



the  
**REFORMATION**  
*herald*

Vol. 64, No. 2

**The Great  
Day of God**



# the REFORMATION herald

Volume 64, Number 2

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"The greatest want of the world is the want of men—  
men who will not be bought or sold."—*Education*, p. 57.

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# FROGS VS. FAITH

John the Revelator describes something intriguing from the divinely-sent vision given him on the isle of Patmos. He writes: "I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 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" (Revelation 16:13, 14).

## THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS

The three unclean spirits will come from three distinct sources—the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. They pour forth what they have in mind, and they operate in tandem. It would be nice if they had something good in mind, but unfortunately, they do not. These are the spirits of devils—they are hell-bent on evil.

But that's not all: They are sly and sneaky. We know this because they can work miracles by supernatural power, something impressively dazzling to human sight.

But that's not all: They are so adept at what they do, they can convincingly go forth unto the kings of the earth. Kings are typically

individuals who are somehow gifted and intelligent enough to be able to lead the rest of the population. But worldwide leaders will be swayed by these spirits of devils.

But that's not all: These spirits of devils go to the whole world. They are to deceive not only the kings, but nearly everyone else, too.

But that's not all: They bring them all together to go to battle—the final, decisive battle known as "the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

## THE BATTLE

This is a very solemn matter. When the Bible couples the word "God" with "Almighty," it is quite serious. The Lord's messenger was shown: "God's holy name should be used with reverence and awe. The words God Almighty are coupled together and used by some in prayer in a careless, thoughtless manner, which is displeasing to Him. Such have no realizing sense of God or the truth, or they would not speak so irreverently of the great and dreadful God, who is soon to judge them in the last day. Said the angel, 'Couple them not together; for fearful is His name.' Those who realize the greatness and majesty of God, will take His name on their lips with holy awe. He dwelleth in

light unapproachable; no man can see Him and live. I saw that these things will have to be understood and corrected before the church can prosper."<sup>1</sup>

With such a warning, it is with fear and trembling that we even refer to this battle by using the same words written in Scripture, simply because that is how they are written.

Yet it is very important that we understand all these matters. The final battle is soon to come, and every single human being will be on either one side or the other. We'll either be under the influence of the "frogs" led from beneath or be holding onto Christ by faith.

By God's grace, "we are not left to battle unaided against the prince of darkness. As we realize the attacks of the enemy, we shall feel the need of fleeing to the stronghold, we shall learn to lean upon the Mighty One. He will be to us as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, as a covert from the tempest. Deep and fervent will be the gratitude of him who experiences the help of God in times of temptation and trial."<sup>2</sup>

May this firm holding onto God be our experience in the days to come. Amen! *R*

## References:

<sup>1</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bible Echo*, December 1, 1892.





by Barbara Montrose

[Emphasis supplied throughout.]

# THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON AND OF THE BEAST

In Revelation 16:13, 14, John the Revelator describes: “**I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.** 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” (Revelation 16:13, 14).

To grasp this verse, we first need to understand the source of the spirits mentioned. What is meant by the dragon, the beast, and the false

prophet? The third of these—the false prophet—will be discussed in the next article following this one, “The Mouth of the False Prophet” (see page 10). So, first let us examine what is meant by the dragon and the beast.

## THE BIBLICAL DRAGON

The Bible explains that “there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in

heaven. And **the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth,** and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7–9). This is the same archenemy to be stopped in his tracks in Revelation 20:2, 3. We read that his destruction is sure, along with that of his evil angels: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and



the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 1:6, 7).

How? "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Malachi 4:1).

Although doomed to destruction, in the meantime, the devil and his evil angels are quite active on this fallen planet. In addition to all the horrendous crimes they incite people to commit, the most direct evidence of their ploys is in the form of spiritualism, also known as spiritism.

## SPIRITUALISM

Isn't it good to be spiritually-minded? Aren't people who follow God and read the Bible referred to as being spiritually-minded? Such a context of the word "spiritual" as used in the Bible is referring to something different; we must not confuse this with what is known as "spiritualism," also known as the occult. Genuine Christians follow the Holy Spirit, the Comforter sent by Jesus. But such are not what is known as "spiritualists," who follow the spirit from beneath. The apostle Paul explains the urgent need for our awareness in this regard: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:11, 12).

## OLD-STYLE BABYLONIAN WORSHIP

Since the early days recorded in the book of Genesis, we see evidence of spiritualistic influences. The serpent beguiled Eve in Genesis chapter 3, causing the fall of humanity. Soon, strange alternative life-

styles began confusing the population already in Genesis 4 (eventually culminating in the need for God to send the great Flood and for Noah to be spared in Genesis 6). Later, Nimrod and his cohorts aimed to make a global government to rebel against the Majesty of Heaven in Genesis 11. By the time of the book of Exodus, the Egyptian nation already had a sophisticated spiritualistic religion (Exodus 7:10, 11; 8:7). Throughout Old Testament history, we see a record of the struggle of God's few faithful people against the perverse, evil powers that dominated the nations.

## THE LEOPARD-LIKE BEAST

**The Bible clearly states that the dead are not conscious,** and God is not pleased when people commit sorcery by speculating otherwise. (Please see Leviticus 19:31; Deuteronomy 18:10–12; 2 Kings 21:6, 9, 11; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10; Psalms 6:5; 115:17; 146:4; Job 14:12; Isaiah 19:3; Daniel 4:7; John 5:28, 29; 6:39, 40, 54; 11:11–13; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Revelation 20:6, 7; 21:8; 22:15 as a partial list on the actual state of the dead.)

Yet "in every system . . . except that of the Bible, the doctrine of a purgatory after death, and prayers for the dead, has always been found to occupy a place. Go wherever we may, in ancient or modern times, we shall find that Paganism leaves hope after death for sinners, who, at the time of their departure, were consciously unfit for the abodes of the blest."<sup>1</sup>

In ancient Egypt, the priest officiating at a pagan burial often wore a leopard skin mantle.

It is interesting to note the parallel of the leopard-like beast in Revelation 13:1, 2. More on that below.

## POWERED BY THE DRAGON

"It will be observed . . . that the Great Red Dragon, or Great Fiery Serpent, is represented as standing before the Woman [in Revelation 12] with the crown of twelve stars, that is, the true Church of God, 'To devour her child as soon as it should be born.' Now, this is in exact accordance with the character of the Great Head of the system of fire-





worship. Nimrod, as the representative of the devouring fire to which human victims, and especially children, were offered in sacrifice, was regarded as the great child-devourer. . . . This legend has a further and deeper meaning; but, as applied to Nimrod, or 'The Horned One,' it just refers to the fact, that, as the representative of Moloch or Baal, infants were the most acceptable offerings at his altar. We have ample and melancholy evidence on this subject from the records of antiquity."<sup>2</sup> (See also Jeremiah 19:5; 32:35.)

The sun worship of Baal is also linked with this fire-worship.

"The dragon is said to be Satan; [Revelation 12:9.] he it was that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of Satan in making war upon Christ and his people during the first centuries of the Christian era, was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the prevailing religion. Thus while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.

"In chapter 13 [Verses 1–10.] is described another beast, 'like unto a leopard,' to which the dragon gave 'his power, and his seat, and great authority.' This symbol, as most Protestants have believed, represents the papacy, which succeeded to the power and seat and authority once possessed by the ancient Roman Empire. Of the leopard-like beast it is declared: 'There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies. . . . And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.' This prophecy, which is nearly identical with the description of the little horn of Daniel 7, unquestionably points to the papacy."<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT DOES THIS BEAST DO?

"The special characteristic of the beast, and therefore of his image,

is the breaking of God's commandments. Says Daniel, of the little horn, the papacy, 'He shall think to change the times and the law. [Daniel 7:25, Revised Version.] And Paul styled the same power the 'man of sin,' who was to exalt himself above God. One prophecy is a complement of the other. Only by changing God's law could the papacy exalt itself above God; whoever should understandingly keep the law as thus changed would be giving supreme honor to that power by which the change was made. Such an act of obedience to papal laws would be a mark of allegiance to the pope in the place of God.

"The papacy has attempted to change the law of God. The second commandment, forbidding image worship, has been dropped from the law, and the fourth commandment has been so changed as to authorize the observance of the first instead of the seventh day as the Sabbath. But papists urge, as a reason for omitting the second commandment, that it is unnecessary, being included in the first, and that they are giving the law exactly as God designed it to be understood. This cannot be the change foretold by the prophet. An intentional, deliberate change is presented: 'He shall *think* to change the times and the law.' The change in the fourth commandment exactly fulfills the prophecy. For this the only authority claimed is that of the church. Here the papal power openly sets itself above God."<sup>4</sup>

## ANCIENT AND NEW AGE SPIRITUALISM

"The doctrine of man's consciousness in death, especially the belief that the spirits of the dead return to minister to the living, has prepared the way for modern Spiritualism. If the dead are admitted to the presence of God and holy angels, and privileged with knowledge far exceeding what they before possessed, why should they not return to the earth to enlighten and instruct the living? If, as taught by popular theologians, the spirits of the dead are hovering about their friends on earth, why should they

not be permitted to communicate with them, to warn them against evil, or to comfort them in sorrow? How can those who believe in man's consciousness in death reject what comes to them as divine light communicated by glorified spirits? Here is a channel regarded as sacred, through which Satan works for the accomplishment of his purposes. The fallen angels who do his bidding appear as messengers from the spirit world. **While professing to bring the living into communication with the dead, the prince of evil exercises his bewitching influence upon their minds.**

**"He has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The counterfeit is perfect; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with marvelous distinctness.** Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of Heaven; and without suspicion of danger, they give ear to 'seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.'

**"When they have been led to believe that the dead actually return to communicate with them, Satan causes those to appear who went into the grave unprepared. They claim to be happy in Heaven, and even to occupy exalted positions there; and thus the error is widely taught, that no difference is made between the righteous and the wicked. The pretended visitants from the world of spirits sometimes utter cautions and warnings which prove to be correct. Then, as confidence is gained, they present doctrines that directly undermine faith in the Scriptures.** With an appearance of deep interest in the well-being of their friends on earth, they insinuate the most dangerous errors. The fact that they state some truths, and are able at times to foretell future events, gives to their statements an appearance of reliability; and their false teachings are accepted by the multitudes as readily, and believed as implicitly, as if they were the most sacred truths of the Bible. The law of God is set aside, the Spirit of grace despised, the blood of the covenant

In days before, Revivals brought deep heart-searching and humility. They were characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to the sinner, by yearning compassion for the purchase of the blood of Christ. . . .

counted an unholy thing. The spirits deny the divinity of Christ, and place even the Creator on a level with themselves. Thus under a new disguise the great rebel still carries forward his warfare against God.”<sup>5</sup>

## UNDERSTANDING REVIVAL

The Christian world is eager for revival. The world-loving, lukewarm state of the professed churches have disheartened many a consecrated believer seeking for a deeper experience with Christ and more meaningful fellowship with others of similar faith.

