



Lesson 36

The Form and the Character

- **Ancient Israel**
 - The 400-year captivity
 - The end of the captivity
 - The Apis bull
 - The Babylonian captivity
 - Christ's time (Roman captivity)
 - The cure
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 - The 1260-year captivity
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 - The 1888 history
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 - Our cure

The entire history of the world can be split into 2 time periods. The first is Ancient Israel and the second is Modern Israel. Because of their captivity, Ancient Israel had a wrong perspective of God that stayed with them throughout their whole history. When we line up Ancient Israel with Modern Israel, we see that we have a wrong perspective too. In this lesson we'll learn what Ancient Israel's problem was, how it was fixed, then see what the cure for our wrong perspective is.

Ancient Israel

The 400-year captivity

“In their bondage the Israelites had to some extent lost the knowledge of God's law, and they had departed from its precepts. The Sabbath had been generally disregarded, and the exactions of their taskmasters made its observance apparently impossible.” PP 258.1. During the 400-year captivity of Egypt, the Israelites lost sight of the Sabbath. Because of their bondage, they regarded the Sabbath less and less until they stopped keeping it altogether.

The end of the captivity

Moses is the one who God used to bring His people out of their captivity in Egypt. We mark Moses' birth as the Time of the End for that history because he was the 1st angel/messenger in that time. After 80 years of training (first in Egypt and then in Midian) God sent him back to Egypt to free His people. The observance of the Sabbath was reinstated while they were still there, by Moses. And exactly when the 400 years was over, God through Moses led the Israelites out of captivity. Not long after leaving Egypt the Israelites reached Sinai. Moses went up into the mountain for forty days not long after. But while he was in the mountain the Israelites got scared. They thought that they didn't have a leader: Moses was “gone” and God was invisible. So they decided to make an idol. They had been in Egypt for a long time and they were familiar with their idolatry, so they copied one of the god's of the Egyptians. They made a golden calf. They said that the calf symbolized God and that they were worshipping God by worshipping the idol. But God did not accept that- they were practicing idolatry. When Moses came down from the mountain he destroyed the idol; he told them to not practice idolatry and he also gave them other rules from God- he was the prophet for Ancient Israel. Yet Israel did not give up idolatry.

The Apis bull

At Sinai, the Israelites thought they were worshiping God, but they were in idolatry. After being in Egypt for 400 years, the Israelites began to worship like the Egyptians. The golden calf was an idol of an Egyptian god. This god was the Apis bull. The Apis bull was a real animal, and all the Egyptians worshiped it as a god. When someone makes a god, it has to have a specific character that makes it unique, and it has to have a form, in other words, it has to have a character and an appearance. The Apis bull's form was the bull and its character was supposed to be a fighting spirit- a warrior. We now see that the Israelites had a wrong view of God. When they worshiped the golden calf, the form, they were ascribing to God its character. Being in Egypt for so long the Israelites had become idolaters.

The Babylonian captivity

Israel went into captivity to Babylon for 70 years. "By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images." DA 28.5. They gave up the worship of idols in the form but not in the character. They had a wrong conception of God's character still. They began to become more and more conservative; they shut themselves away from the other nations- to remain pure. Out of this conservatism came the Pharisees. They were the most conservative of the conservatives. This was the result of the 70-year captivity.

