



the
REFORMATION
herald

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A MESSAGE OF

Hope

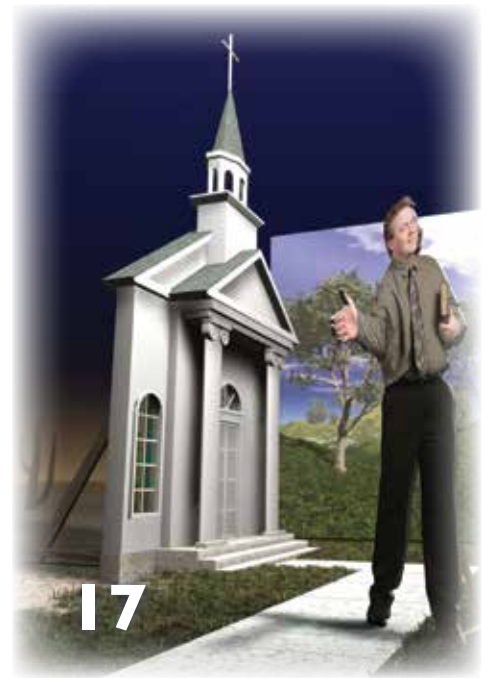
False Prophets & False Revivals / Preparing for the Final Test / The Sealing Time

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"The age in which we live calls for reformatory action."
— *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 488.

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The Last WARNING—III

The third angel of Revelation 14 presents a much broader message than his predecessor. He warns the whole world against the worship of the beast and its image. Heaven uses these symbols to identify earthly governments. He also cautions humankind against receiving the mark of the beast by conviction or practice. Those who receive this mark will be punished with the seven last plagues.

This is a sealing angel. The result of the third angel's message is revealed in the preparation of a people who possess the patience of the saints, keeps the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Those who faithfully die under the third angel's message are called happy: "*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth [when the message began to be preached]: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them*" (Revelation 14:13).

The advent people in 1844 expected the Lord to return on October 22 of that year. He didn't come to the earth but left the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and moved to the most holy place to start the last phase of His

intercession in behalf of those who trusted their salvation to Him. Studying His office in the heavenly temple, the faithful believers found the Law of God inside the ark, and the fourth commandment, the seventh day Sabbath.

Now they had to develop the patience of the saints, and expect Jesus coming after His work in the most holy place is finished. Through His marvelous grace they were made able to obey His commandments and to live by the faith of Jesus.

"The third angel's message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness.

"The faith of Jesus.' It is talked of, but not understood. What constitutes

the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel's message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. **And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.**"¹

We need to possess the "faith of Jesus" to develop the patience of the saints and to keep the commandments of God. Thus we are prepared to receive our Saviour in His soon coming. May the Lord give us this personal experience! *R*

Reference

¹ *Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 172 [emphasis supplied].

THE LIFE OF FAITH UNDER *The Third Angel*



By T. Stockler

In the middle of one of his visions, John watches Jesus come down from heaven with a little book in His hand. John is then ordered to eat the book. In his excitement, its ideas and stories were delicious. But when it got down to his belly, he got a bellyache.

You have had that experience too, probably. I have. I was an excited little boy. My grandparents were visiting, and we were going to have my favorite food for supper, fruit salad. Eagerly I ate my first bowl, and then my second and third. Every bite was delicious. I listened to the stories around the table. I was happy. But my belly was not. It didn't agree with my tongue. I delighted in eating fruit salad, but my belly refused to digest it. My dinner suddenly ended up on the living room floor.

In reality, John was asked to go through an experience that would be the prophecy of the Advent movement of the 1800s. That "little book" of Daniel that Jesus held in His hand predicted that He would stop all the suffering

and injustice of the world and replace it with heaven. Recognizing these predictions would be fulfilled soon was sweet to the minds and "mouths" of our spiritual forefathers. But when the time came to live those ideas out in the development of character, the reality was so bitter to their stomachs it gave them a stomachache.

To be intensely excited and then disappointed once was hard enough. Twice in the same year was almost unbearable. How could God disappoint them twice? How could they be right and yet wrong? What was going on? The believers in God and His word were confused and frustrated. For so long, the world around them had told them they were wrong. But that world never found something better it could agree on. The believers knew that the world's disagreement for the sake of disagreeing was not proof of any error. But now, after the first disappointment and then the great disappointment of 1844, they didn't know what to say.

The advice given John for his upset stomach was hard for these few. You "must prophesy again before many



Repentance and forgiveness were not all. God asked for something more. He wanted character.

peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings" (Revelation 10:11).

Twice they had already prophesied that Jesus was coming, that it was time to be ready to live with Him, that it was time to nurture the "better angels" of our natures and conquer our inner "devils." Both times their prophecies proved incorrect. What could they prophesy now? Who would believe them again? What could they say that would be so credible that even kings would listen to them? Their soul-searching was intense. Who were they? What was their mission and purpose? Why did they exist? What should they do now?

God must have the answers. He had led them before. They knew it was His leading, for only He could bring the unity and good will, the happiness and holiness that were part of their past. And God's guidance would once again have to come from a combination of understanding the Bible, and understanding the circumstances and impressions that came to them in light of the Bible.

No one person answered the deep questions of the believers of that time. Many of them searched deeply the Bible and their own hearts and experiences. Groups of them came together and studied the truths of the Bible and the circumstances of their times. Out of those groups, answers came, until once again there was unity and joy.

They were to present once again the second coming of Jesus, but this time in a new perspective. In their excitement previous to the two disappointments, they were focused on harmony with God. "We carefully examined every thought and emotion of our hearts, as if upon our deathbeds." "Every morning we felt that it was our first work to secure the evidence that our lives were right before God. Our interest for one another increased; we prayed much with and for one another." "The joys of salvation were more necessary to us than our food and

drink. If clouds obscured our minds, we dared not rest or sleep till they were swept away by the consciousness of our acceptance with the Lord."¹ These believers told the world of Jesus' coming and asked them to seek forgiveness from God for where they wronged Him, themselves, and others.

But repentance and forgiveness were not all. God asked for something more. He wanted character. "If the message had been of as short duration as many of us supposed, there would have been no time for [God's people] to develop character. Many moved from feeling, not from principle and faith, and this solemn, fearful message stirred them. It wrought upon their feelings, and excited their fears, but did not accomplish the work which God designed that it should. God reads the heart. Lest His people should be deceived in regard to themselves, He gives them time for the excitement to wear off, and then proves them to see if they will obey the counsel of the True Witness."²

God not only wants us to ask Him to forgive us. He wants us to live a full and satisfying life while depending on Him. He wants us to develop habits of industry, humility, nobility, reasonability, dependability. "Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before [us] there is opened a path of continual progress. [We have] an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes *everything good, and pure, and noble*. [We] will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge. But [our] efforts will be directed to objects as much higher than mere selfish and temporal interests as the heavens are higher than the earth." "All [humanity's] faculties [are] capable of development; their capacity and vigor [are] continually to increase."³

Let us use an example. One of the first great areas of *reform* or change

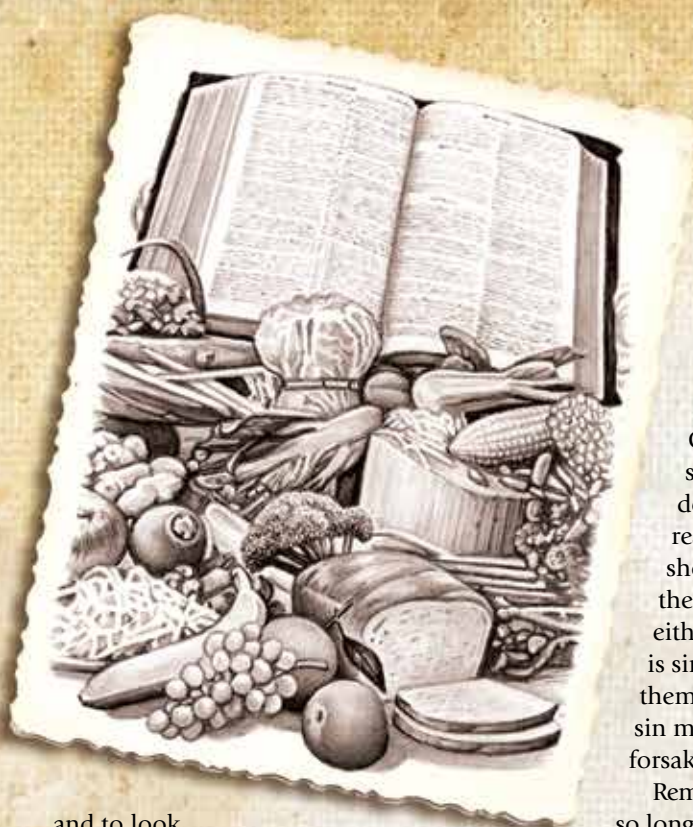
brought to the attention of these Advent people was their health. For, no matter how much they loved God and were careful to examine their motives and thoughts, they were sick. So were many of their neighbors. In 1840, most of the U.S. population was young. Adults were the minority, with more than half the population under twenty and less than one in three of the population between the ages of twenty and forty. Those over forty made up fifteen percent of the population.⁴ Between 1830 and 1840, hundreds of thousands of people emigrated from Europe to the United States. Many of these immigrants were young. That explains part of why the U.S. population was so young in 1840. Sickness explains the rest.

Nearly every home had someone seriously ill in it.⁵ John Andrews would later explain that he grew up believing that headache, nausea, dyspepsia, and fevers were acts of nature as freak and uncontrollable as tornadoes and hurricanes.⁶ Millions of Americans thought the same way.

The most common causes of death in 1840 are hard to discern. Historical records are not always complete or accurate in this matter. But the general reality is clear. Tuberculosis, whooping cough, pneumonia, and typhoid fever caused roughly half of all deaths. The treatments were even scarier than the diseases, with leaches used for bleeding and mercury and arsenic being prescribed as treatments. Sick people were imprisoned in rooms with no light and little air. They were given bread and water. The treatment made people sick as much as the disease did.

The Adventists were sick also. They suffered from the same health problems as the general public. And they were using the same remedies with the addition of prayer.

God asked Adventists to take responsibility for their own health. He invited them to improve their health



“The violation of God’s law, either natural or spiritual, is sin. . . . In order . . . to receive His blessing, sin must be confessed and forsaken.”

and to look to Him for healing.

