ambassadors to the Senate to represent the right he had to the provinces of Coele-Syria and Palestine, of which he was actually in possession, and the necessity he was under of engaging in a war in order to support that right, immediately after which he put himself at the head of his army and marched toward the frontier of Egypt."

So, under the pretence of establishing his rights in Coele-Syria and Palestine, he deliberately marched into Egypt. In this invasion he certainly was successful, and overran the country, conquering it all with the exception of the capital city, Alexandria, which held out against him. And this conquest is the ground for regarding him as waxing great toward the south; but his greatness was short-lived and was about to be laid in the dust, for just as he was on his way to again besiege that one remaining unconquered city, and was within one mile of it, the Roman ambassador, Popilius, confronted him, and in the name of the Senate, not only commanded him to stop the war, but compelled him to abandon all the conquered territory and leave the country immediately; and history records the fact that "He quitted Egypt, humiliated and boiling with passion, sure ere long to find vent against some section of his subjects or all of them.

The first storm fell upon the Jews. Picture the scene. The so-called "exceeding great" Antiochus, surrounded by his generals and army, in full battle array, being so forcefully warned off the ground and compelled to leave behind him all the fruits of his conquests and that, by a man armed by nothing more than a mere "scrap of paper". What could be more humiliating, more abasing, or a more effectual shattering of his supposed greatness? Who, then, on this occasion, proved to be "exceeding great", Antiochus or his master, Rome?

Then after Popilius had seen Antiochus depart from Egypt, according to "the time stipulated", he, with his two colleagues, returned to Alexandria where: "he brought to a conclusion the treaty of union between the two (Ptolemy) brothers. which had hitherto been but slightly sketched out.

He then crossed to Cyprus; SENT HOME ANTIOCHUS'S FLEET, which had gained a victory over that of the Egyptians; RESTORED THE WHOLE ISLAND TO THE KINGS OF EGYPT, who had a just claim to it; and returned to Rome to acquaint the Senate with the success of the embassy."

Later, ambassadors from Antiochus appeared before the Roman Senate where they stated that their Sovereign "had OBEYED THE COMMANDS OF THE ROMAN AMBASSADORS as strictly as if they had been sent from the Gods."

Again we ask. Which was the greater. Antiochus or Rome?

In that same year. 168 BC. "Egypt voluntarily submitted to the Roman protectorate and thereupon the kings of Babylon also desisted from the last effort to maintain their independence against Rome." -Momsen, History of Rome Book 3, Chapter X, 168 BC.

In the face of such history, who will contend that Antiochus waxed "exceeding great" when not only was he all through his reign under heavy tribute to Rome, but was also regarded by his subjects as a madman, while on the other hand Rome's power and prestige was such that, with out recourse to arms, her commands were immediately and implicitly obeyed by him.

Now history informs us that immediately after Antiochus was driven from Egypt, "humiliated and boiling with rage" he went directly to Jerusalem where he vented his rage on the Jews. He despoiled their temple and did away with their services etc. And this was done by Antiochus the same year that he was driven from Egypt. The 143rd year of the Greek kingdom.