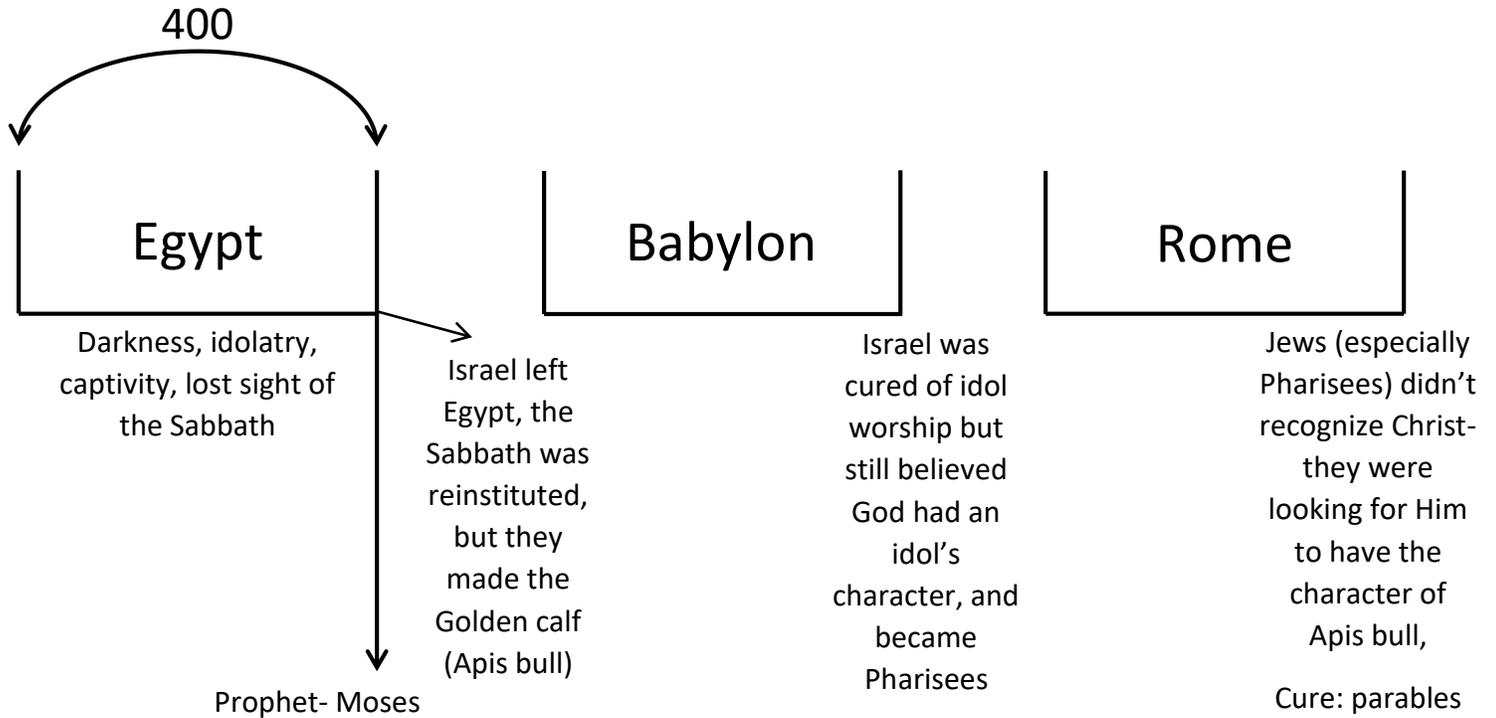
Christ's time (Roman captivity)

In the time of Christ God's people were in captivity to Rome and they were still in idolatry. They didn't have idols but they still had a wrong idea of God's character (and of the character of the Messiah). To them He was like the gods and leaders of the other nations. They thought Christ would be a conquering king who would establish an earthly kingdom and make Israel the leader of the world. They misunderstood both the nature of God's kingdom and the nature, or character, of the king: Christ. Jesus did not meet the expectations that the Jewish leaders- especially the Pharisees- had led the people to believe. He came to establish a heavenly kingdom and teach people from all nations the truth. But because they didn't correctly understand the character of the Messiah many of them didn't accept Jesus; they were still in idolatry.

The cure

All of the Israelites had a wrong view of what Christ would be like. Even John the Baptist and the 12 disciples- they all expected the character of the Apis bull to be Christ's character. The disciples couldn't do their work properly with these wrong theories, so they needed a cure. Since Christ was the one with the correct explanation of Himself, the cure had to be in His teachings. Throughout His whole ministry, we see the same teachings repeated- He says "the kingdom of heaven is like" then He compares it to natural things the disciples can understand. This is why Christ talked so much about the kingdom of heaven, because the disciples were expecting something that it wasn't, but what one word can all of his teachings be called?

Parables. Parables were the cure to the disciples' wrong view of Christ and the kingdom. They were what the disciples needed to understand. They were what Christ was trying to get across to them throughout His whole ministry.



Modern Israel

The 1260-year captivity

During the 1260 years of Papal supremacy, the Protestants were God's church. But, they lost sight of the Sabbath. The Papacy suppressed the observance of the Sabbath and persecuted those who kept it so that slowly, the Protestants began to give in and worship on Sunday. "Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's ax." GC 54.2. Sunday worship is idolatry; and idolatry is the Apis Bull.