He required them to learn how their bodies worked at least at a simple level. “Since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigor are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. Without health no one can as distinctly understand or as completely fulfill his obligations to himself, to his fellow beings, or to his Creator. Therefore the health should be as faithfully guarded as the character. A knowledge of physiology and hygiene should be the basis of all educational effort.”⁷

God asked them to look to Him to heal their bodies as well as their minds and characters. This means the same need for prayer and heart searching as before the great disappointment. In addition it means lifestyle changes. “It is labor lost to teach people to look to God as a healer of their infirmities, unless they are taught also to lay aside unhealthful practices. In order to receive His blessing in answer to prayer, they must cease to do evil and learn to do well. Their surroundings must be sanitary, their habits of life correct. They must live in harmony with the law of

God, both natural and spiritual.” “To those who desire prayer for their restoration to health, it should be made plain that the violation of God’s law, either natural or spiritual, is sin, and that in order for them to receive His blessing, sin must be confessed and forsaken.”⁸

Remedies were encouraged so long as they assisted the body in its own healing processes.

This meant careful attention to sunshine and fresh air, water and diet. The environment surrounding the sick one was to be made to be as beneficial as possible for healing. Medicinal substances were to be used as long as their effect was to help the body.

The greatest attention was also to be paid to the mind. “The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. *Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust,* all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death.”

“*Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love,* promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. . . . In the treatment of the sick the effect of mental influence should not be overlooked. Rightly used, this influence affords one of the most effective agencies for combating disease.”⁹

While acknowledging some disease has supernatural origins, such as Job’s boils, most diseases can be prevented and healed. “God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist [referring to Psalms 103:13, 14; 107:17, 18, ARV; 19, 20, RV]. And

Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity.”¹⁰

And the spiritual part of humanity is important to the health of everyone. “The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place.”¹¹

Jesus wanted to come and take people home. He wanted to end injustice and suffering. He wanted to turn the page of human history and end all sin. But He asked us to become men and women of well-developed bodies and minds and characters *first*. He wants people to have healthy, mature, developed *individualities, families, and communities* as well as *bodies and minds*. He offers a superior way to *educate, heal, and govern* in order to help us who are helpless. He provides instruction in all of life, if we will listen.

This instruction in life and character came to help us prepare for heaven. It also came at the same time as the world around Adventism was rethinking itself. Medicine was completely reformed. Out went the use of mercury and opium. Gone were the leeches and bloodletting. In came anatomy, physiology, and a new pharmacology. Many of the new medicines were plant based and thoroughly tested before being used. Diagnostic procedures changed. Hygienic practices improved.

Our mental health and personalities changed. So did our families and communities. Modern civilization completely changed its educational methods and governing systems. At the same time Adventism was completely changing, so was the world. And the changes in the world and in Adventism were in the same areas of human activ-

ity. The world put a great deal of work and thought into creating its civilization. Adventists also put a great deal of work and thought into their alternative solutions to the great problems of humanity. Adventism was influenced by the world around it. Sometimes, especially in the field of health, it influenced the world around it also. Adventism reached different solutions to the great human problems, such as "How do I get well?" There are three primary reasons why Adventism reached different conclusions.

First, they believed God should be consulted in the solution of life's problems. They used the same methods of searching the Bible systematically and thoroughly. They examined passages that seemed helpful to the subject while carefully considering their context. They believed that the God who answered one way in the past would answer consistently again in the present.

Second, they believed in submitting all human wisdom to God. While actively engaged in research and thought, they were willing to surrender their perceptions, preoccupations, and pursuits when it became clear that God contradicted them.

Third, they were blessed with extra help from God in the work of Ellen White. Unassuming and hardworking, Ellen wrote thousands of pages of material that offer guidance in life. Working against the hardships of little education and no wealth, she tirelessly supported and encouraged the refor-

matory and evangelistic work of the Advent people during some seven decades of ministry. Though sometimes accused in her day and ours of an evil character, her humility, decency, hard work, spirituality, and determination demonstrated her accusers to be uttering falsehoods. Her work confirmed the doctrines of the movement, but she was not its source of doctrine. The doctrines of the movement can be found with the use of the Bible alone and have been believed by others outside of the movement. Others within the movement discovered and introduced every doctrine of the movement except the subject of the Godhead. She did not control the church or its individual members, even though she was very influential. Her prophetic work harmonizes consistently with the Bible.

The men and women that began and founded the work of the third angel were generally very similar: poor, uneducated, hard-working, dedicated. Ellen's husband, James White, would produce some of the best biblical scholarship to be found in his time. He did this after only a few months of education. (His poor eyesight as a child prevented him from attending school for most of the grades available.) John Loughborough, John Andrews, Uriah Smith, all had more education but came from poor, hard-working backgrounds. So did the Kellogg brothers, and Farnsworth families, and George Amadon, and John

Byington, and Hiram Edson, and Stephen Haskell. Joseph Bates, twice as old as many of his colleagues, was an experienced businessman as a sea

captain. But his education was more practical than scholastic.

In those years when these men and women were forming a new spiritual body, they were guided by God and by experience. In those Sabbath Bible Conferences as they studied together and united on "present truth," they discovered the realities of 1844. They learned that, while the believers before the great disappointment thought that the twenty-three-hundred-days of Daniel 8 referred to Jesus' coming, those believers misunderstood the Bible. For nowhere does the Bible refer to the earth as God's sanctuary. The Advent idea that the earth would be cleaned up by fire as the cleansing of the sanctuary was their own supposition. It was, in fact, the sanctuary God maintains in heaven that would be cleaned. It would be cleaned in two ways.

First, the forgiveness given to sinners throughout human history would be confirmed. All that forgiveness would be examined. If the sins were never sorrowed over and forsaken, they would not have their forgiveness ratified. Instead, those sins would return on the head of the person incorrectly claiming forgiveness. Then, all humans still attached to sin would be condemned to the final bonfire, to be entirely extinguished. Second, those who are alive in the present would find a better way to live and overcome every temptation to pride and exaggerated passion. Finally, all the corrected record of forgiven sins, stored for centuries in heaven, would be placed on the great originator of sin. He would be condemned to suffer for the guilt of the sins he caused the repentant ones to commit.

The method to all lifestyle changes is the same one we find when we give

The method to all lifestyle changes is the same one we find when we give ourselves to God the first time: surrender.



ourselves to God the first time: surrender. We must look at God until we regret hurting Him and ourselves, our families and our communities. We must ask for forgiveness until He changes us from destructive to noble. The great key to lifestyle change is time management. And the capstone of time management is the weekly cycle of six working days and the seventh day of every week for reflection, study, and spiritual socialization. It was the discovery of this Rest or Sabbath that Adventism found early on to be unique and uniquely beneficial. God Himself called it a symbol, when properly lived out, of His happiness with us and our submission to Him. As a seal of our commitment to Him, it serves as part of the bond in the divine-human relationship.

And so, our forefathers learned that they were looking for too easy a preparation for eternity and heaven. They wanted Jesus to take them out of this world when they were still part of it as misfits for heaven. They wanted a quick moment of repentance, very genuine but not sufficiently thorough to be enough.

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.’ Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying

the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone; and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.’¹²

For more than a century and a half, the Seventh Day Adventist people have sought to prepare themselves and to advocate in our world for a character worthy of heaven. At first they used small meetings. Then they started conducting great conferences. Renting or bringing a giant tent (before there were stadiums available) they would invite people from miles around to come and hear the subjects of Adventist concern. Thousands of people would camp around the big tent. Many joined the group of Seventh Day Adventists.

Later, the churches became organized in little prayer groups. A few believers would meet in the homes of one of the members to pray for the children and neighbors and friends of everyone in the group. Not believing talking to God to be enough, they would then help each other in talking with and helping their children, neighbors, and friends. If someone did not have many people to pray for, they would find articles in the newspaper that were interesting and start writing to the author. (We could do the same with internet bloggers and TV and radio personalities today.) When they did not know what to say, they gave one of many tracts the Adventists had available. (Adventists saw themselves as public educators and prepared tracts and publications on many subjects for the general public.) Then they would follow up and see what the person thought of the tract and whether they understood it. These prayer groups with their work soon brought in as many new people as the evangelists with their big tents. Besides these, Adventist sanitariums and schools reached many who did not know

about Adventism. And Adventists were active in foreign missions. Through these means, Adventism has served the world around us, following in the footsteps of the great master Teacher.

We wish the Advent people had always followed Him. Like the rest of humanity, Adventists are far from infallible. Asked to fill the shoes of those “who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus,” we have often fallen short. Offered the chance to build educational and medical systems directly guided by God, we have turned many times to our own ways. Offered help for our families, our communities, our personalities, our health, our wealth, and our time, we have often turned God down because we are wiser than Him in our own eyes. And so we have not yet provided the clear and convincing alternative to the solutions of our contemporary civilization that God has provided for us.

Fittingly, God speaks to us in our self-sufficiency and blindness. You think you are rich, well dressed, and have excellent eyesight. But you are really poor, naked, and blind. Buy wealth, clothes, and eyesight from Me.

So often we argue with God in the deep recesses of our minds. We tell God He really doesn't know what *we* need. We tell Him that He is just annoying us, and we don't care about Him. We essentially say that we do not want His wisdom for our choices. The Bible speaks of Him as outside of our lives, asking to come in. “I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in.” “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 3:20; 22:20). *✠*

References

- ¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 51, 55.
- ² *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 187.
- ³ *Education*, pp. 18, 19, 15, emphasis added.
- ⁴ U.S. Census, 1840.
- ⁵ Doris Robinson, *The Story of Our Health Message*, p. 20.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- ⁷ *Education*, p. 195.
- ⁸ *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 227, 228.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 241, emphasis added.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 226.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- ¹² *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 187.



SYMBOLS

IN THE Third Angel's Message

By L. Tudoroiu

There has always been a question addressed to Divinity: "Since God has our well-being in mind, why does He need to use such sophisticated language depicting symbols of beasts and dragons with horses, trumpets, earthquakes, and plagues in communicating to humans? Why must a God of love (who employed clear, simple language to depict the crucifixion and resurrection of His only begotten Son) in the book of Revelation suddenly use now very

confusing language to describe the future to His children?

To understand why, let us first consider history. A non-Christian once asked me a legitimate question:

"Tell me, my friend: If God loves all people equally, why did He select the Jewish people to fulfill the task of writing the Bible instead of choosing the Chinese people who have over 5,000 years of history?"