## ASBURY . . . AND BEYOND

The recent Christian revival at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky, has attracted widespread, international interest and sparked similar revivals at Christian colleges across the United States, including Lee University, Samford University, and others that have also been mentioned by name. (God only is the Judge, but some appear to have more elements of sincerity than others.)

Reporting the Asbury experience, on February 23, 2023, Thomas Lyons (an alumnus of Asbury) posted online in *The Atlantic* magazine: “The event has gone viral online—on TikTok, the hashtag #asburyrevival has more than 100 million views and counting. But its appeal is actually its physicality and simplicity. In a time of factionalism, celebrity culture, and performance, what’s happening at Asbury is radically humble. . . .

“Some see what would be the seeds of another nationwide *Great Awakening*, and others see echoes of the crowds of January 6 and the looming threat of Christian nationalism.”<sup>6</sup>

Not having been present, we cannot know all that occurred, but so far by this and other accounts, the Asbury event was described

as simple and humble, as was the humble Nazarene. Yet according to prophecy, in which direction will many modern revivals go, perhaps on the part of some who might seek to “outdo” the attention drawn to Asbury? Therefore, we really need to understand what constitutes genuine revival.

## TRUE AND FALSE REVIVALS

In days before, “Revivals brought deep heart-searching and humility. They were characterized by solemn, earnest appeals to the sinner, by yearning compassion for the purchase of the blood of Christ. Men and women prayed and wrestled with God for the salvation of souls. The fruits of such revivals were seen in souls who shrank not at self-denial and sacrifice, but rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and trial for the sake of Christ. Men beheld a transformation in the lives of those who had professed the name of Jesus. The community was benefited by their influence. They gathered with Christ, and sowed to the Spirit, to reap life everlasting. . . .

“But many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God’s servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving the darkness more dense than before.

**“Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony**

of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason, awakens no response. The plain warnings of God’s Word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.”<sup>7</sup>

## ARE WE PREPARING TO DISCERN AND RECEIVE TRUE REVIVAL—OR ARE WE RIPE FOR DECEPTION?

“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. Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.”<sup>8</sup>

## TEST THE SPIRITS!

The Bible is very clear about how to test the spirits to know whether they are of God or of the devil.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether



they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:1–3).

What does it mean to "confess" that Jesus is come in the flesh? The fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23) will be revealed in our flesh—in our daily life—whether we really believe what we profess or whether, in contrast, we are just full of mere talk in claiming to be Christians. This is even more important in leaders and teachers:

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. . . . The prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:10–14, 20–22). Please read Deuteronomy chapter 13 also.

"The saints must get a thorough understanding of present truth, which they will be obliged to

maintain from the Scriptures. **They must understand the state of the dead; for the spirits of devils will yet appear to them, professing to be beloved friends and relatives, who will declare to them that the Sabbath has been changed, also other unscriptural doctrines. They will do all in their power to excite sympathy and will work miracles before them to confirm what they declare.** The people of God must be prepared to withstand these spirits with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who appear to them are the spirits of devils. Our minds must not be taken up with things around us, but must be occupied with the present truth and a preparation to give a reason of our hope with meekness and fear. We must seek wisdom from on high that we may stand in this day of error and delusion.

"We must examine well the foundation of our hope, for we shall have to give a reason for it from the Scriptures. This delusion will spread, and we shall have to contend with it face to face; and unless we are prepared for it, we shall be ensnared and overcome. But if we do what we can on our part to be ready for the conflict that is just before us, God will do His part, and His all-powerful arm will protect us. He would sooner send every angel out of glory to the relief of faithful souls, to make a hedge about them, than have them deceived and led away by the lying wonders of Satan.

"I saw the rapidity with which this delusion was spreading. A train of cars was shown me, going with the speed of lightning. The angel bade me look carefully. I fixed my eyes upon the train. It seemed that the whole world was on board, that there could not be one left. Said the angel, 'They are binding in bundles ready to burn.' Then he showed me the conductor, who appeared like a stately, fair person, whom all the passengers looked up to and revered. I was perplexed and asked my attending angel who it was. He said, 'It is Satan. He is the conductor in the form of an angel of light. He has taken the world captive. They are given over to strong

delusions, to believe a lie, that they may be damned. This agent, the next highest in order to him, is the engineer, and other of his agents are employed in different offices as he may need them, and they are all going with lightning speed to perdition.'"<sup>9</sup>

## THE OCCULT INVASION

Here's the big twister: There is a subtle deception in our days: Not only blatant occultists, but many preachers and so-called Christian speakers claiming to follow God are also comingling the spirits of devils into their work.

Just one example: Recently a funeral was held for a lady who had died unexpectedly. She had a likeable personality and, together with her sister, had made quite a hit as a popular team offering political commentary on the internet, speaking openly as strong supporters of a very prominent leader who kindly attended the funeral as a loyal friend. All would seem fine, but while presenting the eulogy, the surviving sister claimed that she spoke with the deceased after her death, and she then proceeded to present a list of comments that the deceased sister (supposedly speaking from another world) now wanted everyone to know. The obvious implication was that those comments would surely be thought to carry greater weight now since she was dead (presumably in another world—the spirit realm), so the listeners were expected to be more impressed with the content.

Where is this heading? How common will such an unbiblical practice become in Christian circles? Will anyone stop to question what God's word says about "necromancy"—that is, presumed communication with the dead? Please see Deuteronomy 18:11 and the verses cited earlier about the state of the dead.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1).

"The very first claim put forth by these communicating intelligences



was that they were spirits of the dead; and in that claim they still persist. But that is a lie; for there are no such spirits in a condition thus to communicate. And this, to him who will be guided by the Scriptures, reveals at once both the unseen agents and their character; for we are told of spiritual beings which have to do with the human family—the angels of which there are two classes, the fallen and the unfallen, the evil and the good. But these spirits cannot be the good angels; for good angels do not lie; they must be evil angels, who have been deceivers from the beginning.”<sup>10</sup>

Is this where the Charismatic movement with its pagan spirit of glossolalia is ultimately leading the multitudes? The warning against this ancient practice of glossolalia (ecstatic utterance in the form of false speaking in tongues, not to be confused with the genuine gift as manifested under logical, appropriate circumstances in Bible history) is recorded by the Old Testament prophet Isaiah: “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? 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 8:19, 20). A religion based on feelings and emotion will surely lead astray.

On the other hand, in clear contrast, “it is the work of conversion and sanctification to reconcile men to God, by bringing them into accord with the principles of His law.”<sup>11</sup>

“Let none deceive themselves with the belief that they can become holy while willfully violating one of God’s requirements. The commission of a known sin silences the witnessing voice of the Spirit, and separates the soul from God.”<sup>12</sup>

## THE ULTIMATE DECEPTION

“Satan sees that he is about to lose his case. He cannot sweep in the whole world. He makes one more, last, desperate effort to overcome the faithful by deception. He

does this in personating Christ. He clothes himself with the garments of royalty which have been accurately described in the vision of John. He has power to do this. He will appear to his deluded followers, the Christian world who received not the love of the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness (transgression of the law), as Christ coming the second time.

“He proclaims himself Christ, and he is believed to be Christ, a beautiful, majestic being clothed with majesty and, with soft voice with pleasant words, with glory unsurpassed by anything their mortal eyes had yet beheld. These, his deceived, deluded followers, set up a shout of victory, ‘Christ has come the second time! Christ has come! He has lifted up His hands just as He did when He was upon the earth, and blessed us.’

“Here it was [that] the masterly effort of Satan would have deceived the very elect. But who were the ones blessed by him? Whom did he make glad? Whom did he honor? The combined powers of earth, the churches fallen by rejecting light and the messages of mercy Heaven had sent to heal Babylon but she refused. (Christ had declared the friendship of the world was enmity with God. Whosoever would be a friend of the world was the enemy of God.) The papal power, the man of sin which thought to change times and laws, that had presented a rival sabbath to the world to be worshiped, the apostate power who sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God, the power that drank the blood of the saints is united with the Protestant churches, having two horns like a lamb but speaks as a dragon; the deceptions of spiritualism which have perpetuated Satan’s lie uttered in Eden, ‘Thou shalt not surely die’ [Genesis 3:4]—all these are bound up in bundles, a corrupt harmony under a corrupt leader. The blessing is pronounced by this false christ upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, [the people] who have received the mark of the beast and the mark of the image of the beast.”<sup>13</sup>

“In [Satan’s] assumed character

Satan sees that he is about to lose his case. He cannot sweep in the whole world. He makes one more, last, desperate effort to overcome the faithful by deception. He does this in personating Christ. . . . But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false Christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures.

of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. Like the Samaritans who were deceived by Simon Magus, the multitudes, from the least to the greatest, give heed to these sorceries, saying, ‘This is the great power of God.’ [Acts 8:10.]

“But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false Christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures.”<sup>14</sup>

May the Lord strengthen us to rely solely on His sure Word and not be deceived! Amen. *R*

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- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 446.
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- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/02/asbury-kentucky-university-christian-revival/673176/>
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- <sup>9</sup> *Early Writings*, pp. 87, 88.
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- <sup>11</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 467.
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by A. C. Sas

# THE MOUTH OF THE FALSE PROPHET

## THE FATHER OF LIES

In the beginning, when God's creation was finished, His words were very clear when He said:

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou **shalt surely die**" (Genesis 2:16, 17) [Emphasis added.]

The "old serpent" (Revelation 12:9) contradicted God's word, telling Eve a lie:

"And the serpent said unto the

woman, Ye **shall not surely die**: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4, 5) [Emphasis supplied.]

Whenever a falsehood or a lie is urged upon the minds of the people, they are not always 100% wrong. Truth and error are often so mixed together that only by the help of the Holy Spirit one may detect which part is truth and which part is a lie. The "serpent" was telling some truth when he said: "in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes

shall be opened." In verse 7 it is confirmed that after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes were opened. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." When the "serpent" said: "ye shall be as gods" this part was a lie. But the words ye shall know "good and evil" was true, because before sin entered the world they knew no evil, only good; but after they disobeyed God they experienced and knew what evil was.