The end of the captivity

Modern Israel parallels Ancient Israel. The 1260 years of captivity is paralleled by the 400 years of captivity. After the 400-year captivity, Moses was raised up. William Miller is typified by Moses. Miller was the first messenger in the alpha history of Modern Israel and he was the one who led God's people out of the 1260-year captivity through the message that God had given him. Like Ancient Israel Modern Israel had lost the Sabbath in their captivity, as we have learned, and so it needed to be reintroduced. God did that in the end of Millerite history. God also raised up a prophet for them: Ellen G. White. She instructed the Millerites/ Adventists in many things including the Sabbath. The "idol" for Modern Israel is Sunday worship and in the Millerites' time they were cured from that.

The 1888 history

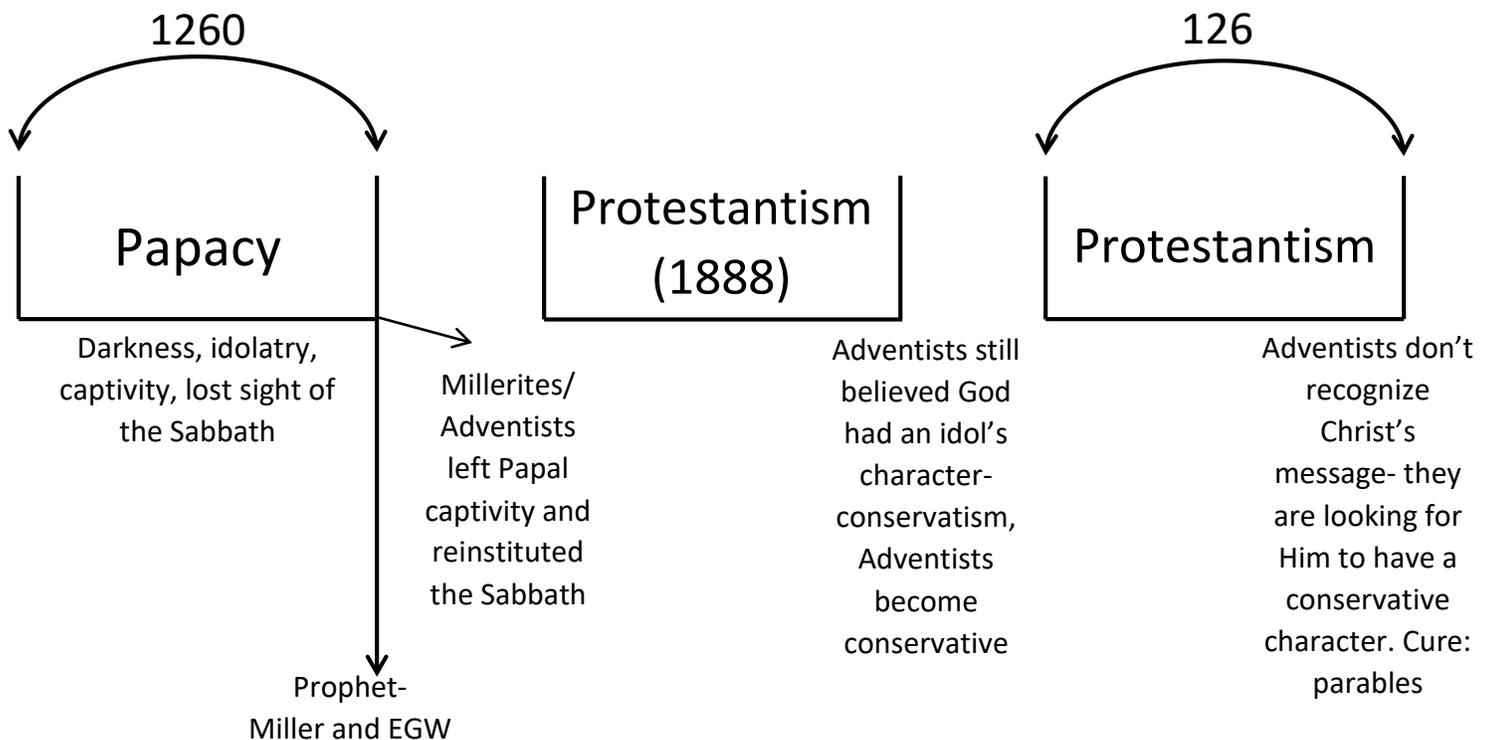
The 1888 history parallels the history of the captivity to Babylon. In and after the Babylonian captivity, the Israelites became Pharisees- they still preserved the character of the Apis bull by believing when the Messiah came, he would be a warrior, have a fighting spirit, and would free them. Likewise, in the 1888 history, the Seventh-day Adventists became Pharisees or conservatives. They kept the character of the Apis bull- conservatism. Worshiping the form of the old Apis bull is the same as the new- they're both idolatry, we then can say the characters must be the same. The character of the old Apis bull was a warrior king that the Jews thought would free them and make them separate from the Romans. In 1888 the SDAs became conservative and to be (socially) conservative is to not like other people that aren't like you, for the Adventists, it was to not like other religions. We see that this is the character of the old Apis bull- the Jews wanted a warrior king because they didn't like other Nations (the Romans), the SDAs became conservatives by not liking other religions (mainly Protestantism because they don't worship on the seventh day). This conservatism is the old and new Apis bull- We get all of this information from lining up the Babylonian captivity with the 1888 history.