We know that God loves the entire human race, and He is never guilty of unjust discrimination. So, I replied humbly:

"God knew what He needed. He realized that the Bible could not have survived from one dynasty to the next dynasty, because every emperor had an obsession to leave behind him the concept that 'China begins with me.' The problem with this attitude is that in a few decades other contender would come with the same idea: 'China begins with me.' What such a person would typically do is exactly the same: Destruction by fire of every social, political, and cultural detail that may have linked people to believe that there was ever another 'Chinese era'



Revealing the future

The last of the books is “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:1), none other. Perhaps the most important symbol found therein is that of the “Lamb” of God—Christ Himself. He stands in vivid contrast to the “beast of Satan.” In the gospel according to John, we find the character of God in contrast to the character of the dragon, and the character of the Son of God in contrast to that of the son of perdition. This is aptly summarized in the words, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

God did not send a savage or intimidating beast to redeem the world; rather, He sent a Lamb. And this is where we understand the concept of salvation. The heavenly Father is not a god of violence or forceful persuasion but a God of love that offers the sinner freedom of choice in contrast to the character of the beasts depicted in Revelation. It would be really scary to imagine a twisted concept of salvation expressed in ways such as: “Behold the beast of God that redeems the sin of the world.” The major purpose of “the beasts” in the Bible is not the salvation of the world but a forceful demand to worship. In Daniel chapter 7 we have the description of the character of a beast:

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns” (verse 7).

Here is a quite an interesting difference between the character of God and the character of Satan. God is interested first in our salvation and then, as a natural consequence of our love toward Him, a spontaneous, voluntary worship of Him will follow.

On the opposite hand, the beasts war against the Word of God, against His law, and against His followers. Having seen this, we can add to the puzzle other types of symbols that will enlarge our apocalyptic scene.

The waters, the Lamb, and the beast

The battleground is our planet, the people are the subjects, and the beasts are the persecuting power of governments. See Daniel 7:21–23; Revelation 13:11–13. The Lamb is the extraterrestrial power that comes to help the enslaved humanity; those two powers collide on struggling for the supremacy, the other for deliverance of the human race. The world and the nations were described to John the Revelator:

“The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15).

So, basically, the waters are the symbol of multitudes and nations and languages of this world. The interesting thing to notice is that even though human beings live in dry land, God in His wisdom chooses to compare the world with “many waters.” People do not live in waters, but God in His wisdom uses water to depict the stormy changing character of human nature. Water can begin very lenient but also can suddenly change not only the speed of its flow but its direction as well. Likewise,



before him. Usually after burning the library, killing the scribes, and the previous emperor with all his wives, children, and relatives, erasing any evidence of any previous Chinese society, looking triumphantly around through the fire, smoke, and blood, with a sense of inner pride the contender would say to his new scribe: “Thus shall it be written: “China begins with me.” ”

Throughout history, there have been powerful empires in the world, each having its own passionate pride and extreme dignity. These characteristics alone would have been serious enemies against the objective intentions of the Bible.

Similarly, the all-wise God, knowing the ambitious nature of the world’s empires, chose to shelter the writing of the Scriptures behind the humble character of what was often a nation of shepherds.

The truth has been well preserved over the years, being covered by symbols and events of indescribable solemnity. It is indeed a miracle that today in the 21st century we have the extraordinary reflection of the book of Daniel to compare with the book of Revelation. Let us therefore echo the inspired aim of the wise man: “I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out **wisdom**, and the **reason** of things” (Ecclesiastes 7:25).





humans can be with you now and in the following second can change the course to be against you. We have to admire the extraordinary insight of God!

That being said, we have the Lamb, Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world,

rescuing us from the hands of a reckless tyrant that is Satan, the beast that is the reflection of Satan's character of government on this world, persecuting His authority—the Word of God, the people of God, and the law of God. The waters are the arena—multitudes, nations, kindred, and tongues. So let us come to another symbolic element which is found in Revelation 17:15:

“Where the whore sitteth”

The expression “whore” is the reflection of a debased and immorally defiled conscience resulting in the immoral behavior of a woman that sells herself for a worldly commodity such as gold or silver in contrast to spiritual values. In the Scripture the expression “woman” has a specific connotation, especially when we talk about prophecy. In the gospel of Isaiah 4:1, we have a very interesting concept about this symbol:

“And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach” (Isaiah 4:1).

This prophetic statement involves the concept of a spiritual marriage between Christ and the wishing women. The elements in the picture, such as: “eat our own bread” (having our own theology, unscriptural teachings, and lustful appetites); “wear our own

apparel” (have our own inward corruption that is strange to Jesus in contrast to His robe of righteousness—and often even displayed also in our outward appearance); “let us be called by thy name” (allow us to marry you only conventionally for the sake of protocol without having any committed, affectionate feelings); “to take away our reproach” (so we don't have to be embarrassed since, after all, it is the time of the Judgment, and we prefer to consider ourselves free from actual responsibility and genuine accountability). All these reflect the condition of the churches before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what Christ actually is looking for is explained in Ephesians 5:25–27:

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

The concept of the marriage between a church and a certain authority is reflected in Revelation 17:1–6:

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of

the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”

The woman in this description is the mother of the 7 women described by Isaiah. This woman is married to a beast as an authority figure, she is seated on the beast, and is supported by the beast. We agree that a beast, contrary to the Lamb in nature and character, is a persecuting power. That is why the woman is drunk with the blood of the people of God. Quite an intriguing mystery! This counterfeit will play a very distinguished role in the order of the things till the end of time.

If we come back to the introductory statement of Isaiah 4:1, there is a parallel with the time of the judgment of the “mother of harlots” specified



in chapter 17 of the book of Revelation:

“In that day seven women shall take hold of one man,” in compliance with; “I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” This pair of verses reflects one single, critical moment: The end, the judgment. The expression “in that day” reflects unequivocally the typical expression of the symbolic language of the prophecy in regard to the end of the world, the Day of Judgment, and other events. Whenever you look into the scripture and you meet this expres-

It is indeed a miracle that today in the 21st century we have the extraordinary reflection of the book of Daniel to compare with the book of Revelation.

sion “in that day,” in a prophetic context it means the end of the things, the end of the human reign, the end of sin, the end of Satan’s authority, and so forth.

The next step

The Lamb of God stands in opposition to the beast of the dragon, which is Satan; the world, which is symbolized by “many waters,” in opposition to the remnant of the people of God. (See Revelation 12:17.)

The woman who is a whore dressed in purple and scarlet (in Revelation 17) is in contrast to the pure woman dressed in white (in Revelation 12).

In Revelation 12 the prophet describes: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” (verse 1).

The woman dressed in white is the church of God; the woman in purple is serving Satan the dragon by persecuting the pure woman and her seed, which is the remnant of God’s people.



The woman that is a whore does not have moral principles, while the remnant church has the commandments of God.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (verse 17).

The mark of the beast

The mark of the beast (see Revelation 13) is the authority of the persecuting power at the end of time and stands in contrast to the mark of God (see Ezekiel 9), which is the symbol of His divine authority.

The beast “causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Revelation 13:16).

So what we can observe here is the idea of recognizing either authority—one or the other. The principle is the same. While the beast applies the mark on the hand and on the forehead, the Lord in the book of Ezekiel applies the mark only on the forehead, which brings us to the next level of understanding. The symbol of God’s authority is set only on the forehead, reiterating the same principle: love, free will, and conscience. The beast works based on principles of persecution, besides the fact that “many waters” (the world) recognize its authority and receive the mark willingly. Thus the beast goes one step further, applying the rule of iron “on the hand,” meaning forced persecution and finally extermination. This is Satan’s principle till the end of time, which is why we must properly understand the symbols of the book of Revelation. Although this book seems very hard to understand, by reasoning with contrasts we can understand how

easy is this message of God towards us. We have been designed by God to think by contrasts. For instance, the notions of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, day and night, low and high, light and darkness—all these are bringing us to an intelligent choice. It never was necessary for us to choose evil in order to reach the climax of our happiness, but unfortunately we are dealing with an aftermath life due to our choices. We have never needed to know the other version of life. It is sufficient for us to know that the Lamb of God, not the beast of Satan, was sufficient to convey the love of God, not the wrath of the dragon.

Where do we go from here?

The faithful believer in Christ must preserve and cherish the mark of God as revealed in His holy law of Ten Commandments. It is not our Redeemer’s plan for us to have to suffer the woe of the mark of the beast. Humanity in its infancy made terrible choices that brought us to the book of Revelation. There is still an eventual happy ending if we learn the lesson of our forefathers, and if we learn from the repentance of our first parents. The history of the world begins with a choice and will end with a choice. That is why you find symbols in the book of Revelation. Choose today the Lamb of God, instead of the beast of Satan, choose today the remnant of the people of God that keep the Ten Commandments, instead of choosing the presumptuous mark of the erring human authority. Choose today the church of God dressed in white apparel, instead of the church of the world dressed in purple and scarlet, surrounded by gold and silver but missing the fundamental moral beauty. Choose the Lord Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of your life.

“I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with *sense, reason, and intellect* has intended us to forgo their use.”

—Galileo Galilei, *emphasis added.*

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND THE FAITH OF JESUS

By D. P. Silva

Even before the creation of this planet, the fundamental principles of divine government are based on the eternal Law of God. Before the rebellion of Lucifer and his associates, there was perfect harmony in the whole creation because the divine Law was engraved in the heart of all intelligent creatures.

After the mutiny promoted by Lucifer in heaven, the war against the divine principles brought conflict, disharmony, and unhappiness. As a result, the third part of the angels was expelled from the heavenly environment.

Adam and Eve were also created in full harmony with God's Law, which was engraved in their hearts. Their happiness depended upon complete obedience to those principles of God's administration.

Sadly, Satan was successful in bringing to this planet the seed of rebellion, and our first parents accepted the words of Satan instead of obeying the

divine constitution. As a result, our world became a rebellious planet.

The ultimate goal of the plan of salvation is to bring humanity back to harmony with the Law of God. The whole system of sacrifices instituted after the fall of Adam and Eve included forgiveness to repented sinners and restoration to their previous position in harmony with the will of God.

After sin, human nature became corrupt and in enmity against God. We are born in this sinful condition.

In the prayer of David, after his terrible sin against God in the case of Bathsheba and Uriah, he declared: "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5).

Paul, in Romans 3:23, wrote that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The same apostle, talking about human experience, said in Romans 7:

"We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate,

that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (verses 14-24).

In these Scriptures, Paul describes a real struggle. After knowing God's law, the sincere believer starts a battle against sin, but he discovers that his own strength is not enough to win. He

becomes conscious that there in his human nature what Paul calls "the law of sin" against which human power is totally incapable. Even after knowing Christ, the sinner continues this struggle against his sinful tendencies. Observe the following verse:

"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (verse 25).

But the real point does not stop there!

