

Nature and
Property
of the Parable

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A Moral or Prophetic Understanding

The methodology that our movement focuses on is parable teaching; using parables is a powerful technique.

Adventist think it's not useful to use parables because their idea of morality and prophecy became two separate ideas, so they approach a parable study as a moral issue or prophetic issue thus keeping them separate; this has molded Adventist in a certain way of thinking as they study.

Parables are usually discussed or introduced from a moralistic perspective.

Let's look at Luke 15:4-9 from a moral understandings:

“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

“And when he hath found [it], he layeth [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing.

“And when he cometh home, he calleth together [his] friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find [it]?”

“And when she hath found [it], she calleth [her] friends and [her] neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.”

The shepherd who lost his sheep shows that he hadn't taken care of the sheep, and the woman who lost one piece of silver clearly shows a story of carelessness; this woman represents the leaders of the church. In this story, it's not the fault of the piece of silver that it's lost; it doesn't know it's in the house or that it's lost.

The moral understanding of these parables is correct, but our focus should be to understand parables at the prophetic level; the hidden treasure needs to be dug up and understood.

To understand morality you don't have to be a Christian, everyone understands how to treat each other, all understand morality. The difference between Christianity and other religions is our understanding of the great controversy- how sin entered the world and how it will be dealt with, and our availability to receive power from God- the power to deal with our sinful lives.

What Has Troubled Us

If we want to understand prophecy we need to know how to read inspiration correctly.

Luke 10:25 says, “And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

This lawyer asked Christ a question; what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Christ answered, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” How do you understand what the words mean?

This issue strikes at the heart of Christ’s ministry. This has troubled humans before Christ came, while He was on earth, and ever since.

Luke 10:25 says the lawyer “tempted” him but he was not trying to deceive or trick Christ.

The key question is in Luke 10:26, what does the law say? How do you read those words?

Another story with the same dynamics as Luke 10 is in Acts 8:29-35:

“Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

“ And Philip ran thither to [him], and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

“And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

“The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

“In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

“And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”

The problem is he doesn't understand what he is reading. This is our problem too; we can read but we don't understand.

Is Daniel's Life Significant ?

In Daniel chapter 2, Nebuchadnezzar made a statue, a copy or an image- an image of the beast and commanded all to bow down. We understand this as a connection to the Sunday Law. So, we must read all these stories and try to understand what they mean; they all have a moral component, but also a prophetic component. These are written to teach us what the end of the world would look like.

The book of Daniel takes us to the end of the world, and in it Nebuchadnezzar has a dream and it was given to him because he was thinking about what would happen in the latter days.
(Daniel 2:28)

All of the prophecies of Daniel take us to the end of the world. Daniel 11:40, the time of the end, refers to the end of the world because if you go to the beginning of the chapter Daniel begins to lay out the prophecy from the beginning. And Gabriel actually tells Daniel in Chapter 10:14, "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision [is] for [many] days."

We should understand that the stories and the life of Daniel have significance not just the dreams and visions. We should understand how his life and captivity in Babylon teaches us about the end of the world.

Daniel 2 starts with literal Babylon and it ends with Rome, but when you get into the imagery of Revelation, the end of the world looks like a woman on a beast whose name is mystery Babylon. So, we know that Babylon is at the end of the world, but it's a mystery. It's not easy to understand, it's a spiritual phenomenon. We have to be spiritual to understand; for 1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned."

So it's a mystery because most of us don't know what it means, what it looks like, unless we're spiritually minded.

When you go from Daniel 2 to Revelation 17, which are parables- literal Babylon to spiritual Babylon; the literal story of Daniel becomes the spiritual story of Babylon. The parable of the literal story of Daniel in captivity is written for our understanding, to teach us that at the end of the world there will be some form of captivity into spiritual Babylon. Therefore, Daniel becomes a symbol of God's people at the end of the world.

In Daniel 1, he is faithful to God by not eating from the king's table and we understand this to refer to the health reform message, that's true, but do you believe that Daniel was literally ten times cleverer than his teachers? How can a teacher create an assessment unless he knows the answers? For Nebuchadnezzar to know the answers, he has to be ten times cleverer than the teachers too.

And what is Nebuchadnezzar eating? Isn't he eating from the king's table? So, it's silly to think that being vegan will make you ten times cleverer than meat eaters. We know that there is a moral lesson, that being faithful to God is good, but we need to understand the lesson at the prophetic level too.