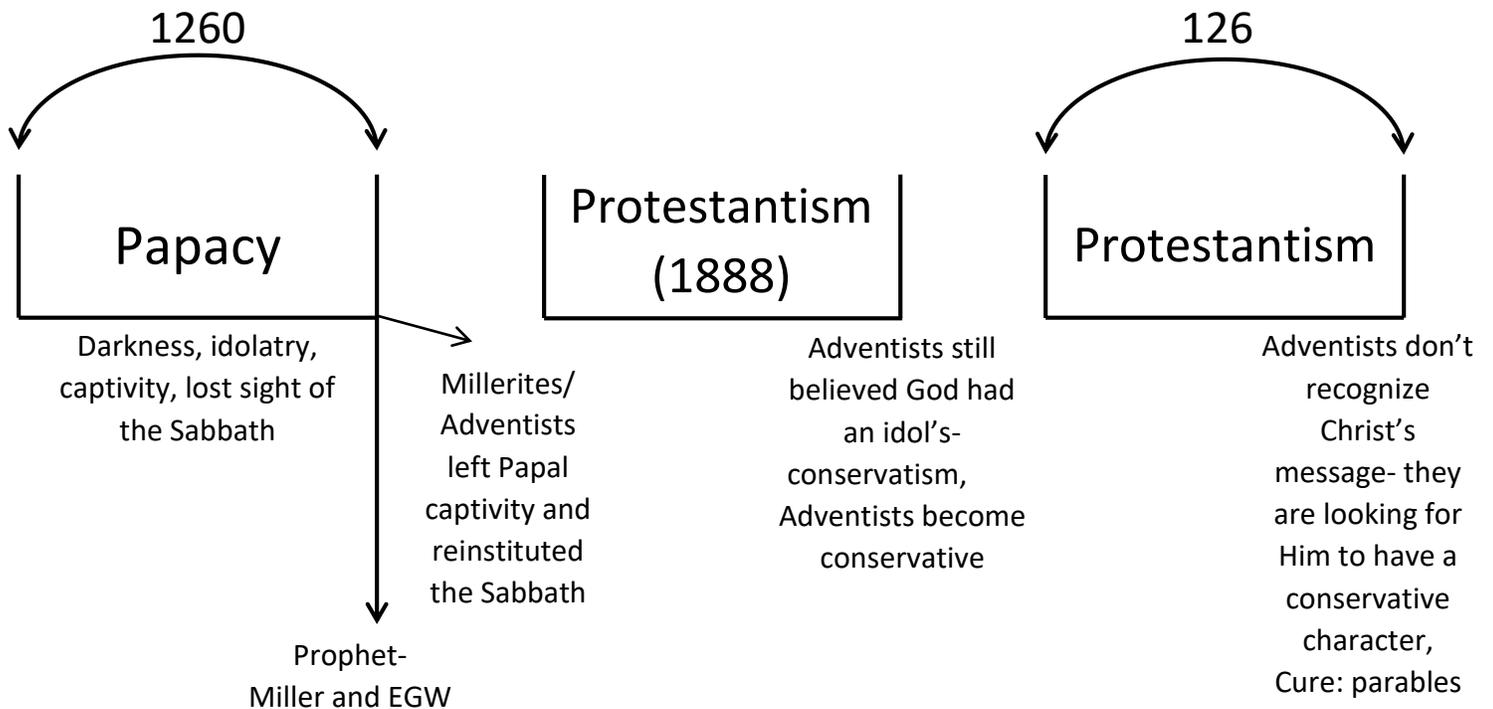
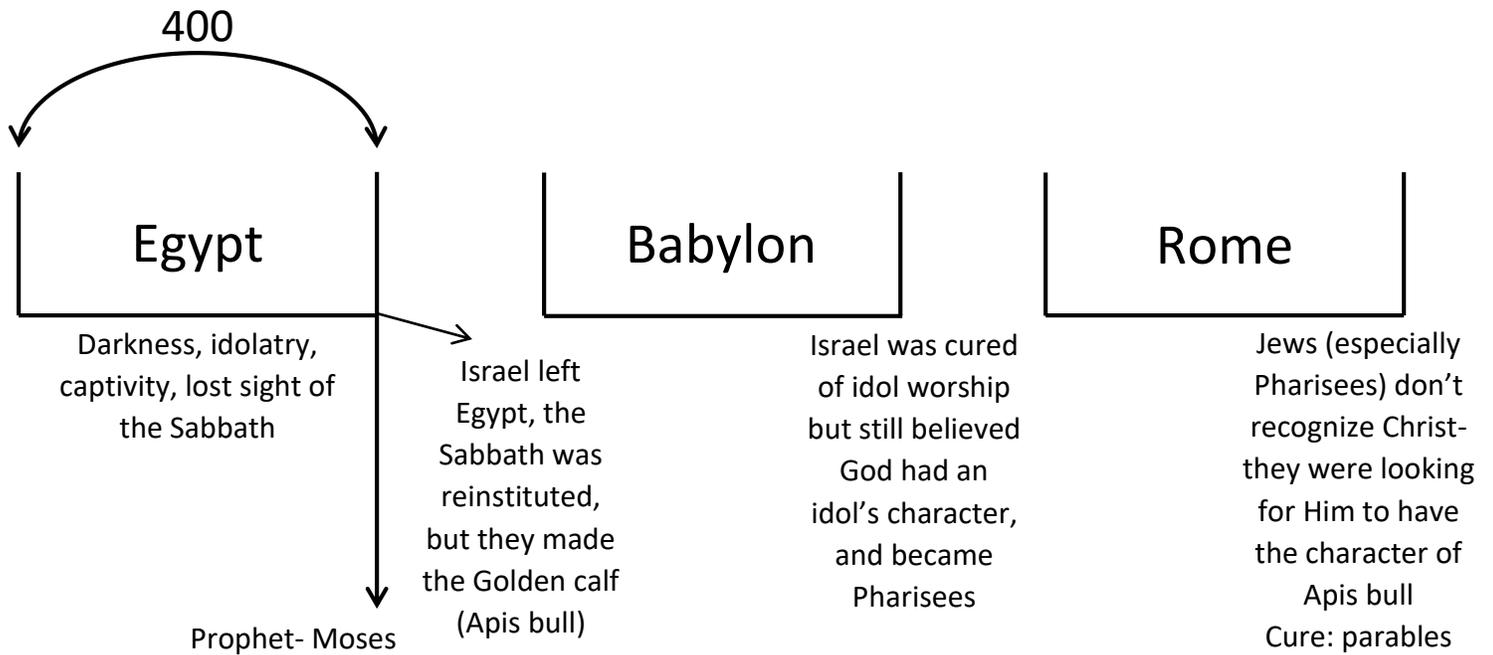
Our time

The Roman captivity before Christ's time parallels the 126 years of captivity before our time. Our time after the captivity parallels Christ's time. The mindset of Apis Bull worship that the Jews had is the same mindset Seventh-day Adventist have today. In Christ's time the Jews did not understand His character so in our time Adventist don't understand God's character. They attribute to Him the characteristics of their Apis Bull- a Protestant mindset: conservatism. That was the same thing that the Israelites did. They did not worship the idol but they still worshiped the character. Adventist don't worship idols but they worship the character of the idol. This is why Seventh-day Adventist don't accept this message- they don't accept equality. They are conservative like the Pharisees and so they are looking for a conservative message.

Our cure

In our time, like in Christ's, the cure for our wrong ideas of the nature of the kingdom and character of God: the king, is parables. Parable teaching is the methodology that will bring us to the right conclusions on these things. Comparing and Contrasting (which is a form of parable teaching) the King of the North and the King of the South teaches us about equality. That lets us understand how God sees people (and how we should see others too). A triple Application of Prophecy of 1850, 1888, and our time tells us that the great test is not Sunday- it's discrimination. That enables everyone to have a chance to be saved- not just Christians. Parables correct our wrong understandings of God and His kingdom, therefore freeing us from idolatry.





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