

The Night Vision

Aaron D. Patiño

Times and seasons are critical factors when interpreting the Word. Every work and every passage has its application in its appointed time. Some extended periods of time are often called dispensations or administrations. When one errs in the application of scripture to its proper dispensation, that leads the Christian to draw erroneous and sometimes absurd conclusions that lead to doubt and confusion. This morning our study is over the night visions. Daniel 7:13-14.

Los tiempos y las estaciones son factores críticos al interpretar la palabra. Cada obra tiene aplicación en su propio tiempo señalado. Algunos períodos de tiempo prolongados a menudo se denominan dispensaciones o administraciones. Cuando uno se equivoca en la aplicación de las Escrituras en su debido tiempo, eso lleva al cristiano a sacar conclusiones erróneas y, a veces absurdas, que lo conducen a la duda y la confusión. Esta mañana nuestro estudio será sobre las visiones nocturnas. Daniel 7:13-14.

Let's begin by reading the commentary by Bill Reeves, who was a prominent leader and preacher in the Church of Christ among Spanish speakers.

Reeves- commentary on Daniel 7:13 (p. 36-37)

"Here, Jesus Christ represents His redeemed people, because in verse 22 we see that the kingdom is received by the saints, or possessed by them. The saints reign with him now in the Christian dispensation, in death, and will reign forever (Rev. 5:10; 20:4; 22:5). The phrase "son of man" emphasizes the deity of Jesus, and the humanity of Christ. He is a supernatural person. Consider Rev. 5:5, the humanity of Christ. - who came to the Ancient of Days, v37 and was made to approach before him - The direction of movement in this case must be well noted. The person is presented, "as a son of man", coming with the clouds of heaven to the "Ancient of days". This happened at Christ's ascension into heaven after his resurrection. Upon reaching the Ancient of Days, he is given a kingdom! The premillennialists have the whole case turned around, because they have Christ now without a kingdom and that some future day he will come from God to earth to receive (to establish) his kingdom (of a thousand years, they say). Daniel did not see anyone coming from God to earth, but someone who in the clouds reaches God to receive the kingdom from him. Christ receives the kingdom at his first coming, not at the second. Christ reigns now (1Tim. 6:13-16)!" (Transl. mine)

Mr. Reeves applies Daniel 7:13-14 to the ascension of Jesus Christ in his first coming after his resurrection, found in Acts 1:11. The Church of Christ has long held the belief that the kingdom as a whole, came at Pentecost, as can be seen in this same commentary (verse 18) as well as many other commentaries. Because of this belief, they are forced to give application to texts, such as Daniel 7, to Jesus Christ at his first coming.

There is one key factor that Mr. Reeves, and others, miss, or choose to neglect, in this text. It is found at the beginning of Daniel 7:13 where it reads "*I saw in the night visions*". Two other places in this chapter does Daniel use the same language referencing the night visions; verse 2 and verse 7. This is not Daniel simply saying "I had a dream as

I slept during the night”. Instead, the Spirit is showing that these events occur at a specific time. And it is imperative that we know the specifics of this fulfillment.

In short, the interpretation and the application assumed by Mr. Reeves is out of season. We are going to have to explore different texts throughout the scripture regarding the night vision and the night season in order to understand this time and answer such questions as “when does this coronation take place, and what is happening during this time?” Knowing this, will help us understand “who was made to approach the Ancient of Days?”

A Time of Deep Sleep

“Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.” Psa. 104:20-23

There is a clear distinction given to us in the scriptures between the works of the day and the works of the night. Remember what Jesus says in John 11:7-10 and in John 9:4-5 about there being 12 hours in the day, describing the day as a time when one could walk and not stumble. He also points out the dangers of the night.

The night vision in Daniel 7 must be interpreted within the limits of the dark age of the gospel. A time when there was no light, indicating that snares and stumbling blocks were hidden by darkness (human inference in the form of divine law). The prophets describe the night visions as dangerous times filled with unknown terrors, representing a time of deep sleep when evil men acted in the shadows, to cover up their evil works. Psa. 91:5-6.

The night vision indicates an ecclesiastical period that corresponds to the time in which the church slept, indicating scarce revelation and neglect of the doctrine, thus, allowing the entry of error. Matt. 13:24-28a; Matt. 25:1-13. We have two visions of the kingdom of heaven showing us a time of sleep, or slumber. The Church, including all its members, all fall into a deep sleep. It is during this time that the enemy enters and sows tares among the wheat.