From the very beginning of the world Satan is deceiving people. His mouth utters falsehood and



lies. Jesus said to the Jews who were seeking to kill Him, that they were children of the devil, for he was a liar from the very beginning, and he is the father of liars.

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).

## LYING PROPHETS

Satan uses many ways to spread his lies using human instrumentalities. We will consider a few examples hereunder.

After the split of the twelve tribes of Israel, king Jeroboam who ruled over the ten tribes, set up a false system of worship. He built an altar to the false gods. A prophet from Judah was sent by God to prophesy that on that very altar the false priests will be sacrificed. “And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out” (1 Kings 13:3). The king was furious when heard this prediction and extended his hand to catch the prophet—but his hand dried up and could not bring it back to himself. The king then pleaded for the true prophet to ask God’s mercy and heal him. So, the prophet did pray, and his hand was restored to the right position.

As a recognition of this act of healing his hand, the king invited the prophet to enter his home and have something to eat, and be refreshed. But the prophet declined, saying:

“If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel” (1 Kings 13:8–10).

But the devil was not happy. He had used someone to destroy the true prophet of God, and sadly, he

had succeeded. The continuation of the experience is found in 1 Kings 13:11–19.

It is dreadful to think that a man who claimed to be God’s prophet would stoop to uttering a lie, but we read in 1 Kings 13:18 that that is exactly what happened, causing the ruin of God’s messenger. This was Satan’s act to destroy the Lord’s true servant. Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the wolves that come as sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

What happened to the true prophet of God, because he believed a lie of the other prophet, and disobeyed the clear instruction he had received directly from the Lord? We read in 1 Kings 13:20–24 that a lion slew him. How and why?

“Because the prophet allowed himself to take a course contrary to the path of duty, God permitted him to be destroyed. . . .

“And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, . . . and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. And . . . he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

It is extremely dangerous to turn away from the clear and explicit command of the Lord! Once we have a clear understanding of the will of God, if a prophet who may claim to be God’s servant suggests that we turn away from the word of the Lord, we should not listen to him. We should be aware that many false teachers and prophets may appear with lying words to deceive, if possible, the very elect of God.

## IN THE DAYS OF KING AHAB

Ahab, king of Israel, invited Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in a battle against the Syrians. Four hundred false prophets predicted success for them, but one



of God’s true prophets, Micaiah, prophesied their defeat. (See 1 Kings 22:17–23.)

“Although Jehoshaphat in a moment of weakness had rashly promised to join the king of Israel in his war against the Syrians, yet his better judgment led him to seek to learn the will of God concerning the undertaking. ‘Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today,’ he suggested to Ahab. In response, Ahab called together **four hundred of the false prophets** of Samaria, and asked of them, ‘Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?’ And they answered, ‘Go up; for God will deliver it into the king’s hand.’ Verses 4, 5.

“Unsatisfied, Jehoshaphat sought to learn for a certainty the will of God. ‘Is there not here a prophet of the Lord,’ he asked, ‘that we might inquire of him?’ Verse 6. ‘There is yet one man, Micaiah to son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord,’ Ahab answered; ‘but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.’ 1 Kings 22:8. Jehoshaphat was firm in his request that the man of God be called; and upon appearing before them and being adjured by Ahab to tell ‘nothing but that which is true in the name of the Lord,’ Micaiah said: ‘I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd:



and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.' Verses 16, 17.

"The words of the prophet should have been enough to show the kings that their project was not favored by Heaven, but neither ruler felt inclined to heed the warning. . . .

"During the battle that followed, Ahab was shot by an arrow, and at eventide he died. 'About the going down of the sun,' there went a proclamation throughout the host, 'Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.' Verse 36. Thus was fulfilled the word of the prophet."<sup>2</sup>

Micaiah told them that which the Lord has revealed to him, that the false prophets would use lying words, and because he spoke the truth, he was confined to prison. (See 1 Kings 22:26–28.)

From the experience narrated above we may learn that sometimes even one single person who is obedient to the Lord will be used to proclaim the truth, while hundreds or even thousands of false prophets and teachers will utter lying words.

It is not uncommon today to hear the false notion: "There is no need to obey the commandments of God; we will be saved, for our God is merciful."

God has given us direct instruction through His word about our duties in these last days of the world's history. The enemy of truth will put in the mouths of false teachers and false prophets lying words to contradict God's message:

"They declare that we have only to believe on Jesus Christ, and that faith is all-sufficient: that the righteousness of Christ is to be the sinner's credentials; that this imputed righteousness fulfills the law for us, and that we are under no obligation to obey the law of God. This class claim that Christ came to save sinners, and that He has saved them. 'I am saved,' they will repeat over and over again. But are they saved while transgressing the law of Jehovah?—No; for the garments of Christ's righteousness are not a cloak for iniquity. Such teaching is a gross deception. . . . Virtually they teach, both by precept and example,

that Christ, by His death, saves men in their transgressions."<sup>3</sup>

## AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENT MOVEMENT

In the history of the rise and development of the Advent Movement we find that only a few people accepted the doctrine of the ministration of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary, while the majority had rejected this doctrine, and accepted a falsehood, believing that Jesus Christ was still with them. Let us read about that experience:

"I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him. I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him as He left the throne and led them out a little way. Then He raised His right arm, and we heard His lovely voice saying, 'Wait here; I am going to My Father to receive the kingdom; keep your garments spotless, and in a little while I will return from the wedding and receive you to Myself.' Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. On the hem of His garment was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate. Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, 'My Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.

"I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, 'Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Satan would



then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God's children."<sup>4</sup>

Satan imparted his spirit with those who rejected the truth about the heavenly sanctuary. They believed in error and delusion. Error and falsehood may contain some light and some power, but they lack God's love, and there is no joy and peace in the lives of the rejecters of truth. Those who received the unholy influence thought that they had received a portion of the Holy Spirit, but it was Satan's unholy spirit. We read about their experience, how the enemy used them:

"I saw that Satan was working through agents in a number of ways. He was at work through ministers who have rejected the truth and are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie that they might be damned. While they were preaching or praying, some would fall prostrate and helpless, not by the power of the Holy Ghost, but by the power of Satan breathed upon these agents, and through them to the people. While preaching, praying, or conversing, some professed Adventists who had rejected present truth used mesmerism to gain adherents, and the people would rejoice in this influence, for they thought it was the Holy Ghost. Some even that



used it were so far in the darkness and deception of the devil that they thought it was the power of God, given them to exercise. They had made God altogether such a one as themselves and had valued His power as a thing of nought.”<sup>5</sup>

The apostle Paul predicted that those who do not receive the love of the truth to be saved will accept and believe in strong delusion. God will not prevent them from listening to, and believing the voice of liars:

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:9–12).

## IN THE TIME OF THE END

A very common occurrence is the appearance of messengers whom God has not sent. They come in the name of the Lord, and they give false explanation of prophecies, and try to turn away the faithful from the present truth. The Lord warned us through the prophet to watch those who are telling lies:

“Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart” (Jeremiah 14:14).

“Those men who are not called of God are generally the very ones that are the most confident that they are so called and that their labors are very important. They go into the field and do not generally exert a good influence; yet in some places they have a measure of success, and this leads them and others to think that they are surely called of God. . . . Even if wicked men talk the truth, some may receive it; but it does not bring those who talked it into any

more favor with God. Wicked men are wicked men still, and according to the deception they practiced upon those who were beloved of God, and according to the confusion brought into the church, so will be their punishment; their sins will not remain covered, but will be exposed in the day of God’s fierce anger.”<sup>6</sup>

The deciding point by which we may know whether the messengers and their words are of the Lord or of Satan, is the obedience to the commandments of God, especially to the fourth commandment:

“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).

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law” (James 2:10, 11).

Yes, the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath is the sign which distinguishes God’s people from the fallen churches. In the near future, the keeping of the Sabbath will be the great final test to all the world. When the loud cry of the third angel will be given by the power of the latter rain, neither the false shepherds nor the disobedient people will have any excuse, because they will receive sufficient light to make their decision intelligently, either to keep God’s seventh-day Sabbath, or the spurious day of rest, which is Sunday, the first day of the week.

“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**

The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath is the sign which distinguishes God’s people from the fallen churches. In the near future, the keeping of the Sabbath will be the great final test to all the world.

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.**”<sup>7</sup>

The prophecy of Revelation 13:11 soon will be fulfilled. The second beast soon will utter his voice like a dragon. We read thus:

“The lamblike horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The ‘speaking’ of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak ‘as a dragon,’ and exercise ‘all the power of the first beast,’ plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the



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.

leopardlike beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns 'causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast,' indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy."<sup>8</sup>

"Through the **two great errors**, the **immortality of the soul** and **Sunday sacredness**, Satan will bring the people under his deceptions. While the former lays the foundation of spiritualism, the latter creates a bond of sympathy with Rome. The **Protestants** of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of **spiritualism**; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the **Roman power**; and under the influence of **this threefold union**, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience."<sup>9</sup>

"Brethren and sisters, would that I might say something to awaken you to the importance of this time, the significance of the events that are now taking place. I point you to the aggressive movements now being made for the restriction of religious liberty. God's sanctified memorial has been torn down, and in its place a false sabbath, bearing no sanctity, stands before the world. And while the powers of darkness are stirring up the elements from beneath, the Lord God of heaven is sending power from above to meet the emergency by arousing His living agencies to exalt the law of heaven. Now, just now, is our time to work in foreign countries. As America, the land of religious liberty, shall unite with the papacy in forcing the conscience and compelling men to honor the false sabbath, the people of every country on the globe will be led to follow her example. Our people are not half

awake to do all in their power, with the facilities within their reach, to extend the message of warning."<sup>10</sup>

### THE FALSE PROPHET'S ROLE IN THE FINAL MASTERPIECE OF DECEPTION

In the article preceding this one ("The Mouth of the Dragon and of the Beast" starting on page 4), we considered the two of the three unclean spirits of Revelation 16:13, 14. The third, the "false prophet," is apostate Protestantism which is soon to assume its distinct role in prophecy:

"The **Protestants** of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of **spiritualism**; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the **Roman power**; and under the influence of this **threefold union**, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience."<sup>11</sup>

The prophecies mentioned above will be fulfilled very soon. The "lamblike beast" (Revelation 13:11) will open his mouth and will speak like a dragon.