The good news is that Paul did not stop his discourse in a double-minded state. Just as the psalmist prayed, "I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name" (Psalm 86:11), the passage in Romans continues with the apostle Paul explaining how we can choose to do right through the divine strength imparted through Christ: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what

the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the

flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:1-14).

Our victory against sin and our power to obey God's commandments depend on full surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit, when we submit our life totally to Christ.

When we study the history of Israel, God's people for more than 3,000 years, we see how rebellious is human nature against the Law of God. Then it comes to our mind the important question: "Is it really possible for human beings to obey the Law of God?" We can answer with a strong YES because the Bible describes a people about whom is written: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

Here we find three basic characteristics of God's people:

1. They possess the patience of the saints;
2. They keep the commandments of God; and
3. They have the faith of Jesus.

The life of Christ on earth proved that Satan is a liar. After his rebellion in heaven, he started spreading through the whole universe that the Law of God could not be obeyed, and when Adam and Eve disobeyed the word of God in Eden, the enemy tried to prove that he was right. But after taking human nature upon Himself, Christ declared before His crucifixion: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46).

We need to understand that, in our own, we cannot obey the commandments of God, but through faith in Christ obedience is really possible.

"Apparently the whole world is guilty of receiving the mark of the beast. But the prophet sees a company who are not worshipping the beast, and who have not received his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. 'Here is the patience of the saints,' he declares; 'here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.'"¹

"Of the remnant people of God it is written, 'The dragon was wroth with



the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ' (Revelation 12:17)."²

After falling in sin, humans became, by themselves, totally unable to obey God's precept. Christ said: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Only when we realize our total impossibility to fulfill God's will in our own strength we are prepared to submit ourselves totally to Christ, and then we can obey God's word.

"The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

"It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

"More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live

by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me' (Galatians 2:20). So Jesus said to His disciples, 'It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you' (Matthew 10:20). Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.

"So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us.

"When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that 'the devils also believe, and tremble;' but this is not faith (James 2:19). Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul. Through this faith the heart is renewed in the image of God. And the heart that in its unrenewed state is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, now delights in its holy precepts, exclaiming with the psalmist, "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day' (Psalm 119:97). And the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit' (Romans 8:1)."³

Obedience by faith

There is no doubt about what it means the commandments of God, however, when we talk about the "faith

of Jesus," then we meet with many interpretations. What is the real meaning of the "faith of Jesus"?

Without the "faith of Jesus" is practically impossible to obey the commandments of God.

The words of John Nevins Andrews are very appropriate in this context:

"The language of verse 12, 'Here is the patience of the saints,' is sufficient of itself to overthrow the application of these messages to the future age. The following scriptures clearly teach that the patience of the saints refers to the present time, and not to the period of their future glorious reward: 'Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise' (Heb. x, 36). 'In your patience possess ye your souls' (Luke xxi, 19). 'Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord' (James v, 7). Will the saints have need of patience in the kingdom of God? Will they have to possess their souls in patience after they have received the promise, even life everlasting? 1 John ii, 25. It is tribulation that worketh patience. Rom. v, 3; James i, 2, 3. Are the saints in tribulation after they are made immortal and crowned with everlasting joy? No, never. Isa. xxv, 8, 9; xxxv, 10; Rev. vii, 13–17. But the saints are in their patience when the third angel's message is given. Hence that message does not belong to the future age.

"But verse 12 concludes thus: 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.' It is evident that this refers to the period when the remnant are keeping the commandments of God while exposed to the wrath of the dragon [Rev. xii, 17], and that it does not refer to the period when the commandment-keepers shall have entered in through the gates into the Holy City [Rev. xxii, 14]; and that it refers to the period when the saints

"Where there is not only a belief in God's word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him, there is faith."

“Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.”

are living by faith [Heb. x, 38, 39], and not to the period when they shall have received the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. 1 Pet. i, 9.”⁴

“The offering of Cain was an offense to God, because it was a Christless offering. The burden of our message is not only the commandments of God, but the faith of Jesus. **A bright light shines upon our pathway today, and it leads to increased faith in Jesus.**”⁵

“God’s denominated people—those who on this earth have witnessed to their loyalty. Who are they?—Those who have kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; those who have owned the Crucified One as their Saviour.”⁶

“The commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are both important, immensely important, and must be given with equal force and power. The first part of the message has been dwelt upon mostly, the last part casually. The faith of Jesus is not compre-

hended. We must talk it, we must live it, we must pray it, and educate the people to bring this part of the message into their home life. . . .

“Why are our lips so silent upon the subject of Christ’s righteousness and His love for the world? Why do we not give to the people that which will revive and quicken them into a new life? The apostle Paul is filled with transport and adoration as he declares, ‘Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory’ (1 Timothy 3:16). . . .

“The character of Christ is an infinitely perfect character, and He must be lifted up, He must be brought prominently into view, for He is the power, the might, the sanctification and righteousness of all who believe in Him.”⁷

“The faith of Jesus has been overlooked and treated in an indifferent, careless manner. It has not occupied the prominent position in which it was revealed to John. **Faith in Christ as the sinner’s only hope has been largely left out, not only of the discourses given but of the religious experience of very many who claim to believe the third angel’s message.**”⁸

“The third angel’s message is the proclamation of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ. The commandments of God have been proclaimed, but the faith of Jesus Christ has not been proclaimed by Seventh-day Adventists as of equal importance, the law and the gospel going hand in hand. I cannot find language to express this subject in its fullness.

“ ‘The faith of Jesus.’ It is talked of, but not understood.

What constitutes the faith of Jesus, that belongs to the third angel’s message? Jesus becoming our sin-bearer that He might become our sin-pardoning Saviour. He was treated as we deserve to be treated. He came to our world and took our sins that we might take His righteousness. And faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.

“The only safety for the Israelites was blood upon the doorposts. God said, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you’ (Exodus 12:13). All other devices for safety would be without avail. Nothing but the blood on the doorposts would bar the way that the angel of death should not enter. There is salvation for the sinner in the blood of Jesus Christ alone, which cleanseth us from all sin. The man with a cultivated intellect may have vast stores of knowledge, he may engage in theological speculations, he may be great and honored of men and be considered the repository of knowledge, but unless he has a saving knowledge of Christ crucified for him, and by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, he is lost. Christ ‘was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:5). ‘Saved by the blood of Jesus Christ,’ will be our only hope for time and our song throughout eternity.”⁹

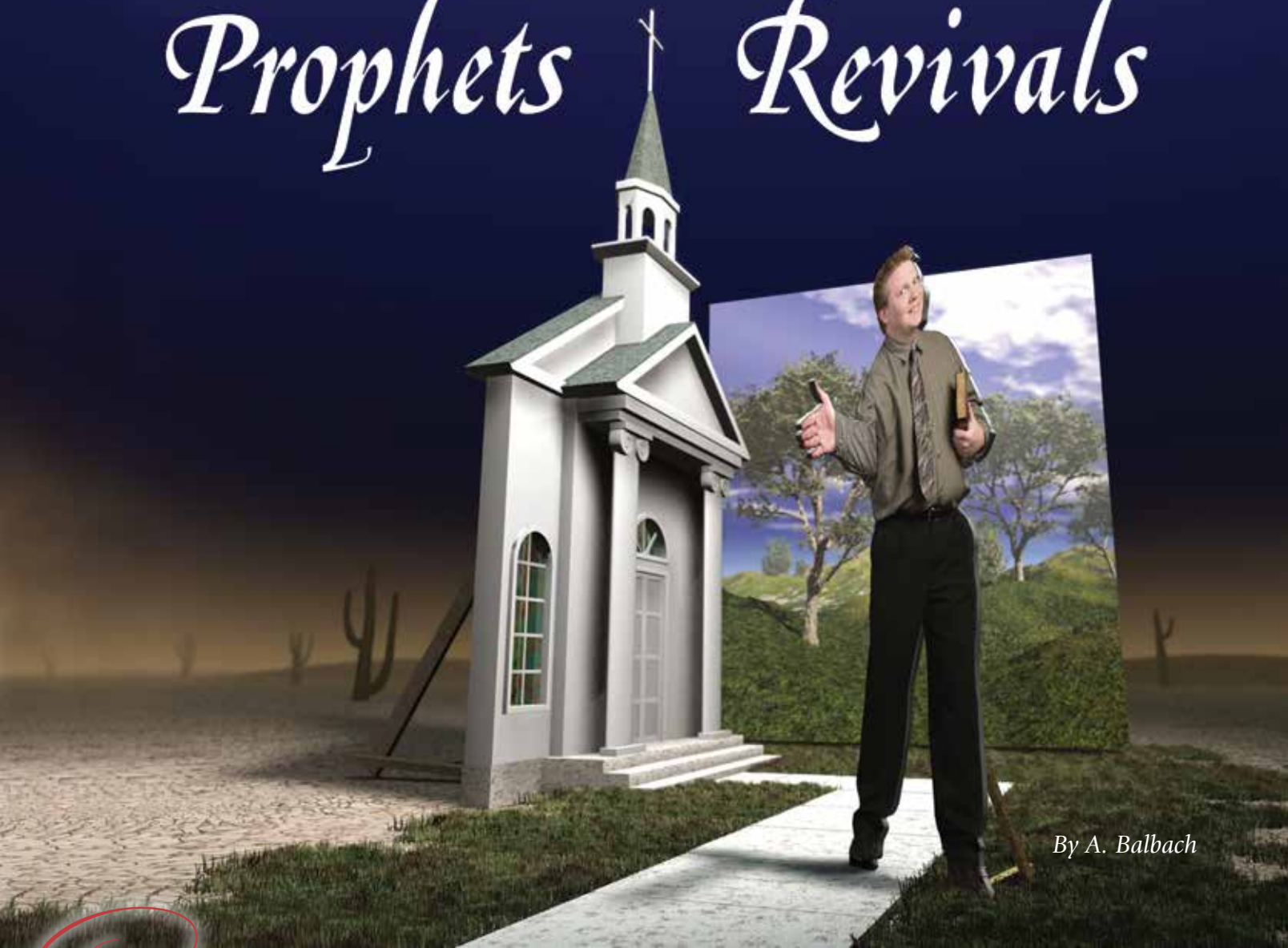
By the amazing grace, let us cultivate “the patience of the saints,” the obedience to the “commandments of God,” and keep firmly the “faith of Jesus” which is total distrust in ourselves and complete confidence in Jesus as our only Saviour and Lord! ❧

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- ⁴ John Nevins Andrews, *Three Angels of Revelation 14:6–12*, pp. 7, 8.
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False & False Prophets | Revivals



By A. Balbach


The apostle Paul warns: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Ephesians 5:6, 7).

