

Walter Veith and 1888

A Seventh-day Adventist friend of mine sent me a link to Walter Veith's study, *1888: On the Borders of Canaan* and asked what I thought about it. This article is my reply.

For those who are not familiar with Adventist history, 1888 was a year when two young ministers, E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones, began to present a strong gospel message to the church, starting at the Minneapolis General Conference meeting of that year. This message was identified as the cure for the Laodicean condition of the church, and the beginning of the "latter rain," a time when great power would attend the Advent message, to bring it to the world.

Since this promised blessing never came, there has been much discussion among Adventists as to what was done with that message. Was it accepted? What exactly was the message? In this video, Walter Veith makes reference to it, and I have commented on his presentation.

I reviewed the video study you referred to. I noticed at one point that Walter refused to deal with what he referred to as "doctrinal points of debate, which divide." How can anyone talk about the 1888 message without mentioning a single doctrinal point? Can you imagine talking about the Protestant Reformation that Luther started but then refusing to deal with doctrinal points such as the protest against indulgences, justification by faith, the Bible only, etc?

There are spiritual reasons why the Lord chose to emphasize certain doctrinal points through His chosen messengers, and to refuse to deal with those points is to refuse the Lord's healing medicine.

I know that one of my friends was at a Walter Veith meeting near Vancouver, BC, Canada, and during a question session, publicly asked him what his view was about the human nature of Christ. Walter refused to deal with it, because it was a "disputed" point.

Well Waggoner and Jones did not refuse to deal with it. They dealt with it very plainly, because the Lord knew that only as we see Jesus' full identification with our fallen human nature, will we have the faith to believe that He can save us

from all our temptations. Those who give the last demonstration of the character of God in the time of Jacob's trouble (*Jeremiah 30:7*) must know intrinsically that Jesus was one with them in all their trials and temptations, and that even in that darkest hour, His grace is sufficient to bring them through. If there were the least doubt about this, they would crumble and the great controversy would be lost. God knew what He was doing when He gave Waggoner and Jones that particular emphasis. We are not wiser than God.

It is very common now, for Adventist ministers to talk all about 1888, without ever once quoting the messengers themselves. I found the same thing here again. Why, if it was such an important message, is there not even a quote from the message itself? Can you imagine if God sent me a personal letter, and I was sharing it with you and all I did was refer to that wonderful letter which God wrote me, without ever once reading you the actual letter? Would you be satisfied with that? I wouldn't. I would demand to know what the letter said.

I don't think his presentation really gets to the root of the problem. The message of 1888 must be wholeheartedly embraced, not just tip-toed around. It was the beginning of the loud cry of the third angel of *Revelation 14*, as carried especially by the fourth angle of *Revelation 18*. This cry was to go forth in "latter rain" power (the "former rain" signifying the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the early church, the "latter rain" being the same blessing on the church at the end of time).

Ellen White, Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 363 (1892):

The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin-pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.

Is the latter rain message so doctrinally thorny that we

dare not even quote from it? Then what kind of God do we serve, who gives such an awful message? It is no wonder then that Adventists want their own “latter rain” message, because they don’t trust the one that the Lord gave.

Walter made one statement which I wrote down:

“If you accept that the character of God and the law are one and the same thing, and you accept that only by the merits of Christ you can be saved, then that’s the third angel’s message, isn’t it? It’s not that difficult to understand.”

The statement itself is true, provided it is understood correctly. But he does not explain it in such a way as to make clear the difference between light and darkness, between the true gospel and all the false ones that use the same words. I find this inadequate.

For example, the light on God’s character (that He is not a destroyer) is firmly based on this principle that “the character of God and the law or one and the same thing.” But most Adventist theologians think that message is an error. So it is one thing to say that “the character of God and the law are the same,” it is another to actually define what this means. Once you make the definition clear, there will be division...it is unavoidable. This is what Ellen White referred to as the “mighty cleaver of truth.”

Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 455-456:

God has called His church in this day, as He called ancient Israel, to stand as a light in the earth. By the **mighty cleaver of truth**, the messages of the first, second, and third angels, He has separated them from the churches and from the world to bring them into a sacred nearness to Himself. He has made them the depositories of His law and has committed to them the great truths of prophecy for this time. Like the holy oracles committed to ancient Israel, these are a sacred trust to be communicated to the world. The three angels of *Revelation* 14 represent the people who accept the light of God’s messages and go forth as His agents to sound the warning throughout the length and breadth of the earth.