"By the decree enforcing the institution of the papacy in violation of the law of God, our nation [the United States] will disconnect herself fully from righteousness. When **Protestantism** shall stretch her hand across the gulf to grasp the hand of the **Roman power**, when she shall reach over the abyss to clasp hands with **spiritualism**, when, under the influence of **this threefold union**, our country shall repudiate every principle of its Constitution as a Protestant and republican government, and shall make provision for the propagation of papal falsehoods and delusions, then we may know that the time has come for the marvelous working of

Satan and that the end is near."<sup>12</sup>

True Protestantism historically has claimed the Bible to be its sole source of faith and doctrine. Yet it will abandon the scriptural Ten Commandments, and the enemy of souls will exalt in the apostasy. In the crowning act to deceive those whose nominal Protestantism has become a mere form, Satan impersonating Christ "**claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday**, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. . . .

"But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image—the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out."<sup>13</sup>

"The light of the Word carefully studied, the voice of conscience, the strivings of the Spirit, produce in the heart genuine love for Christ, who gave Himself a whole sacrifice to redeem the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. And love is manifested in obedience. The line of demarcation will be plain and distinct between those who love God and keep His commandments, and those who love Him not and disregard His precepts."<sup>14</sup> R

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- <sup>3</sup> *The Bible Echo*, February 8, 1897.
- <sup>4</sup> *Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 44.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 99.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 605. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>8</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 442.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 588. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>10</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 18.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 588. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>12</sup> *Maranatha*, p. 190. (Emphasis supplied.)
- <sup>13</sup> *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, pp. 442, 443. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>14</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 92.





by Walter Lukic

# THE TWO REPUBLICS

## Part 2 – The Roman Republic

### INTRODUCTION

In Part 1 of this article, we pointed out that the Roman Republic has never ceased to attract the attention of historians and to serve as a model of social and political organization. It was carefully studied and judiciously emulated by the framers of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. founding fathers acknowledged that precious lessons can be learned from the rise, decline, and fall of the Roman Republic. It would be well if the contemporary U.S. policymakers were as keen students of ancient history as were their forefathers.

In this part two, we propose to offer a brief survey of the Roman Republic, to learn some valuable lessons from its rise and fall, and to ap-

ply those lessons to another Republic—the United States of America. This we do for two main reasons: The American Republic was modeled on the Roman Republic. And second, the apocalyptic prophecy in Revelation 13 speaks of both Rome and the United States as the last major global powers that will attempt to establish worldwide dominance and impose laws in opposition to the law of God.

### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF POLYBIUS

In 167 BC, the Roman army took an educated and accomplished Greek noble a hostage and

transported him to Rome to be detained there for 17 years. Due to his upbringing and culture, the Greek noble was admitted to the most distinguished Roman houses. There he was appointed a teacher and entrusted with the education of two sons of Aemilius Paulus, a celebrated military commander and two-time consul. For many years, that Greek teacher was to remain in the inner circle of the most powerful Roman magistrates and accompany them on their military campaigns. He would have the privilege to observe directly the rise of the Roman Republic to the height of its global power in the Mediterranean world. The Greek nobleman's name was Polybius and his great histori-



cal work on the Roman Republic is entitled *The Histories*. In that notable work, Polybius was to narrate the Roman history from 264 BC-146 BC.

As one of the stunned spectators, Polybius questioned how such an austere, agrarian civilization had come to dominate the Mediterranean with such unprecedented success. Polybius sought to answer this question in *The Histories*. He believed that the secret of Rome's success was only partly attributable to the Roman leaders who displayed great personal and civic virtue. He found that an equally important ingredient to Rome's success story was the Roman Constitution, particularly the division of powers between the Republic's main governing institutions ("mixed government"). Chapter 6 of Polybius' *History* was to be carefully studied by the fathers of the American Constitution, and for a good reason. In this part of the article, we will take a brief look at the same subject matter. The starting point will be a sketch of Rome's earliest history.

## THE HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

In a magazine article we can offer only a brief sketch of Roman history by limiting ourselves to the survey of the key historical events, social institutions, and persons that are relevant to our subject matter.

Rome's origins are to a large extent shrouded in the mist of legendary tales. It is undisputed, however, that the Italian peninsula was inhabited by various tribes and peoples at the time the Latins settled in the region of Latium, a plain of west-central Italy (2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC). Latins spoke one of the Italian dialects, the other two dialects being Oscan-Umbrian and Venetic, all of them belonging to the Indo-European family of languages. Rome emerged and evolved in a multicultural environment from which the Latins largely benefited. From the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, two developed civilizations would exert profound influences on the Latins—Etruscans to their north, and Greeks to their south. From these peoples, especially from the Etruscans, Romans borrowed and adapted their alphabet, political in-

stitutions and military organization, urban infrastructure, art and architecture, entertainment (gladiatorial combat).

Romans were flattered by and readily adopted the Greek historians' account of their city's origin. According to this myth, the Trojan hero, Aeneas, and some followers escaped the Greek destruction of Troy and set out on a sea voyage. After a few years of wandering, they settled in central Italy where they intermarried with the native population and became the Latins. Several kings, supposedly descending from Aeneas, ruled the city Alba Longa in Latium from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, until the last of the royal line—the twin brothers Romulus and Remus—overthrew the wicked king and in 753 BC founded their own city on the Palatine Hill, the city of Rome. It is noteworthy that the ancient tale recounts how a struggle for dominance over the new city arose between the two brothers and how Romulus prevailed and killed Remus. It is highly emblematic and eerily foreboding that from this bloodshed emerged the state that would rule the Mediterranean world.

Early Latins engaged in agriculture and in animal husbandry, living in villages and small towns. Sometime in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC a fortified settlement was established on the Tiber River, about 12 miles or 20 km inland from the sea. That site commanded a convenient river crossing and lay at the border area between Latium and Etruria. For the next 250 years, Rome was to be ruled by seven kings, several of them coming from the Etruscan dynasty. The first six kings apparently ruled well, but the last of them, Tarquinius Superbus (Tarquin the Proud) is reputed to have been a cruel tyrant who was overthrown by a popular uprising. The people's revolt was triggered by an act of sexual violence perpetrated by the king's son against a virtuous noblewoman, Lucretia. That event, most likely a mixture of truth and fable, is important for the understanding of the Roman Republic for two reasons: The Romans highly prized the concept of a republic and detested even an appearance of monarchy,

and second, the early Romans held in high esteem individuals who displayed moral virtues and promoted a healthy and well-ordered family.

## THE EARLY REPUBLIC

It is commonly assumed that the last Roman king was deposed in 509 or 510 BC and that Rome transitioned to the republican form of government from that time. As we stated earlier, the early Roman historians formed the chronological framework for their historic accounts by relying on a list of annual magistrates from the beginning of the republic onward (the consular *fasti*). It must be stressed, however, that the period of monarchy (753-509 BC) and the period of the early republic (509-264 BC) are historically not well documented. Considering the scope and the purpose of this article, we can offer only a basic outline of the most significant political and social institution in the Roman Republic (the Roman constitution).

Central to the abolition of the kingship and to the establishment of the republican government was the election of two highest magistrates—**consuls**, following their nomination by the highest governing body—the Senate. Two main prerogatives of the king—that of the high priest and the chief military commander—devolved to two classes of magistrates: *Rex sacrorum* or a priest-king assumed the leading religious function, while the supreme military command was entrusted to two chief magistrates called consuls. Consuls were elected annually by the Centuriate Assembly, and they exercised collegially the highest military and political executive powers (*imperium*). The vesting of Roman public office holders with equal powers (collegiality) was a common and effective way to check abuses of power. Thus, for example, any magistrate could veto the action of a magistrate of equal or lesser rank.

It is likely that the **Senate** (Latin *senatus*) originated during the monarchy as an advisory body assisting a king. Most likely it consisted of older, arguably "wise" men (Latin *senex*, gen. *senis* means "old" or "old man"). Livy, and later Cicero, re-



port that Romulus selected the first 100 hundred senators from among the respected Roman families (e.g., Claudii, Iulii, Cornelii). The descendants of those men (“fathers” — Latin *patres*) would later form the patrician class or Roman nobility. During the middle republic the Senate numbered about 300 members who were collectively termed *patres et conscripti* (“the fathers and the enrolled”). The number of senators in the late republic increased to 900 and even 1,000 only to permanently settle at 600 in the empire. Plebeians, the Roman citizens without nobility, were later to obtain an equal access to the Senate and hold the offices of high-ranking magistrates.

The Senate was not an elected body but one to which the members were appointed by consuls and later by censors. Over the course of history, an election to magisterial office led to automatic Senate membership. The Senate advised both magistrates and the Roman people by issuing its majority decision (“*senatus consultum*” — “the Senate’s advice”). The Senate was by far the most influential deliberative and governing body, having enormous prestige and power both in domestic and foreign affairs. Even the celebrated name of the Roman Republic revealed the Senate’s significance. The famous abbreviation — **SPQR** — *Senatus PopulusQue Romanus* — “The Roman Senate and People” — testifies that the two sovereign entities in the Roman Republic were the Senate and the people of Rome.

The legislative and electoral powers rested with the Roman **popular assemblies**. Only adult male Roman citizens could exercise their political rights (right to vote) in one of two assemblies. Each person had one vote, but he cast it within a larger voting unit which in turn also had only one vote (this model is somewhat akin to the electoral college in the U.S.). These two popular assemblies were named Centuriate Assembly (*Comitia Centuriata*) and tribal assembly (*Comitia Tributa*).

The **Centuriate Assembly** (*Comitia Centuriata*) was a successor of the Curiate Assembly (*Comitia Curiata*) whose origins were in the Roman Kingdom, and which was based on the early Roman family,

or more precisely, the thirty original patrician (aristocratic) clans. The sixth Roman king, Servius Tullius, introduced political reforms which resulted in the formation of the Centuriate Assembly. This assembly originally consisted of citizens-soldiers and had a military character. All voters in this assembly were divided into *equites* (cavalry) to which class was assigned 18 centuries, and to *pedites* (infantry) collectively assigned 170 centuries. The infantry class was further divided into five (or six) subclasses according to wealth criteria. Each class and subclass were entitled to a certain number of centuries, the total number of centuries being 193 (in 241 B.C. that number increased to 373). The wealthy class was allotted the largest number of centuries and thus acted as the dominant group in the assembly, although it was numerically the smallest. The Centuriate Assembly voted on war and peace and elected the highest magistrates (consuls, praetors, censors, and curule aediles, of which consuls and praetors exercised imperium). Until the late republic, this assembly also sat as a criminal court and exercised capital jurisdiction.