Daniel is clever, he understands everything; we need to understand this point prophetically/ spiritually. Spiritually Daniel represents God's people at the end of the world, he is going to have superior understanding because he's faithful.

Literal Babylon → Spiritual Babylon Literal Daniel → Spiritual Daniel

What is the spiritual significance of Daniel being an eunuch? The fact that Daniel could not have any children shows that he is a symbol of the final generation, someone who lives at the end of the world.

The Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8 can be compared and contrasted with Daniel who was also an eunuch. They're the same person: God's people at the end of the world. But the Ethiopian eunuch understands nothing. You have someone who understands everything and someone who understands nothing, both representing God's people at the end of the world.

This is at the heart of God's church today. There are too many people not like Daniel, but like the Ethiopian; they don't understand what they read. We may think that most of us are like Daniel, but too many are actually like the Ethiopian. This is our problem today.

Paralleling Daniel 11 and Luke 10

The lawyer in Luke 10 had a problem, so Christ told him a real life story:

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

“He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?”

“And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

“And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

“But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?”

“And Jesus answering said, A certain [man] went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded [him], and departed, leaving [him] half dead.

“And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

“And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked [on him], and passed by on the other side.

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion [on him],

“And went to [him], and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”

Verses 25-34

We can understand this story morally, Christ and Sister White explains it that way, but we can also understand it prophetically though many of us don't attempt to do this.

The man robbed was a Jew (God's people) so God's people have been robbed.

Luke 10:30 says, "And Jesus answering said, **A certain [man]** went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and **fell among thieves**, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded [him], and departed, leaving [him] half dead."

Daniel 11:14 says, "And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also **the robbers of thy people** shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall."

A vision is spoken about in Daniel 11:14, the robbers will establish the vision, but they shall fall. This story about the robbers of God's people is connected to a vision as well as the man who fell among thieves in Luke. Verse 14 uses the definite article "the" so it's the vision of Daniel 11. So, the story of the good Samaritan in Luke is a story of the vision of Daniel 11, and the vision is being spoken about through the story of the good Samaritan. Therefore, this story about the priest, Levite, and Samaritan is the vision of Daniel 11.

All of inspiration is dealing with God's people at the end of the world. In Luke 10:25, the lawyer wants eternal life, but he's a

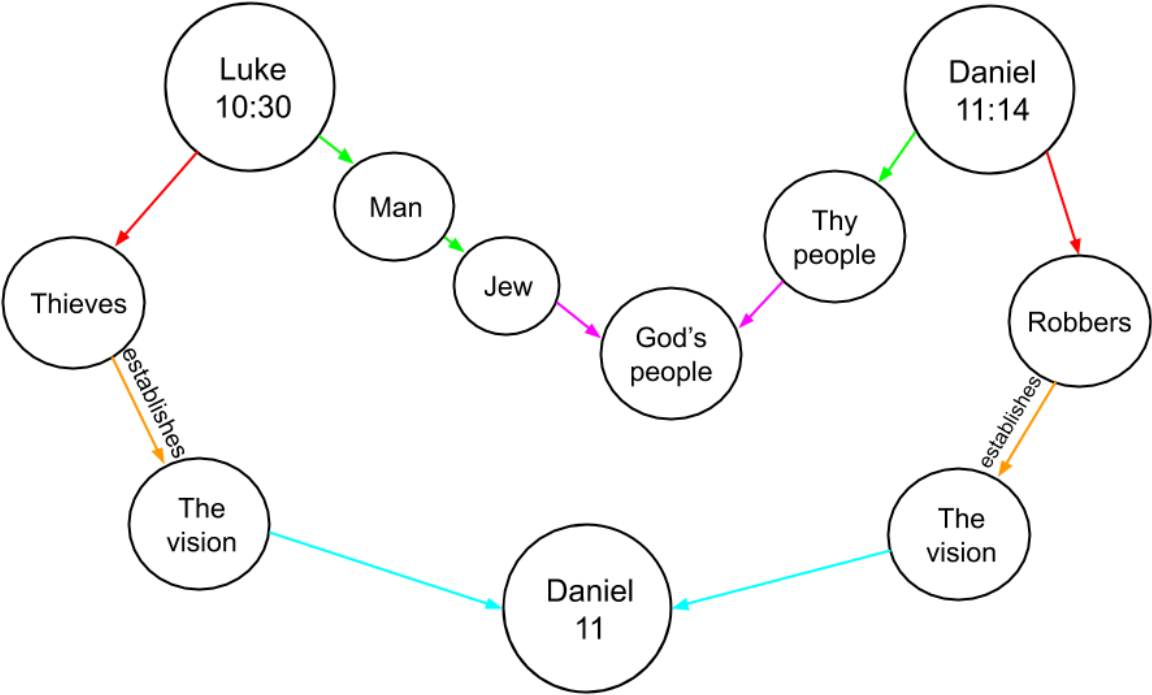
lawyer; he is supposed to understand how to explain inspiration/the law. He asked how to receive eternal life and Christ says you have the law tell me what it means, and then Christ tells the story. After hearing this parable the lawyer tries to justify himself by asking, who is my neighbor?