The need for this warning increases toward the close of time, "for delusions and deceptions will come in among us and will multiply as we near the end."¹

Therefore it is very important that we examine the spirit of professed religious teachers rather than blindly accept or reject their claims. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). The Lord tells us plainly that false prophets will arise and deceive many, especially in the last days (Matthew 24:11). But we need not be deceived, for the Bible is the litmus

test by which to discern the validity of any and all professed teachers: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

The danger of false prophets has always surrounded the people of God. See Jeremiah 14:14; 2 Peter 2:1. The Lord declares "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had



“Unless believers are on their guard, the enemy, disguised as an angel of light, will lead them into false paths.”

stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings” (Jeremiah 23:21, 22).

“Christ foretold that the going forth of deceivers would be accompanied with more danger to His disciples than would persecution. . . . The effort of seducers has been to undermine confidence in the truth of God and to make it impossible to distinguish truth from error. Wonderfully pleasing, fanciful, scientific problems are introduced and urged upon the attention of the unwary; and unless believers are on their guard, the enemy, disguised as an angel of light, will lead them into false paths.”²

Miraculous healing

Through miraculous healings, Satan is able to deceive many souls who have little or no background in the truth. See 2 Kings 1:1, 2; Acts 8:9–11.

“The apostles of nearly all forms of spiritism claim to have power to heal. They attribute this power to electricity, magnetism, the so-called ‘sympathetic remedies,’ or to latent forces within the mind of man. And there are not a few, even in this Christian age, who go to these healers, instead of trusting in the power of the living God and the skill of well-qualified physicians. The mother, watching by the sickbed of her child, exclaims, ‘I can do no more. Is there no physician who has power to restore my child?’ She is told of the wonderful cures performed by some clairvoyant or mag-

netic healer, and she trusts her dear one to his charge, placing it as verily in the hand of Satan as if he were standing by her side. In many instances the future life of the child is controlled by a satanic power which it seems impossible to break.”³

Those who are not anchored in Christ will be vulnerable to strong delusion and will readily believe a lie. They may appear to have accepted the truth, but if they do not have a **love** of the truth, their shallow faith will not stand. 2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.

False prophets presume to bypass the standard of righteousness outlined in Scripture: “That the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. . . . Because the carnal mind is enmity against God” (Romans 8:4, 7).

“Many make great pretensions to holiness and boast of the wonders they perform in healing the sick, when they do not regard this great standard of righteousness. But through whose power are these cures wrought? Are the eyes of either party opened to their transgressions of the law? and do they take their stand as humble, obedient children, ready to obey all of God’s requirements?”⁴

Beware of the counterfeit!

Before the Holy Spirit is poured out in fullness, Satan will try to counterfeit the work of God. He will use false teachers who will eventually claim to Christ: “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?” (Matthew 7:22).

Discerning between the true and the false

“Before the final visitation of God’s judgments upon the earth there will be

among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord’s second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power he will make it appear that God’s special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit.”⁵

What discernment do we need when faced with the confusion introduced by the enemy of souls? Who shall be able to stand? Only those who have anointed their eyes with the heavenly eyesalve (Revelation 3:18)—“those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

The servant of the Lord explains the way God’s work will operate in the last days:

“The way in which Christ worked was to preach the Word, and to relieve suffering by miraculous works of healing. But I am instructed that we cannot now work in this way, for Satan will exercise his power by working miracles. God’s servants today could not work by means of miracles, because spurious works of healing, claiming to be divine, will be wrought.

“For this reason the Lord has marked out a way in which His people

are to carry forward a work of physical healing, combined with the teaching of the Word. Sanitariums are to be established, and with these institutions are to be connected workers who will carry forward genuine medical missionary work. Thus a guarding influence is thrown around those who come to the sanitariums for treatment."⁶

God's remnant people will not be deceived by false revivals and spurious miracles. Our prayers should echo the prayer of the apostle Paul for the believers in his day: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephesians 1:17, 18).

"In many of the revivals which have occurred during the last half century, the same influences have been at work, to a greater or less degree, that will be manifest in the more extensive movements of the future. There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead. Yet none need be deceived. In the light of God's word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements. Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God's blessing is not bestowed."⁷

What must we face?

In these last days, there will be an increasing number of people who would tear down God's law of Ten Commandments as they were given to the human race on Sinai. Obedience to the law reveals the depth of our devotion to Christ, who died to pay the penalty of our transgression of the law—and whose sacrifice is able to strengthen us to keep it. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God

perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (1 John 2:3–5). Such will possess the heavenly gold of faith and love and be spiritually clothed with the white raiment of Christ's pure, holy character (Revelation 3:18; 19:7, 8).

The battle rages between light and darkness.

"In these days of delusion, everyone who is established in the truth will have to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Every variety of error will be brought out in the mysterious working of Satan, which would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect and turn them from the truth. There will be human wisdom to meet—the wisdom of learned men, who, as were the Pharisees, are teachers of the law of God but do not obey the law themselves. There will be human ignorance and folly to meet in disconnected theories arrayed in new and fantastic dress—theories that it will be all the more difficult to meet because there is no reason in them.

"There will be false dreams and false visions, which have some truth, but lead away from the original faith. The Lord has given men a rule by which to detect them: [Isaiah 8:20 quoted]. If they belittle the law of God, if they pay no heed to His will as revealed in the testimonies of His Spirit, they are deceivers. They are controlled by impulse and impressions, which they believe to be from the Holy Spirit, and consider more reliable than the Inspired Word. They claim that every thought and feeling is an impression of the Spirit; and when they are reasoned with out of the Scriptures, they declare that they have something more reliable. But while they think that they are led by the Spirit of God, they are in reality following an imagination wrought upon by Satan."⁸

The most deceptive counterfeit of all

The strongest delusion comes when Satan impersonates Christ. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not" (Matthew 24:23). False apostles presume to transform themselves into the apostles of Christ "and no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

"The conflict is not yet ended; and as we draw near the close of time, the battle waxes more intense. As the second appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, satanic agencies are moved from beneath. Satan will not only appear as a human being, but he will personate Jesus Christ; and the world that has rejected the truth will receive him as the Lord of lords and King of kings. He will exercise his power and work upon the human imagination."⁹

The apostle James reveals our only safety in the hour of peril: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:21–25).

"At every revival of God's work the prince of evil is aroused to more intense activity; he is now putting forth his utmost efforts for a final struggle against Christ and His followers. The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested."¹⁰

References

¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 952.

² *Evangelism*, p. 359.

³ *Prophets and Kings*, p. 211.

⁴ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, p. 1099.

⁵ *The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

⁶ *Selected Messages*, bk 2, p. 54.

⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

⁸ *Selected Messages*, bk 2, pp. 98, 99.

⁹ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 5, pp. 1105, 1106.

¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 593.

PREPARING FOR THE *Final Test*

By the Reformation Herald staff

Every Bible-reading Christian should know that we are living in the last days. This fact is often mentioned in the Scriptures. In the time of the end there is to be a great crisis in the religious world. There will be a conflict between those who believe they should adhere to the word of God and those who reject the authority of His word. This situation is described in such scriptures as Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:8–10; Revelation 12:17; 13:11–17; 14:9, 10; 15:2. Those who keep the commandments of God will be persecuted.

Before this time of trouble comes, people are not to be left in darkness as to the final events and the circumstances under which everyone will be called to choose his or her eternal destiny. Prophecy points to three final messages that God sends to the world—(1) a message announcing that the hour of God’s judgment is come; (2) a message denouncing the churches, both “mother and daughters” (Revelation 17:4, 5), that have become Babylon; and (3) a message warning the inhabitants of the world against paying allegiance to the religio-political powers (the “beast” and his “image” or imitation) which these churches will institute.

On the one hand the seal of God’s authority will be clearly presented before the inhabitants of the world, while, on the other hand, the “mark of the beast” will be forced upon the people. In this article we will discuss

two very important questions—(1) How God wants us to identify His authority; (2) How are we to identify rebellion against God and submission to the powers of darkness. The third warning message reads:

“The third angel [cried out] with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation” (Revelation 14:9, 10).

The religio-political power represented by the “beast” is described as follows:

“The world wondered after the beast,” “saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” and “all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him” (Revelation 13:3, 4, 8).

The second religio-political power mentioned in the prophetic picture of Revelation 13 is blamed for forming an “image,” or creating an imitation of the first beast. This second power is condemned by God for the following reasons:

“He had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should . . . cause . . . both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:15–17).

The victorious Christians, those who stand in God’s light and reject identification with the “beast” and its “image,” are described as follows:

“I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1).

The authority of God

The authority of God, His will, His name, and His character of love and justice are revealed in His Law, which His right hand wrote on two tables of stone. Moses testified:

“From his right hand went a fiery law for them” (Deuteronomy 33:2).

“He declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone” (Deuteronomy 4:13).

“These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, . . . and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me” (Deuteronomy 5:22).

The complete moral Law was written by the hand of God on two tables of stone. This moral Law, as found in Exodus 20:3–17, was the basis of the covenant of the Lord with Israel. Here the fourth commandment shows the reason why God’s people are commanded to keep the Sabbath: “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the

seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

This moral Law is kept in the sanctuary in heaven just as it was kept in the sanctuary on earth. In heaven that moral Law is in the “ark of his testament” in the “tabernacle of the testimony” (Revelation 11:19; 15:5). The “example and shadow of heavenly things” (Hebrews 8:5) was also called by the same names. The Law was called the “testimony” (Exodus 27:21; 31:18), the ark of the covenant was called the “the ark of the testimony” (Exodus 25:16; 30:6), and the sanctuary was called the “tabernacle of testimony” (Numbers 1:50, 53). “The messenger of the covenant,” who was with Moses among the people of Israel in the desert, was Christ (Malachi 3:1; Acts 7:38; 1 Corinthians 10:4, 11). This Law is not a law of Moses; it is the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

The Law of Christ was originally written in the heart of Adam and Eve, because they were created in the image of their Creator (Genesis 1:27), acknowledging His authority. Therefore, under the provisions of the new covenant, especially in the time of the end, the Law of Christ is to be restored into the hearts of His followers. Christ says:

“This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

Christ came into the world, and He comes to live in us with the Law in His heart. Christ is not separated from the Law, and the Law cannot be separated from Christ. He says:

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, Thy Law is within My heart” (Psalm 40:8).

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:28, 29).

He explains how He wants us to wear His yoke:

“Come ye near unto me, . . . Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God

Under the provisions of the new covenant, especially in the time of the end, the Law of Christ is to be restored into the hearts of His followers.

which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea” (Isaiah 48:16–18).