Does this happen at the onset of Christianity? The scripture indicates that false teachers entered after the apostolic departure. Since that time, the Spirit has been urging the Church to wake up to the realization of the gospel truth and to take arms in its defense (Acts 20:28-31; Jude 3-4).

Isa 29:7-8. Isaiah uses prophetic language to depict the members of church in a state of deep sleep (v10). The members hunger for truth, they thirst for righteousness; to be fed with the strong meat of the doctrine. They slept and dreamt, believing their souls were being sustained; that the fullness of salvation was theirs. Yet when the church was awakened, by the voice of one crying out, they woke up and their soul was empty, faint and hungry because they were not truly being nourished. James says this same thing in James 2:15-16; we must put to work our faith.

Where in the doctrine of the Church of Christ was there ever a place where the preachers failed to give sound interpretation in order to sustain its members? The only place is in 1Cor 11 regarding the covering tenet and the order of authority principle. The overseers of the Church did not work this field in order to produce fruit, but instead, buried the controversy under the blanket of *doubtful disputation* (Rom 14) and “*folded their hands to sleep*” because they feared controversy and division rather than fearing the

demanding nature of the Lord, who reaps where He does not sow. They did not prevent the introduction of heresy into the kingdom allowing the works of the night to overtake them.

Due to the orientation of the previous passages, the vision of the son of man approaching the ancient of days does not correspond to the days of the stay of Jesus Christ in the world but, to the time in the church described as "while men slept."

The Passing Spirit

This period of time, the night vision, was not just a time of sleep and neglect. But, as we have read, is a time of terror. It is also a time where evil men conspire. Job 33:14-18. Deep sleep falls on the believer, terror surrounds them, but God opens the ears. The Amplified version of the bible reads *"Then He opens the ears of men and seals their instruction [terrifying them with warnings]."* One individual awakens to see that the church is in a terrifying state of apostasy.

Job 4:13-21. As surprising as it was to the angels at how soon error entered the kingdom, in the parable of the wheat and tares found in Matthew 13, is the recognition of this fact by the individual here in Job's vision; it's as if a ghost had passed before his eyes. That is to say, by eyewitness, witnessing the usurpation of Christ by the preachers. This individual recalls the vision of the tares infiltrating the kingdom. It is easy to reconcile the entry of the tares with the covert entry of the ungodly that the epistle of Jude indicates. The Spirit and ghost are one, both deliver an ominous message. It is a frightening revelation seeing the faithful made fools by these men's vile efforts to try to usurp Christ's place in the Church as legislator. 2Thess 2:2-4.

Upon awakening from the dream, one individual, represented here in Job, is said to despise the appearance of unfaithful ministers. Psa. 73:20 *"As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image."*

Job 7:14-16. The strangulation here represents being drowned by the pleasures and cares of the world that are enjoyed by those in the church that awoke ill-prepared to receive the husband. The lack of oil in their lamps points to the lack of sufficient knowledge to sustain them in the truth.

The Son of Man

It is obvious to see, by use of other scripture, that there is a clear distinction between the time described as "the day" when Jesus and His apostles were present in this world and the time described as "the night", where, while men slept and thereby neglected the care of the church, the terrors of the night worked! Knowing this, and knowing the events surrounding the end times, the night season, (the apostasy, the usurpation of Christ's throne by the antichrist, and the day of the Lord) then we know without a doubt that Daniel's vision must have its fulfillment at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Who then is this son of man who is made to approach the Ancient of Days and receive the kingdom? Ps 2:1-12. At the time of rebellion, where false preachers take counsel against the Lord and attempt to usurp His throne, the Lord fully establishes His kingdom with power by anointing His king. The Lord made one member of the Church to approach unto Him, anointed her, set her on the throne and declared the decree *"Thou are my Son, this day (today) I have begotten thee."* She was made to inherit the nations because she fulfilled the entire law.

Rom 13:10-12. Paul was speaking of this future time where the works of darkness must needs be cast off, that the faithful Christian should awake from sleep and fulfill the law completely by walking in love. In the book of 2John we see the personal letter written from the Ancient of Days to a woman and her children; this is that faithful member who was made to draw close to Him in Daniel's vision and crowned with the title Elect Lady.

Through the work of Lord's Elect, the enemy has been cast out of the church along with all heresies according to the vision of Revelations 12; which serves as further prophetic confirmation of the elevation of the Lord's handmaid. Furthermore, it is we, the saints, who now possess the kingdom according to Daniel 7:18,20,27. *"But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."* Today we possess the kingdom and abide in spiritual New Jerusalem; the house of the Elect Lady. Rev 21:22-27.