But the last period of the church, symbolized by Laodicea, is lukewarmness. Everything must be mixed up. You must allow both hot, cold, and everything in between. So even though Waggoner and Jones clearly taught that Jesus took our fallen human nature, was tempted in every detail like us, even to the uttermost, and that therefore He can live the same life (perfectly) through us today, Adventists feel quite free to disagree and teach something entirely different, something they borrowed from the evangelical Protestant churches: Jesus' "sinless human nature."

And what is the consequence of that teaching? The consequence is that people believe and teach that we cannot overcome as He overcame, but must remain sinful right on through to Christ's second coming. This is just the opposite of the promise given to the Laodicean church:

Revelation 3

²¹ To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

We must "overcome" as He "also overcame": same battle, same nature, same victory. That is the purpose of the third angel's message, to form an army who overcome Satan as Jesus did, who deliver the final blow and "bruise Satan under their feet" (*Romans* 16:20). How important then that we know exactly how to overcome. It is not enough, not nearly enough, just to rest on a vague statement such as "we are saved by faith." Such a statement means almost nothing today!

The message given by Waggoner and Jones in the 19th century, and by the *Brinsmead Awakening* in the 20th century, and later through Fred Wright's ministry, was all about how we overcome, and how we deal with temptation, and how Christ overcame. It was justification by faith, but not the modern Protestant version. It clearly defined how the new birth takes place, and that it involved a removal of the old carnal mind. It clearly explained that sin was not just an action, but a

corrupted life within, and that forgiveness involved cleansing.

The sanctuary was presented as a “living way” (*Hebrews* 10:20) in which the corruption caused by sin was taken from us and a new life given to us from our High Priest, Jesus Christ.

Fred’s revival of the 1888 message clearly upheld the truth that Jesus wants to bring His church to perfection in preparation for the time of Jacob’s trouble. It was for teaching these living truths, which were also taught by Waggoner and Jones, that Fred was disfellowshipped from the Seventh-day Adventist church in the early 1960’s.

And if Walter Veith would teach that real “third angel’s message” he would also be disfellowshipped. Instead, he uses general statements, and avoids getting into details. I don’t know why he does this, perhaps it is all that he sees. But it is not the Lord’s message for this time. The real latter rain message will build on the one that went before.

Also, Walter stated “only by the merits of Christ can you be saved.” Is that a clear presentation of the third angel’s message? It is true that the third angel’s message could be summed up that way, but you need a much clearer presentation to explain what that means in practical terms, because almost every church, from the Catholic to the Pentecostal will agree that “only by the merits of Christ can you be saved,” yet they do not teach the third angel’s message, but actually oppose it.

The counterfeit so closely resembles the true, that only by the word of God can we distinguish the difference.

Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 593:

So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true, that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the Holy Scriptures. By their testimony every statement and every miracle must be tested.

So we must ask, and demand, that people explain what

they mean. What do they mean when they say, “only by the merits of Christ can you be saved”?

For myself, I want to know that the merit, or goodness of Christ, is powerful enough, and accessible enough, to overcome the lust and pride of my flesh. If it isn't, then Christ is not a Saviour, because a Saviour must save me here and now, not just “in the sweet by and by.”

When the Bible says, “he that is dead is freed from sin,” (*Romans* 6:7) then I want to know how to be dead, and how to be freed from my sin. The Bible promises that I can be “freed from sin,” and I want to know it. I don't want people to tell me that the Bible doesn't mean what it says!

That isn't the voice of Christ, it's the voice of Satan. Satan comes, just like he came to Eve, and says, “Has God said...?” “Has God said that you shall not eat of every tree?” or in our time, he states it this way, “Has God said that you can be free from sin?” Then he denies the truth. Originally he denied it by saying “You shall not surely die.” In our time, through his representatives, he says “you shall not surely be freed from sin.” Well it's the same old devil, using the same old tricks. He may call it the “third angel's message” but it's just a counterfeit.

As I said, I don't know why Walter Veith does not deal with the 1888 message more clearly. Is it a “most precious message” to him, as it was to Ellen White when she heard it? (see *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91). I don't know.

But I know what God wanted to teach the church in 1888, and I know why Satan is so busy to derail that message and prevent God's people from hearing it. It is Satan's last attempt to win the battle, and unless we pay close heed to God's instructions, we will be tricked. We are no match for the mind of Satan. We must not play around with God's truth. The Jews played around in Christ's day and lost everything.

We must “live by EVERY WORD that proceeds from the

mouth of the Lord” (*Matthew* 4:4). Even the words spoken in 1888. They cannot be ignored.