When Jesus was in the world, He taught that the two principles of the Law—love for our Creator and love for our fellow men consist in keeping the Ten Commandments as they are explained, clarified, and exemplified in the Scriptures:

“Jesus said unto [a certain lawyer], Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40).

It is important to notice that neither Jesus nor the apostles ever said that keeping only part of the Law would meet the demands of heaven. Partial obedience is not accepted. Christ said with reference to our duty to fulfill all the requirements of the Law:

“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:18–20).

“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail” (Luke 16:17).

James warns us: “Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

And Paul warns the Law-breaking Jews and refers to the Law-abiding converts from among the Gentiles: “As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. . .).

“Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

“For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?” (Romans 2:12, 13, 17–22).

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them

“The epistle of Christ” is written “with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”

who are [guilty sinners] under [the condemnation of] the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the [Godless] world may become guilty before God. . . . Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:19, 31).

“The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7).

“What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (verses 3, 4).

“Christ is the end (Greek *telos*, purpose, intent) of the law for righteousness” (Romans 10:4).

So, through Christ, the ministration of death based on the Law written in stones was replaced by the ministration of righteousness (2 Corinthians 3:3, 6, 7, 9), as the contents of the Law, namely, the “epistle of Christ,” is written “with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone but in fleshly tables of the living heart” (2 Corinthians 3:3). Read Jeremiah 31:31–33; Hebrews 8:10.

How God is to be worshipped

The first commandment says that God is to be worshipped as the only God. Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 44:6.

The second commandment requires us to worship God directly and not through an image. “Worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

The third commandment forbids the use of the Almighty’s name in an irreverent way.

The fourth commandment demands that we worship God as the Creator of everything in heaven and earth, and demands that we remember and observe the memorial of His work.

Was the fourth commandment rejected by Christ and His disciples?

Christ was continually being watched by those who wanted to find an accusation against Him (Luke 6:7) in connection with the fourth commandment, though He always taught correct Sabbath keeping (Matthew 12:12).

Were they able to accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath commandment? Matthew 26:59–61.

After the death of Christ, the disciples continued keeping the Sabbath. “They . . . rested the sabbath day according to the commandment” (Luke 23:56). If they had given up that practice, they would not have continued having “favour with all the people” (Acts 2:47). The Jewish people would not tolerate such an offense against their religion.

The Pharisees and the Judaizers among the early Christians, who would not sanction any deviation from their religious customs, objected that Peter went into the home of “uncircumcised men” and even ate with them (Acts 11:3). And then, when they heard that Peter, Paul, and Barnabas were teaching that the Gentile converts needed not to be circumcised, this was too much for them. They raised serious objections against this innovation, but, at the same time, there was no disputation about Sabbath keeping among the apostles or among the non-Jewish Christians. The apostles warned the Gentile believers in Syria to abstain from three or four “necessary things.” The rest of the many necessary teachings they would receive in the synagogues “every sabbath day” (Acts 15:21; Matthew 23:2, 3), according to the instruction coming from Jesus. (Read Acts 9:2; 22:19; 26:11.) But neither the believing Jews nor the Gentiles were instructed to cease Sabbath keeping. Such a thing would be unthinkable among the Jews.

Another example of faithful Sabbath keeping among the early Christians

is found in Acts 22:12. “Ananias, a devout man according to the law,” had “a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there.” Just imagine what would have happened to him if he had tried to give up Sabbath keeping. He would not have had “a good report of all the Jews” but would have been stoned. And the account that he was a “devout man according to the law” would not be true.

Likewise, the apostle Paul would have uttered a great lie when he said, I have not offended anything at all “against the law of the Jews” (Acts 25:8), and I “worship . . . the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets” (Acts 24:14), if he had ceased to obey the fourth commandment of the Law of God.

In the early days of Christianity, Judaizers disturbed the churches in several places. Among the Colossians (chapter 2:16, 17), for example, they tried to impose their own ideas about the way the believers should celebrate the yearly holidays of the ceremonial law, called “your sabbaths” (Leviticus 23:15, 32), which could occur on any day of the week. So that the people of Israel would not confuse these yearly festivals with the requirements of the fourth commandment of the Law of God, they were instructed: “These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations [sabbaths], . . . beside the sabbaths of the Lord” (Leviticus 23:37, 38). Apparently the Galatians actually believed that they should keep these yearly festivals. This was the reason why Paul had to send them specific instructions (Galatians 4:10, 11). In those days the distinction between the ceremonial law and the moral Law of Ten Commandments, and the distinction between the yearly holidays (called “your sabbaths”) and the weekly Sabbaths (called “my sabbaths”) was very clear to them (Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 23:32). Today this distinction is not clear to many Christians. Many cannot see that the Sabbath of the fourth commandment of the Law of God (Exodus 20:8–11) points to the past, to creation, while the yearly sabbaths of the

ceremonial law pointed to the future. By overlooking this distinction, they virtually regard the works of creation as a "shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17).

A work of restoration

From the beginning of the world, Satan has taught men to tamper with every commandment of the Law of God. And, especially in the time of the end, he is doing everything in his power to do away with the fourth commandment, which was chosen by God as a sign between Him and His people. God said:

"It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested" (Exodus 31:17).

"And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God" (Ezekiel 20:20).

"Keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Deuteronomy 5:29).

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. . . . And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:6-8).

This sign of identification was given to the children of Israel forever. That is right. Christians are the modern-day children of Israel (Romans 9:6-8). So there can be no doubt that it belongs to us.

In these days "an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" are to be sealed with the seal of the living God (Revelation 7:4).

As the powers of darkness have worked to cripple the Law of God by tampering especially with the Sabbath commandment, the servants of God have been called to do a work of restoration in the time of the end. God says with reference to His servants living in the last days of the Christian dispensation:

"Many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared,

and be taken (compare Isaiah 8:14 with 1 Peter 2:8). Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. . . . To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:15, 16, 20).

"They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 58:12-14). (Compare with Isaiah 61:1, 4.)

Those who submit to the authority of God will be sealed with the seal of the living God. These are those who acknowledge His will, His name, and His character of love and righteousness as revealed in His Law. These are those who worship Him according to the requirements specified in the first four commandment of His Law. These are those who are well-settled in the truth.

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Timothy 2:19).

The servants of God who will be sealed with the seal of God are described as follows:

"I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1).

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (Revelation 15:2).

The mark of the beast

"Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that 'all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond' (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts. . . .

"But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.

"The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God."¹ *R*

Reference

¹ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 604, 605.



THE SEALING TIME

By P. Lausevic

Because the third angel is the sealing angel, and because his work is so vital in the closing scenes of this earth's history, we need to pray and meditate on every aspect of this message. The messenger of the Lord writes: "I ... saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, 'Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention.'"¹

To help us understand the solemnity and seriousness of this work, we need to also evaluate the timing of this message when the sealing angel is to do his work. Speaking of the work of the three angels of Revelation 14, the Spirit of Prophecy explains that we need to study several aspects of this message. "Satan is constantly seeking to cast his hellish shadow about these messages, so that the remnant people of God shall not clearly discern their import, their time, and place; but they live and are to exert their power upon our religious experience while time shall last."² This

evaluation of the message must include the timing of the work mentioned.

Holding the four winds

The first thing we need to understand when speaking of the time for the work of sealing to take place is that it happens while the four winds are being held in check. "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Revelation 7:1-3). Once the sealing work is finished, then the four winds are permitted to blow with their force upon the unsheltered world.

In our study of prophecy we understand that these winds are the forces of destruction. (See Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 25:32, 33; 49:36; 51:1, 2.) "John sees the elements of nature—earthquake,

tempest, and political strife—represented as being held by four angels. These winds are under control until God gives the word to let them go. There is the safety of God's church."³

This is not speaking of the wars and general political strife as we know them because though loosening, they are actually still being, to a great extent, held in check. "While already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle."⁴ When we think of the traumatic events that took place in New York City on September 11, 2001, most people think of the tragic loss of the 2,726 souls in the twin towers of Manhattan. What a tremendous loss of life in such a short period of time! However, what most people do not realize is that 50,000 people actually worked in those towers, and that another 200,000 visited or passed through them each day. So the real question is why so few died on that day? The answer is quite simple. Although there seemed to be the loosen-

“Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of His character?”

ing of the winds, the angels held back the winds from blowing on that day.

Why is that the countries of this world are held in check when we can see that they are always trying to flex their muscles against one another? “The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.”⁵ Are we so devoted to the cause of God that we are praying for the four winds to be held in check until our work is finished? More than that, are we engaged in this work of preparing ourselves and a people to be ready for the culmination of all the prophecies from the beginning of this world’s history?

John the Revelator states that these winds will be held in check until the servants of God are sealed. The modern prophet under inspiration reveals the following about that event in her own time. “I asked my accompanying angel the meaning of what I heard, and what the four angels were about to do. He shewed me that it was God that restrained the powers, and that He gave His angels charge over things on the earth, and that the four angels had power from God to hold the four winds, and that they were about to let the four winds go, and while they had started on their mission to let them go, the merciful eye of Jesus gazed on the remnant that were **not all sealed**, then He raised His hands to the Father and pleaded with Him that He had spilled His blood for them. Then another

angel was commissioned to fly swiftly to the four angels and bid them hold until the servants of God were sealed with the seal of the living God in their foreheads.”⁶ In 1849 not all were yet sealed, so the four angels had to be held back in their destructive work.

What are the four winds?

We already know that the seal of God is proper Sabbathkeeping. It is in direct contrast with the seal or mark of the beast, which is the desecration of the seventh-day Bible Sabbath by intentionally observing the first day of the week as sacred.

What will happen to those who receive this mark of the beast power? “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” And what is the complete and full wrath of God? “And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God” (Revelation 14:9, 10; 15:1).

As we read a description of these plagues in Revelation 16, we can see that it is exactly as we have read of the four winds. It involves the earth and sea in a general ruin of the world as we know it. It also includes warfare as mentioned before. This we see in the execution of the sixth plague. “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they

see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Revelation 16:14–16). Why are the nations gathered together in Armageddon? Because Jesus is coming as a thief in the night. And when does He come as a thief? “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3).

By this we can clearly see that the blowing of the four winds is nothing more than the seven last plagues. And these plagues—four winds—cannot come until the sealing of God’s people is concluded.

Time for the plagues

When are these plagues poured out? “And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Revelation 15:7, 8). During the falling of the seven last plagues, no person can enter the temple of God in heaven.