What we want to see is that it's about how you read inspiration and depending on how you read determines if you receive eternal life. This lawyer is an expert in the law, but he does not know how to read. We think we know how to read, but we are shown in this story that we don't know how to read.

So, what's the issue in the literal story in Luke 10; who is my neighbor? The lawyer is saying in asking this question that he doesn't understand the relationship between God's people and the world. He seems to think he is superior to the world. That the world can't teach him anything. This becomes a significant issue when you take these stories and add them together because what you want to do is go back to Daniel's life. He's an eunuch which means he is a symbol of the final generation. He is not ten times cleverer than his teachers because the person assessing him is Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar is not ten times cleverer than the teachers. We need to understand the symbolic meaning. It's not about eating from the world's table or not. We should understand who the true bread is- Christ. He is the true bread.

John 6:32 says, "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

So in the story of Daniel when he says he won't eat from the world's table but from God's table shows us the spiritual understanding.



Daniel 11:14

But one thing that is challenging us is that we don't understand Luke 10:29- who is my neighbor? We don't understand our relationship to the world. Daniel understands because he knows what table to eat from. The Ethiopian and the lawyer don't understand, so Christ tells the lawyer a story about three people, two from the church and one from the world. Christ teaches you who your neighbor is; the lawyer is taught that his neighbor is the world because the world helped the injured person.

Daniel 11:14 connects with Luke 10 through the "robbers" and the injured person, so the robbers of thy people are dealing with the vision, and when speaking of the priest, Levite, and Samaritan the subject matter is the vision of Daniel 11 and this chapter repeats and enlarges upon itself as you go through Medo-Persian, Greece, Pagan Rome, and Papal Rome- four repeating stories all telling you about the end of the world culminates in verses 40-45.

Verse fourteen says the establishment of the fulfillment of this vision is based upon the relationship of the robbers and the people, so you know that Luke 10, the story of the good Samaritan is the story of the establishment of the fulfillment of Daniel 11. This is a relatively easy way to see how significant it is to understand parables at the prophetic level.