The **Tribal Assembly** (*Comitia Tributa*) was a civilian assembly organized not on wealth but on a territorial principle and thus somewhat more democratic in nature. The territory of the Roman state was divided in four urban and several rustic districts called tribes wherein Roman citizens voted according to their residence (the number of rustic tribes increased from 17 to 31, making the total number of all tribes 35). Tribal assembly elected magistrates who did not exercise imperium (plebeian tribunes, plebeian aediles, and questors) and it heard the cases involving serious public offences sanctioned by high monetary fines. It should be noted that about one third of the Roman society consisted of slaves with no political rights.

There was in the Roman Republic a third popular assembly from which the patricians were excluded — the **Concilium Plebis** or **Plebeian Council/Assembly**. Only plebeians (commoners) voted in this council to pass legislation (called *plebiscites*), to elect plebeian tribunes

and plebeian aediles, and to try judicial cases. **Plebeian tribunes** were regarded as sacrosanct and possessed inviolability. They could also veto the action of any magistrate including another tribune. They interceded on behalf of citizens against the actions of a consul, introduced to the Tribal Assembly legislative proposals, only they could convoke Plebeian Council. Plebeian Council/Assembly should be distinguished from Tribal Assembly. Both assemblies were organized on the territorial principle, however, in the work of the Tribal Assembly participated both plebeians and patricians, while participation in the Plebeian Council was restricted only to plebeians. The Plebeian Council was gradually to fade away and disappear in the time of the Empire.

### THE CONFLICT (STRUGGLE) OF THE ORDERS AND PLEBEIAN TRIBUNATE

The creation of the Plebeian Council and of the plebeian tribune was the outcome of a struggle between the two classes of Roman citizens — plebeians and patricians. Plebeians served the Republic in the time of war by often neglecting their own farms and by falling into debt. The patricians imposed harsh debt laws which left the plebeians open to abuse and even enslavement by their creditors. As the patricians were in control of politics, the plebeians were left with no choice but to withdraw from the city at the time their military service was needed. The First Secession took place in 594 BC and two more followed. The patricians conceded and granted to the plebeians the right to meet in their own assembly, the *Concilium Plebis*, and to elect their own official to protect their rights, the tribune of the plebs.

The plebeians’ struggle for equality with the patricians and for an access to the magistracies lasted for about two hundred years. In 367 BC was passed the law named *Lex Licinia Sextia* (Licinio-Sextian rogations) allowing plebeians to stand for election as consul. The following year was elected the first plebeian consul, and from 342 BC onwards one of the two consuls had to be





plebeian. The conflict of orders will continue until the passage of *Lex Hortensia* in 287 BC. This law finally gave the Plebeian Council the power to pass laws binding both on plebeians and patricians by taking away from the patrician senators their final check (*auctoritas patrum* — “authority of the fathers”) over the Plebeian Council.

According to the Roman tradition, the earliest high magistracy emerging from the conflict of the orders that opened to plebeians an access the consulship was created in 445 BC. It was the office of **military tribunes with consular power (consular tribunes)**. The list of magistrates from 444 to 367 BC shows that the chief magistracy alternated between consuls and military tribunes. The consular tribunate was abolished in 367 BC and replaced by the consulship.

One of the most valuable outcomes of the conflict of the orders was the codification of the Roman customary law. That law code known as the **Law of Twelve Tables** came into being in about 450 or 451 BC upon the insistence of plebeians who sought legal protection from patrician abuse of power. The law was inscribed on twelve bronze tablets and publicly displayed in the Forum making it thus known to all citizens. It stated the rights and duties of the Roman citizens and contained rules of legal procedure (for courts and trials, enforcement of

judgments) and of substantive law (contracts, family law, inheritance laws, acquisitions and possessions, land rights, torts and delicts, sacred law). The Law of Twelve Tables had an enormous weight and authority in the Roman Republic. It laid the foundation of the Roman law and, although much developed through succeeding centuries, it was never formally repealed. The contents of this law code are not known to us directly but rather through the authors who reproduced various legal provisions with their comments.

## THE MAGISTRATES IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

The governmental institutions of the Roman republic evolved over several hundred years and centered around a series of magistracies or offices.

All these magistracies shared several characteristics.

- Office holders obtained their positions by election.
- Office holders served one-year terms.
- Office holders had to meet minimum age requirements for each office, and
- Each office was collegial, meaning that more than one person held that same title at the same time.

The lowest magistracy was the **quaestorship**. Under the fully developed system, quaestors were supposed to be 30 years old and were entrusted with an oversight of various financial affairs, both domestic and provincial. As the republic expanded, so grew the number of quaestors from initially two to twenty.

The next magistracy was that of **aediles**. The aediles were originally two in number and were elected from the plebs. From 365/366 BC two patrician aediles were added to the existing two. These additional aediles were called *curule* (“higher”) *aediles* and they had the power to issue edicts (*ius edicendi*) governing commercial transactions. From that time onward, four aediles were elected each year and the minimal age requirement for this office was 36. The aediles were responsible for a variety of urban affairs, including

the maintenance and repair of urban infrastructure, monitoring markets to ensure fair trade and enforce uniform standards of weights and measures, and staging public festivals.

Above the aediles and just one round below consuls, were the **praetors**. To qualify for this office, a person needed to be at least 39 years old. As with the quaestors, the number of praetors increased over time, from one to as many as eight. A praetor initially adjudicated only the cases involving Roman citizens (*praetor urbanus*), but later additional praetors were elected to administer justice in cases involving foreigners (*praetor peregrinus*). Praetors mainly served in judicial capacity, overseeing law courts and the running of the judiciary system. Praetors possessed imperium enabling them to command military units and to preside over popular assemblies including the Senate. Praetors’ edicts, laying out procedural law, had a major influence on the development of the Roman law.

The most prestigious post of all was the **consulship**. Only two were elected each year; each of them required to be at least 42 years old. They acted as the chief executives of the state and, for the greater part of the Republic, served as the generals of Rome’s armies. The office usually represented the pinnacle of a Roman’s noble career. More about consuls is stated earlier.

Each of the main magistrates in the Roman government was appointed several assistants or **lictors**, whose job was to enforce their orders and to march on the streets ahead of the magistrate to clear a path for him. The number of lictors granted to each magistrate varied, with the highest officer, like a consul, having the most, and junior magistrates having fewer lictors. As a symbol of the magistrate’s power, each lictor carried fasces, an axe surrounded by a bundle of rods tied together with a purple ribbon. In theory, the magistrate could order lictors to dispense punishment by beating offenders with the rods or executing them with the axe. One of the most dreaded commands that a magistrate could utter was the formulaic phrase: “Lictor, unbind the fasces” —since this meant that



someone was either about to be beaten or decapitated. The modern word “fascism,” meaning an overly authoritarian form of government is derived from these bundles of sticks and axes that symbolized Roman administrative power (yet the fascism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the Republican Roman fasces, apart from the common symbol, have very little if anything else in common).

Two more high offices with special powers existed in the Roman Republic—the office of dictator and the office of censor. From time-to-time military emergencies necessitated that an outstanding leader be invested with extraordinary powers for a short period of time. According to ancient tradition, the office of **dictator** was created in 501 BC and was in existence until the Second Punic War (218-201 BC). During the military emergency, but only up to six months, the dictator held supreme military command over the Roman army (*magister populi*). This office was thoroughly constitutional and should not be confused with the late republican dictatorships of Sulla and Caesar which represented legalization of autocratic power arrogated through military usurpation.

The other slightly unusual office was the office of a censor. From 443 BC until 22 BC, the Centuriate Assembly was electing two **censors** for the term of eighteen months. The primary task of these two civil magistrates was to make up and to maintain census—the official list of Roman citizens (personal data, tribal assignment, assessment of the property). Census served as a basis for determining voting rights, liability for military service and for taxation. The censors were initially only patricians, from 339 BC at least one censor had to be a plebeian, from 131 BC both censors were plebeian. The censors also exercised a supervision of the public morality, revised the membership of the Senate, and oversaw the leasing of revenue-producing public property and for making contracts with the *publicani* (tax collectors). The office of a censor did not confer imperium, but it was highly prestigious and second only to that of consuls. It was typically filled with ex-consuls.

The middle and late Roman Re-

public created a sequence of magistracies that a leading Roman noble might hold. That “career path” was called the “*cursus honorum*” (the “course of honor”). Once the law beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC stipulated that all consuls be ex-praetors, the basic progression was quaestor-aedile (or a tribune of the plebs)-praetor-consul. As stated earlier, the law set the minimal age for certain office holders and imposed the gap of at least two years between two offices. As the Republic grew, so grew the competition for public offices among the Roman elites. The most successful aspirants to the high offices did not miss a year climbing the *cursus honorum* until they reached the top, the consulship.

## THE ABIDING VALUE OF THE ROMAN CONSTITUTION

The Roman Republic was far from an ideal model of just society. Yet we cannot deny that it made several major contributions to the principles of governance that we hold dear. As we conclude our brief review of the Roman Constitution, we wish to bring out one noble feature of Roman system of republican government which we prize to our own day—the status of a citizen (*civitas*) and recognition of the rule of law. One of the rights of the citizens was that they could not be punished without a proper trial, that the type of punishment must be prescribed by law, and furthermore, this trial had to be held at Rome.

This legacy of the Roman Republic, retained during the Roman Empire, is documented in the New Testament historical books. Christians charged with any public offence, could not be persecuted or punished without due process if they were Roman citizens. A well-known example is the unlawful flogging of the apostle Paul and Silas on the order or lower magistrates in Philippi. Pursuant to Porcian Laws (*Leges Porciae*), a Roman citizen could not be tortured or whipped. When Paul claimed his Roman citizenship, he was granted the right of a citizen, namely, to be tried in Rome (Acts 16:20–40). If not a Roman citizen, the accused would be tried by a local magistrate.

One of the most potent phrases in Roman society was “*Civis Romanus sum*,” meaning “I am a Roman citizen.” By invoking his Roman citizenship, the citizen would be granted protection and accorded his full procedural rights. This phrase entered Roman legend when a corrupt governor, Verres, seized a Roman citizen and illegally ordered that the man be beaten and tortured notwithstanding the man's repeated protestations: “*Civis Romanus sum*.”