Which being is in this temple in heaven today? “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). And where is this work of mediation being done? “Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle,



which the Lord pitched, and not man." And who is this High Priest? "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 8:1, 2; 3:1). When we study these things together with Revelation 5, we see that Jesus is the man who is ministering in the holy temple in heaven, together with the 24 courses of priests with their respective 24 elders who are the governors of each course leading out in the work. Please see Revelation 5 together with 1 Chronicles 24:1-4 and Ephesians 4:8 (margin) and Matthew 27:51-53.

When we study the sealing of Revelation 7 and 14, we find that it is the same work that the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel had seen in his ninth chapter. "This sealing of the servants of God is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision."⁷ For this reason, the destruction in Ezekiel 9, the blowing of the four winds, and the seven last plagues are all a description of the same events. "Our own course of action will determine whether we shall receive the seal of the living God or be cut down by the destroying weapons. Already a few drops of God's wrath have fallen upon the earth; *but when the seven last plagues shall be poured out without mixture* into the cup of His indignation, then it will be forever too late to repent and find shelter. No atoning blood will then wash away the stains of sin."⁸

If Jesus is our mediator in the heavenly temple, and if the 24 courses and elders are assisting Jesus in the ministry of the temple, and if the plagues cannot fall on this earth while they are in the ministry of the temple, and if the plagues are the full wrath of God, and the wrath of God cannot come until the servants of God are sealed, we must conclude that the sealing finishes at the close of probation when Jesus is no longer our Mediator. "I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues."⁹

Work is done in the sanctuary

What it is meant by the end of the work in the sanctuary? "Every case had

been decided for life or death. While Jesus had been ministering in the sanctuary, the judgment had been going on for the righteous dead, and then for the righteous living. Christ had received His kingdom, having made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The subjects of the kingdom were made up. The marriage of the Lamb was consummated. And the kingdom, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, was given to Jesus and the heirs of salvation, and Jesus was to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

"As Jesus moved out of the most holy place, I heard the tinkling of the bells upon His garment; and as He left, a cloud of darkness covered the inhabitants of the earth. There was then **no mediator** between guilty man and an offended God. While Jesus had been standing between God and guilty man, a restraint was upon the people; but when He stepped out from between man and the Father, the restraint was removed and **Satan had entire control of the finally impenitent**. It was **impossible** for the **plagues** to be poured out while Jesus officiated in the sanctuary; but as His work there is **finished**, and His intercession closes, there is nothing to stay the **wrath of God**, and it breaks with fury upon the shelterless head of the guilty sinner, who has slighted salvation and hated reproof. In that fearful time, after the **close of Jesus' mediation**, the saints were living in the sight of a holy God **without an intercessor**. **Every case was decided, every jewel numbered**. Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while He was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment."¹⁰

In other words, the sealing work goes on until probation's door closes. It is only after the last possible person is sealed that the seven last plagues, or four winds, are let loose upon this world. "Just before we entered it [the time of trouble], we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and

sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion."¹¹

When we speak in practical terms of being sealed, we need to understand that we are talking about perfecting one's character. "We may talk of the blessings of the Holy Spirit, but unless we prepare ourselves for its reception, of what avail are our works? Are we striving with all our power to attain to the stature of men and women in Christ? Are we seeking for His fullness, ever pressing toward the mark set before us—the perfection of His character? When the Lord's people reach this mark, they will be sealed in their foreheads. Filled with the Spirit, they will be complete in Christ, and the recording angel will declare, 'It is finished!'"¹²

Between verses 13 and 14 of Revelation 6

The perfecting of character is not something that is done after Jesus comes the second time. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

As we study the sixth chapter of Revelation, the second coming is described as heaven departing "as a scroll." "The King of kings descends upon the cloud, wrapped in flaming fire. The heavens are rolled together as a scroll, the earth trembles before Him, and every mountain and island is moved out of its place."¹³ We know that it is too late to perfect character and prepare for eternity after the second coming of Jesus. For that reason, the sealing work of Revelation 7 must take place prior to Revelation 6:14.

We also know that the sealing work cannot begin before the falling of the stars in Revelation 6:12, 13. From the study of history, we know that this event was fulfilled on November 13, 1833.¹⁴ The reason it could not happen before that time is that, in order to be sealed, one must understandingly keep the seventh-day Bible Sabbath. This commandment keeping is in direct contrast to those who are receiving the

mark of the beast. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). We must, therefore, conclude that this sealing of the 144,000 takes place when the message of warning against the receiving of the mark of the beast is given by the third angel.

"The third message warns all against receiving the mark of the beast. So this movement makes it the burden of its work to show what the mark of the beast is, and to warn against its reception. It is the more solicitous to do this, because this antichristian power has worked so cunningly that the majority are deceived into making unconscious concessions to its authority. It is shown that the mark of the beast is an institution which has been arrayed in Christian garb, and insidiously introduced into the Christian church in such a way as to nullify the authority of Jehovah and enthrone that of the beast. Stripped of all disguises, it is simply setting up a counterfeit sabbath of its own on the first day of the week, in place of the Sabbath of the Lord on the seventh day—a usurpation which the great God cannot tolerate, and from which the remnant church must fully clear itself before it will be prepared for the coming of Christ. Hence the urgent warning, Let no man worship the beast or receive his mark."¹⁵

The third angel's message is given after the first and second messages, after the announcement of the hour of His judgment and the fall of Babylon when the Protestant churches rejected the first angel's message. Therefore, it must take place after 1844, when the Sabbath light was received as the seal of God, and the people of God understood that the conscious, purposeful worship of Sunday was the mark of the beast.

"As the ministration of Jesus closed in the holy place, and He passed into the holiest, and stood before the ark containing the law of God, He sent another mighty angel with a third message to the world. . . . After Jesus opened the door of the most holy, the light of the Sabbath was seen, and the people of God were tested, as the children of Israel were tested anciently, to see if they

would keep God's law."¹⁶ Therefore, this sealing of Revelation 7 cannot take place before the falling of the stars in Revelation 6:13. It fits clearly between verses 13 and 14 of Revelation 6.

The subject of the sealing of the 144,000 is given in answer to a question brought to view at the end of the sixth seal in chapter 6, when the second coming of Christ is introduced. "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:17). Since Revelation 7:1–4 is given in answer to that question of who will stand when Jesus comes again, then it must follow that the 144,000 are the ones that will be alive at the second coming of Jesus.

Intent

As we study the prophecy regarding the Sabbath-Sunday issue, we learn that intent is very important in receiving the mark of the beast. "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Daniel 7:25). In this prophecy, the little horn really believes that he has the power to change times and laws. We know that he cannot really change them, but he believes that he has that power.

Another prophecy explains why this beast power believes that he can change the laws. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4). He really believes that he is God and therefore can change the laws of the unchangeable and eternal God.

Why is it so important to know the reason of this origin of the mark of the beast in regard to Sunday keeping? Because intent is the key. Unless a person hears and understands the third angel's message, he or she does not and cannot receive the mark of the beast

and consequently does not receive the wrath of God on that alone. In other words, Sunday keeping is not the mark of the beast. It is only as a person who understands the Sabbath truth and rejects that truth and then accepts its imposture that he or she receives the mark of the beast.

The proclamation of the third angel's message results in the distinction between a people who keep the commandments of God, not just the patience of the saints and the faith of Jesus, and those who receive the mark of the beast. They are distinct because of the proclamation of the third angel's message. Therefore, the sealing of the 144,000 is a result of the proclamation of the third angel's message, and individuals consciously and purposely choose to obey God rather than give honor or worship to the beast.

"As men then reject the institution which God has declared to be the sign of His authority and honor in its stead that which Rome has chosen as the token of her supremacy, they will thereby accept the sign of allegiance to Rome—'the mark of the beast.' And it is not until the issue is thus plainly set before the people, and they are brought to choose between the commandments of God and the commandments of men, that those who continue in transgression will receive 'the mark of the beast.'"¹⁷ As probation's door is closing, are you preparing for the mark of the beast or for the seal of the living God? *R*

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- ³ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 444.
- ⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 14.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 408.
- ⁶ *The Present Truth*, August 1, 1849.
- ⁷ *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 445.
- ⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 212. (emphasis supplied).
- ⁹ *Early Writings*, p. 36.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 280, 281. (emphasis supplied).
- ¹¹ *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 968.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 1118.
- ¹³ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 641, 642.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 333.
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A MESSAGE OF

Hope

By the Reformation Herald staff

Looking back

God has always had a people whom He looks upon as the apple of His eye. In the very beginning, during the creation week, He made in His own image a man who bore His characteristics, and also He made a help meet (suitable) for him; God's plan was that from them would come a multitude of people who would be an extension of His family, to love and serve Him and who would reverence and obey Him. But, from the study of His word, we learn that that plan was altered by a great deceiver, and disaster was the result. Now what would happen?

The history of Israel

It was to Abraham that God had made the promise that from his seed a great nation would be raised up, a nation with whom He would make a covenant, or an agreement. This covenant contained three points. The first was of God's promises (Galatians 3:16, 17); the second was His conditions or their

obedience to His will (Deuteronomy 4:13); the third was that there would be a means with which to meet the conditions (Isaiah 42:1, 6). This nation would remain the chosen of God as long as they honored the covenant that He had made with them.

Later in their history God raised up the man Moses, who would be used to lead His chosen ones out of the bondage of Egypt in which they found themselves. They had come under this bondage because of their failure to honor the agreement that had been made with God. They also had joined themselves with the heathen idolaters and failed to honor the law of God.

As they grew weary of their affliction of slavery, many welcomed the help which would be sent to them, that of freedom from their plight. Because they were still God's chosen people, He desired to set them free and deliver them to a better land where they might be free to serve Him and obey His precepts. While they were in slavery, they had lost sight of the requirements of God and were not living in obedience to Him. It was while they were in the midst of their affliction and could

not help themselves that God set forth a plan by which they could overcome the obstacles before them.

How did the events work out in the history of ancient Israel, and what can we learn from them in our lives today? Do we find ourselves in a similar situation? And what will take place in the future? Where does the message of hope fit in for us?

Facing the same enemy

The same enemy, the deceiver of souls, who brought disruption into the lives of the inhabitants of the Garden of Eden, has been and still is at work. In all ages he has sought to falsely accuse those who are the seekers of the mercy and favor of God. But, in Genesis 3:15, the promise is found that some day he will receive his just reward.

As the nation of Israel wandered across the desert wilderness after having been rescued from Egypt, that same deceiver went with them and brought constant disruption into their lives. They murmured and complained to Moses about almost everything, and at one point some of them voiced that they wanted to return to Egypt where they could have the food and other things that they desired. If they had remained faithful to the God who was leading them, they would have reached the promised land in a shorter period of time than the forty years which it took. Because of their many complaints and their failure to remain, once again, obedient to the covenant which God had made with them, the majority of them died along the way. It was their children who finally entered the land of promise.