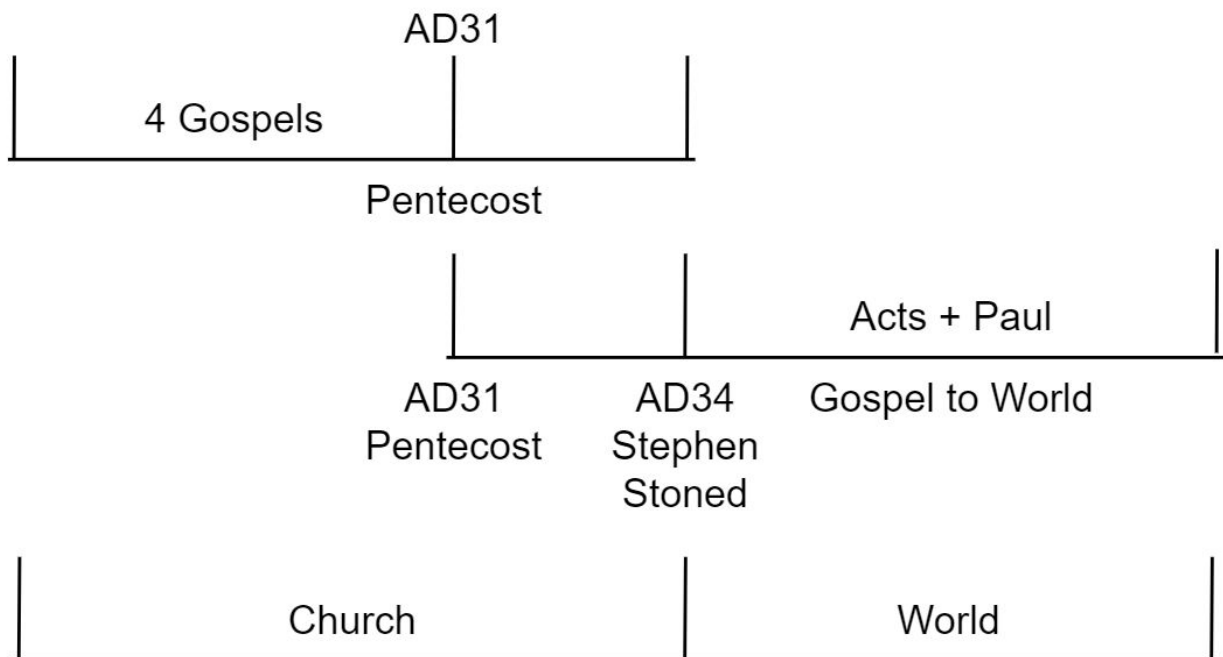
The Church and the World

The New Testament can be divided many ways, but Elder Parminder wants to do it in two parts for this point. Matthew through John, the story of God's church, to His death and the death of Christ to His commission to give the gospel to the world. The second part is the book of Acts, which starts where the gospels end, taking you from the Cross through the history of the stoning of Stephen.

The four gospels actually finish in AD 31, but they take you through the time where the gospel goes to the world. The structure and the purpose of the four gospels is to relay how God is going to deal with His church.

The New Testament is a story of the gospel, first to the church and then to the world; that is how it is structured.

Paul's letters are also repeating the story of how the gospel went to the world.



During the history of Pentecost there was the conversion of 3,000 Jews, so we know the story of the church given in the New Testament is in two parts; the history before the Cross and the history after Pentecost.

And Paul was commissioned to give the gospel to the world in AD 34; we can see the structure of the New Testament is also in three parts: two for the church and one for the world.



A Repeating Story

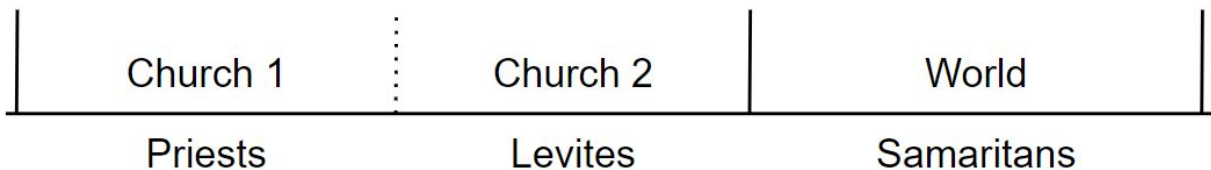
The stories in the New Testament are a repeating story (the church in two parts and then the world); it's the same story that is in Luke 10 (the priest, Levite, and Samaritan).

Those three groups in Luke 10 are what subject?

The subject is Daniel 11:14 which is the vision.

Luke 10 is the story of the priest, Levite, and Samaritan; it's the vision of Daniel 11, therefore, the whole story of the New Testament, those twenty-seven books, are the story of how the gospel goes to the church in two parts then the world. These are all repeating stories, so when we read the four gospels we can decide for ourselves if we want to read them morally and receive some benefit or whether we should be reading these stories prophetically. We can see that the stories in the gospels all have prophetic significance.

The four gospels end in AD 31, this is the church part one and if you overlay Luke 10 it becomes the story of the priests.



All four gospel books are a prophetic explanation on how we, as priests, should relate to God on a prophetic level.

And in the gospels, the disciples have a problem with Christ though, they don't believe or understand what he is teaching them. This is the story about you; you don't understand your relationship with God.

This is about you giving the gospel to humanity whether it's the first or second Advent, it's the same issue.

Our problem is that we think we know what we are doing and we don't. The priests are the worst out of the three, go back to the story, even at the moral level they're the worst.

Therefore, we should understand at a prophetic level that we fulfill the same role; we don't understand who we are, and what we are supposed to do because we read and don't understand.