The Roman author, Cicero, who successfully prosecuted Verres, vividly describes the scene stressing the importance of the man's status as a citizen. In his oration “Against Verres,” Cicero writes: “Then he [orders the man to be most violently scourged on all sides. In the middle of the forum of Messana a Roman citizen, O judges, was beaten with rods; while in the mean time no groan was heard, no other expression was heard from that wretched man, amid all his pain, and between the sound of the blows, except these words, ‘I am a citizen of Rome.’ . . . O the sweet name of liberty! O the admirable privileges of our citizenship! O Porcian law! O Sempronian laws! O power of the tribunes, bitterly regretted by, and at last restored to the Roman people! *R*”

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by Peter D. Lausevic

[Emphasis supplied throughout.]

# THE MOUTH OF GOD — AND OF US

Throughout this issue of *The Reformation Herald* we have been looking at what it is that comes out of the mouth of the three unclean spirits—the mouth of the dragon, the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet. Through their mouth they work miracles and this culminates in a conflict of the “battle of the great day of God Almighty.” The purpose of the miracle-working is to control the entire world through the art of deception. “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the

beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live” (Revelation 13:14). The mouth has great power and in this case we can see that it moves people to do the will of the dragon.

## POWER IN THE MOUTH OF GOD

In this article we need to understand that the mouth of God also has power. The “battle of the great day of God Almighty” (Revelation 16:14). does not fare well with those who engage in this conflict with the Master of the universe. Those who follow the beast—whether willingly

or through deception—shall be consumed with the mouth of God. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall **consume** with the **spirit of his mouth**, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8). The presence of God has the power to consume because “our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29). Life comes from God who is our Creator—and when we separate from Him, we separate from life. And what is it that separates a being from God? “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah



59:2). Sin, “transgression of the law,” makes a disconnect from the Source of life (1 John 3:4).

How does this operate? Is God looking with eager intensity to punish someone? “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). This is why God has given us so much time to prepare. He wants every human being to become intelligent as to the issues of the conflict and decide in favor of life. “We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.”<sup>1</sup>

This is why it is natural for our God to be a consuming fire. “In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. **Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.**”<sup>2</sup>

The power of God is found in His actions as a Creator. This is how He shows that there is no other God besides Himself. “For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:18). This is why the Sabbath, a memorial of creation, is the only sign of our allegiance to God as the Creator.

The way that He creates is through the power of the Word. “**By the word** of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the **breath of his mouth**” (Psalm 33:6). For that reason Jesus (Creator and Redeemer) is called the Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by

him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John 1:1–4). This life is not speaking of the short span of time that we exist in this sinful world. It is speaking of a timeframe that cannot be comprehended by sinful human beings. It is speaking of a length of time that measures with the life of God. “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may **know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13). The consciousness of having eternal life gives a totally different perspective on the things of this world and even life itself.

## CHANGING THE HUMAN HEART

If we want to have that kind of life, that kind of power that is omnipotent, we need to be related to God. This only comes by inheritance and inheritance is given to family—passed from one generation to another. There is only one way to be family with God. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). By accepting Jesus as our personal Saviour we become a part of that infinite family. We are so close that we have a “Daddy” (Abba) relationship with God. “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). When you are family you don’t have to go through the normal channel and procedures to gain access. For that reason we are able “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). We are family—actually a son or a daughter of God.

This is what we refer to as the new birth—to be born again into the family of Jesus. But how is one born again of the Spirit so that we have a familiar (family) relation with the great Emperor of the universe? “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God**, which liveth and

abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23). We are back to words . . . words that come from the mouth of God, words that have power. We are created anew (born again) through the powerful word of God. But more than that. God does not just create and then leave it be. He maintains everything and keeps it running. As the apostle Paul brings out, He is “upholding all things **by the word of his power**” (Hebrews 1:3). That means that everything is running through the power of the word of God. So if we want to live, what do we need to be doing? Jesus made that clear in answer to Satan on what a person needs to survive. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but **by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God**” (Matthew 4:4). This is how a believer lives. This is the power of one who is dependent on the words from the mouth of God.

For this reason the Word of God is more important than anything else in this world. “I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food” (Job 23:12). This is not just a requirement—I must eat or else I will die. No! It is where we derive our pleasure. “How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Psalm 119:103). “As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God’s word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another’s mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know ‘what saith the Lord.’ ”<sup>3</sup>

## THE EFFECTS ON THE MOUTH OF THE BELIEVER

How does the Bible show that there is a corresponding change in one who genuinely accepts the words from the mouth of God into their life? “**Thy word** have I hid



in mine heart, **that I might not sin against thee**" (Psalm 119:11). When the powerful word of God enters the human life, that same power which consumes the sinner attached to sin, burns the sin itself in the soul of one who yields to the pure words coming from the mouth of God. It is true that first it reveals the sin to us—but then it has the power to change! "That word which reveals the guilt of sin has a power upon the human heart to make man right and keep him so."<sup>4</sup>

But first the mind must have the truth stored in it for there is no time to look for it when the temptation actually arrives. "The heart that is stored with the precious truths of God's Word is fortified against the temptation of Satan, against impure thoughts and unholy actions."<sup>5</sup> How is this done? "Temptations often appear irresistible because, through neglect of prayer and the study of the Bible, the tempted one cannot readily remember God's promises and meet Satan with the Scripture weapons."<sup>6</sup>

What happens when we truly feed upon the precious words that come from the mouth of God? "As they feed upon His word, they find that it is spirit and life. The **word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus.** The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he

becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude."<sup>7</sup> We are born again.

And what is the result in the life of such a person? The Psalmist put these thoughts in song so that Israel could more easily remember them. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not" (Psalm 15:1-4). A lot of this has to do with the mouth and the words that come out of it.

### IDENTIFYING THE REMNANT

No matter how much easier God has made salvation available, only a few will accept the invitation to have life. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Another word for this little flock is called throughout the Bible as the remnant. "Esaïas also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a **remnant** shall be saved" (Romans 9:27). There

were times in the history of this world that it was hard to identify such a people. However, "Even in the darkest hours some would remain true to their divine Ruler and in the midst of idolatry would live blameless in the sight of a holy God. These faithful ones were numbered among the goodly remnant through whom the eternal purpose of Jehovah was finally to be fulfilled."<sup>8</sup>

Although it is very small, if it was not for this godly remnant, the world would have long ago been ripe for destruction. Often we do not see the power of a godly example but it is there working in the background preserving this world from the abyss into which it would naturally fall. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:9). The effect that they have on the world is the same as dew or showers of rain upon a wilderness. "And the **remnant** of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a **dew** from the Lord, as the **showers** upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Micah 5:7). "God had chosen Israel. He had called them to preserve among men the knowledge of His law, and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour. He desired them to be as wells of salvation to the world. What Abraham was in the land of his sojourn, what Joseph was in Egypt, and Daniel in the courts of Babylon, the Hebrew people were to be among the nations. They were to **reveal God to men.**"<sup>9</sup> And this He did through this remnant throughout all the ages of this world's history. Imagine what would have happened if Israel

"Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:9). The effect that they have on the world is the same as dew or showers of rain upon a wilderness. "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men" (Micah 5:7).





as a nation, or if the majority of Christendom had truly lived the life of God among men instead of just a small remnant doing so.

Even the remnant, who is still composed of sinful human beings, need a transformation in order to accomplish this—in order to be genuine representatives of the true God. “Who is a God like unto thee, that **pardoneth iniquity**, and passeth by the transgression of the **remnant** of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will **subdue our iniquities**; and thou wilt **cast all their sins into the depths of the sea**” (Micah 7:18, 19). It is not just to be forgiven. They need to have their sins cast into the depths of the sea.

Keep in mind that the power of God is found in His word. It is true that the words of the remnant combined with the blood of Jesus give them power to overcome the dragon. “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the **word of their testimony**; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Revelation 12:11). “The remnant are to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. Some expect to overcome alone by the blood of the Lamb, without making any special effort of their own. I saw that God has been merciful in giving us the **power of speech**. He has given us a tongue, and we are accountable to Him for its use. We should glorify God with our mouth, speaking in honor of the truth and of His unbounded mercy, and overcome by the word of our testimony through the blood of the Lamb.”<sup>10</sup>

This means that there is an effect upon the mouth of this remnant when they are born again and this is what gives them power to be a witness to the world held captive in darkness. We often speak of the commandments as being the identifying marker of the remnant people of God and this is true. “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” (Revelation 12:17). But which commandment is it that

they are identified with? Which commandment shows truly who the remnant is in this dark world? **Those who have truly placed their trust in God will have their mouths changed.** “I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The **remnant** of Israel shall **not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth:** for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid” (Zephaniah 3:12, 13).

Looking down to the last days during the sealing of the 144,000 the prophet sees the identifying mark of the last remnant. “**And in their mouth was found no guile:** for they are without fault before the throne of God” (Revelation 14:5). It goes back to the mouth. Why the mouth? What does the mouth reveal that no other action can? “For in many things we offend all. If any man **offend not in word**, the same is a **perfect man**, and able also to **bridle the whole body**” (James 3:2). The mouth reveals character—and character is power. The power of God is found in His character and that is why His mouth has such power to destroy sin (and naturally those who are so attached to sin), and also to change a sinner into a saint. The same happens when a person’s character is changed. It reflects in their words. When a person’s words reflect that change, we know that they have the character of God. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

And this is what God is waiting for because when Christ comes, He comes for a people that are fit for the heavenly kingdom. “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” (1 John 3:2). We must be like Him, we, not just as individuals but also as a church, must have His character **BEFORE** the second coming. “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the **manifestation of Himself in His church**. When the character of Christ shall be **perfectly reproduced** in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.”<sup>11</sup>

When we look at the Ten Commandments, they speak of our relation to God and to our neighbor—things that we do or think. There is only one commandment that actually has to do with our words, our mouth. It is the ninth commandment: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exodus 20:16). We may think that we are not lying but in the repetition of these commandments it identifies a serious problem that needs to be corrected in order for the remnant to have that power to move the world. “Thou shalt not go up and down as a **talebearer** among thy people” (Leviticus 19:16). Yes, evil speaking, gossip is an open violation of the law of God and that remnant that is ready for the coming of Christ will have conquered this defect of character. It is this flaw that destroys the unity and prosperity of a church. “The hasty, reckless use of the faculty of speech **lies at the foundation of nearly all the church troubles that exist**. Evil-speaking should be dealt with as a misdemeanor that is subject to church trial and **separation from church membership** if persisted in; for the church cannot be set in order in any other way.”<sup>12</sup>

Are we truly waiting for the second advent of our Lord and Saviour? Are we the people preparing for the eternal home with our Lord and Saviour? Does our mouth reflect that we belong to a different world? Right now it is our opportunity to submit to the power of the Divine Word and have such a change made in our character during the time when the words of the dragon, beast and false prophet have their effect on the rest of the world. “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). *R*

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- <sup>1</sup> *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1576.
- <sup>2</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 107, 108.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 390.
- <sup>4</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 80–82.
- <sup>5</sup> *My Life Today*, p. 28.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 600.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 391.
- <sup>8</sup> *Prophets and Kings*, p. 108.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 27.
- <sup>10</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 114.
- <sup>11</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Voice in Speech and Song*, p. 31.





by Septimiu D. Muresan

# TWO OPPOSITE ASSEMBLIES

“Among the casualties was Tod Carter, who was found after midnight just southwest of the house. He died in the home in which he was raised on December 2.” These words were the ones that marked me the most when I visited the historic Franklin Battlefield area.