These children who were able to occupy the land of promise did not all remain faithful to the God who was still wanting to lead them. As they failed to honor and obey Him, they lost many battles and experienced captivity again at the hand of their enemies. The temple which had been built was destroyed along with the city of Jerusalem.

The work of the prophets

Again and again God gave His people warnings and reproofs through

Our experiences have been similar to those of ancient Israel and we, as they each one had to do, have to determine our destiny.

the prophets; so great was His desire to save them and bring prosperity to them, that He wanted them to remember the covenant made between Him and them, that He would be their God and they would be His people. They needed to see their guilt and repent humbly before Him. Messages of encouragement were sent to them that they would once again be delivered from captivity and be restored to their own land where they could glorify God by being obedient to Him. Indeed, this was to bring to them a message of hope.

The prophet Zechariah was given a vision of Joshua, the high priest, and the Angel, who was Christ, revealing the situation which would exist for His people then and into the future. The deceiver who has been working continually to discourage God's people would not give up his battle for supremacy. As we read in Zechariah 3:1, 3, Joshua was seen clothed, as it were, in filthy garments standing before the Angel, pleading mercy for his people in their dire affliction.

As this plea for mercy is going on, Satan arises boldly and brings accusations against the people and presents to them a reminder of their transgressions as the reason they should not be restored to the favor of God. "[Satan] claims them as his prey, and demands that they be given into his hands.

"[Joshua] the high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel is free from fault. In filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, and relying upon the mercy of a sin-pardoning Redeemer. In faith he claims the promises of God."¹

We read in Zechariah 3:2, "And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Here, once again, we can recognize a message of hope extended to God's people in the face of their enemy.

It is Satan's hope that their faith will be destroyed and their allegiance will be turned away from God. "As [Satan] influenced the heathen nations to destroy Israel, so in the near future he will stir up the wicked powers of earth to destroy the people of God. All will be required to render obedience to human edicts in violation of the divine law. Those who will be true to God and to duty will be menaced, denounced, and proscribed. They will 'be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends' (Luke 21:16)."²

What is our message of hope today, and where do we find it?

Where do we stand?

We are now standing on the edges of the promised land, waiting for our Guide to come and lead us in through the massive gates into that beautiful city that has been prepared for the faithful commandment-keeping people of God. Our experiences have been similar to those of ancient Israel and we, as they each one had to do, have to determine our destiny. We have choices to make regarding who we will follow: the One who has brought us out of the bondage of sin and darkness, or the one who continues to try to deceive us into believing that we will be benefited by following his way.

Just as Israel experienced, we find that there are many obstacles placed before us which we in our own strength cannot overcome. We, like them, may at times experience fear as

Just as Zechariah saw in vision how Joshua was entreating the mercy of God for his people, so we have that same assurance of a High Priest pleading our cases before God.

the enemy throws into our pathway powerful forces of difficulties. At these times we must do as Joshua did and seek for the assurance of divine guidance and help. And as he uttered his need for help, he encountered the warrior with a sword drawn, ready for battle. Joshua then knew that this was none other than Christ who had been leading the Israelites through the trials of the desert wilderness. With this assurance of help, his courage became strong to go forward to conquer the enemy according to the instructions given him.

This, also, must be our experience.

What assurance do we have?

In the world today we see many signs of tribulation and trouble. Humanity is suffering from the onslaughts of the evil one and his agents as they attack the physical, mental, and spiritual welfare of people everywhere. It seems that on every side destruction is occurring, and multitudes are being attacked, even destroyed. By the false teaching that

originates with the enemy of our souls, he is seeking to lead many closer to destruction rather than to life eternal.

The great controversy rages more intensely between Christ and His holy angels and Satan and his host of evil spirits. Just as ancient Israel found themselves in terrible bondage and did not realize that there was a wonderful work of God about to happen in their behalf for their deliverance, there is likewise a plan in place for the deliverance of God's faithful ones from the bondage in which Satan wishes to now engulf them.

The time is coming upon us when God's faithful, obedient followers, will be accused of failure to obey the edicts of the land and of those making claims against them. Just as it was with Joshua, the high priest, who made a plea for his people, there is a High Priest who, even now, is pleading in behalf of His people. Just as the prophet Zechariah saw in vision how Joshua was entreating the mercy of God for his people, so we have that

same assurance of a High Priest pleading our cases before God.

Because the Israelites had been chosen to preserve the knowledge of God in the earth, they had aroused the hatred of Satan toward themselves. And because God's chosen people of today have been called out of darkness and commissioned to carry the truth of things to come throughout the earth, the ire of the enemy is being kindled against them.

The loud cry of the third angel of Revelation 14:9-11, with its warnings and admonitions, will be given by the obedient followers of God. As verse 12 states, "Here is the patience (persistence) of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

"The Lord desires to see the work of proclaiming the third angel's message carried forward with increasing efficiency. As He has worked in all ages to give victories to His people, so in this age He longs to carry to a triumphant fulfillment His purposes for His church. He bids His believing saints to advance unitedly, going from strength to greater strength, from faith to increased assurance and confidence in the truth and righteousness of His cause."³

Herein lies our assurance that we will be led by His hand and protected by His strength as we go forward in obedience to Him.

The ministry of Christ, our High Priest

In the fourteenth chapter of John, verses 1-3, we read concerning the ascension of Jesus back into heaven following His sojourn on earth. His promise to His disciples, then as well as to all who should follow afterward, was that He would prepare for them a place and would come again to receive them into that heavenly home, the promised land, as it were, to once again be with Him. Hebrews 4:14 states, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

As our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, as is mentioned in Hebrews



8:1, 2, His ministry is going on now and will do so until He is ready to return to earth. He is ministering in our behalf, just as the priests ministered in behalf of the people of Israel in the earthly sanctuary. Why do we now need the ministry of a High Priest in heaven?

As we look back to the Garden of Eden and remember what took place there, when the perfect pair disobeyed God's instruction and were led into wrong-doing by the instigator of sin, and also follow the history of God's chosen people as they lived in disobedience to Him and His law, we can see how far humanity has digressed from His will for them. Even though Adam had sinned, he was not to be left in his fallen state, to perish at the hand of the enemy.

In the experience of Joshua, he was assured that the people would receive the means by which they could be pardoned and have their sins forgiven and blotted out. Through faith in Christ they were to be restored back into God's favor. "Christ was their hope, their defense, their justification and redemption, as He is the hope of His church today."⁴

When we sin, terrible stains are left upon our character. These are also found on our records in the books in heaven. There is nothing of ourselves that we can do to remove these stains. There is something that we must be willing to do, however, and that is to truly be repentant of our wrongs and confess them before the only One who can plead our pardon before God and claim that His blood was shed for our cleansing. As we read in 1 John 1:7, we find that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin; verse 9 tells us that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We must accept the cleansing blood of the One who died for us.

It is at this time that Jesus, as our High Priest, is ministering in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary. When a repentant sinner confesses his or her sins and, by faith, claims atonement through the blood of Christ for them, he or she will have pardoned

written for them in the books of heaven. Through divine power, he or she will develop a righteous character through obedience to the commandments. When the case is examined by the Judge, those sins are blotted out and the name is retained in the book of life. The work of the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is like unto that which was done in the earthly sanctuary, and the day of atonement served the same purpose.

As the penitents confess their sins and ask for forgiveness by claiming the cleansing power of the blood of the Lamb, Jesus does not excuse the sin but lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels and claims that He knows them by name and has them graven on the palms of His hands; just as the words that were spoken to Joshua, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Christ clothes His faithful ones with His own righteousness so that He may present them to His Father, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27).

While the door of salvation remains open, we must walk through it and be saved by His grace which is so freely given.

When the priest ministered in the most holy place and was cleansed, the confessed and pardoned sins of the people of the congregation were blotted out and placed upon the scapegoat and carried far away into the wilderness. Thus it will be when the sins that have been confessed will be placed upon the head of Satan with whom they originated, and he, with them and all his evil agents, will be destroyed from off the face of the earth. Then all things can be made new again!

While the saints are pleading for purity of heart

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments' from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment'

(Zechariah 3:4). The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevertheless to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honored. 'A fair miter' is set upon their heads (verse 5). They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, *holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God.* These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads."⁵

As we diligently cry unto the Lord, seeking for purification of character, we need to realize that the seal of God will not be placed upon us as long as one spot or stain remains. Now the time of urgency is upon us; there is no time for delay.

"Now is reached the complete fulfillment of those words of the Angel: 'Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch' (verse 8). Christ is revealed as the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Now indeed are the remnant 'men wondered at,' as the tears and humiliation of their pilgrimage give place to joy and honor in the presence of God and the Lamb."⁶

Amen! *R*

References

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³ *Counsels for the Church*, p. 357.

⁴ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 470.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 475. (emphasis supplied).

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CHILDREN'S
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The Leap of Faith

By B. Montrose

"Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee"
(Job 12:7, 8).

The salmon is a common fish native to northern waters of the Atlantic and Pacific coastal regions. This remarkable creature is hatched in fresh water as a baby, and then it migrates far away to live most of its life in the salt water of the ocean. Finally, when the time comes for the salmon to breed, it returns back to its original birthplace—fresh water—often even to the same exact stream where it hatched. Scientists believe that the fish remembers the location partly through its sense of smell and other factors. But regardless of exactly how this happens, there is no question that the mighty hand of God is what guides this amazing journey.

In order to achieve its goal of returning home, the salmon must swim against an extremely strong current. This is a very difficult task! The fish often must leap into the air to make its way against the surging waves. In fact, the name "salmon" comes from the Latin term, *salmo*, which means "leaper." It's not easy to swim against a strong current forcefully pushing you from the opposite direction! Yet the brave salmon does not give up.

What is one thing we can learn from the Creator by observing the life of this fish?

Right now we are living in the time of the Third Angel's Message—the most solemn message given by God since time began. Very soon, most of the world will try to force people to accept the mark of the beast—a symbol of humans pretending to be more important than their Creator. But God will have a people faithful and true who will spiritually "swim against the current" by moving forward in the face of the rushing tide of wickedness. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).

So, when hard problems arise, look to Jesus for strength. He will guide you back to the fresh waters of life, the fountain of purity. Just as the salmon gathers strength to leap above the challenge faced, Christ your Creator is there to help you, too.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. **Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy:** for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets" (Luke 6:22, 23, emphasis added). *R*