The bloodiest battle in Tennessee during the Civil War was fought in Franklin, a town only half an hour from Nashville, the state capital.

On November 30, 1864, the Battle of Franklin was centered on the Carter property. Before sunrise, Union General Jacob D. Cox arrived and set up his headquarters in

the Carter House to oversee the construction of the Federal line of defense. At 4:00 p.m. that afternoon, Confederate General John B. Hood’s army attacked the Federal position and briefly broke through the line. The fighting quickly became incredibly violent, and hand-to-hand combat swirled all around the Carter house and across the farm.

A Union soldier had said: “We were so badly mixed up with old soldiers going forward, new soldiers going back, and Rebs running both ways. . . I could not tell. . . which were prisoners, the Rebs or ourselves—each ordering

the other to surrender, and many on each side clubbing their guns and chasing each other around the Carter houses.”

Horrific casualties were inflicted on Hood’s army—and by 9:00 p.m. nearly 10,000 soldiers from both sides were dead, wounded, or captured. Among the casualties was Tod Carter. He died of his wounds at the young age of 24 years old in the home in which he was raised, surrounded by his distraught family. He was buried in Rest Haven Cemetery just north of town.

It made me think, why did that young man have to die? And that it



happened right next to his parents' house! We know that Satan delights to see people destroyed and dead—mentally, emotionally—and finally, physically dead.

**“Satan delights in war, for it excites the worst passions of the soul and then sweeps into eternity its victims steeped in vice and blood. It is his object to incite the nations to war against one another, for he can thus divert the minds of the people from the work of preparation to stand in the day of God.”<sup>1</sup>**

What about spiritually? And ultimately even physically. . . . Why are many people dying spiritually ultimately to be lost . . . some even when professedly living in the house of God?

## TWO CLASSES

The Bible presents many examples when people—even though living in the same house or worshipping in the same church, included some who were saved and some lost:

- Cain and Abel.
- The Pharisee and the publican.
- The wise virgins and the foolish virgins.
- The prodigal son and the elder brother.

“There have ever been two classes among those who profess to be followers of Christ. **While one class study the Saviour's life, and earnestly seek to correct their defects and to conform to the Pattern, the other class shun the plain, practical truths which expose their errors.** Even in her best estate, the church was not composed wholly of the true, pure, and sincere.”<sup>2</sup>

“The two classes are controlled by different masters, and are opposites in their purposes, hopes, tastes, and desires. The followers of Jesus enjoy sober, sensible, ennobling themes, while those who have no love for sacred things cannot take pleasure in these gatherings unless the superficial and unreal constitutes a prominent feature of the exercises.”<sup>3</sup>

Even at the end of this world, there will be two classes or two assemblies—the ones who have listened to the voice of God and the ones that did not.

Jesus explains: “I tell you, in that

night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (Luke 17:34–36).

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matthew 25:31–33).

It's quite unique that our Saviour says that some of the goats will pretend to have been sheep until the close of probationary time. But their actions show that they are goats. They stay until the end with the sheep, acting like a goat while pretending to be a sheep. Sadly, such a character will suffer eternal death. Having the privilege to join in the spiritual house of God, and yet still dying like Tod Carter because they fought battles to which God did not call them.

If we want to be saved at the end, we need to make sure that we are listening to the full orders of the Heavenly captain. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh” (Hebrews 12:25).

We may be in the same crowd but have different feelings and different attitudes. To which voice do you listen? From which voice do you take your orders?

### 1. Those who don't listen to the voice of the Shepherd

Our Saviour specified the attitude of those that follow Him: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27).

It's a terrible thought to realize that too many souls don't listen to the voice of Jesus. They don't make time to commune with Him in prayer and study, and to actually listen to His voice.

There were thousands of people that followed Jesus, but unfortunately not that many were hearing His voice. Specifically, Christ repeated an expression which

resounds tremendously when we realize how many voices would try to make us listen to something else.

Jesus, the True Witness said: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!” (Matthew 11:15; 13:9; 13:43; Mark 4:9; 4:23; 7:16; Luke 8:8; 14:35; Revelation 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22). Have you ever wondered why He insisted that if we have ears we should hear?

Could someone be distracted to not hear Jesus?

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1).

Somewhere in their heart they would love to hear Jesus, but they are “seduced.” To seduce means “1: to persuade to disobedience or disloyalty 2: to lead astray usually by persuasion or false promises.”<sup>4</sup>

“If the voice of Jesus is not heeded at once, it becomes confused in the mind with a multitude of other voices, the world's care and business engross the attention, and conviction dies away. The heart becomes less impressible, and lapses into a perilous unconsciousness of the shortness of time, and of the great eternity beyond.”<sup>5</sup>

These confusing spirits of devils, seducing spirits, and doctrine of devils are always working heavily for our destruction. Remember Tod Carter? Oh, if he would only have heard Jesus telling him through the Bible: “Put up thy sword into the sheath” and “All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (John 18:11; Matthew 26:52)!

The worst destruction which the spirits of devils, these seducing spirits incite is the spiritual one, which ultimately leads towards the physical one:

“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” (Revelation 16:14).

Notice: “the whole world, to gather them.” Would you like to be—do you plan to be—gathered by these seducing spirits? Surely not. Would you be likely to listen to their voices? May the Lord help us to not pay attention at all to the seducing power of the archenemy. His strategies of battle are so sharp and



delusive that when the very work of salvation goes on, he's seducing the very hearers of Jesus.

"Angels were united in the work of Him who had broken the seals and taken the book. Four mighty angels hold back the powers of this earth till the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. **The nations of the world are eager for conflict; but they are held in check by the angels.** When this restraining power is removed, there will come a time of trouble and anguish. Deadly instruments of warfare will be invented. Vessels, with their living cargo, will be entombed in the great deep. **All who have not the spirit of truth will unite under the leadership of satanic agencies. But they are to be kept under control till the time shall come for the great battle of Armageddon.**"<sup>6</sup>

All sorts of pressures are performed by these "seducing spirits": spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and even physically. The family is affected, the church is affected, the society is affected by them! Familial, social, political, military, a whole world is twisted and seduced towards its own destruction.

Will your family—and our church—stand?

"As trials thicken around us, both **separation** and unity will be seen in our ranks. **Some who are now ready to take up weapons of warfare will in times of real peril make it manifest that they have not built upon the solid rock; they will yield to temptation.** Those who have had great light and precious privileges, but have not improved them, will, under one pretext or another, go out from us. Not having received the love of the truth, they will be taken in the delusions of the enemy; they will give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and will depart from the faith."<sup>7</sup>

A question for each of us to meditate upon:

"Will you squander God's talents, and lose your soul through idolatrous love of the blessings He has given?"<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Those who listen to the voice of the Shepherd

A rabbi was once asking a Christian about the famous question referring to a passage in the Bible: "Which is the first commandment of

all?" Obviously, the good Christian answered by repeating the well-known verse which is mentioned both in the Old Testament in Deuteronomy and as well in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." To that, the rabbi answered: "Sir, your answer is not complete! You forgot to memorize the beginning of this commandment, which says: 'The first of all the commandments is, *Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment*' (Mark 12:29, 30). We need to hear, we need to listen to the voice of God, my dear Christian!"

How much do we as Christ's followers need to make sure we are listening to His voice! The true followers of Jesus, listen to His voice only! Not to their own thoughts and reasonings, not to the notions of learned men, not to preeminent speakers or influencers, not to anything that this world may offer, but to the voice of Jesus! That's why, if you are a speaker or a writer, if you speak on a TV program, radio program, podcast, YouTube, recorded sermons or videos, social media video or audio recordings, etc., make sure, and I emphasize, make sure that you don't speak your opinions but rather: "Preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2). There's nothing more that the world needs than the voice of Jesus, the pure voice of God! Oh, that we may hear the sweet voice of Jesus speaking to us, and through us to others, more than anything else!

"Oh, that all could behold our precious Saviour as He is, a *Saviour*. Let His hand draw aside the veil which conceals His glory from our eyes. It shows Him in His high and holy place. What do we see? Our Saviour, not in a position of silence and inactivity. He is surrounded with heavenly intelligences, cherubim, and seraphim, ten thousand times ten thousand of angels."<sup>9</sup>

While this world is growing in agitation, in a constant state of anxiety and nervous excitement about anything and everything, the

followers of Jesus put their trust in Him. They follow His example. That is not only in peaceful times, but especially in very troublous times!

Probably one of the most stressful moments of our Saviour's ministry together with His disciples was the terrible moment of the betrayal of Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane. The pure and innocent One, betrayed by one of the most infamous names around the world and most infamous kiss. How would you react? Like Peter? Would you cut off someone's ear as he did? What would you and I do? Yet our Saviour's declaration is majestically made: "Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world:** if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). [Emphasis added].

The prince of darkness was not satisfied to kill only the Prince of life. Satan is constantly looking to destroy anyone who listens and follows the meek and lowly Jesus. But we have hope; we have a powerful army from the kingdom of heaven that looks over the faithful ones on the earth. Even though we may be passing through difficult times, stressful moments, with all sorts of evil words said about us, and maybe even to the extent of persecution and betrayal; do not forget that all heaven is interested in your faithful soul. The heavenly intelligences are very interested in what's going on here!

"All these heavenly beings have one object above all others, in which they are intensely interested—His church in a world of corruption. All these armies are in the service of the Prince of heaven, exalting the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. They are working for Christ under His commission, to save to the uttermost all who look to Him and believe in Him. These heavenly intelligences are speeding on their mission, doing for Christ that which Herod and Pilate did against Him. They confederate together to uphold the honor and glory of God. They are united in a holy alliance, in a grand and sublime unity of purpose, to show forth the power and compassion and love and glory of the crucified and risen Saviour."<sup>10</sup>

When your soul is tempted to be anxious about the prevailing



While this world is growing in agitation, in a constant state of anxiety and nervous excitement, the followers of Jesus put their trust in Him. They follow His example. That is not only in peaceful times, but especially in very troublous times!

powers of darkness manifested in the political world, in the scientific world, in the military world, in the whole society, and sadly of all—maybe even in the church of God, keep this in mind: “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them” (Psalm 34:7).

“Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claims to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and with sleepless vigilance they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God's people shall be accomplished.”<sup>11</sup>

“In their service, these armies of heaven illustrate what the church of God should be. Christ is working in their behalf in the heavenly courts, sending out His messengers to all parts of the globe, to the assistance of every suffering one who looks to Him for relief, for spiritual life and knowledge.”<sup>12</sup>

I already quoted the following paragraph in the first part of this article with regard to the separation that will be seen in our ranks. But now, let's focus on the unity that will be seen in our ranks:

“As trials thicken around us, both separation **and** unity will be seen in our ranks. . . . **When the storm of persecution really breaks upon us, the true sheep will hear the true Shepherd's voice.** Self-denying efforts will be put forth to save the lost, and many who have strayed from the fold will come back to follow the great Shepherd. The people of God will draw together and present to the enemy a united front. In view of the common peril, strife for supremacy will cease; there will be no disputing as to who shall be accounted greatest. No one of the true believers will say: 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas.' The testimony of one and all will be: “I cleave unto Christ; I rejoice in Him as my personal Saviour.”<sup>13</sup>

When you see notes of discord, envy, jealousy, doubt, complaints, verbal violence, dishonesty, sadness, egotism, laziness, anxiety, falsehood, confusion, indolence, indifference, inferiority, indecisiveness, superficiality, greed, worry, distraction,

demoralization, do not go there in your mind. Do not step on that side that goes towards separation from the church of God.

Stay on the positive side! Stay on the side of faith! Abide there! Draw closer together, nearer to Christ and to one another! In humility seek to promote notes of self-sacrifice, supportiveness, responsibility, forgiveness, honesty, calmness, gentleness, inspiration, love, goodness, courage, help, activity, diligence, loyalty, efficiency, motivation, creativity, sincerity, passion, understanding, gratitude, and above all, involvement in saving the lost!

“The church of Christ on earth is amid the moral darkness of a disloyal world, which is trampling upon the law of Jehovah. But their Redeemer, who has purchased their ransom with the price of His own precious blood, has made every provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the Light of the world, possessing the glory of Emmanuel. The bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, shining through His church, will gather into His fold every lost, straying sheep, who will come unto Him and find refuge in Him. They will find peace and light and joy in Him who is peace and righteousness forever.”<sup>14</sup>

“The Lord is a refuge for all who put their trust in Him. He bids them hide in Him for a little moment, until the indignation shall be overpast. He is soon to come out of His place to punish the world for its iniquity. Then the earth shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.”<sup>15</sup>

## CONCLUSION

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest . . . but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an

innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain” (Hebrews 12:18, 22–27).

The sheep and the goats. Matthew 25. The choice is ours.

“The church of God is a living witness, a continual testimony, to convince men if accepted, to condemn them if resisted and rejected.”<sup>16</sup>

Please, in the name of Jesus, hear the true Shepherd's voice, seek unity with all the faithful ones! If we want to be saved at the end, we need to make sure that we are listening to the full orders of the Heavenly captain. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh” (Hebrews 12:25). *R*

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 589. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>3</sup> *Messages to Young People*, p. 395.
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/seduce>
- <sup>5</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 967.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 967. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>7</sup> *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 400, 401. [Emphasis added.]
- <sup>8</sup> *The Review and Herald*, November 2, 1886.
- <sup>9</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 967.
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- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 967.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 968.
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- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 967.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*





Reformation Herald Editorial Staff

# THE DAY OF THE LORD

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Revelation 1:7).

Matthew chapter 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 all reveal specific signs foretelling the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. These signs have been unfolding in the sight of humanity for many years already.

We read in Revelation 1:7 above that Jesus comes in the clouds of Heaven, the same way He ascended (Acts 1:8). For what purpose? “For the Son of man shall come in the

glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matthew 16:27).

Yes, we are accountable to God for our every motive, our attitude, and our behavior. “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for **we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ**” (Romans 14:10). [Emphasis added].

## WHAT IS THE JUDGMENT?

The judgment is the final exam to determine our eternal destiny. “For

God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). When that moment arrives, our time is up; we cannot be preparing for the exam anymore—and no one else can help us with it, either. “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God” (Ezekiel 14:14). Even if a genuinely righteous person would be standing by our side, we are judged by our own works, not by our association with others.



## WHEN?

Death instantly closes the probation of a person. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). But what about those who are still alive when their name comes up in judgment in the last days?

"Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. **The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living.** In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour's admonition: 'Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.' Mark 13:33. 'If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' Revelation 3:3.

**"When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven.** Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be' Revelation 22:11, 12.

"The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above."<sup>1</sup>

## WHO SHALL BE ABLE TO STAND?

"Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman

in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:6, 7).

When Christ comes, the faces of those who have waited for Him will turn pale. They will humbly wonder who shall be able to stand before a holy God, the King of kings and Lord of Lords. On the other hand, the faces of those with unconfessed sins on their record will gather blackness as the blood rushes to their faces in an extreme blush of horrendous embarrassment and shame. Jesus explained: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Revelation 6:15–17).

A vision is described:

"Our eyes were drawn to the east, for a small black cloud had appeared, about half as large as a man's hand, which we all knew was the sign of the Son of man. We all in solemn silence gazed on the cloud as it drew nearer and became lighter, glorious, and still more glorious, till it was a great white cloud. The bottom appeared like fire; a rainbow was over the cloud, while around it were ten thousand angels, singing a most lovely song; and upon it sat the Son of man. His hair was white and curly and lay on His shoulders; and upon His head were many crowns. His feet had the appearance of fire; in His right hand was a sharp sickle; in His left, a silver trumpet. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which searched His children through and through. Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then

**"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"**  
(1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

we all cried out, 'Who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?' Then the angels ceased to sing, and there was some time of awful silence, when Jesus spoke: 'Those who have clean hands and pure hearts shall be able to stand; My grace is sufficient for you.' At this our faces lighted up, and joy filled every heart. And the angels struck a note higher and sang again, while the cloud drew still nearer the earth."<sup>2</sup>

The grace of God is sufficient for those who have washed their robes of character and made them white in the blood of the Lamb of God (Revelation 7:13, 14).

What a glorious moment that will be! The Bible says that "when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and **all** the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations" (Matthew 25:31, 32, first part).

All the angels! Heaven will be emptied of angels! None of them will want to miss out on this unspeakably glorious event! It will not be a secret:



“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

## WORDS OF HOPE

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the

kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall

be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:50–54).

“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). Amen! *R*

### References:

<sup>1</sup> *The Great Controversy*, pp. 490, 491. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>2</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 15.

# NEWS SDARM WORLD



## EAST TIMOR—BAPTISM

Sunday, February 19, 2023 marked a special occasion in East Timor, a Portuguese-speaking country in Southeast Asia. Five souls were baptized in what was the Reform Movement's first baptism in the country. Brother Benjamin Thiel, Pacific Region Regional Secretary, and Brother Daud Simanjuntak who relocated to East Timor from Indonesia, were the officiating pastors.



## ORDINATION—MONTIJO, PORTUGAL

On March 25, 2023, in the Montijo Church, Brother Adrian Gabriel Barnea was ordained as an Elder. Brother Barnea is the Portuguese Field's Youth Department Director, as well as Director of the Filadélfia Missionary School. The ordination ceremony was officiated by the current president of the Portuguese Field, Brother Elvis Camargo, current field pastor, Hilton Castro, retired president of the field, Édson Meireles, and Pastor Catalin Barnea, Brother Adrian's father.



## FRENCH POLYNESIA— MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

From February 22 to March 4, 2023 the brethren from Tahiti Nui Island, French Polynesia, held a series of missionary activities in the surrounding islands.

French Polynesia consists of a set of 118 islands in the Pacific Ocean, between Australia and South America. It is one of the most isolated places on earth due to its distance from the closest continent.

Brother Rolly Dumaguit from the Philippines (GC Vice President), accompanied by Brother Etienne Lombard (Elder, Canada), assisted our brethren in their missionary activities.





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MOVING? Please let us know.

# TRUST THE GOOD SHEPHERD!



Jesus tells a story about His soon return—and about sheep and goats. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31, 32).

Can you tell the difference between a sheep and a goat?

## Sheep:

- Have fluffy wool that needs shearing.
- Their tails point downward.
- If they have horns, they curl around on the side of their head.
- They like to eat grass and plants with their head to the ground.
- They stay in groups to be safe.
- They are happy to stay inside their fence.
- They are gentle and don't like loud noises.
- They listen to the shepherd and are easy to handle if he is kind to them.
- They have a good memory about whom they can trust.

## Goats:

- Have a flat, hairy coat and a beard.
- Their tails point upward.
- Their horns are on the top of their head.
- They eat anything, mostly leaves and twigs with their head up.
- Sometimes they go back on their hind legs to get something higher up.
- They do not stay together; they explore wherever they want.
- They are good at climbing and do not try to stay inside their fence.
- They do whatever they want and eat whatever they like, even poisonous plants.
- They are smart about knowing how to avoid being attacked.

Why does the shepherd take his sheep to be apart from the goats? Mostly because at the end of the day, they will all need to come into a fold for shelter. It is more crowded inside there, so the goats may try to fight against the sheep. Fighting is not good for any in God's creation.

Jesus says the shepherd "shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:33, 34).

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus divides all the people at the end. The sheep are those who have obeyed His voice and have been kind to others in need. He Himself is known as the Lamb of God. But the goats are those who were selfish and did not care about helping anyone else. (See Matthew 25:35–46.)

The choice to obey and follow the Good Shepherd is ours: "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations" (Psalm 79:13).—*BHM*.